



Affiliated to The A.S.A (West Midland Region) and Warwickshire A.S.A & R.L.S.S

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How to progress as a swimmer?

One of the most common questions that arise with Junior swimmers is "Why is Swimmer A getting faster, Swimmer B not progressing and Swimmer C going backwards?"

This is not an easy question to answer because many factors affect it, often outside the influence of the swimmer;

Attendance	How often and when?
Parental Support	Do they watch and encourage me?
Effort	How much effort do I put in?
Growth Rate	How big am I, am I growing fast?
Competition	Do I compete regularly?
Technique	Do I try to improve my technique every session?
Diet	What do I eat and when?
Maturity	Do I listen & concentrate?
Competitiveness	Do I want to get better and win races?

Whilst some of these can be affected by the swimmer themselves if they are aware of them most are the responsibility of the parents or just nature taking its course.

However it is no coincidence that those swimmers who train regularly (more later) and have strong parental support are the ones who are more successful by far. Getting to training when they need to and having parents that watch (watch not coach!) is the biggest factor in a swimmer's development. It is no co-incidence that the parents of all the Performance squad swimmers are heavily involved in their children's swimming from watching the majority of sessions from the balcony to being involved on poolside or on the committee. **Children work harder when their parents are visibly interested in what they are doing!**

The biggest drop out of swimmers occurs because they don't train enough to stay 'swim' fit and progress and they feel as though they're doing it on their own without any support because no-one ever comes to watch them. This tends to occur around puberty when swimmers doing sufficient training generally make giant leaps forward while others are left behind and become demoralised.

Lastly it is important that they compete regularly in teams, time trials and very importantly Open Galas where they have the best opportunity to swim in more than a couple of events. Nothing is more likely to motivate a swimmer than a competition with their team mates, even being beaten is good because they then go back and train harder and hopefully smarter, working on all aspects of their technique to improve their times.

Hours & Sessions – How Many?

There are no hard and fast rules as everyone grows and matures at a different rate and boys slower than girls! That's why girl's times are faster up to about 12 years of age.

There are however basic guidelines that will help you on your way, these aren't rules though and if you're unsure speak to the Coach.

It is important to understand that when attending competitions, swimmers may NOT be competing on a level playing field.

They will undoubtedly be competing against other swimmers doing significantly more training than them. If as a swimmer you train 2 times per week for a total of 3 hours and you are competing against swimmers training 4 times per week for 6-8 hours, with everything else being equal, the higher training volume will undoubtedly shine through!

Local clubs and their younger swimmers in this area are doing the sorts of training volumes detailed below. The guideline below show a Minimum to represent the smallest progression and a Maximum to optimise it:

Up to 8 years	Minimum 1 sessions per week, 1-2 hours. Maximum 3 sessions/4hrs if they're capable and have sound strokes (speak to the coach first)
9-10 years	Minimum 2 sessions per week, 3-4 hours Maximum 5 sessions per week, 7 hours As physical development accelerates increase the training (speak to the head coach first) Junior Performance Squad is now possible if selected.
11-12 years	Minimum 3 sessions per week, 5 hours No maximum limit depending on ability & development stage ½-1 hour land training per week
13 over	Minimum 4 sessions, 6 hours No maximum limit 1 hour land training per week

Effort

In the USA they refer to training as practice. In many ways this is a more accurate description. If you attend swimming and 'practice' doing things such as turns, streamlining, and stroke technique to the best of your ability, you will get better at them. However, if you attend swimming and are lazy with all these things, you still get better, you just get better at doing them badly!!!!

Habits are formed at young ages, so why not get in the habit of streamlining really well after good quality turns with good technique between the walls!?! This does not mean that every session has to be swum flat out, but they do need to be swum well!

Diet

We recently had a nutritionist come along to the club. During his lecture, he mentioned a couple of main points.

- Drink plenty of water! 2 litres each day plus an extra litre per training session.
- Eat food with less than 30% fat, calculated by:
 - Read the label, find the fat content per 100g and multiply it by 10.
 - Divide that number by the total calories of the food per 100g and multiply that number by 100 to get a percentage.
 - If this gives a number higher than 30, then too much of the 'energy' in that food comes from fat and it should be avoided.

Swimming Leagues & Open Meets

We compete in a number of leagues which can be difficult for swimmers and parents to place in relation to each other. The diagram below should help to explain the swimmers level and the standard of swimmer to be found in each league and relate that to Open Meet competitions.

**Club Swimmer, Coventry & District
Secondary Galas**

**County / Coventry & District
Primaries Standard Swimmer**

District (Midland) Standard Swimmer

National Standard Swimmer

