

How to Keep a Synchronized Swimming Journal

High level athletes of all sports consider their bodies to be finely-tuned machines. The smallest amount of fatigue or pain can affect performance. Keeping a synchro journal is a great way to keep track of the trends in your training. This will help you recognize the best regimens for both training and actual competition.

Every synchro swimmer – regardless of level or age—should keep a journal to remember their corrections, track their progress, and vent their frustrations. If you're wondering where to start, look no further! Here are some simple ways to get your journal started.

Buy a Fun, Functional Journal

Before you can start writing in your journal, you have to actually have one! Go to the nearest office supply shop or bookstore and find a journal catches your eye. One with a fun cover or decorated pages might inspire you to write more frequently than a standard spiral bound notebook. Make it your journal. Write your name in it, decorate it, and maybe add a bookmark to make it uniquely yours.

Kick It off Right

Further personalize your journal by filling the first few pages with how you feel about synchro at the time. What's frustrating you? What are you happy with? Are you already worrying about team tryouts next year?

Open the flood gates and pour your heart out onto those initial pages. Remember, this is your journal. No one else will be reading it, so be honest! These first pages will provide a solid foundation for the rest of the journal. When you look back at previous entries, you can get a feel for how much you've grown and changed.

Make It a Habit

Put your journal in your swim bag (though maybe inside a zip-top plastic bag first!) and write in it after every practice. Don't let the moment slip away, whether it means writing in the car on the way home (not if you're driving of course), hanging around an extra ten minutes after practice, or plopping down in the coffee shop next door. The longer you wait to record your experience, the more details you may lose in the distractions of day-to-day life.

Write Corrections

While you should be writing down your concerns, triumphs, and struggles, it is also important to keep track of your corrections (as many as you can remember). Write down exactly what your coach said, choosing the wording he or she used that makes the most sense to you.

If you're not sure, don't be afraid to ask! This will remind you of what you need to work on and how to go about it. And once you finally fix something, you'll be able to look back and see exactly how your progress was made.

Take Note

Every synchro swimmer has someone they look up to. Perhaps it's an internationally renowned soloist, a skilled teammate, or a coach with amazing demonstrational skills. Take note of everything you love watching, and study how it's done to perfection.

Don't worry about breaking everything down to an exact science. Describe things exactly as you see them. You may be surprised at how much more accessible things appear when you use your own voice to narrate them!

Admire Natalia Ishchenko's rockets? Slow down video clips of her solos and figure out why – exactly – they look so good. Adore Gemma Mengual's expressive strokes and posture? Break down exactly what it is you like about them so much. Even though you may not be able to pinpoint what makes every movement correct and beautiful, deconstructing their routines and trying to explain them to yourself in writing will make them easier for you to perform in the future.

Celebrate Breakthroughs

While it's important to write down your corrections, make sure to write down your triumphs as well. If you've finally nailed that barracuda 360, mark the day of victory in your journal. Elaborate on how it felt, what you were doing, and if anyone else noticed.

The journal can serve as your personal record keeper. That way, if you forget what helped you pull off a certain move in the past, you can check an entry to remind yourself of the sensation you had when you did it correctly. On tough days, these successes can be reread for inspiration and some much needed motivation!

Hang on to the Journal

Plan to keep your synchro journal forever! The secrets, successes, and struggles within it will be a constant reminder and tribute to all the hard work you've put in. Who knows? Maybe someday you'll even use it to help your own swimmers years later – when you're the teacher.