An Interview with Rebecca Adlington

Rebecca Adlington had a very successful career as a competitive swimmer. She won two gold medals at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, and two bronze medals at the 2012 Olympics in London. In this interview, she talks about how she got into swimming and why she loves it.

**When did you get into swimming?**
When I was younger, my parents took me and my older sisters to swimming lessons so that when we went on holiday, they could leave us in the pool without being scared. Swimming with my older sisters gave me extra motivation as I always wanted to keep up with them.

**When did you decide you wanted to compete?**
I joined a club when I was eight or nine, but I didn’t start racing until I was 10 or 11. My first big competition was the European Youth Olympic Festival in 2003, when I was 14. After that, I thought I can really do this. After my GCSEs, I took a year off to focus on competitive swimming and I haven’t looked back.

**What do you love about swimming?**
There’s something uniquely fun about being in the water. There’s nothing like it. Everyone should experience it. I love being in the water, whether I’m competing or not.

**How does swimming keep you healthy?**
Swimming works every muscle group in your body, but it’s kind to your joints. The risk of injury is very low compared to other sports. So it’s healthy and safe. There’s no upper age limit for a swimmer. At my local pool at 7am, you’ll see the older guys swimming next to schoolchildren. It’s a wonderful contrast and shows that swimming is for everyone.

**What’s your training routine?**
I do about 10 sessions a week, at two-and-a-half hours each. All I do is sleep, train, drive and occasionally find time to eat.

**What’s your advice on staying motivated?**
I train with a squad of 20 people and that really helps. We’re all friends and we push each other. My advice is to go swimming with a friend regularly. Having someone to swim with will encourage you to swim on days when you’re lacking motivation. It’s also good to mix things up. Practise different strokes, use kickboards to work your legs, set yourself little targets such as increasing the number of lengths you can do or improving certain areas of your technique.

From http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/rebecca-adlington.aspx