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B is for Building Your Mindset



Mentally preparing yourself to swim fast can be as easy as A-B-C. Sport psychologist Aimee Kimball brings usaswimming.org her second installment of the ABCs of mental training — “B” is for Building Your Mindset.

Check back in two weeks to find out what “C” stands for.

How should I think to swim well?

Every individual he or she performs best. There is not one right way to think. The key is to know what *you* are thinking and how *you* are feeling when you

perform your best.

How do I know my ideal mindset?

To identify your ideal mindset, think about the best performance you ever had. Ask yourself:

- What did I do to mentally and physically get ready (music, routines...)?
- Was I relaxed or pumped up?
- What did I focus on throughout the event?
- What words describe how I was feeling? What I was thinking?

How do I recreate this mindset?

First, you have to *choose* to create your ideal mindset and take responsibility for your thoughts. Second, before each practice and event you should *develop a routine* that allows you to recreate this mindset. Imagery, music and positive self-talk are great ways to build your ideal mental and physical state. Third, you can come up with a *trigger* word, phrase or action that reminds you of the characteristics of your best performance. This trigger needs to have meaning to you so that it can focus your mind to help you perform your best. Write the trigger on your hand, goggles or bag so when you see it you will be reminded to think that way and to approach each event with your ideal attitude.

Build your mindset

Instead of just hoping you will be mentally ready to compete, take control and create the mentality you want before each event. Know your ideal mindset and choose to create this mindset through pre-event routines, trigger words and by simply telling yourself, “This is how I’m going to think today.”

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