



Stretching for swimmers



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR SWIMMERS TO STRETCH



Swimming, like any other form of exercise, can result in injury and being prepared for the workout that your body is going to go through is important. It's even more important for swimming because of the great range of muscles you will be using when you're in the water. Unprepared muscles don't perform as well as muscles that have been warmed up ahead of exercising. Here are our top reasons why you should stretch before swimming.



Increases Mobility and Flexibility

When you start your lesson or swim session with some stretching exercises you increase your mobility and flexibility. This means that the range of motions that you can do with ease will improve and this will make your swimming more efficient. When you don't stretch beforehand your muscles and joints remain stiff and that lessens your ability to use them to their full potential.



Decreases chances of injury

Stretching gets blood to your muscles and joints preparing them for exercise and making sure they have the resources they need to carry out the movements. So pre-session stretching warms up your muscles and keeps them healthy, strong and flexible. This makes your body more resistant to injury because you can move more flexibly and your muscles can extend all the way more easily. That makes them less likely to get damaged from a sudden stretch or an exertion during swimming or any other exercise.

2

MAIN TYPES OF
STRETCHING



*Increase
mobility,
improve
performance*

Stretching for swimmers



Improves your posture

Our lives are often spent sitting down or generally having a bad posture. This often leads to bad back or discomfort. Stretching is a great way to generally improve that. It strengthens your muscles and encourages proper body alignment. This is an important aspect of stretching especially for children as it teaches them healthy habits.

Starts your breathing

A good warm-up and stretch will help prepare your lungs and heart for exercise by lightly easing you into it. This will make exercise overall feel less strenuous and less of a shock to your system. By warming up before your swimming lesson you extend the amount of time your heart and lungs are working for, maximising the cardio-vascular benefits of your lesson.

TYPES OF STRETCHING

There are 2 main types of stretching for swimmers – static and dynamic. So what's the difference and when do I do what?

DYNAMIC stretching is something you do **BEFORE** your workout or event. These exercises are repetitive arm and leg swings that don't hold muscles in stretch but are designed to increase your heart rate and blood flow so your muscles are ready for the exercise ahead. [Here are some examples](#)

STATIC stretching is something you do **AFTER** your session at home and/or as part of a daily routine. These stretches are designed to release lactic acid that has built up during your session and help to improve muscle development and boost your recovery. This is where you do hold muscles in stretch. [Here are some examples](#)

IMPORTANT: *Not all the stretches shown in the video links may be relevant to your swimmer right now. It will depend on their age and stage of development. Land training will be integrated into your swimmer's programme as they progress. This flyer is designed to increase awareness and help you and your swimmer to understand why stretching is important as they progress.*