



Building A Mental Toolbox

1: GOAL SETTING

Our year-round, multi-level aquatic programs emphasize
Personal Achievement, Team Unity & Competitive Excellence

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COACHES GUIDE: Key Points to Emphasize when Introducing Goal Setting to Your Swimmers

- Ask your swimmers to define GOALS. Have them discuss why they set goals. Then, discuss additional ways that goals can help performance.
- Teach your swimmers the importance of Systematic Goal Setting (using different lengths and types of goals) and give examples of elite athletes to stress your point.
- Discuss, in detail, the tips of effective goal setting as outlined above.
- Have the swimmers complete some of the goal setting exercises, included at the end of the chapter.
- Brainstorm ways for the team to “stay on top of” the goal setting plan.

Every day, for three years and ten months, I wrote at the top of my training log, ‘I work harder than anyone else, that is why I will be an Olympic Medalist!’ I also wrote down specific goals for every competition and every day and week of training. These goals were very specific and focused on MY performance, not my competitors.

Having these goals was the only way I was able to get through all my injuries (operations and bone breaks), and stay focused enough at the Olympics to win a medal. There were so many days when I just wanted to sleep in, but having my training goals made me head into rehab or weight training instead. At the Olympics, simple goals kept me intense and focused. Goal setting seems like more work, but if I didn’t do it, I wouldn’t have a medal around my neck today.

Olympic medal winner in Atlanta.

Goal Setting Exercises

To help your swimmers understand and use goals more often in practice and competition several goal setting worksheets and recording sheets have been included. Feel free to pick and choose which ones work best for you. The sheets have been included to get athletes started on effective goal setting; feel free to modify the forms by incorporating your own ideas into your goal setting program.

Exercises 1 and 2 are targeted toward older swimmers; they are designed to bring home differences between short and long term goals and outcome and task goals.

Exercise 3 is an example of a goal setting sheet for swim meets and can be used with any age group. Pick four swim meets within each season in which you want to emphasize goal setting. Write the name of the meet in the first blank given. Choose a goal time for each meet, remembering to keep them challenging but realistic. Keep the sheet in a safe place and remember to review it before you compete in the next upcoming meet.

Exercise 4, 5 and 6 are targeted towards younger swimmers. The main purpose of these exercises is to get the younger swimmers thinking about short and long-term goals and emphasize how one type of goal influences the other.

Exercise 7 can also be used with any age group. Setting and recording daily goals is important. Daily goals can be recorded in many different ways. One way of recording daily goals is on a 3x5 card.

Exercise 8 is designed for creating individuals goals as a reflection of team goals. Once your swimmers have set group goals for the season, then have them set goals to further progress towards the group and team goals. Then ask you swimmers what they can do daily as individuals to further progress towards the group and team goals.

Finally, at the end of this chapter, some training log templates have been included and will be described in more detail there.



Goal Setting Exercise 1: How Far should I Look Ahead?

Long-term goals tell you where you want to go and short-term goals tell you how you are going to get there. Both are important for effective goal setting. Try this exercise to help you breakdown your long-term goals.

- 1. What is one of your long-term goals for this season?**

- 2. What are the abilities or skills you need to achieve this goal?**
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

- 3. What can you do between now and the end of the season to develop those abilities and skills?**
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

- 4. What will you do this week to develop those abilities and skills?**
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

- 5. What can you do next practice to develop those abilities and skills?**
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Goal Setting Exercise 2: Moving Beyond Outcome Goals to Task Goal Setting

Outcome goals tell you where you want to be which can help motivate. But, on a daily basis, they do not tell you what you need to DO.

1. Start With an Outcome

Choose an upcoming meet, and pick a challenging but not impossible outcome goal (win, place, get a certain score or time, etc.). Write that goal down in detail here:

2. Moving From Outcome to Task Goals

How can you maximize your chances to achieve this goal? Write down three things (i.e. pacing, stroke count, concentration, good breakfast, plenty of sleep) **you can do at the meet** in order to increase your odds of achieving the outcome goal.

1. I will: _____

2. I will: _____

3. I will: _____

[You have just gone from goal setting to task goal setting.]

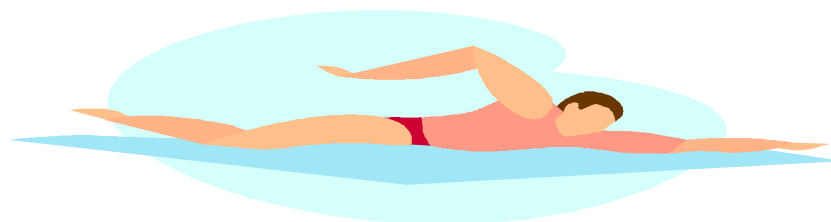
3. Practicing the Task Goals in Training

What can you do in practice between now and your competition to increase your chances of achieving your three competition tasks? Write down two things to focus on in practice that will gear you towards your competition task goals.

For example, if your competition task goal is to hold a specific stroke rate, you might focus on specific stroke rating sets in practice.

1. In training, I will _____

2. In training, I will _____



Goal Setting Exercise 3: Setting Goals for Swim Meets

Name:

Date of Meet:

Name of Meet:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Name:

Date of Meet:

Name of Meet:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

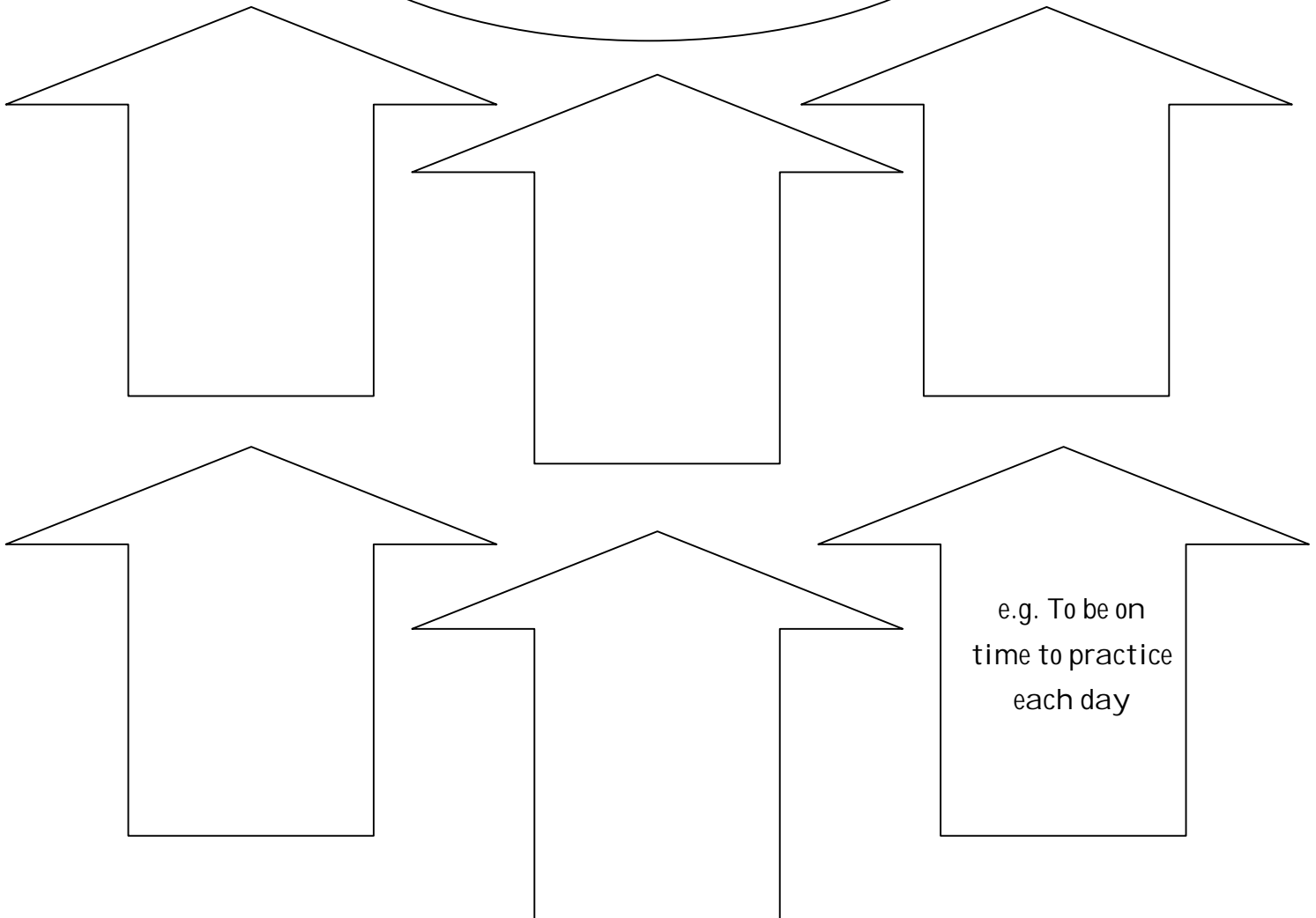
Skills needed to achieve this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Goal Setting Exercise 4: Stepping Stone Exercise

Write your long-term goal in the oval. The arrows all point towards the goal. Use the arrows as stepping stones and write down your short-term goals that will lead to your long-term goal.

Goal



Goal Setting Exercise 5: Make Dreams Reality

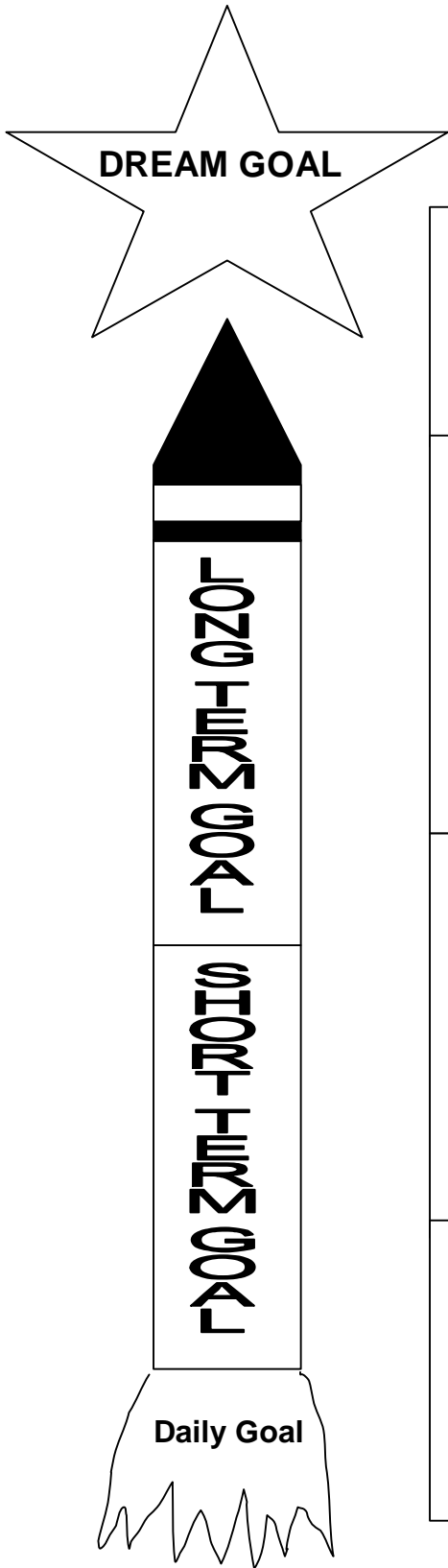
In the box provided write down your dreams as a swimmer. Then underneath write down four things you can do today in practice to bring you a little closer to your dreams.

My Dream List:



Four Things I can do **Today** to Help Me Reach My DREAMS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- .



Exercise 6: Shoot for the Stars!

Use the goal setting rocket to help define your dream goal(s), long term, short term and daily goals.

Dream Goals	
1.	
2.	
Long Term Goals	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Short Term Goals	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Daily Goals	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Goal Setting Exercise 7: Daily Goal Setting Cards/Sheet

My goal for today:

What do I need to do physically to accomplish my goal?

- 1.
- 2.

What do I need to do mentally to accomplish my goal?

- 1.
- 2.



Goal Setting Exercise 8: Team, Group and Individual Goals.

Name:

Date:

Group:

Team Goal(s) for 200____:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Group Goal(s) for 200____: (What can we do as a group to work towards the team goals?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Individual Goal(s) for 200____: (What can I do as an individual to work towards both the team and group goals?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Keeping Track of Progress

Training Logs

An important aspect of setting goals is writing them down and making them real. One way to help keep track of goals is by maintaining a training log. This written log of daily activities serves as a way to help maintain a more systematic focus on all aspects of training and competition. Training logs can include information about both physical and mental practice and goals. Benefits from keeping a training log, include developing a better sense of how you spend your practice time, knowing where improvements are coming from, increasing your motivation to keep working, and heightening your awareness at competitions.

On the next pages you will find some sample training logbook pages. Note that logging will take place both before and after each practice and before and after swim meets.

Feel free to make copies of any of these sheets and try them out with your team.

Training Log Book

Before Practice

Physical Training Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mental Training Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

After Practice Evaluation:

Physical Training Goals – Accomplishments:

Physical Training Goals -- Things to keep working on:

Mental Training Goals -- Accomplishments:

Mental Training Goals – Things to keep working on:

Training Logbook

Date _____

THIS WEEK'S GOALS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Strategies for attaining goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Obstacles that might prevent me from achieving goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Self-evaluation:

Daily Training Logbook

Date _____ AM or PM

Type of Workout: Pool Dryland/Weights

Physical Training goals:

Mental Training goals:

Workout:

Comments:

Competition Logbook

Date _____

Swim Meet:

Event:

Time:

How did you feel?

Coaches' Comments:

Competition Logbook

Date _____

Swim Meet:

Event:

Time:

How did you feel?

Coaches' Comments: