

Memo To: TAC Community
From: Derek Wall
Executive Director
Subject: Why Movement Comes First
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At the Triangle Aquatic Center, our mission is simple but ambitious: **Developing Swimmers for Lifelong Success.**

At TAC, we believe in being clear about our 'why.' This memo explores a foundational principle that shapes everything we do.

At the core of our approach is a simple principle: **Before athletes can move fast, train hard, or compete at a high level, they must first learn to move well.**

This principle is widely supported across sport science, neuroscience, and long-term athlete development research. It does not lower expectations, it raises the ceiling for what athletes can safely and sustainably achieve over time.

Movement Comes First

Movement is the foundation of all athletic performance. Before focusing on speed, strength or training volume, athletes must first develop:

- Balance and awareness of how their body moves
- Strong posture and alignment
- Coordination that connects arms, legs and core
- Spatial control – the ability to move their body precisely through space

These skills are often referred to as *movement literacy*. Just as children learn to read before writing essays, athletes must learn how their bodies move before being asked to perform at high intensity.

When movement foundations are strong, athletes learn faster, adapt better, and progress more safely as demands increase.

Why Swimming is Uniquely Powerful

Swimming provides one of the most effective environments for developing movement quality, especially in young athletes.

Water provides constant feedback: efficient movement creates flow, inefficient movement creates resistance. Athletes immediately feel how changes in body position, timing, and coordination affect their progress.

Because swimming is low-impact and full-body, it allows athletes to:

- Build strength and stability safely
- Develop coordination without excessive joint stress
- Improve posture and core control during periods of rapid growth
- Learn precise movement patterns through repetition

At TAC, our coaches intentionally emphasize technique, alignment, and control early – not to slow athletes down, but to give them the tools they need to progress further later.

Why This Matters Long-Term

Athletes who learn to move well early are better prepared to:

- Handle increased training loads
- Adapt during growth spurts
- Reduce risk of injury
- Maintain technique under fatigue
- Continue progressing over time

In contrast, athletes who skip foundational movement often plateau earlier, struggle with overuse injuries, or require significant technical correction later.

Our goal is **durable excellence**.

What This Looks Like at TAC

You may notice that the pre-competitive and early age group development stages at TAC emphasize:

- Technical skill development and body position
- Intentional progression of volume and intensity
- Repetition with feedback rather than rushed outcomes
- Patience during periods of physical growth and change

This approach is about preparing athletes for what comes next, whether that is higher-level competition, multi-sport participation, or lifelong confidence and health in the water.

Just this past September (2025), TAC launched the new **TITANS Swim Academy**: a completely redesigned learn-to-swim curriculum built around movement quality, timing, and skill progression.

The TITANS Swim Academy intentionally teaches how bodies move through the water, emphasizing alignment, coordination, and rhythm from the very beginning rather than focusing solely on checklist-based swim skills.

This approach ensures participants learn essential water safety and drowning prevention skills *while* developing movement patterns that support a lifetime of low-impact physical activity.

By thoughtfully considering the long-term impact of early technique, not just short-term milestones, the Swim Academy reflects the same movement-first philosophy that guides athlete development across all levels at TAC.

The Bigger Picture

Movement-first development creates better swimmers. It helps young people understand their bodies, trust the learning process, and build confidence through mastery and consistency rather than comparison or early accolades.

This foundation supports everything that follows, and it's why movement always comes first at TAC.

In upcoming communications, we'll continue exploring how this approach supports learning, confidence, resilience, and long-term success, both in the pool and beyond.

We want this to be a conversation. If you have questions or topics you'd like us to address in future communications, we invite you to share them with us [here](#).

Thank you for being part of that journey with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'DWall'.

Derek Wall
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