

APPENDIX: Additional Results

Theme 1: "I Just Love the Sensation of Being in the Water"

I look forward to it. I want to be there. I can't wait to get there ... I don't dread it. If I did, I wouldn't do it. So lucky me that I found a sport that I can enjoy into my 70s ... and beyond. (P11, 71-year-old male)

I joined Masters swimming about 15 years ago. And I was the slowest person in the slowest lane. I remember the first time I went in a 50 meter pool at USC, I had to stop halfway across, I was so tired. Yeah, though today, not only do I prefer long course, but I can do 100 meters butterfly in a 50 meter pool. (P01, 61-year-old male)

When my stroke comes together. I love it. When I'm moving efficiently, I love the sound of the splash in my ears. I love the sound of my breathing. When I do it, I love the feel of a flip turn when it happens in the workout. I just love the sensation of being in the water and moving. (P12, 69-year old male)

I like the color of the water...on a beautiful sunny day. That color is so special and so spectacular with the sunlight on it. (P18, 75-year-old male).

The best thing about swimming is how relaxed you feel...it just completely wipes away all stress, at least for that entire day. So that's the main thing I like about it. (P06, 78-year-old male)

It is sort of like a massage, it is sensual to have the water flowing ... I like the wringing out bit of it. So those health effects. So if I'm get off a long haul flight, I know that if I get into a pool, even if I don't swim, it's going to kind of squeeze all that fluid that's accumulated in my ankles back where it's meant to go. (P19, 61-year-old female)

Swimming was the time for myself... that was the me doing something for me. (P07, 63-year-old female)

I also like ocean swimming better, because you know, there's a natural element to it, you're outside. We do run into dolphins, not you know, not rarely we more than much more than rarely. And that's fun. That kind of thing is fun and the different temperatures of the different types, times of year you really feel like you're out like you would if you were hiking in the mountains. (P06, 78-year-old male)

You are at the edge of this whole Pacific Ocean, right, you're in this big, huge place. This big body of water, you don't like feel that small usually... this takes you out of it, right, it makes you connect a little bit more with ... the water and nature and just the elements. (P17, 63-year-old female)

I swim only in the morning, very early in the morning. And I'm still working full time. Come home, take the shower, and I will tell you that when I go to work, I feel like I can

do anything that day. I feel invigorated for the day. Absolutely. Absolutely. invigorated, I don't feel tired. (P02, 67-year-old female)

Once you reach old age, you know, once you're past 65, once you're essentially--at least you ought to be--retired, you know, you don't have all those drives ... ambitions and distractions of youth, you know, what I mean? And all that. They say life is what's happening while you're making other plans. You know, and at my age, you really resigned to that. And you really get focused on this sense of, of appreciating just being alive. Being in the moment being here now, like the 60s, we say, 'Be here now.' Instead of living in the past, and ... like living for the future, what I'm going to do next and what I'm going to achieve and all that, you know, you get to ... be right here in this very moment. And, and swimming is the essence of that is the essence of being in the moment. (P09, 77-year-old male)

It also is kind of very mindful. Like you can get to the whole thing of feeling your arm in the water, you know, dolphining and just feeling your whole body in the water and you really in tune to it. So you really can focus. And sometimes that's just what you need to do, not think about anything else, but just focus in the moment. And swimming does that. (P13, 63-year-old female)

I kind of do a superman thing where I kind of do like a breaststroke and just kind of float with my stomach and chest over the bottom of the pool. (P01, 61-year-old male)

Theme 2: "Tell Your Body What to Do Instead of the Other Way Around"

It's a sport that you can continue to do as you age. The key thing ... about swimming is to stay with it as you age. And it becomes increasingly difficult. ... So it does fall off over time. ... you just have to enjoy it. And be grateful for what you have every day in a pool. (P18, 75-year-old male)

Eventually, as I got older I now swim with my fins all the time. (P16, 77-year-old male)

I learned it was what helped me and that's how I started it, because of my back. ... What motivates me now is more physical conditioning, rather than overcoming the disability from my back surgery. (P08, 80-year-old male)

I get so profoundly depressed, but if I swim in the morning, I don't get depressed all day. ... it's had a big impact on my life. (P09, 77-year-old male)

I got in [masters swimming] with the intention of working on my speed and doing longer races ... I am a very goal-oriented person. So now it's all about competing. (P10, 60-year-old female)

There is a learning component to it. ... The learning itself is ... very rewarding, and kind of addictive. ... there was ... a body of knowledge easily available, and you could go out there, figure out how to do it, how to do it better. (P15, 65-year-old male)

I'm afraid you guys are Olympians ... 'Well, I am and she is but not all of us are.' [laughter] So that totally put me off Masters swimming because I really did think everybody was an Olympian. (P19, 61-year-old female)

It's something I have a little bit of pride in ... I think that swimming is one of my special gifts. Because it's ... something I can do that a lot of people can't. (P04, 60-year-old male)

I play soccer as an old person, and it'll take me a week to recover for the next game. I usually just about recover. I'm usually limping on Monday, and I'll just about recovering time for the next soccer game I play every Sunday. But with the swimming, ... you don't really get injured at all. Certainly. So that's a really big plus for ... older people. (P15, 65-year-old male)

I'm a lifelong tennis player and very active person ... the way I got into swimming was at age 36... I broke my leg skiing ... what motivated me to do it when I first took it up was that it was the only exercise I could do. I was injured. I couldn't run, I couldn't walk. I couldn't hike. It was the only thing I can do. But then I realized how fantastic it was. (P19, 61-year-old female)

The nice thing about swimming is really you can do it at any age ... you can learn as a toddler, you can be swimming on swim teams if you want or you can be just enjoying yourself with your friends or, and you can do it all the way until till you can't get yourself out of bed anymore. (P14, 65-year-old female)

I've never been a world beater or a champion or anything like that. But I've always been into exercise. Gotta get it. And it used to be easier to do it by jogging at the end of a day's work or something like that. But you know, I found the older that I got, swimming is a lot more comfortable. And I think it's probably better exercise. (P06, 78-year-old male)

I had run for 30 some years on regular basis. I reached that point where my hips weren't going to be as functional. And so I was told to stop running and that meant trying to figure out what you do to fill in ... so I signed up and discovered that I couldn't swim. But everybody was so nice that I stayed with it. It was I would say almost humiliating to be slow and weak and unable to keep up needing a lot of rest. But over the course of the first year, I built back up into actually being able to swim. (P05, 75-year-old male)

I tend to like things like, in my life, and swimming's one of them, you know, that are there's a long path right to getting good at something, or to begin becoming expert, or, you know, very, very good at it. So I, I think, like, in terms of, well, you know, I could spend a decade doing this and get better at it. And that, that sort of, that's a positive for me. (P17, 63-year-old female)

I sort of joke, ... I'm afraid you guys are Olympians or something. And she stopped. She said, 'Well, I am and she is but not all of us are.' [laughter] So that totally put me off

Masters swimming because I really did think everybody was an Olympian. (P19, 61-year-old female)

It's something I have a little bit of pride in. It's like we try to think of ourselves like, what, what am I good at? You know, what are my special gifts, I think that swimming is one of my special gifts. Because it's ... something I can do that a lot of people can't. (P04, 60-year-old male)

I had my 50th high school reunion last year, they all thought not only was I amazing, but I was insane. Because not only am I swimming every day, but I'm competing. Why would somebody my age compete? ... And then they would say, this was in the same breath ... there's no way you're my age. And I would go well, that's the reason I swim. (P12, 69-year-old male)

We are different breed. Yeah. There's no denying that. (P07, 63-year-old female)

I'm pretty much a swimmer, not a regular person. (P01, 61-year-old male)

[Swimming is] my sugar. You know, it's sort of once I'm in the water I'm totally fine, you know, and even in the ocean, ... getting through the surf, is the trouble and getting in and out of trouble. But swimming in it is awesome. And then once you get out, I mean nothing hurts. (P13, 62-year-old female)

I decided I was going to try and swim the Pier to Pier you know, the ... Hermosa Manhattan Beach race. And so I had to train for that. So then I was in training and so it really gave me an outlet that I think was healthy too. (P14, 65-year-old female)

Theme 3: "Make a Commitment to Your Friends That You're Going to be There"

I like the routine. I know that I wouldn't usually swim an hour myself, like up, but I like the Yeah, I like the drilling aspect of it. (P19, 61-year-old female)

I started ... on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday. And there were some other people, of course, everybody was younger, but other older people. And they were definitely not nice in my lane, when I was in the slow lane, and they were definitely rude and irritated because I was slow and maybe ... not saying anything, were making it very clear. So I switched to Tuesday, Thursday. And the Tuesday-Thursday crowd was completely different, no matter how fast the people in the lane were. They were supportive and encouraging and kept reminding you that you'd get there one day. (P06, 78-year-old male)

I've been swimming with the same two women for well over 20 may even be 25 years. We're friends, we've aged together, gotten old together. You know, and we like to swim together... There's a camaraderie between everyone. I love the fact that it's really multi age group and multi ability group. It was really nice the last two years that they opened up the SCAQ office for you know, a holiday party. (P02, 67-year-old female)

[Wife was] very, very supportive of me and it, it made a difference. It really made a difference. (P11, 71-year-old male)

Theme 4: “I’ve Never Gone This Long in My Life Without Swimming”

I’ve never gone this long in my life without swimming. It’s been seven months now.... I miss all my SCAQ friends because I actually haven’t swum since we closed down for COVID ... the people I would see every morning, I mean, three times a week at 630 in the morning ... Like and you know, we were, How are you? We were always together. And now I don’t even know how they are. And I miss them. (P02, 67-year-old female)

I made absolutely sure that I swam before chairing one of those meetings. And sometimes this took great effort, because well, it always took effort because it was in London I would just show up to the meeting, completely calm, completely prepared, and ready for ... a huge day of chairing. (P19, 61-year-old female)

I’m in lockdown right now I’m in quarantine. And I’m dying for a swim. (P19, 61-year-old female)

Now I have a feel like I have more time for myself. I ... like swimming. So I’m going to find, you know, the opportunity to swim. (P17, 63-year-old female)

Are there mornings when it’s raining and it’s cold and like I maybe went to bed later than I expected? And I don’t want to get out of bed and go swim? Yeah, but not very often. (P05, 75-year-old male)