

Establishing your season:

The beginning of each new swimming season is a great time to start a training journal, which is a written record of your performance and a consistent, positive and concrete reminder to keep you focused. Use the journal to make observations about how you feel physically or mentally, and describe your level of motivation, mood and confidence. By recognizing these things, you have taken the first step in gaining control over them and using them to your advantage. Personalize it however you want, but we recommend the following:

1. Buy a writer's journal or spiral-bound notebook. On the first page, write out the following in big, bold print: What are your specific goals for this year? What are the major improvements you want to make during the season?
2. After each practice, date your entry, then list your practice goal, how you felt during practice (physically and mentally), what you learned new today, and how you dealt with distractions or fatigue. End each entry with one positive note about practice, then with a powerful statement, such as, "I am strong," or "Nothing can stop me."
3. After each meet, write down your goals for the meet and the times you swam. Briefly describe how you felt physically and mentally, then what you learned from your performance. List any stressors you faced as well as how you attempted to deal with them. End each entry with a very positive, powerful statement, such as "I love the battle" or "London, here I come."

Keep the journal simple so it doesn't feel like homework, and make it as positive and motivating as possible. If nothing else, it will be quite a gift to yourself to look back over your swimming career and keep cherished memories of your experience.