

PRACTICE BETTER

Swim coaches have a long line of one-liners and zingers ready at a moment's notice when the situation calls for it. These pre-packaged comments come handy as the neighbourhood swim coach darts between swimmers.

"Pitter patter, let's get at 'er!" your coach will say when a couple swimmers are dragging their feet getting into the water. Or maybe when discussing race strategy you'll be told, "You gotta go out fast, and come back faster!"

One of the Hall of Fame coaching quotes is the old: "Practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect!"

While perfect practice is desirable, twist this quip into something that more accurately reflects what happens when we spend hour upon hour swimming around the black line:

Practice doesn't make
PERFECT.
Practice makes
PERMANENT.

See what happened there?

You spend a lot of time in the water honing your skills and physical capacity. Are you spending it in a way that is going to give you the best chance for amazing results? Or are you paving bad habits and sloppy technique that will echo when it comes time to step up on the blocks?

At the end of the day, you should practice the way you want to race. The way you train is the way you want to swim on the day that it matters. In other words, practice like it matters.

*Don't know where to start?
Here are a few keys to practicing better!*

Swim with focus.

It's tempting to swim with sloppy technique on the sets that "don't matter." A lap completed with perfect technique and focus is not wasted.

Turn and breakout with speed.

Each and every day is a day to practice turns. Over the course of a 3,000 yard practice, you have the opportunity to do like a kajillion turns. Don't wait until the day of the big race to decide you need to work on the thing you've been doing since day one.

Challenge yourself.

Seems obvious, but in order to improve, you need to be challenging yourself regularly in the pool. Take a swing at the fast interval, or try the hardest variation of the main set. Improvement comes by swimming through and over our comfort zone.

Remember the fundamentals.

Having awesome technique in the water means having the fastest and smoothest way to swim. So before you start piling on the meters and ramping up the intensity, make sure that you have your technique dialed in from day one.

Olivier Poirier-Leroy is a former National-level swimmer turned publisher of YourSwimBook, a goal setting guide and log book made specifically for competitive swimmers. Learn more at: yourswimbook.com.