

Meet Preparation for Parents  
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### How to help your swimmer prepare for swim meets

With the end of the season fast approaching the question often becomes, “How can I help my swimmer perform their best at the big meet?” Aside from helping them make healthy choices when eating, and to take care of their bodies by getting plenty of rest, there are things you can do to help them prepare mentally. Often times you want to give them confidence, by telling them that they can do well, or that they have worked hard and have earned the right to swim fast. Maybe you want to help them to remember their technique by giving them reminders. Maybe you want to help them remember race strategies or race strategies of top competitors and you try to help them by giving them a scouting report on the competition. These are all excellent ways to remind them of things they have been working on during the season.

I want to caution parent’s using this approach. The kids are well aware of the competition, having raced them all season, they understand race strategies, and they have confidence in their technique. Often times, it comes down to blocking everything out and racing. If they have been working hard all season on the details they will be automatic during the race. Giving them extra things to think about might throw them off their rhythm. The other thing that I see happening is that you can put added pressure on them during this part of the season by telling them about the level of competition. They have been working hard all season for this meet and they all understand the pressure. They are probably putting a decent amount of pressure on themselves. Swimmers need a place to get away from the pressure so that they can maintain focus at the meet. We have had success with several of our swimmers that have decided to just not talk about swimming when at home during this phase of the season. This has helped them to remain relaxed and focused entering the competition.

Anything else that can help them stay relaxed is usually the best way to prepare, from comfort foods to watching favorite movies the night before. Remember, they have been preparing for this weekend all season, and they know what they are working for. Please help them to remain calm and help them to release themselves from the pressure they may be feeling at the pool.