

SWIMMING HEALTH BENEFITS

- Swimming helps maintain the blood pressure and cholesterol of a person, thus ensuring the well being of his/her heart.
- It is good for the health of your lungs and also reduces the risk of stroke, heart attack and diabetes.
- Swimming enhances the flexibility of your joints and provides the scope for boosting your physical activity workout level. In other words, it helps a great deal in your weight loss program.
- It is perfect for those people who have a hard time carrying out weight-bearing, land-based physical activities. This is because your weight in water is about 1/10 of your weight on land.
- For pregnant women as well as for people who are suffering from arthritis and back pain problem, there can be no better workout choice than swimming.
- Swimming minimizes the risk of injuries from physical activity. So, you can easily try out the delightful exercise and enjoy the health fitness benefits it offers, without any attached risk.
- If indulged in on a regular basis, swimming can help build the endurance, muscle strength and cardio-vascular fitness of a person.
- You can indulge in swimming before as well as after a strenuous workout on ground, as a warm-up and cool-down activity, respectively.
- It helps a person exercise almost all the muscles of his/her body, with the main focus being on arms and legs.
- The people suffering from injuries, back pain, arthritis and disabilities, who cannot indulge in a normal workout, can undertake swimming.
- Swimming has been associated with relieving the joint pains, high blood pressure and discomfort that are often experienced during pregnancy.
- Indulging in swimming can help post-surgery patients, who adopt an otherwise sedentary lifestyle, avoid muscular atrophy.
- It is found to have soothing effect on the mind as well as the body of a person, mainly by regulating breathing and stimulating circulation.

EQUIPMENT

- Kickboard stabilizes body position and enables swimmers to practice kick and improve muscular strength and endurance.
- Training paddles help to stabilize proper feel of hand action during the stroke and build shoulder strength.
- Pull-buoy placed between legs isolates upper body and keeps body in horizontal position.
- Goggles are used to see underwater and keep eyes dry and free of chlorine.
- Swim caps keep hair out of face improving your ability to breathe.

SWIMMING ETIQUETTE

- Check pool for rules about lane sharing.
- Find a lane where the swimmers swim similar to you.
- It is generally acceptable to interrupt and ask to share the lane; however, if the swimmer is rigorously swimming intervals wait for a break in their workout.
- When sharing a lane with multiple swimmers, always stay on the right side of the black line on the bottom of the pool.
- Circle swimming is the most common used form of lane sharing.

PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING

HOW DO I PACE MYSELF?

Start out slowly and gradually increase. If you have not been exercising regularly, start at a moderate intensity. As you feel stronger, increase the intensity and or the duration. Do not increase both at the same time.

HOW HARD SHOULD I EXERCISE?

To improve cardio-respiratory fitness, exercise heart rate levels should be between 70 – 85% of your maximum heart rate. This is called the Target Heart Rate Zone. To find your zone use the following formula.

$$220 - \text{Age} = \text{Maximum Heart Rate} \times \text{Intensity} = \text{Target Heart Rate (Beats Per Minute)}$$

Examples of Target Heart Rate Zone:

$$220 - 17 = 203 \text{ (MHR)} \times 70\% \text{ (Moderate Intensity)} = 140 \text{ BPM}$$

$$220 - 17 = 203 \text{ (MHR)} \times 80\% \text{ (Moderate to Vigorous Intensity)} = 160 \text{ BPM}$$

$$220 - 17 = 203 \text{ (MHR)} \times 85\% \text{ (Vigorous Intensity)} = 170 \text{ BPM}$$

The figures above are averages and should be used as guidelines. To see if you are in your heart rate zone, take your pulse during or immediately following your exercise. This may be done by taking a 10 second count and multiplying by 6 or a 6 second count and multiply by 10.

HOW LONG SHOULD I EXERCISE?

That depends on your age, your level of fitness, and the level of intensity of your exercise. If you are inactive now, you might begin slowly with a 10-15 minute session, 3 times a week. As you become more fit, you can do longer sessions or short sessions more often. If you're active already and your goal is to condition your heart and lungs, try for a minimum of 30 minutes in your target heart rate zone, most days of the week.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I EXERCISE?

Exercising regularly is one of the most important aspects of your exercise program. You should exercise on most days of the week. If you don't exercise as least 4-5 times a week, you will not experience as many of the benefits of regular physical activity as you could or make as much progress in your training.

THE FITT PRINCIPLE

The FITT Principle helps us remember how often, how hard, how long, and what type of exercise to do.

Frequency- most days of the week (at least 5)

Intensity- 70 to 85% of maximum heart rate

Time- at least 30 minutes in your target heart rate zone

Type- aerobic or anaerobic, something you enjoy

SWIMMING FOR FITNESS

WORKOUT PROGRAM

A swimming workout is a specific length of time during which you develop your swimming ability and improve your fitness. The frequency, intensity, and time of the workout depend on your current level of fitness and swimming ability. Over time the workout should progressively and gradually increase (*overload*) in frequency, intensity, and time (duration). Do not increase more than one training principle at a time.

COMPONENTS OF A WORKOUT

Warm-up: In the water kick, swim or tread water in an easy, relaxed manner. This raises the body temperature and gets you prepared for swimming. You can break it into several sets and it should take at least 5 minutes or about 20% of the total workout time or distance.

Main Set: This should be the most demanding part of the workout. The main set should consist of one long set or several subsets with short breaks between. The duration of the main set will vary according to the overall workout – at least 50% of the total time/distance.

Cool down: This consists of a few laps at the end of the workout to relax and loosen the body. It is also a way of letting your heart rate gradually return to normal. You may add a cool down on land with static stretches.