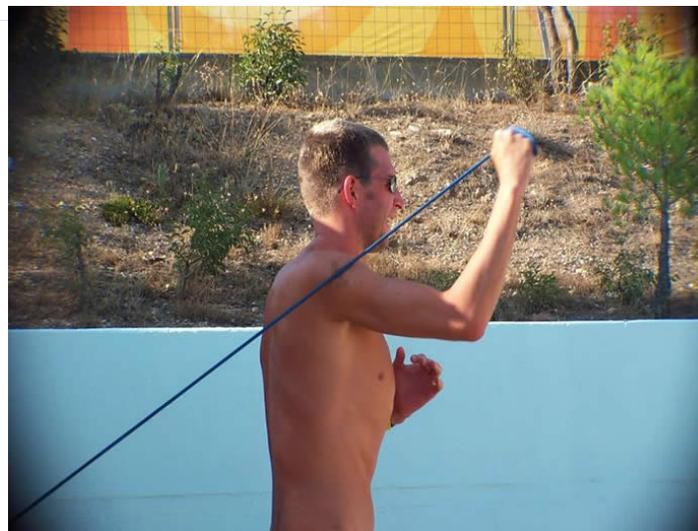




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Dryland Advice

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Dryland Conditioning

As most swimmers already know, dryland training is very important since it builds core strength and also flexibility. It has the additional benefit of offering variety in your training routine. Dryland training should compliment, not replace, time spent in the water. If you find that your dryland training is interfering with your swim practice, think about cutting back on dryland training so you can devote the appropriate amount of time to water training.

Stretching for Swimmers

Flexibility is very important for all swimmers and by including regular stretching in your daily routine, you can keep your body flexible. It's important to note that you should never try to stretch joints or apply pressure to them, doing so can cause damage so be careful and stop if you feel pain or are uncomfortable.

Why should swimmers stretch?

- Stretching prevents injuries
- Stretching can make you faster
- It can also make you more efficient
- Helps swimmers have better technique

With all of these benefits the importance of stretching becomes clear, so be sure you include stretches as part of your exercise program.

Below are some recommended stretches as well as points for good technique. Generally, stretching before a workout restores your regular level of flexibility. Stretching after a workout helps increase your flexibility.

Proper Stretching Technique

Perform balanced stretching. This means you should always stretch the muscles on both sides of your body evenly. Don't stretch one side more than the other side.

Avoid over-stretching. Never stretch to the point of pain or discomfort. You will feel slight tension or a pull on the muscle at the peak of the stretch.

Go slow! Always stretch slowly and evenly. Hold the stretch for about fifteen seconds and release slowly.

Never bounce or jerk while stretching. This can cause injury as a muscle is pushed beyond it's ability. All stretches should be smooth, and slow.

Don't forget to breathe. Flexibility exercises should be relaxing. Deep, slow and even breathing is key to relaxation. Never hold your breath while you stretch.

Recommended Stretches

Hamstrings: Sit on the floor with one leg straight in front of you and the other leg bent (with the sole of the foot touching the inside thigh of the outstretched leg). Keep your back straight and lean forward from the hips. Slide your arms forward toward your outstretched foot. Stop when you feel a pull in the hamstring. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat with the other leg extended.

Hips: Lie on your back. Bend your left leg and bring it toward you. Grasp your left knee gently with your right hand and pull it slightly down and to the right until you feel a stretch. Turn your head to the left. Your right leg should stay flat on the floor. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with the other leg.

Low back: Lay flat on the floor with knees bent. Use your hands to pull them toward your chest. Lift your head and shoulders off the floor until your head is approximately six inches from your knees. Cross your ankles. Gently rock yourself back and forth in this position for 30 seconds.

Quadriceps: Lie on your right side with your right knee bent at a 90-degree

angle. Bend your left leg and hold onto the ankle with your left hand. Gently pull your left heel in toward the left side of your butt. As soon as you feel a stretch in your left quad, slowly lower your left knee toward the floor behind your right knee. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat with the other leg.

Calves: Stand an arm's length away from a wall with your feet shoulder-width apart. Slide the left foot back approximately 18 inches, keeping the knee straight and both heels flat on the floor. Bend your right knee and slowly move your pelvis forward until you feel a stretch in the calf and Achilles of the left leg. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat with the other leg.

Exercises for Starts and Turns

Leg strength is essential for a swimmers starts and turns so it is important to focus on developing leg muscles. The following exercises focus specifically on leg strength, however, anyone with an injury or knee problems should always seek advice from their coach or trainer before beginning a dryland program.

Squat Jumps

Begin in a standing position and place your feet slightly wider than shoulder width with your hands behind your head or over your head in a streamline position. Bend at the knees (squat) while keeping your head and neck in alignment (maintain a comfortable neck position). When you reach a comfortable squat, jump upward as high as you can while holding your back, hands and neck alignment. Perform three sets of 10 jumps.

Lunges

Your body position is similar to the squat, in that, you begin from a standing position, feet no more than shoulder width apart and place your hands/arms above your head in a streamline position. To begin the lunge, take a wide step forward while holding the upper body position and complete the lunge when the knee behind you either touches the floor or comes to about 1 or 2 inches above the floor. Repeat the lunge for the other leg and perform three sets of 10 lunges each leg.

Plyometrics

Once you are comfortable building leg strength with squats and lunges, you can begin the more advanced plyometric jump. Begin by standing on a bench or chair (no more than 20 inches from the floor) and jump to the floor, landing on both feet evenly and bending at the knees as if you are squatting while bringing your arms down to your side (fingertips nearly touching the floor). Then immediately jump forward and swing your arms up over your head. Measure the distance you can jump (forward) to monitor your progress.

Plyometrics - bench step

This is a great exercise to not only build leg strength but also perform with a few friends. Using a long bench begin by standing on the floor/ground facing the bench. With the right leg, step up onto the bench, then raise the left leg so you are now standing with both feet on top of the bench. Step back down with the right leg so you return to the starting position. After stepping up 15 times with the right leg, switch to the left leg and step up 15 times. Perform

three sets with 15 steps on both right and left.

Exercises for Core Strength

Push-ups

Push-ups are a great exercise for developing core strength. To begin, lay down on a firm flat surface, place your hands on the floor and under your shoulders with the fingers pointing forward. Also make sure you keep your back straight and in good alignment. Push upward until your arms are extended then lower back down until your chest touches (or nearly touches) the floor.

There are several kinds of push-ups here are a few examples:

Push-up Hold

Perform a push-up, holding the "up" position while squeezing your shoulder blades together. Hold it for as long as possible while maintaining good body position. This will force you to use your core muscles to hold a stable body position.

Rotation Push-ups

Begin in the up position of a push up and keep both hands on the floor while rotating to the left (your left elbow will bend slightly). Return to a centered position and down to the floor. Perform another push-up and rotate to the right, also returning to the center (up position) and down to the floor. Perform an equal number of push-ups on both the right and left.

Extended-arm Push-ups

This push-up is performed by placing the hands as far forward as possible. Keep the hands together (not shoulder width apart) while performing each push-up. This push-up can be very difficult, so if you're a beginner, start by placing your hands only slightly in front of you. As you gain strength, move your hands further forward.

Split-arm Push-ups

A split-arm push-up is done with one arm slightly in front of you and the other arm (hand) at your side, just in front of your waist. After completing 10 push-ups, switch arm/hand positions so you're doing an equal number for each side.

Abdominal Exercises

Part of having a strong core is having strong abdominal muscles. Swimmers can build or improve abs by incorporating several focused exercises into their dryland training. Here are a few examples.

Sit-ups - hands behind head

These are traditional sit-ups, with bent knees so your feet are flat on the floor. Start by bringing your elbows to your knees and/or your chest to your knees. Lower back to the floor and repeat.

Sit-ups - arms forward

While laying on a flat, firm surface, bend your knees so your feet are flat on the floor and place one hand on top of the other (over your tummy but like a streamline position) pointing your finger tips toward your knees. Perform a sit-up by pressing forward, moving your finger tips between your knees.

Crunches

Begin by laying flat on the floor, place our hand at your ears and lift your feet about 2-3 inches off the floor. Then, in one motion and at the same time, bring your knees to your chest as you lift your upper body as if to bring your chest to your knees. Repeat until you complete 3 sets of 10 crunches.

Leg Raises

Start by laying down with your arms extended as if in a T position. Use your arms for stability as you raise your legs up. Keep your feet together and bend at the waist while lifting your feet to a 90 degree position. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 raises.

Plank Position

The plank position is an advanced core strength training exercise, it combines both abdominal and all around core body strength. To perform the plank position, lay face down on a flat surface (as if you are about to do a push up). Place your elbows on the floor, directly under your shoulders with your forearms flat on the floor in front of you. Lift your body so that you're supported only by the tips of your toes and your elbows/forearm. Hold this position for at least 30 seconds and repeat three times. As you gain core strength, increase the time you hold the position.

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