

Why do olympic divers shower after each round? essay



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It's the kind of thing that we see but don't usually think about. In the Summer Olympics, divers are always shown on television showering soon after their dives. There are showers in the public area around the pool, and the camera fixes on them as they wait for the scores to come and watch their competitors take their turns. But wait a second. What exactly is the point of this activity? Why get in the shower and clean off if you've just been in the water of the pool? It's quite a mystery.

And there are no exceptions—every diver does it. She finishes her dive, climbs out of the pool on the ladder, and walks straightaway to the showers near the diving boards. Then, right in full view of the whole world, they shower, rinsing their hair, arms, and legs. They keep their suits on, of course, but it's still a funny thing to see. When you think about it, there are obvious things that present themselves as potential solutions.

For example, maybe they shower to rinse the pool chlorine out of their hair and off their skin. But of course, we generally don't shower immediately after getting into a pool, so why would Olympic divers be in this habit? Is there something special about Olympic pools? Do they have more chlorine than the pools that you and I swim in? No, the chlorine theory is just a red herring. Olympic pools don't have substantially more chlorine than the pool down at the public park, and there's nothing special in the water that competitors need to rinse off. Here's the explanation to this conundrum: Olympians shower after diving in order to keep their muscles warm. Given the difference in temperature between the water and the air, muscles can get tight after a dive, and the best way to combat this is to either stand under a warm shower or sit in a hot tub.

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Of course, this doesn't answer all the questions. For example, why is that divers are always squeezing and rinsing out their hair when they're in those showers? Is it just a habitual motion born of years of daily showering? Are they washing the chlorine out of their hair after all? Furthermore, why are the showers out in the open for everyone to see? Not that it's lewd to watch bathing-suited divers shower—it's just a little weird.