



THINK LIKE A CHAMPION

By Wayne Goldsmith

Set high-performance goals in training every day – and high-performance swims are on the way.

GREAT SWIMMERS THINK DIFFERENTLY:

- Where most of us see obstacles, great swimmers see challenges to overcome.
- Where you might see difficulty, great swimmers see a chance to learn and grow through experience.
- Where the average swimmer thinks, “I can’t do this,” great swimmers think, “the more things I try to do the more I will learn.”
- Where most people think, “can’t do,” great swimmers think, “can do.”

Most swimmers look at the challenges of swimming in terms of how much work it will involve or how hard the task seems to be. This is called *work-based thinking*.

Champion swimmers look at challenges and tasks, and focus on doing the little things right. This is called *goal-based training*.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Challenge: Swim 400 meters freestyle warm-up.

Work-based thinking: “I am going to swim a 400 freestyle warm-up. It is eight laps.

Goal-based thinking: “I am going to swim a 400 freestyle warm-up. My goal is to swim it with a tight core and remain rhythmic. I will also aim to hold my breath for three strokes off every turn, and I will hold my breath for the final 5 strokes into the wall on my finish. When I finish warm-up, I will take my heart rate, a sip from my drink bottle and get ready for the next set.”

IT’S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

Goal-based thinking has nothing to do with swimming speed or level of ability. It is about ATTITUDE. It is about looking at everything you do as an opportunity to challenge yourself and grow and improve as a swimmer (and a person).

Think about the most successful swimmers or persons you know. Write down a list of the things they do that you believe make them successful. It might look something like:

- Hard Work
- Commitment
- Dedication
- Work on technique every day
- Look after themselves (such as eating well and getting plenty of sleep)
- Perseverance
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Persistence
- Humility
- Enjoy what they do
- Consistent
- Disciplined
- Happy to help teammates
- Always looking to learn and improve
- Love challenges and challenging themselves

Take a look at your own list. I bet there are few – if any – words that describe size, strength or physical ability.

That's the great news – swimming fast is within YOUR control. Your attitude – more so than the size of your feet, length of your arms or how much blood your heart can pump – determines how successful you can be!

It all comes down to goal-based thinking – high-performance goals for high-performance people.

Work-based thinking means you are looking for the minimum standard – always doing what the coach has asked; no more, no less.

Goal-based thinking asks, “How can I maximize this opportunity to become a better swimmer? How can I make training more challenging and more demanding so that I can achieve my goals faster? How does this work in practice every day?”

IT'S ALL ABOUT ME

Take a look at the chart on the next page. In each example, note that the goal-based thinking begins with the word, “I.” This is because you and ONLY YOU can set high-performance goals in training and preparation, and turn everyday situations into opportunities to grow and improve.

Goal-based thinking is about the “how” – not the “what.” The coach sets the “what” – but you take it and make it amazing by “how” you do it.

High-performance goals need high-performance thinking and high-performance attitudes to turn them into high-performance swimming!

EXAMPLES OF GOAL-BASED THINKING

TASK	WORK-BASED THINKING	GOAL-BASED THINKING
Stretching	10 minutes of stretching before training	If I arrive for training 10 minutes early, I can do some extra stretching and work on improving flexibility in my ankles, hips and shoulders
Dryland Training	Circuit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 sets of 15 pushups ▪ 3 sets of 20 jumps ▪ 3 sets of 6 pull-ups ▪ 3 sets of 50 abs 	I can use my dryland work to help my swimming performance if I visualize swimming situations when I am working out. When I am doing arms and shoulder work, I will concentrate on breathing and relaxation to help me improve my ability to stay strong in the final 25 of my 100's.
Sleeping	What is the least amount of sleep I can have and still function?	If I go to bed 20 minutes early each night, I can get an extra 2 hours sleep each week.
Packing Swim Bag	I need a pair of goggles, a swim suit a cap and a towel in my swim bag	I will pack two of everything I need so I can deal with any problems with gear or equipment. I will also pack a water bottle and some recovery snacks to make sure I start the recovery process immediately after training.
Kicking Sets	10 x 100 kick on 2:15	I will work on keeping my legs long and loose, and my feet fast. I will try to kick my kick-set PB's as close as possible to my swim set PB's.
Paddles Set	5 x 150 on 3:10	I will keep my arms and body long and strong and I will feel powerful throughout the stroke.
Speed Sets	12 x 50 from a start – 15 meters explode, relaxed 35 meters on 2:00	I will work on my breathing and my pre-race routine to improve my ability to relax before races. I will focus on exploding to the surface and my first three strokes on every repeat.
Endurance Sets	12 x 300 on 5:30	I will stay relaxed and will work on keeping my stroke even, balanced and rhythmic. I will try to keep an even, controlled pace and I will experiment with pace changes from the 200-250 mark on each repeat.