

Time Management for Swimming Success

By: Wayne Goldsmith

Don't Plan to Fail by Failing to Plan

Swimming successfully is as much about time management as it is about training hard. Fitting in training, schoolwork, rest and recovery and having some time to yourself is a difficult juggling act even for the most committed and dedicated athlete.

One of the toughest things to do when managing your week is to schedule time to do nothing. For most athletes doing nothing is just as demanding as doing the hard training in the pool and gym.

Rest, relaxation, recovery and restoration - Those times when your body is growing, adapting and developing are fundamental to swimming (sporting) success. Allocate some time every week for recovery.

Most stress in life is caused by not doing things when you should have done them. The anguish and tension you feel behind the blocks is quite often the result of not preparing adequately in the weeks leading up to the race. The anxiety you feel on the way to an exam is sometimes the result of not doing the necessary study that you should have done before exam day.

Effective management of your time can not only improve your swimming (and your study) but it can help to minimise those nervous moments when you know you should have prepared better.

Proper Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

Some Hints for Time Management:

1. **Prioritise**, put first things first. Do those things you have to do first.
2. Use spare time to make life easier. Get an early start on a school project in your lunch breaks. Read your required school reading in the car on the way to training. Do sit ups and push-ups in the ad breaks when watching TV. Stretch your neck and shoulders when sitting at school or in front of your computer.
3. Set goals for every week and design a plan to help you achieve them. At the end of the week, (the best time is Sunday afternoon or evening when you are rested) review the previous seven days and evaluate how you went. Plan to do one thing a little better every week.
4. Pick a time that you can put aside every week to plan for the next week.
5. If in doubt – do it now!

Step One: Design a simple weekly schedule. If using a computer it's easy to do something like this in a word processing program, spreadsheet program or even a database program.

Some swimmers design their own weekly schedule, enlarge it to a full page size (A4) and stick it up on their wardrobe or bedroom door so it's the first thing they see each morning.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Day							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Step Two: Fill in the things you have to do. For younger swimmers this usually means school. For senior swimmers it may mean work or University study commitments. Doing what you **have** to do **when** you have to do it means you have more time left for what you **want** to do.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Day	School	School	School	School	School		
Afternoon							
Evening							

Step Three: Write in training times and other swimming activities. Include gym and other dryland training as well as club night and competitions.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning	Swim	Swim		Swim		Swim	
Day	School	School	School	School	School		
Afternoon	Swim	Swim		Swim	Club Night		
Evening							

Step Four: Schedule rest and recovery times. As one Olympian once told me, *“It wasn’t until I started scheduling rest periods that my times really started to improve.”* Allow extra time for homework, school projects and study.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning	Swim	Swim	Rest	Swim	Rest	Swim	Rest
Day	School	School	School	School	School	Study time	Rest
Afternoon	Swim	Swim	Study time	Swim	Club Night		
Evening	Homework	Homework		Homework		Rest	

Step Five: Schedule time for doing the things you want to do, (spending time with family and friends, going to the movies, watching TV etc.). **Part of achieving long term success is maintaining a balance in your life.** Scheduling time to enjoy life is just as important as training and racing well.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning	Swim	Swim	Rest	Swim	Rest	Swim	Rest
Day	School	School	School	School	School	Study time	Rest
Afternoon	Swim	Swim	Study time	Swim	Club Night	Music (e.g. guitar Lessons)	Beach / Bike ride with friends
Evening	Homework	Homework	T.V. / friends	Homework	Video / family stuff	Rest	Read / T.V.