



Welcome New & Returning Swimmers!

For the month of September, LAA allows any new member to try the team for free. We have many new swimmers and we are honored that you have chosen to try us out! We certainly hope that you have a positive and lengthy experience with us. We also have many swimmers who have turned out for another season of swimming. It's great to see everybody back! It's fun to look back to when all these veterans were the "new swimmers" and see how far they have come. The improvements witnessed by the coaches are immense and we thank these swimmers for their time and efforts. We're going to have a great season!

Aquatomics Swim Meet

We will be having our first swim meet of the Short Course Season on September 28 and it's here in Los Alamos. It looks like a lot of swimmers are signed up and it will be a great time! Please come and help so that the meet can go as smoothly as possible. It is only by the volunteer parents that any of this is possible. No Experience Required! Don't worry, you can volunteer and still see your child's every swim.

Short Course Swim Meet Schedule

- Sept. 28** LAA Fall Invite @ Los Alamos
- Oct. 18-19** Kirtland Invite @ Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque
- Nov. 7-9** LOBO Invite @ UNM
- Nov. 22-23** Taos Invite @ Taos
- Dec. 5-7** Charger Invite @ Albuquerque Academy
- Dec. 14** Rio Grande League Meet @ Santa Fe
- Jan. 4** Rio Grande League Meet @ West Mesa Pool, Albuquerque
- Jan. 10-11** IMX Challenge Meet @ Albuquerque Academy
- Jan. 16-18** LAA Winter Invite @ Los Alamos
- Feb. 14-15** RGL Championships @ Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque
- Feb. 22** 8 & Under Championships @ TBA
- Feb. 27 - Mar. 1** New Mexico Short Course State Meet @ Los Alamos
- Mar. 4-8** Spring Sectionals @ Las Vegas, NV

A Big Thank You...

To the Garcia family for allowing the Aquatomics to use their truck and trailer for the Homecoming Parade!

Questions? Concerns? Comments?

Please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have. Remember, we are a parent run team and can only exist with your help and participation. We would love to hear from you!

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There are many businesses and individuals who sponsor the Aquatomics each year. If you or a business you know would like to contribute to the Aquatomics, please contact Sharon Calhoun. You can email her from Board of Directors Box above, or from our webpage at www.aquatomics.com.

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COACHES CORNER



Coach Rusty contributed the following article concerning improvement rates for swimmers.

Factors That Influence Improvement Rates

I recently had conversations with a couple parents that were concerned that their swimmer was not improving as quickly as they should. Their conversations with me inspired me to write this addition.

Why is it that some swimmers improve faster than others? My swimmer comes to practice just as often – or more – than some other swimmers, why aren't they improving as much? I am sure these are just a couple of the questions you may have asked yourself at one time or another. The factors that influence the improvement rate differently amongst swimmers, are vast, and can be complicated. I will attempt to outline these factors.

Before we get to these factors, I would like to point out something I call "False Improvement Deception". This is a term I use for those younger swimmers that are only getting faster because they are getting taller and stronger. The question must be asked – Are they really becoming better swimmers or is it just a case of FID?

Factors Influencing Improvement

How often does a swimmer attend practice? Most research has shown that athletes start to forget what they learned at a practice after about 48 hours. Swimming

involves many technical skills. The brain must be "educated" on what muscles to use during each individual movement of each stroke. Even swimmers that have many years of experience will feel bad in the water after an extended break from being in the water, because their brain is starting to "forget" how to swim. This is why we recommend that all swimmers attend practice at least 3 times/week.

Body Core Strength. These are the muscles that are attached to the trunk of the body and are very important to the movement of the four competitive swimming strokes. If you can picture two lines that go through the middle of the body – one that goes straight up and down (the long axis of the body), another that goes from side to side (the short axis of the body) – they will intersect in the abdominal region. During Freestyle and Backstroke, the swimmer rotates their body on the long axis. During Butterfly and Breaststroke, the swimmer rotates their body on the short axis. The core muscles are used in these rotation movements. This is why abdominal strength is so important for swimmers. Exercises such as sit-ups and crunches can help improve body core strength.

Feel for the Water. Everybody is born with a different level of feel for the water. Some individuals will just have more natural ability than others. Successful competitive performance is not possible without the ability to translate input (feel, touch, kinesthetic awareness) into effective motor output (recruitment of muscular force by the most appropriate muscles at the most appropriate times). We could have two swimmers on the team that are physically the same and attend practice the same amount. If one of them has more natural ability than the other, the one with more natural ability will improve more quickly.

The Challenges of Performance in Water. A swimmer is immersed in a liquid that envelops the body and gives no point of reference. Gravity is essentially neutralized. Down feels like up and back feels like any other direction. The sense of pressure exerted against the body is the same in all directions. Even the most

sensitive areas for sensory feedback located in the hands and feet have no external reference point to base effective motor output. For example, an outstretched arm in the water is in its weakest mechanical position. Yet, the novice swimmer interprets the vigorous downward application of force as a helpful movement due to the added resistance caused by the weak lever position. The result is a bracing action with little propulsive component. The bracing movement feels forceful to the swimmer when, in reality, it is a weak and inefficient movement.

Starting Age. This is a factor that is often overlooked by many people. The age in which you start learning to swim is very important. The gross motor skills in children develop very early. Fine motor skills develop earlier in girls than in boys. This is why it is more important for girls to start swimming earlier than boys if girls want to have real success, because girls generally reach puberty earlier than boys. I coached high school swimming for many years and I personally saw the results of girls waiting until they were freshman to start swimming. They would improve, but most of them would never make state qualifying times. Boys that did not start swimming until they were freshman, on the other hand, would have much greater improvements and generally most of them would make state qualifying times by the end of their sophomore year.

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