

## Planning Your Practices

At first, it may seem like a daunting task to organize and plan effective practices for a swim team. It is easy to be overwhelmed with thousands of potential things to explain, teach, and review for each of your many different groups. ASCA has some great articles and courses that can help. (Links are provided at the end.)

Let's start with a basic perspective. A planned Tuesday workout, in November, for your Age Group 2 lane(s) does not happen in a vacuum. That written workout gives specific sets and skills to be taught. It has intervals that may be moderate or intense. It may include skill practice on things such as proper catch, diving, underwater kicking, Breaststroke drills, or 100 other things. That workout can be written more easily if it is guided by your weekly or bi-weekly plan. That plan is derived from your monthly plan, or by preparing for your upcoming meet(s). And those plans are derived from your overall season plan.

**Practice planning and organization means what you do, and in what order. This is determined by your team goals, which are used to form your season's outline.**

If your team has a solid idea of what they want to go, and has specific goals, it makes all the other plans fall into place. If your season plan is the “skeleton”, your monthly plans (or meet goals) are the tendons and muscles that give it stability, with your weekly and daily outlines being the organs and skin.

For example, at the pre-season coaches meeting, the Head Coach says ... *“Our team had 10 swimmers qualify for LSC champs last year and this year our goal is 20 because we added one more hour (each week) of practice time. We want a full relay in 11-12 Boys and 13-14 Girls age groups, and maybe even the 9-10 Boys. Our VCC score was 92,500 and we want to break 100,000 and reward the swimmers with special T-shirts. Our Breaststroke and IM scores were lowest, especially in the 12-under age groups so we can start there. We will give extra attention to those with different drills, video, and teaching. We were 3<sup>rd</sup> in our State Meet last year and can be close to the top if we achieve these things. And we will have weekly coaches meetings to track our progress and make modifications if needed.”*

This makes it easier for all coaches to select the workout pieces you emphasize and the methods you use, especially if you are reviewing them in weekly meetings, or at least after every meet. This will make coaches more confident, more effective, and they will have more fun if they see these goals being achieved.

**Sample weekly workout plan on reverse. (6th week of season with daily practices shown.)**

Check out the ASCA website for more articles, courses, and videos at [www.swimmingcoach.org](http://www.swimmingcoach.org)

Mon/Tues Apr 20-21 AG + Tues. JRP→	Tues 21	Wed /Thurs Apr 22,23 AG/JR + Th JRP→	Fri Apr 24 AG/JR + Sun JRP→→	Sat Apr 25 AG + JRP
WU: 5 minutes straight kicking FREE	WU:	WU: <b>5 minutes</b> straight kicking FREE	WU: 5 minutes straight kicking FREE	WU: 5 minutes straight kicking FREE
FOCUS Meet review, 7x__ Free set, head position	FOCUS:	FOCUS: 7 x __ Kick set, Fly "click", turns	FOCUS: Back finishes, Fly timing, Free head pos.	FOCUS: FUN RELAY, Free HP, coaches choice
<p>Meeting: <b>5 minutes</b> to summarize the meet this weekend. IMs were good. Fly was improved. Fewer DQ's for swimmers in new events.</p> <p>Need to work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Back finishes and turns (counting from flags)</li> <li>-Freestyle head position (keep it still as hands enter and shoulders roll)</li> <li>-Butterfly ... no "arch" breathing (see video)</li> </ul> <p><b>TEACH:</b> On land review the following techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Breathing every 4 or 6 allows you to keep head still, which allows for an           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) extended arm stroke,</li> <li>B) a streamlined body, and</li> <li>C) promotes a straighter, rhythmic 6-beat kick. (Jogging head and/or chin side to side on each hand entry KILLS this.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>SWIM:</b> 10 minutes of 25's, 50's or 75's Free having swimmers go smoothly and keep head still as if they were resting gold doubloons on the backs of their heads.</p> <p>Breathing should be QUICK and EARLY.</p> <p><b>SWIM:</b> At 6:40, get swimmers line up for <b>7 x __ FREE on 4:00</b> They should remember where they were the last time. I will assume Juniors will do this set on Tuesday with the Jr Preps.</p> <p>(125, 150, 175, 175, 200)</p>	<b>SWIM:</b> <b>STARTS</b> <b>DRILL</b> <b>TEACH</b> <b>KICK:</b>	<p>The below set starts at 6:20 .....</p> <p><b>SWIM: 7 x __ Free Kick on 4:00 28 Minutes</b></p> <p><b>TEACH:</b> ON LAND, do the "click" Fly explanation as demonstrated on the emailed video <b>10 -15 minutes</b></p> <p>If they can't do it on land they won't be able to do it in the water</p> <p><b>SWIM: TURNS:</b>            Tie the BACK finish (flag counting) work and the work on open turns we did last week (see below) by doing some turns (splitting coaches at each end) of Back/Breast. Start with a review of the count, never looking to the side or back, then a confident spin, reviewing the skill below. <b>15 minutes</b></p> <p>Review the proper "ready position" for each and every pushoff we do in practice.</p> <p><b>WATCH FOR ....</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use bottom hand to scoop body under</li> <li>- Eyes look to ceiling and hand brushes by ear</li> </ul> <p>WAIT till body is under and arms squeezed before pushing off</p>	<p><b>TEACH:</b> Review AGAIN the Fly "click" explanation on land. Will be doing short 12 1/2 distances so getting tired won't be an issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>7 minutes</b></li> </ul> <p><b>SWIM:</b> With lots of correction, do short distances of Fly looking for the proper extension ("click") then a set of 25's (<b>18x25 on :45?</b>) with 12.5 Fly then 12.5 Back. The Fly should be perfect timing and the Back should have a 6-beat kick and a no-look finish. <b>15 minutes</b></p> <p><b>TEACH:</b> Review the importance of Looong Free and keeping a still head for good BP and arm strokes. (Keep the chin from wagging back and forth on each arm entry)</p> <p><b>SWIM:</b> set of 50's or 75's with the first part thinking of HEAD STILL, and the last 25 RACE with the head KEEPING STILL. <b>15 minutes</b></p> <p><b>TURNS:</b> Work on flip turns for the remaining practice. (I like the Free to Back flip to get the immediate pushoff) Lots of correction!</p>	<p><b>TEACH:</b> Teach the <b>6 kick switch drill</b> for Freestyle (like the kick/pull/roll) as they work on a still head. This drill makes their stroke long and promotes a strong kick</p> <p>Review the <b>catch-up stroke drill</b>. This promotes a long finish.</p> <p><b>8-kicks streamline, 6 full strokes, repeat</b> This drill promotes a steady kick, even when breathing, and a streamlined body position.</p> <p>Do 25's to teach them the drills, then 10 to 20 "half n' halves"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. <b>20 minutes</b></li> </ul> <p>Bribe them with a fun relay (you pick) if they do the following set well (similar to the Fly set we did last week) Keep all strokes streamlined and efficient.</p> <p><b>SWIM:</b>            300 IM 30 seconds rest            200 IM     "            100 IM     15 sec            50 IM  <b>15 minutes</b></p> <p><b>Remainder is whatever then need work on and a FUN RELAY</b></p>

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