



**Short Course Season**

# Swimmer Journal and Workbook



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### **The Maverick Swim Club Mission**

The Mission of the Maverick Swim Club is to provide the finest possible comprehensive aquatics program. Our philosophy of “children first, swimmers second” creates an atmosphere where children learn valuable life lessons from their experiences in a competitive swimming environment. We are committed to a structured yet fun-oriented program, which provides an opportunity for swimmers to develop to their fullest potential.

# **Go Mavericks!**



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## **Introduction**

### **The Purpose of this Journal**

In support of the Maverick Swim Club mission, the purpose of this journal and workbook is to help you learn important skills out of the water that will help up you swim faster. In other words, to help you realize your full potential as a swimmer. This journal will help you:

- Set effective goals
- Build mental toughness in practice and meets
- Make good food choice before practice and meets
- Record your daily workouts and yardage
- Track your personal best times

Some of the activities in this journal will be completed with your coach and teammates. Please wait for your classroom sessions to complete these sections. Classroom Activities are marked with a flipchart picture:



#### **Classroom Activity**

Some of the activities can be completed on your own. You can complete these activities whenever you'd like, although you may update them after a related classroom session. Individual Activities are marked with a book picture:



#### **Individual Activity**

## **Supporting Resources**

Many of the exercise and concepts in the journal are based on the book *Smoke on the Water: A Swimmer and Coach's Guide to Developing Mental Toughness* by Dr. Alan Goldberg. They are used here by permission of the author. To purchase a complete copy of the book or related mental toughness resources, visit his website, Competitive Advantage, at <http://www.competitivedge.com>.

Many of these exercise and concepts are also supported in the book, *Mind Gym: An Athletes Guide to Inner Excellence* by Gary Mack and David Casstevens.

### **Should I buy one or both of these books?**

It is not necessary to purchase either book to use this workbook effectively or to participate fully in classroom activities. However, one or both of them may be helpful to the Senior level swimmer.

Both books can be read independently by Core 3 and Senior level swimmers. Core 2 swimmers will need assistance from parents since the terminology and examples presented in the books are aimed at older teens and adults. The concepts and techniques presented in those books have been modified for Core 2 swimmers in this workbook.



## **Individual Activity: Why do You Swim?**

Some people swim because they love to race and challenge themselves. Some people swim to hang out with their friends. Some swim to stay in shape for water polo or other sports. All of these are great reasons to swim and none is really better than another.

Surprisingly, many people don't really know why they swim. They go to practice everyday out of habit or because their parents signed them up. The 2008 – 2009 season will be more than 20 weeks long. So if you don't have a personal reason to get to the pool, it can be a very long season. Take a few minutes to think about why YOU swim. What makes it fun for you? What keeps you coming back to the pool?

### **Top 5 Reasons I Swim**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## **Classroom Activity: Setting Goals**

Setting goals is an important activity and skill for swimmers. Goals can help you stay motivated and track your improvement. Your goals are also helpful for your parents and coaches, so we know how to support you and encourage you.

To learn more guidelines for successful goal setting, see *Smoke on the Water...*, pages 15 – 16.

### **How to write good goals**

**Good goals are:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

**Partner Discussion: What's missing?**

Review the following examples and discuss whether it is a “good” goal. If not, what’s missing?

**Example 1:** I want be a faster swimmer.

*What's Missing?*

**Example 2:** I want to break Michael Phelps’ record of 8 gold medals in a single Olympics.

*What's Missing?*

**Example 3:** Achieve a Junior Olympic (JO) time in the 100 fly and 100 back by the end of the 2008-2009 season.

*What's Missing?*

## Partner Activity: Brainstorm Your Goals

This activity is based on Goal Exercise #1, Page 15 of *“Smoke on the Water...”*

### Directions:

1. Working with a friend, brainstorm all of the swimming goals you want to achieve.
2. Decide which ones are most important to you and which ones you will likely accomplish first.
3. Label each goal:
  - “Short-term” if you think it will be accomplished in the next 30 days.
  - “Intermediate” if you think it can be accomplished in the next 4-6 months (this season)
  - “Long-term” if you think it will be accomplished after this season.
4. For each short-term goal, list two or three mini-goals that will help you achieve that goal.

**Partner Activity: Brainstorm Your Goals, Continued**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for students to write down their brainstormed goals.



## **Individual Activity: Record Your Goals**

To learn more guidelines for successful goal setting, see *Smoke on the Water...*, pages 15 – 16.

### **Short-term goals (Within the next month)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Intermediate goals (2008-2009 season)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Long-term goals (6+ months)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Individual Activity: Confidence Assessment

### Introduction

The following quiz asks you to think about what kind of swimmer you are. Are you mentally tough at practice? Are you confident at meets? Find out by taking this quiz.

### Directions

The following statements describe situations you face as a competitive swimmer. This quiz focuses on *how confident you feel that you will swim to your optimum potential* in each situation. This is not intended to measure whether you believe you will win or compare favorably to your peers. Limit your response to how well you swim to **your individual potential** in each situation.

### Section 1 - Competition Assessment

	<i>How confident are you that you will swim to your fullest potential?</i>				
	Very Confident	Confident	Neither Confident nor Insecure	Insecure	Very insecure
1. When I race my favorite events against competitors I believe are slower than me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. When I race my favorite events against competitors I believe are faster than me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. When I race my favorite events against competitors I believe are as fast as me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. When I race my "off" events against competitors I believe are slower than me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. When I race my "off" events against competitors I believe are faster than me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. When I race my "off" events against competitors I believe are as fast as me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. When I race in "fun" events against friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. When I race during mid-season after a week of hard practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. When I am fully tapered and race my championship events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Describe what you consider to be your “best race” in the past to years. Why do you feel it was the best race?

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Describe a race that was disappointing for you. What do you believe contributed to the disappointing performance?

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## Section 2 - Training Assessment

*How confident are you that you will swim to your fullest potential?*

	Very Confident	Confident	Neither Confident nor Insecure	Insecure	Very insecure
10. When I am faced with a new set that I anticipate will be very challenging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. When I am faced with a new set that I anticipate will be moderately challenging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. When I am faced with a familiar set that I have successfully completed in previous practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. When I am faced with a familiar set that I have struggled with in previous practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. When my coaches ask me to make a change to technique or strategy during a set.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Think about a time when you surprised yourself with your practice performance. Briefly describe that practice and/or set.

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16. How do you respond when you are swimming comfortably behind a friend/teammate during a difficult practice? Do you challenge yourself to lead the lane or let your teammate continue to lead?

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### Section 3 – General Attitudes

17. What do you like most about the sport of swimming?

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18. What do you like least about the sport at this time?

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### What now?

Discuss your quiz answers with your parents or a coach. What do they say about your mental toughness? **When are you most successful? Which situations are more challenging for you?**

Keep your answers in mind as you learn more about developing mental toughness and confidence for meets and practices.



## **Individual Activity: Individual Keys to Success**

### **Introduction**

Every swimmer is different. They have different goals, strengths, weaknesses, and motivators. In this activity, you will begin to identify some keys to your individual success. Keep your Confidence Assessment answers in mind as you do this activity. There are two exercises in this activity. You'll need about 30 minutes in a quiet place to work on them.

### **Exercise #1: Review Past Performances**

The following exercises are based on the "Discovering your Inner Coach" section found on pages 6-8 of "*Smoke on the Water...*"

#### **Part 1: Review Past Peak Performance** (See Exercise #1, Page 6 of *Smoke on the Water...*)

Think about a time when you had a great meet or your best race. Close your eyes and imagine you are back at that meet or getting ready for that race. Pay attention to everything you see, hear, and feel. Then think about your state of mind. What were you thinking about before and during your race? Where was your focus? Record some thoughts below.

What I saw, heard, felt:

What I was thinking about and focusing on:

### **Exercise #1: Review Past Performances, continued**

#### **Part 2: Review Past Bad Performances** (See Exercise #2, Page 7 of *Smoke on the Water...*)

Think about a time when you had a terrible meet or very disappointing race. Close your eyes and imagine you are back at that meet or getting ready for that race. Pay attention to everything you see, hear, and feel. Then think about your state of mind. What were you thinking about before and during your race? What were your expectations? Record some thoughts below.

What I saw, heard, felt:

--

What I was thinking about and focusing on:

--

#### **Part 3: Comparing Good and Bad Performances** (See Exercise #3, Page 7-8 of *Smoke on the Water...*)

Now compare the state of physical readiness, mental self-talk, and expectations you had before your good race/meet and your bad race/meet. Then record a few ideas about what things help or hinder your performance in the table below.

<i>I seem to swim well when.....</i>	<i>I seem to swim poorly when...</i>

***Thought question: How can you use this awareness to help you swim faster at every meet?***

## Exercise #2: Make a “Key Card”

One way to help you remember your keys to success is to make a “Key Card” to carry with you to practice and meets. A Key Card lists those things you need to do, both physically and mentally, to perform your best. One side of the card lists your physical keys to success. The other side lists your mental keys to success. See the example below

### Side 1 – Physical Keys to Success

#### Keys to Success: **Body**

- Eat a nutritious breakfast
- Get a good warm-up before the meet
- Free: don't breathe in or out of turns
- Free: build kick through last 50
- Back: keep my head still
- Back: explode off wall on start
- Breast: finish my kick and hold
- Breast: No Lazy Pull-outs!
- Fly: Breathe every other stroke
- Fly: Powerful 2<sup>nd</sup> kick

### Side 2 – Mental Keys to Success

#### Keys to Success: **Mind**

- Positive self-talk only! No negative thoughts.
- Stay focused on my own race and keys to success (see side 1)
- Get behind the blocks early and listen to my psych-up songs
- Find my parents in the stands and SMILE at them.
- If I feel nervous, close my eyes, take deep breathes and then smile.

Now make your own.

1. Get an index card or cut a piece of paper into a smaller rectangle that you can easily store in your swim bag.
2. On side 1, list your physical keys to success. Focus on one or two things for each stroke only. You will probably update these during the season.
3. On side 2, list your mental keys to success. Use what you learned to Exercise #1 as a starting point. Then think about strategies you use to help you focus, relax, and have fun.



### Bright Idea...

- Update your Key Card before each meet.
- Put your Key Card in a plastic bag and then put in your swim meet bag.
- Look at your Key Card on the way to the meet and again after warm-ups.



## **Individual Activity: Building Mental Toughness in Practice**

Many of the concepts in this section are discussed on pages 16 – 22 of *“Smoke on the Water...”*

### **Introduction**

There’s no way around it...to swim faster, you’ll have to work hard. Sometimes a swimmer will ask a coach, “Is tonight’s practice a hard one?”. The real answer is that *every* practice is as hard as *You* make it. Even the hardest sets and fastest intervals are easy when you go to the bathroom twice and fix your goggles three times during the main set. And an “easy” practice with lots of drills and 25s can be a challenge if you aim to do every stroke perfectly. The real question is, “How hard are you going to make your practice tonight?”

Swimmers who believe they are or can be champions make every practice hard. They believe in themselves, challenge themselves, and learn from their failures. Do you truly believe in yourself? Dr. Alan Goldberg, a well-known sports psychologist, suggests five steps to build your self-confidence – your mental toughness.

### **5 Steps to Learning to Believe in Yourself**

#### **1. Don’t Listen to the “Experts”**

Ignore anyone who thinks you can’t reach your goal. They don’t know how hard you are willing to work or how long you are willing to stick with it. There will always be an “expert”, perhaps an older sibling or friend’s parent, who will doubt your goal. Ignore them!

#### **2. Eliminate Negative Words like Can’t, Never, and Impossible.**

Don’t limit yourself by using these words. If something sounds impossible to you, say, “That would be a challenge and I might not be able to do it...yet.” Don’t allow yourself to use limiting words.

**3. Practice Doing the Impossible on a Daily Basis.**

Do you think you can swim a 200 fly in practice? How about break a minute in the 100 free in practice? Do you think you can swim more descending 100s than last year’s champ? These goals may sound “impossible” but do them anyway. Push past your own limits, doubts, or fatigue and make them happen. You will reach a point in practice when you have to choose between pushing past the fatigue and self-doubt or giving into it. What will it be for you?

**4. Surround yourself with “Go-For-It” People.**

Reaching a big goal requires hard work and support. What kind of people are in your lane? People who have fun, challenge themselves, and expect excellence? Or people who complain about the practices/coaches/other swimmer? Do your lane-mates encourage you and cheer you on? Or do they make fun of you for trying so hard? Find a lane of go-for-it swimmers and swim with them. Or make it your goal to turn your lane into a go-for-it lane, led by your example and encouragement.

**5. Talk to, Read about, Watch and Listen to People that have Overcome Obstacles to Make it.** Find stories that inspire and amaze you and keep those athletes in mind when you need an extra “boost” of inspiration or energy. If they could do, so can you.

**What Now?**

Take a moment to reflect on each of these steps. Then write down three **specific** things you will do to help you build self-confidence and mental toughness in practice. For example, “*Ask coach if I can move to Lane 4 for the main sets to give me a bigger challenge.*” Or, “*Encourage the swimmers in my lane to use only positive words in practice.*”

**3 things I can do to build my confidence in practice:**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_



## **Classroom Activity: Building Mental Toughness for Competition**

For detailed descriptions and directions for using these techniques, see *Smoke on the Water...*, pages 31-41.

### **Relaxation Techniques**

3 Techniques to help you relax, focus, and cope with “Bad Nervous”:

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Deep/Rhythmic Breathing
- Race Visualization

My Relaxation Cue (the word, image, or song I’ll use to help myself relax) is:

My Focus Cue ( the word, image, or song I’ll use to help myself focus on MY race) is:

### **Psych-Up Techniques**

3 Techniques to help you get psyched up, confident, and “Good Nervous”:

- Change your goals for the meet, beyond winning races. Practice your Pain-buster.
- Use simulation to increase the challenge... in other word, PRETEND it’s a critical meet.
- Get yourself physically “up” for your races.

My anchor/pain-buster (the word or image I’ll use to breakthrough doubt, negative self-talk, and race-time fatigue) is:



## **Individual Activity: Be a Journalist**

### **Introduction**

It's normal to be nervous before a race. Being nervous can either help you by being a motivator, or it can hurt you if you begin to doubt yourself. The first kind is "good nervous" and it helps you focus on your race, get psyched up, and swim confidently. The second kind is "bad nervous" and it makes you tighten up, doubt yourself, and swim scared. One way to get past "bad nervous" is to turn it into "good nervous" through relaxation cues, focus cues, and psych-up techniques. One technique is called "Be a Journalist."

### **How to do it**

A few minutes before the race, close your eyes and pretend you are a journalist writing an article about the race. Of course it is the most amazing race you have ever seen. And of course you are successful in reaching your goal. As the journalist, you'll want to write all about the amazing swimmer (that's YOU!), how hard you've worked, and how inspirational you are to others.

### **Give it a Try!**

Use the space below to Be a Journalist and write about the amazing swimmer you are today. Keep some of these positive statements in mind the next time you feel "bad nervous"



## Classroom Activity: Common Sense Nutrition

Nutrition is important for everyone, but especially for young athletes who are training hard. What you eat is your “fuel”. That’s why it is important to eat the right things at the right times. How well do you know your nutrition needs? Take this quiz to find out.

### Part 1: Do or Don’t?

For each statement below, circle whether you should or shouldn’t follow the advice.

1	Do	Don’t	Eat a high protein, low carbohydrate diet.
2	Do	Don’t	Eat within 30 minutes of completing practice.
3	Do	Don’t	Wait until you’re thirsty to drink fluids.
4	Do	Don’t	Count your calories carefully everyday.
5	Do	Don’t	Eat the same healthy foods everyday.
6	Do	Don’t	Have a snack before bed.
7	Do	Don’t	Snack between meals.
8	Do	Don’t	Supplement your diet with protein drinks.
9	Do	Don’t	Choose color food over white food.
10	Do	Don’t	Eat a rainbow every meal.
11	Do	Don’t	Eat a variety of nutrient dense foods

### Part 2: Which is better?

Circle the better food choice in each pair below.

12: Peanuts or sunflower seeds

13: Black beans or pinto beans

14: Hamburger or Turkey Burger

15: Whole wheat or sourdough bread

16: Pasta or brown rice

17: Corn flakes or oatmeal

18: Dried fruit or fresh fruit

19: Zucchini or bell peppers

20: Potato or sweet potato

## Common Sense Nutrition for Youth Athletes

There's a lot of information, conflicting information, and misinformation about sports nutrition for youth and teenage athletes. The most respected, qualified sports nutritionists agree on the following guidelines.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Eat nutritious food when you're hungry.</li> <li>□ <b>Build your meals around complex carbohydrates – 50% or more of your caloric intake.</b></li> <li>□ Drink sports drinks frequently during practice and competitions.</li> <li>□ Eat breakfast and several healthy snacks between meals.</li> <li>□ Eat a snack or meal within 30 minutes of completing practice to help speed recovery.</li> <li>□ <b>Eat a rainbow every meal. Every meal should have a blue/purple item, a red/orange item, one or more green items, and a brown/yellow item.</b></li> <li>□ Choose nutrient dense complex carbohydrates over simple carbs or "empty" calories.</li> <li>□ Have a snack before bed, especially if you have practice in the morning.</li> <li>□ Pay attention to your energy level and recovery time to determine if you need more calories in your diet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Count calories.</li> <li>□ Follow a high protein, low carbohydrate diet. Those diets are for overweight adults, not young athletes.</li> <li>□ Wait until you're thirsty to start drinking fluids.</li> <li>□ Fill up on junk food between meals.</li> <li>□ Drink caffeinated beverages immediately following a practice. It may cause dehydration and slow recovery.</li> <li>□ Eat the same foods everyday without variation.</li> <li>□ Supplement with protein drinks or shakes unless you are a vegetarian or need to build muscle mass (youth athletes will build muscle naturally at a sustainable rate without supplements).</li> <li>□ Start a practice with an empty stomach. Have something small on the way to practice – a sports bar or banana are good choices.</li> <li>□ Weigh yourself frequently – once a month should be enough. Or throw the scale away.</li> </ul>

### Sources:

Nelson, Suzanne. "What to Feed Youth Athletes." MomsTeam.com. Oct 2007.

<[http://www.momsteam.com/alpha/features/nutrition/eating\\_behaviors\\_and\\_patterns.shtml](http://www.momsteam.com/alpha/features/nutrition/eating_behaviors_and_patterns.shtml)>

Versteegen, Mark. (2004) *Core Performance*. Rodale Press.

# Weekly Workout Logs

## Purpose

Weekly workout logs are a great way to track your daily and weekly progress in practice. They can also help you set weekly goals and to check your progress toward your seasonal goals. Some swimmers may want to write down their entire workout in the log, others may just record the main set. Or you can record a key accomplishment or new tip. Whenever you go to practice, record something in the log to help you remember the practice.

## Add it Up!

Another great use of the log is to track how many miles you swim this season. Do you know that if you are a Core 2 swimmer who goes to practice every day you could swim as many as 345,000 yards this season? That's over 200 miles!

To figure out how many miles you have swum so far:

1. Add up all of your weekly yards and,
2. Divide the total by 1650.

*For example, if you swam 6000 yards in Week 1, 4600 yards in Week 2, and 6300 yards in Week 3, you would:*

*Add the weekly yards:  $6000 + 4600 + 6300 = 16,900$*

*Divide the total by 1650:  $16,900 \div 1650 = 10.24$  miles*

*That means you swam over 10 miles in the first 3 weeks of practice.*

Be sure to write in your log the night after each practice. Otherwise, it's easy to forget what you swam or what new skills or techniques you learned.

## Weekly Workout Log

**Date:**

*Workout (Record complete workout, main set, or key accomplishments)*

Today's Yards

**Date:**

*Workout (Record complete workout, main set, or key accomplishments)*

Today's Yards

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Today's Yards

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*Workout (Record complete workout, main set, or key accomplishments)*

Today's Yards

### Weekly Summary

What I did great this week: \_\_\_\_\_

What I can do better next week: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Yards this week:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Date:**

*Workout (Record complete workout, main set, or key accomplishments)*

Today's Yards

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Today's Yards

**Date:**

*Workout (Record complete workout, main set, or key accomplishments)*

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## Personal Bests (PBs)

Use the following table to record your personal bests throughout the season. If you know your current best times, record them in the first column. When you have a time drop, record your new personal best. If you don't swim one of the events listed, leave that line blank.

Event	Current PB	New PB	New PB	New PB	Season PB
25 free					
25 back					
25 breast					
25 fly					
100 IM					
50 free					
50 back					
50 breast					
50 fly					
200 IM					
100 free					
100 back					
100 breast					
100 fly					
200 free					
200 back					
200 breast					
200 fly					
400 IM					
500 free					
1000 free					
1650 free					



