

Making waves

Our **Swimming Mum** is back – with a familiar tale about Swimming Daughter’s growing pains and some friendly words of advice for her fellow parents on the poolside



Following a break last year, Swimming Daughter started back into the swimming schedule in lacklustre form. Her times were down, she was tired all the time, and eat...she could eat for England! Hardly an hour went by without a ‘Mum, I’m hungry!’ A few weeks in and I had to tell her coach that we could no longer do the early morning sessions. I simply couldn’t get her up – and if I did succeed we had a swimming zombie on our hands.

We’d hit that wall that most age group swimmers must encounter – Growing Pains.

I dreaded the swim meets. At the start of an event she looked exhausted and then appeared to be swimming through treacle. There were tears, morose moods and I wondered why I was putting myself through it – let alone her.

I’d like to report that there were some laughs, some amusing anecdotes, but I can’t. Unless driving two hours for one event (her favourite – the 400 IM), where she was six seconds down on her PB, makes you chuckle.

Amazing transformation

Then, mid-November, an amazing thing happened – with the suddenness of flicking a switch. I served up supper one evening and she said: ‘I’m not hungry.’ Around the dining table, jaws dropped. Not hungry? How could this be? There was a brief pause and then my son, not one to miss an opportunity, stepped in: ‘Can I have hers then?’

The following week Swimming Daughter was on the team for a round of the National Arena League and put in two PBs including her first sub 32-second 50 free. It was an amazing transformation.

Reflecting on the previous four

months, her performance dip was hardly surprising. Her body had undergone some seismic hormonal changes and she’d grown 3 inches. Clearly her system had pushed the ‘override swimming performance

button’ in favour of ‘grow, baby, grow’.

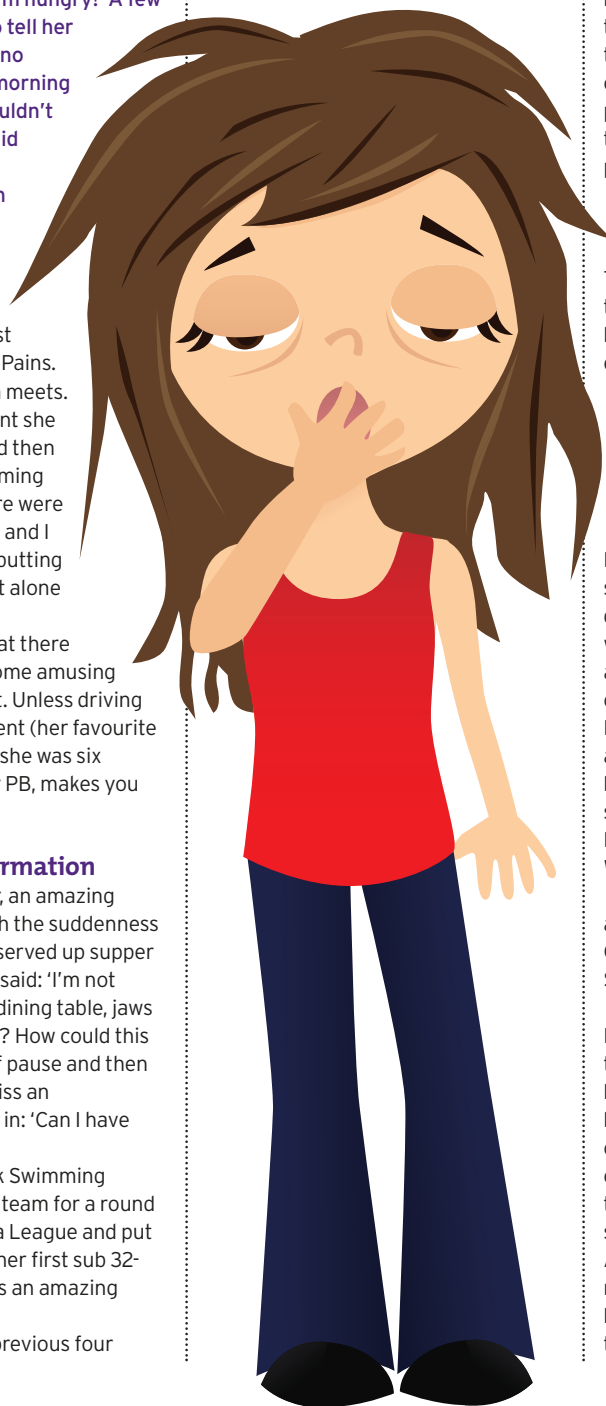
If you are currently encountering this phase – don’t worry. The only option is to slog through it as best you can. I promise you it does come to an end! Swimming mums (and dads) have broad shoulders and it’s our job to take the downs with the ups. Please avoid the temptation to compare and criticise. I’m appalled at the number of parents I’ve witnessed poolside giving their child a dressing down for under-performance, or shaking their heads from the stands as their swimmer emerges from the pool having put in a time less than their PB. Don’t do it! The swimming pressure they put themselves under together with raging hormones and growing pains is surely enough without you chipping in that they’re not good enough.

Teenage angst

I’m having to adjust to my little girl, who’s now as tall as me, borrowing my make up and stealing my shoes. But at least she hung in there. This is a stage where there is the temptation to give up – particularly when combined with all that teenage angst. As I drive around our village, I now occasionally catch sight of some of Swimming Daughter’s contemporaries hanging about on the streets – with nothing better to do than get into trouble. I’m so glad that my daughter aspires to be Rebecca Adlington rather than Amy Winehouse.

And so human biology kindly adjusted in time to allow us an upbeat Christmas. Santa brought her a Speedo LZR Racer Elite.

I was told by a beaming Swimming Daughter that this is the fastest suit in the world – and at the price I should hope so. (Not that I’d know what Santa had to pay!) We’re looking forward to counties and regionals with a spot of open water thrown in. Let’s hope that the new swimming Amazon who’s moved into our house will be on top form.



‘I now occasionally catch sight of some of Swimming Daughter’s contemporaries hanging about on the streets – with nothing better to do than get into trouble. I’m so glad that my daughter aspires to be Rebecca Adlington rather than Amy Winehouse’