

# ***Building Habits for Success***

*“A habit is an action that we perform regularly and often without conscious thought, these are typically formed through repetition”*

## ***Small Habits Lead to Big Improvements***

### ***Idea:***

- *Tiny, consistent changes lead to significant results over time*

### ***Application:***

- *Aim to improve by just 1% each day*
- *This could involve refining your technique, being more consistent during a set, or focusing on recovery strategies like sleep and nutrition*

## ***Focus on Processes, Not Outcomes***

### ***Idea:***

- *Outcomes goals give you direction, but the process goals put the systems in place to deliver results*
- *Those who achieve their outcome goals in key competitions are typically separated from those who do not by the clarity of their process goals and their commitment to working on them daily*

### ***Application:***

- *Instead of solely focusing on winning a medal or achieving a personal best, prioritise your daily routines*
- *Concentrate on consistent attendance at training sessions and the application of race-specific skills, such as underwater techniques, overall race strategies, and race segment performance*
- *Additionally, create aims to maintain both physical and mental resilience by following pre- and post-pool routines, and by fostering positive social and psychological practices*

# **How to Change a Habit**

*To develop good habits or break bad ones, follow these principles:*

## **Make it Obvious!**

### **Good Habit Example:**

- *Lay out your swim kit the night before to ensure you're ready for morning training*

### **Bad Habit Fix:**

- *Remove distractions, such as keeping your phone out of your bedroom to improve sleep*

## **Make it Attractive!**

### **Good Habit Example:**

- *Visualise the long-term benefits of your efforts. Before a tough session, picture yourself on the podium or achieving a new personal best*

### **Why it Works:**

- *Tying your actions to an inspiring vision of success makes the hard work feel more rewarding and meaningful*

## **Make it Easy!**

### **Good Habit Example:**

- *Start with simple steps, like focusing on one technical improvement (e.g. perfecting your streamline)*

### **Bad Habit Fix:**

- *Make unhealthy snacks less accessible at home to encourage better food choices*

## **Make it Satisfying!**

### **Good Habit Example:**

- *Track your progress in a training journal and celebrate milestones, like completing a challenging set*

### **Bad Habit Fix:**

- *Recognise the immediate benefits of discipline, such as feeling energised after training instead of guilty for missing it*

## ***Identity Shapes Habits***

### ***Idea:***

- *Your habits reflect your identity, and your identity reinforces your habits*

### ***Application:***

- *See yourself as a disciplined, high-performing swimmer*
- *This mindset helps you naturally adopt behaviours aligned with that identity, such as prioritising training, rest, and nutrition*
- *If you are uncertain about what to do in a situation, ask yourself;*

***“What would an Olympic champion do?”***

## ***Habit Stacking***

### ***Idea:***

- *Link a new habit to an existing one*

### ***Application:***

- *An example could be once you have the habit of an effective number of underwater kicks, add in not breathing on your first stroke*

## ***Overcoming Plateaus***

### ***Idea:***

- *Progress often seems invisible at first but compounds over time*

### ***Application:***

- *Stay consistent, even if the improvement isn't immediately noticeable (this could be over weeks, months or years!)*
- *Trust that small efforts, such as refining your kick or turns, will pay off in competition*

## ***Environment Shapes Success***

### ***Idea:***

- *Ensure your surroundings support your goals*

### ***Application:***

- *Your coach will create an environment that fosters success and you should model the behavior of a successful swimmer within that setting*
- *Surround yourself with motivated teammates and become a source of motivation for the group during challenging times*
- *Lastly, maintain a positive atmosphere to help everyone stay focused on their goals*

***“What Would an Olympic Champion do?”***

# ***Applying the principles to swimming***

*“What can I do to get the outcomes I want and deserve?”*

## ***In Training***

### ***Take ownership of your training:***

- *Your training is your responsibility*
- *Work closely with your coach to get the most out of each session*
- *Rather than waiting for your coach to tell you to do something (that you know you should be doing!) set the example and take ownership of your progression and ultimately your results*

### ***Address weaknesses:***

- *Work consistently on areas you feel need improvement and that are keeping you from becoming the best version of yourself*

### ***Consistency over intensity:***

- *Prioritise showing up and giving your best daily*

### ***Questions to ask yourself:***

- *What process goal(s) am I aiming to work on in this session?*
- *How am I making my training environment better for me and my team?*
- *How well am I communicating with my coach?*

## ***During Recovery***

### ***Prioritise sleep:***

- *Establish a consistent bedtime routine*

### ***Build healthy nutrition habits:***

- *Prepare healthy snacks and make them easily accessible*

### ***Incorporate active recovery:***

- *Stretch or foam roll while doing other activities, like watching TV*

## ***In Competitions***

### ***Create pre-race rituals:***

- *Develop consistent routines to calm nerves and build focus*

### ***Focus on process goals:***

- *Aim for strong technique, turns, and pacing instead of just time targets*
- *Decide these goals ahead of the competitions*
- *At your key target competitions, the aim is for these goals to be **habits***

### ***Post-race reflection:***

- *Identify at least one strength and one improvement after every race*
- *Then make sure you add this to what you need to focus on in your process goals*

## ***Mindset and Motivation***

### ***Visualise success:***

- *Pair goal-setting with existing routines, like warm-ups or stretching*

### ***Reframe challenges:***

- *See tough sets as opportunities to grow resilience*

### ***Celebrate small wins:***

- *Acknowledge progress to stay motivated*

## ***In Daily Life***

### ***Manage time effectively:***

- *Prepare for school and training the night before*

### ***Balance commitments:***

- *Use systems to align schoolwork, training, and personal time*

### ***Practice mindfulness:***

- *Incorporate relaxation exercises to reduce stress*

### ***Communicate if you need support:***

- *You are not alone in this!*
- *Reach out to your parents, coaches, fellow swimmers, and others in your support network for any additional **assistance you may need.***

## ***Tracking and Reflection***

### ***Keep a training journal:***

- *Track progress, strengths, and areas for improvement*

### ***Weekly reviews:***

- *Reflect on achievements and set goals for the week ahead*

### ***Celebrate milestones:***

- *Recognise how far you've come to stay motivated*

*By adopting these habits, swimmers can improve performance, maintain consistency, and build a strong foundation for success.*

***“What Would an Olympic Champion do?”***