

Find Your Rhythm

1 Matthias stood at the edge of the pool, the tile cold beneath his feet. The air was humid inside the pool building. Sounds from the crowd echoed off the high ceiling. This was it—his first swimming competition. His heart was pounding. He closed his eyes for a moment. Memories of his journey to get here came rushing back.

2 Last year he had wanted to make the swim team more than anything. But the first time Matthias attempted the butterfly stroke, his arms and legs refused to work together. He exited the pool in tears.

3 Matthias's dad was at the pool with Matthias. "Keep practicing. You'll get it," he said.

4 So Matthias kept working. Once he mastered the movements of the butterfly stroke, he turned to his breathing. He was often out of breath while he was swimming. Again, he was frustrated.

5 His dad tried to reassure him. "Remember, it's all about rhythm. Find your rhythm," he said.

6 But Matthias didn't understand what his dad meant. His dad had been a swimming champion in college. He had never struggled with swimming!

7 As tryouts got closer, Matthias grew more nervous. One day at practice, he couldn't seem to get his body and his breathing to work the way he wanted. Matthias got out of the pool and sat with his legs dangling in the water. His dad sat down beside him.

8 "Did you know that when I was your age, I came in last place in my very first race?" he said.

9 Matthias looked at his dad. "Really?"

10 "Really. Having a little trouble now and then doesn't mean you won't be successful."

11 Matthias thought for a minute. "You told me to find my rhythm, but I don't know what you mean."

12 "Let me show you," his dad said. "Pay attention to how my arms, legs, and breathing all work together." His dad walked to the deep end and dove in.

13 When his dad started swimming, Matthias watched closely. For the first time, Matthias understood what his dad meant. His movements and his breathing were all in time together—almost like a dance. All the parts worked with one another.

14 When it was finally time for tryouts, Matthias was nervous. When it was his turn, he kept his dad's advice in his head the entire time. He paid attention to the movement of his legs and arms. He matched his breathing to the way his body was moving. He could feel his body get in rhythm. Later, when he found his name on the list, a wave of joy washed over him. He had made the team!

15 Now he took his place on the starting block. The crowd was buzzing. Matthias looked up into the stands. His dad gave him a thumbs-up.

16 "Take your mark," the referee's voice boomed.

17 Matthias leaned forward, his knees bent, his fingers curled around the edge of the starting block.

18 And then the whistle blew.

What might happen after the whistle blows? In your own words, write a multi-paragraph story about what happens after the last paragraph.

Use what you have learned from the passage to help you write your story.

Remember to —

- provide a beginning, a middle, and an end to your story
- put events in the order in which they happen
- include descriptions of people, objects, and settings
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Use the space provided to write your story.