



## **The Importance of Rest Between Swim Seasons**

While the coaching staff at First Colony Swim Team strives to create opportunities for our swimmers to reach their peak personal performance, we are also conscious of and planning for the long-term development of our swimmers as athletes and as people.

As coaches and parents of student-athletes, we all want to support our children in excelling at their sport, reaching their goals, and staying healthy. Swimming, in particular, is a rigorous and time-consuming commitment that demands not only physical endurance but mental resilience. However, one of the most overlooked aspects of athletic success is rest, specifically, the importance of taking a break between swim seasons. Our program believes strongly that resting during the month of August allows for the beneficial development of our members.

### **Why Rest Matters**

Our student swimmers train year-round, balancing practices, dryland workouts, competitions, and academic responsibilities. This relentless schedule can lead to overtraining syndrome, burnout, or even injury if proper rest isn't prioritized. Just like muscles need recovery after a hard workout, the body and mind need downtime after an intense season to rebuild, recharge, and grow stronger.

#### **Physical Recovery**

Swimming is a high-repetition, full-body sport that may place constant stress on body parts like the shoulders, knees, and back. Without rest, microtears in muscles don't have time to heal, leading to chronic fatigue or injury. A well-timed break allows for:

- **Muscle repair and growth spurts**
- **Reduced inflammation and overuse injuries**
- **Stronger long-term performance and resilience**

#### **Mental Recharging**

Mental fatigue is just as real as physical exhaustion. Constant pressure to perform can dull motivation and increase stress. Taking a break helps your child:

- **Reconnect with the joy of swimming**
- **Regain mental focus and clarity**
- **Develop interests outside of the pool**
- **Return with renewed motivation and creativity**

Swimmers who rest mentally return more enthusiastic and ready to focus on both effort and technique.



## Adjusting to a New School Grade

As the long course season ends, swimmers are also preparing to enter a new grade at school. That transition comes with its own challenges: tougher classes, new teachers, changing social dynamics, and higher academic expectations.

Taking a break from swimming during this period helps your student-athlete:

- **Get settled academically:** A lighter training schedule gives them time to adjust to new routines and expectations.
- **Lower stress:** Starting the school year with more rest means more energy and mental bandwidth for academics.  
**Establish good study habits:** Without the pressure of daily swim practice, students can focus on setting up productive academic routines.
- **Boost confidence:** A strong academic start builds a positive foundation for the rest of the school year and the upcoming short course season.

## "Losing the Feel for the Water" And Why That's a Good Thing

One concern swimmers (and parents) often have about taking a break is "losing the feel for the water." And it's true, after a couple of weeks off, swimmers often return feeling a bit awkward in the pool. Movements that once felt smooth may now seem off.

But the truth is, this loss of feel is temporary and actually beneficial. Why?

- **It resets old habits:** Stepping away from the water gives the nervous system a break from ingrained patterns, both good and bad.
- **It opens the door for technique improvement:** When swimmers return, they're more likely to notice flaws in their stroke and be receptive to technical adjustments.
- **It strengthens coachability:** Athletes who have lost some "feel" are often more open to re-learning fundamentals, allowing coaches to rebuild better stroke mechanics from the ground up at the start of the season.

In short, the break can *clear the slate*, so swimmers return more focused on proper form instead of just going through the motions.

## What Can Parents Do?

- **Support the rest phase:** Reassure your child that recovery is part of training, not a step back.
- **Watch for and communicate burnout signals:** Fatigue, irritability, or a drop in motivation can be signs they need the break more than they realize.
- **Encourage non-swim interests:** This is a great time for hobbies, family time, or mental resets before school ramps up.



### **Final Thoughts**

A break between swim seasons is more than just a pause, it's a powerful part of an athlete's growth. It promotes physical healing, mental clarity, academic readiness, and even technical improvement by temporarily disrupting old patterns.

Let's teach our young athletes that the strongest swimmers aren't the ones who train nonstop, they're the ones who train *intelligently*, rest when needed, and return with purpose.

***Your swimmer has earned their rest. Let them take it—so they can return stronger, sharper, and more prepared for both school and sport.***