



Warm Up and Exercises

These exercises are intended to improve the swimmer's overall function and performance of daily tasks, mobility, independence, flexibility, balance and coordination. All swimmers should strive to do the best they can to follow the exercises, but it is important that everyone go at their own pace. Individuals can go faster or slower and increase or decrease their range of motion for each exercise depending on their ability and endurance. Following these exercises some fatigue may be experienced, so it is important to not overdo and to go at a comfortable pace. If any exercise causes pain or discomfort swimmers should reduce movement, slow down, or stop.

Two things for everyone to understand are:

1. **Buoyancy** – Buoyancy is the force acting in the opposite direction to gravity. Buoyancy decreases forces on joints and allows easier, less painful movement.
2. **Turbulence** – Turbulence is the movement through water that provides increased resistance to exercise by-
 - Increasing the speed of movement
 - Broadening the surface of the body part moving through the water
 - Decreasing the speed of movement and streamlining the body part reduces the amount of resistance.

This is a list of numerous exercises and it is not intended that all of these should be done. Find the exercises that work for you and concentrate on those. Most of these exercises should be done with the joint you are exercising submerged, so you will need to move to deeper water for some exercises.

Breathing and Chest

Breathing is important and during any exercise it is very important that people breathe. As they do their exercises they should breathe in a normal, deep, rhythmic pattern. These breathing exercises can be done at home also.

- **Flower smelling** – Deep breath as if smelling a flower – inhale and exhale slowly
- **Birthday cake** – Deep breath and “blow out candles”
- These can be used at the beginning and end of the session

Warm Up

During warm ups try to move joint to complete range of motion (ROM) which helps maintain flexibility, preserve joint function, and minimize stiffness.

Warm Up – Walking and Marching

- **Walk forward** – swing arms under water, heel, ball of foot, and toe
- **Walk backward** – swing arms under water, use toe, ball of foot, and heel
- **Marching** – Use high steps with bended knee, use exaggerated arm swings
- **Wooden Soldier** – March forward and backward by lifting straight leg and arm swings
- **Little kicks** – Make little kicks with straight leg
- **Back kicks** – Kick backward with bended knee
- **Side steps** – Move right leg to side and close step with left leg. Do the right leg first and then go to the left. Hold arms at water level.

Neck and head – slowly

- **Turtle neck** - Move head down and up
- **Side neck bending** – Neck rolls ear to shoulder both right and left
- **Look over shoulder** – Look over right shoulder and back to center, look over left shoulder and back to center

Hands and wrist – all done under water

- **Hand and wrist wave** – Relax hand and fingers, bend wrist up and down
- **Hand circles from wrist** – Move in small circles in both directions
- **Cat claws** – Form a claw with your fingers and close/open and close, do this on both hands
- **Piano fingers** – Play piano using all fingers from both hands – bend each finger at the middle joint
- **Cheerio's** – Thumb to each finger on both hands
- **Clapping** - Clap hands underwater in front and back

Arms and shoulders

- **Wooden soldier** – Move arms straight out in front as a marching wooden soldier. Move arm out and back, first with the right and then with the left arm.
- **Arm circles from shoulder** – Do forward circles and backward circles. Use the right arm both ways, then the left arm both ways.
- **Breast stroke** – While walking keep arms underwater, move arms to front and side
- **Crawl stroke** – While walking pull straight arm down and back through the water, keep arms and shoulders under water
- **Shoulder shrugs** – Bring shoulders straight up to your ears.
- **Shoulder circles** – Go forward and then backward.
- **Baseball swing** – Take a baseball grip and swing the imaginary bat through the water
- **Golf swing** – Take a golf grip and swing the imaginary golf club through the water.
- **Overhead reach** – Arms to the side, raise the right arm as high as possible, bring it down slowly. Do the left arm next. Repeat with each arm.
- **Fingertips to shoulder** – Lift one arm at a time. Touch shoulder with finger tips. Alternate arms.

- **Touchdown** – Arms under water with hands together. Raise both arms as high as possible for a “touchdown” sign.
- **Arm Waves** – Raise both arms overhead and move side to side – left, center, right, center
- **Raise and lower arms** – Arms to side, raise to level of water with palms down, back to your side
- **Raise to overhead clap** – Arms to side, raise to level of water with palms down, rotate so palms are up and lift arms to overhead clap, then back to your side.
- **Scissors** – Cross arms in front of body at hip level, move arms to sides then cross arms behind the body. Repeat and alternate arms, left on top, then right on top.
- **Surrender** – Raise arms with elbows bent so elbows are in the water, but arms and fingers are pointing to the ceiling. Reverse movement so fingers point to the pool floor.
- **Pat Neck/Pat Back** – Arms at side, raise right arm and pat the back of the neck with the palm of your hand, lower hand and arm into water and place the back of your hand on your back at your waist. Alternate left and right hand or do both arms at the same time.
- **Front arm circles** – Raise both arms in front but below the water with palms down. Circle arms inward and outward. Start with small circles and gradually enlarge the circles. Alternate inward and outward circles.

Legs, Hips and Knee – can be done using side of pool for support

- **Foot ballet** - Lift right foot and point toe to floor and then to the ceiling. Do repetitions on right foot and then change to left foot.
- **Ankle circles** – Do small circles with right foot in one direction, and then change direction. Do this with both left and right foot.
- **Foot turns** – Turn right foot out and back in, do with both feet.
- **Leg/knee circles** – Pick up leg and make small circles from the knee. Make circles to the left and then to the right. Do this with both knees.
- **Straight leg circles** – Bring leg straight out in front and make circles – first to the right and then left. Do both legs.
- **Side Bend** – Hands on hips, bend slowly to each side
- **Trunk rotation** – Arms should be straight out in front with hands together and thumbs up. Turn trunk to one side, return to center, turn trunk to other side and return to center. Eyes should follow the movement.
- **Forward Kick** – Stand with side to pool wall. Lift leg toward the surface, lower and move leg behind the body. Alternate legs, motion should be from the hip.
- **Hamstring curl** – Hold on to the side of the pool, bend the knee and move foot toward you buttocks.

Ankle and Toe

- **Point/Flex toes** – Raise leg in front of body, alternatively point toes up toward the knee and then away from the knee.
- **Heel-Toe Lift** – Hold on to side of pool, lift toes keeping heels on the floor. Return to flat, standing position. Lift heels keeping toes on the floor, return to flat standing position.

- **Ankle Circles** – Alternate make circles inward and outward.
- **Toe Curls** – Lift toes slightly off pool bottom, curl toes down and then straighten.

Noodle - Wrap noodle around your back, go to deeper water

- **Bicycle** – Simulate a peddling motion, move both forward and backward
- **Forward Scissors** – From floating position, keep legs straight and do a scissors kick with both legs moving alternatively forward and then back
- **Flutter kick** – Let yourself float with noodle on your back. Do a flutter kick

Wall

- **Push Aways** – Stand arms length from the wall, lean forward with bent elbows, and return to starting point.
- **Small Squats** – Facing the wall, squat down as far as comfortable bending hips and knees, push up with leg muscles
- **Side leg lift** – Hold on to the wall, balance on leg closest to the wall. Lift other leg to the side and lower. Change legs.

Games

For those who might want to participate here are some suggestions.

1. **Relay** – Divide into two teams and walk a short distance exchanging a yellow duck.
2. **Don't touch relay** – Move a ball by using your hands without touching the ball. Move ball to your next team member until there is a winner.