



Laurie Lawrence's

Coaching for Success





Welcome

Teachers and instructors are a swimmer's initial introduction to the aquatic environment for safety, technique and stroke development. Once a swimmer has honed their swimming skills and is competent with all four strokes, it is time to advance to a squad program.

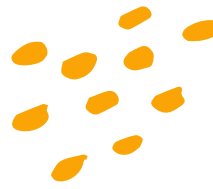
Squad swimmers work closely with their instructors many times a week depending on skill level and ambition.

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Introduction



As swimmers get older and more experienced in the sport, the challenges for coaches change, from just imparting knowledge about the intricacies of a stroke, to keeping the classes fun and social. At the same time, coaches must engage the swimmers' imagination to provide a good quality session that will improve speed, fitness and ability.

A swimming coach is a master juggler, entertainer, lecturer, expert, friend and more. How can we become an accomplished coach of swimmers? This article will discuss how to become an instructor for squad swimmers. These instructors are called coaches and usually work with junior to elite level swimmers.

Laurie's recipe for success in life is based on the following:

- Dream
- Plan
- Work
- Persist
- Refocus

It is this Recipe for Success that we will follow and discuss for becoming a successful coach within the swimming industry. Swimming coaching, like any new skill, may not come naturally to all individuals. It is with constant practice, support and guidance that most skills are learned, improved and successfully presented.





Dream

“Nothing happens unless first a dream.”

Carl Sandburg

Know what you want from your coaching experience. If you set goals and know what you are working towards, it will make your coaching experience more enjoyable and allow you to work towards these goals.

- » Is your dream to coach a junior squad with perfect technique, push-offs and finishes or perhaps it is a group working towards dropping times and using a clock?
- » Is your dream to coach an open water swimmer who will face different conditions each time they race?
- » Is your dream to coach an international representative?

Firstly identify your dream. Then decide how your dream will work:

- » Do you recruit an existing athlete and foster success?
- » Do you build the skills from scratch and develop a champion?

All of these dreams are achievable with the right amount of work. All of these dreams rely on a dedicated coach, working with a committed swimmer. All of these dreams require an expectation of excellence or perfection, starting from the coach and trickling down through the squad to each individual swimmer.

Once you have your dream, it's time to move on to the next step in the Recipe for Success.



Plan

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

All great success stories start with a plan. Planning is a huge part of any success story and is used in all aspects of life. A road map is a plan used to get from one destination to the other. Building a house starts from a good plan design. The curriculum used in swim schools is a plan written and adhered to by all teachers and staff. If you get the foundations right – everything else will follow!

When formulating your plan for coaching, ask yourself the following questions:

- » What is your goal?
- » How long will it take to achieve?
- » What do you need to know?
- » How are you going to learn?
- » Where will you find help?

Work through your coaching plan so you know all aspects of this inside and out. Do you have a team to support you, be it other coaches, a business that you work for or parents and families of your swimmers? What time frame are you looking at? Is everyone aware of your goals and how will you work together to achieve them?

Arm yourself with the knowledge that you will need for your journey. You may need to further your qualifications with the governing body in your country before you go ahead and start your coaching career.

Work

“Nothing easy is worth doing.”

Matt Mann

It will take time to achieve your goals. You may have to try different approaches to your coaching to achieve the results you're looking for. This is the “work” phase of the Recipe for Success. Be prepared!

Here are some things to remember during this time:

» Build a culture of excellence within your workplace – pay attention to details, push for quality in every aspect of your job: skills, strokes, drills, attendance and effort. Excellence is not a “sometime” thing! If you expect excellence from your swimmers, ensure you are upholding these standards too.

- Expect your swimmers to be on time! In fact, be there before them.
- Expect your swimmers to complete every lap! Walk with them! Show your swimmers that you are willing to do what it takes, participate in their training – **DON'T SIT DOWN ON THE JOB!** If they are working hard and participating throughout the session, then make sure you are too!
- Ensure everyone is aware of your expectations – swimmers, parents, staff, co-workers, friends and family. If everyone is working towards the same goal, life will be a lot easier!



- » Arm yourself with an arsenal of different ways to interact and work with your swimmers – remember everyone is an individual and not everyone reacts or learns the same way. Some people are visual learners, others prefer a kinaesthetic approach. Some people react poorly to a direct and firm way of being spoken to, others like a more nurturing and supportive approach. Some swimmers like to be the centre of attention, others like to learn and stay within a group setting. By understanding the individual needs within a group, a coach can get the best out of every swimmer participating in a session.
- » Swimmers must be told when they are getting something wrong – the only way to excel is to know when something isn't working and to work hard to improve upon it. Ensure you let swimmers know when they are not living up to your expectations. This is just as important as praise, when they are excelling!





» Communication is Key

- A great coach must be a great communicator.
- A great coach communicates with swimmers and parents daily.
- A great coach builds a culture of excellence within the squad.
- A great coach sets and upholds standards every time, every day.
- A great coach understands different modes of communication and uses them accordingly.

Verbal Communication

- Keep words clear and concise.
- Use appropriate language and tones.
- Ensure swimming terminology is understood before use.

Types of Communication

- Individual communication - between coach and athlete.
- Group communication - discussion and feedback between the entire squad, certain lanes, groups or clusters of swimmers.

Non-Verbal Communication

- Facial expressions.
- Sign language.
- Hand signals when swimmers are underwater.
- Train swimmers to watch for non-verbal signals.
- Position yourself around the pool for visual communication.

Modern Communication

Use different modes of communication to engage swimmers:

- Video shot by coach or watched online via YouTube etc.
- SMS sent out for reminders, updates, programming changes etc.
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are used to build a team atmosphere and keep team updated.

» A good coach will build not only a team of swimmers, but also a team of support staff to assist in the athletes' performance. Some of this team includes but is not limited to physiotherapist, nutritionist, psychologist, doctor, strength trainer and sports scientist. This may be a group of different people or be a combination of people. It's important for a coach and swimmer to know that there are other people out there who can help them to achieve their goals. Teamwork is an important aspect of any training program.





Persist

“Persist and persevere and you will find most things that are attainable, possible.”


Philip Stanhope

Success won't come overnight. Talk to the many people in " the industry that have had successful swimmers. Coaching is a lengthy process. Coaching is hours upon hours, laps upon laps, sweat, tears, laughter and fun. Many coaches give up before they reach their true potential. It's important to stick with it! Persistence will pay off!

It's not just a coach's persistence that produces champions. It's a team effort between coach, swimmer and parents.

The swimmer must remain focused and committed through varying weather, all seasons, growth spurts, sickness and lack of motivation. A good coach will recognise when a swimmer needs a reminder to continue their training and work towards their goals.

Many parents are a huge part of any swimmer's success story. Swimming requires time, patience and a huge commitment from those involved. Parents are often a part of this process by making a commitment to the sport. This may include providing lifts to and from training, nutrition, social, emotional and financial support. Without parents' support, many swimmers would be unable to develop their true potential in the pool. It's important that coaches constantly remind parents to support the swimmers in their family.





Refocus

“Don't dwell on what went wrong. Instead, focus on what to do next. Spend your energies on moving forward toward finding the answer.”

Denis Waitley

Things may not always go to plan. Constantly refer to your Recipe for Success. If things aren't going the way you hoped, you may need to change one of the earlier steps in your recipe.

Is the “work” phase not producing the desired outcome? Change the way in which you are working towards your goals.

Are you achieving your goal? If not more persistence may be required, or your plan may need to be tweaked to realise its full potential.

Once you achieve your goal, it will be time to refocus and set yourself new challenges. It's important that great coaches continually evaluate their achievements in their Recipe for Success. If something isn't working, then change it with the end focus in mind.

If things don't work out, it's not a failure, but a learning experience or a stepping stone to the next possibility. Mistakes make us disillusioned and defeated OR they can make us stronger and more determined.





Conclusion

Coaching has many personal and professional hurdles within the aquatic industry. An astute coach, can point their athlete towards other sports with a swimming focus, such as Triathlon, Open-Water, Surf Lifesaving, Water Polo and Underwater Hockey. Coaching offers the opportunity to work with swimmers of many different ages, improving not only their skill, but their self-worth and confidence. It can shape their attitudes for the rest of their life. It can be a very rewarding job that can make a difference not only to the swimmer, but also to the coach.

Good luck in your future coaching endeavours and don't forget the Recipe for Success –

Dream, Plan, Work, Persist and Refocus!





Where to From Here?

Becoming a successful coach is a satisfying experience.

Becoming an Infant Aquatic Specialist is a satisfying experience.

Becoming a great Learn to Swim teacher is a satisfying experience.
Explore your options.

The Junior Coaching Academy is an online and interactive training program, recognised by AustSwim and Swim Australia, that has been developed using Laurie Lawrence's philosophies and coaching practices that have transformed raw beginners into Olympic medalists. Coaches can use these learning programs for upgrade professional development points towards re-accreditation.

For more information about the Junior Coaching Academy:



[More Information Here](#)



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