

## Swimming Injuries

Luckily swimming is one of the least dangerous sports to participate in. My mother was always much happier when I was at swimming rather than playing hockey or football. I broke a lot of bones in those sports. People have said how lucky I was not to get hurt swimming. The truth is it was not luck. I, my coaches, and my parents worked very hard to ensure I never got hurt.

From the moment I arrived at the pool until well after practice I did everything I could to keep my body in tip top form. It started with getting changed and out on deck quickly so that I could stretch and warm-up properly. Most days we have dryland for the kids before practice. This is to make them stronger but also to warm-up their bodies. Especially with the older kids their land and water warm-ups are specifically set up for what they are going to do in that practice.

When practice finished I did not stop. I was a typical swimmer. I stayed in the shower and talked after practice. I joked around with my friends and made my parents wait for me. Still, I ate something within 20-30min's of practice. That is when your body wants to replenish. Not only will that help you get stronger it helps you not break down. I would eat a bigger meal at home but getting something, anything, into me right after practice was crucial.

I never had a shoulder problem swimming. I was a butterflyer that relied on his shoulder's a lot. My coaches were old school and had us pull the majority of practice. Almost every night I iced my shoulders, even if they did not hurt. A simple 10-15min's watching TV or doing homework is all you need. Sometimes, when I was really dead, I would take an ice bath. It is exactly what you think. I filled the tub with as cold as I could get the water and then dump a couple of bags of ice into it. I will not lie to you, it does not feel good at first. I will not lie to you, it never feels good. But it works! When in doubt have it checked out. I am not a doctor and there are things a doctor can diagnosis that I cannot. Find people that deal with athletes. A general practitioner may just tell you to stop the activity to make it feel better. A sport therapist will have dealt with these problems before and will have the goal of getting you back into the sport. Also, do not feel like you have to accept every diagnosis. Last year we had a swimmer who had gone through years of shoulder trouble that was fixed by going to a chiropractor.

Keep your coaches informed as well. We can help in practice. Keep doing what they tell you to do, even if it feels better. I hurt my bicep in college. I went to a very good sports therapist. She did great work and I thought I was doing well. I stopped doing my rehab and tried to go back to my regular workouts. Bad idea. It set me back a lot. As much as people may want, and their coaches may want them to, going back to full speed right away is not the best plan. Slowly work your way back and you can achieve even greater results than before.

*"Where you start is not as important as where you finish."*

# Looking Forward

As we are about to embark on the championship season, there are few things I always like to remind our swimmers. Be strong and proud of what you accomplish and the accomplishments of your team. Do not compare yourself or let your parents compare you to any other swimmer except you. Think about the little things between now and your championship meet. Start getting mentally ready. One of my mentors used to tell me, "The hay is in the barn. Now get ready to go fast," meaning, the hard work has been done and it is time for the payoff. Do the important things like streamlining and not breathing off your walls, just like your coaches harp on every day in workout. Be confident, be proud of yourself, and most of all, have fun! I can tell you from my many years of coaching experience; when you're having fun and you are into the meet, then going fast is a "no brainer."

*"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right!"*

# Spring Championships

We are fast coming up on the spring championships. Some are out of state, some are at our home pool, and some are in Anchorage. To do the best we are capable of doing means starting to plan now. We have looked at hotels in Anchorage for JO's and would love to have as many people stay together as possible. Last year we had a great time getting together for dinner at both spring and summer JO's. The earlier we can plan things the better price we can get for everyone.

Spring break is right in the middle of these championships. That can be good and bad. For those traveling it means less time away from school. For others it means a little extra training before champs. Unfortunately, it also means some will be out of the pool. Staying focused and doing what you can is the key. You can still do very well even if you are going on a family trip. Just don't sit on the couch and eat chips the entire break.

*"Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you."*

# Guests

We would like to remind everyone, swimmers and parents, that we are guests of Hamme Pool and Ryan Middle School. They enjoy having us there and always ask how the kids are doing. We want to keep that relationship as good as it is now, always. Please come and pick your child up in a timely manner, from practice and meets. That works for the kids as well. They do not need to be taking 45min in the shower. There are others who use this facility, many of whom are future MSST swimmers and parents. We all want them to view us in the best possible manner. Keep up the great work but be always vigilant.

*"It's kind of fun to do the impossible."*