

From next week we will be starting our new training times. This will mean some earlier starts, luckily at Morpeth ASC we still have later starts than almost all successful clubs. By the time we get in at 6am some clubs will have been in the water for 45-60 minutes.

Children and young people adapt quickly but below is an article from Swim England to help you as parents support your child to reach their potential and manage early mornings training.

## 5 tips for establishing a morning routine in young swimmers *(Swim England, 2016)*

One of the toughest parts of swimmer-life is the early morning wake-ups, and establishing a morning routine is a challenge you face as a swimming parent.

Getting your child out of bed and out of the door at the crack of dawn – especially on those cold, dark winter mornings – is an art form.

You are in a fight with the temptation to roll over and go back to sleep, or to skip the all-important breakfast for a few extra minutes under a warm duvet. It's a tough test of any swim parent's bag of tricks.

So, here are our five top tips to help you get your young swimmer out of bed in the morning – other than simply whipping off the duvet and opening all the windows mid-winter at 4am (see 6am is a late start in the swimming world!)

### Top tips to encourage a good morning routine

#### 1. Embrace early nights

The importance of sleep has endless proven advantages including benefits to muscle recovery, growth, health, metabolism and performance.

Encourage swimmers to record any TV programmes they might be tempted to stay up late for – or remind them of iPlayer. Also, ensure homework gets done early. It all makes it easier to stick to the early nights.

## 2. Turn off the tech

Remind your kids that their thought processes are not fuelled by WiFi and feeling sluggish does not mean that the bandwidth needs upgrading.

Staring at the blue light from devices such as phones or tablets before bed can disrupt sleep. Encourage your swimmer to lower the brightness level and try to **turn devices off an hour before bed. Tech is no friend of a good morning routine.**

## 3. Pack the night before

It's always a great idea for **your child to get their swimming bag** (and school bag) packed the night before. Swimmers can pack their own bags. This both gives a little extra time in the morning and also prevents the risk of forgetting anything in the morning rush. Being well prepared for the day ahead may also help for a calmer and better night's sleep.

## 4. Pick a good alarm

An alarm clock is key to waking up at the same time and establishing a healthy regime. It's a good idea to suggest your child places their alarm clock somewhere out of reach, so they'll have to get out of bed to stop the alarm, rather than rolling over and pressing the snooze button.

## 5. Light up the mornings

Light tells your body it is time to wake up. Swimmers often need to wake before sunrise, especially during winter. A wake-up light alarm clock is a good idea.

There are many different types available which allow a smooth transition from sleeping to waking by getting progressively brighter.

Alternatively, getting straight out of bed and turning the lights on, or opening the curtains in summer will help tell your body-clock that it's time to wake up.

## Taking ownership

**The most important part of establishing a good morning routine is encouraging your child to take ownership and responsibility.**

A nagging parent sending them to bed early and dragging the covers off the bed in the morning may act as a deterrent. If they set clear goals and know why they are getting up so early each day, it will help give them a reason to leap out of bed feeling motivated and raring to go. Well, maybe.