



THE SWIMMER'S WARM UP DECK

A guided land-based warm-up system
for competitive swimmers

AGE GROUP

Exercise Companion Guide

This guide supports **The Swimmer's Warm Up Deck** by adding more detail behind each exercise card.

Together, the deck and guide form a simple system to support consistent warm-up preparation.

It is designed to be simple, adaptable and easy to use, either at home or before training.

If time is tight, swimmers can start the warm-up at home and finish it before getting in the water.

This Exercise Companion Guide helps swimmers, coaches and parents understand:

WHY EACH EXERCISE IS INCLUDED

HOW TO PERFORM IT PROPERLY

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

A warm-up is not just about getting moving.

A good warm-up prepares the body properly, supports movement quality and helps swimmers arrive ready to train or race well.

Each movement is listed in the same order as the deck and follows the same structure:

- Exercise name
- What does it help improve?
- Why does it matter for swimming?
- Perform
- How to do it well
- What to look out for

ABOUT THE CREATOR

The Swimmer's Warm Up Deck was created by Spencer Turner, Head of Swimming at Basingstoke Bluefins.

Spencer brings together more than 30 years of experience in product design and visual communication with his work in swimming coaching, personal training and competitive swimming.

As a qualified Level 3 Personal Trainer, Masters swimmer and multiple British, European and World record holder, he understands the importance of purposeful preparation, clear instruction and movement quality.

The deck and Exercise Companion Guide have been shaped through practical use with age-group swimmers, combining coaching experience, movement knowledge and visual design to create a resource that is clear, engaging and easy to use.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Use this guide alongside the card deck:

- To understand each movement more clearly
- To improve movement quality
- To coach warm-ups with more confidence
- To help swimmers prepare with more purpose

Some exercises also include modification options to help movements be adapted for different ages, abilities and confidence levels. These may include slightly easier options for younger or less stable swimmers, or slightly harder progressions for swimmers ready for greater control and challenge.

Some exercises also include Stroke Insight guidance to help connect movements more directly to swimming skills, streamline control, body position and stroke mechanics.

The aim is simple:

Prepare. Move. Perform.

USING THE DECK EFFECTIVELY

The Swimmer's Warm Up Deck is designed to support movement quality, readiness and confidence in swimmers.

It introduces swimmers to structured, land-based warm-ups and reinforces the importance of quality preparation.

The goal is simple: to prepare and perform well.

You do not need to use every exercise in one session. Instead, select a small number of movements from across the five stages:

1 RAISE TEMPERATURE

2 MOBILISE JOINTS

3 ACTIVATE MUSCLES

4 PRIME MOVEMENT

5 EXPLODE POWER*

A good warm-up should feel structured and controlled.

*The Explode stage is optional and should be used when space and experience allow.

Quality always comes before quantity.

Recommended equipment:

A small mat for floor-based movements.

A light resistance band.

A skipping rope.

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RAISE Temperature

- R1 Skipping
- R2 Static Jogging
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- R7 Jumping Jacks
- R8 Fast Feet

MOBILISE Joints

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- M2 Spider-Man Switches
- M3 Wall Slides
- M4 Shoulder Rotation
- M5 Kneeling Rotations
- M6 Side Openers
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ACTIVATE Muscles

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PRIME Movement

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- P2 Band Swim Pulses
- P3 Zombie Squats
- P4 Split Squats
- P5 Reverse Lunge
- P6 Neutral Grip Row
- P7 Prisoner Squats
- P8 Kneeling Push Ups
- P9 Band Pull Downs
- P10 Push Ups+

EXPLODE Power

- E1 Streamline Jumps
- E2 Track Start Jumps+

COACHING NOTES

Choose exercises based on:

- The age and stage of the swimmers
- The space and environment
- The session goal
- The quality of movement being shown

Focus on:

- Controlled, accurate movement
- Strong posture and positioning
- Maintaining movement quality throughout
- Smooth transitions between exercises

Good warm-up habits include:

- Starting organised and ready
- Moving with control
- Listening to coaching feedback or guidance
- Preparing consistently before training and racing

Coaches, parents and supervising adults should:

- Adapt exercises when movement quality drops
- Use regressions where needed
- Prioritise quality over speed or intensity
- Select movements appropriate to the environment

SAFETY NOTES

Warm-ups should:

- Be adapted to the space, surface and conditions available
- Be performed with control, balance and good technique
- Avoid unnecessary risk or unsafe movement

Swimmers should:

- Work within their own ability
- Avoid forcing movements or positions
- Stop if something feels painful or unusual

Coaches, parents and supervising adults should use judgement based on:

- Swimmer ability
- Surface and space
- Equipment available
- The demands of the session

Some cards include a yellow warning triangle to highlight movements that need extra care, space or control.

This does not mean the movement is unsafe. It highlights where more care, space or control may be needed.

For younger swimmers, or in wet or crowded spaces, movements marked with the yellow warning triangle should be performed with care, adapted, or replaced where needed.

If any movement causes pain, stop immediately and adjust or replace the exercise. If a swimmer has an existing injury or medical concern, movements should be adapted or cleared with an appropriate professional.



Skipping

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Jump Rope

What does it help improve?

Skipping develops rhythm, timing and light reactive foot contacts while gradually increasing body temperature. It also encourages coordination between the arms and feet, helping swimmers organise movement and stay relaxed while moving quickly.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many young swimmers move heavily or lose rhythm when asked to speed up on poolside. Skipping helps teach lightness, rhythm and control through the feet while maintaining posture and coordination. These are important foundations for athletic movement, starts and push-offs.

Perform

25–35 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with feet under hips and elbows close to the body
- Keep the shoulders relaxed and the arm rhythm smooth
- Stay light on the balls of the feet
- Use small, quick jumps rather than big, slow ones
- Turn the rope mainly with the wrists rather than the whole arms
- Keep rhythm smooth and relaxed

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heavy, noisy landings
- Over-jumping
- Arms doing too much work
- Looking down and collapsing posture
- Losing rhythm or timing

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Perform small pogo jumps without a rope or reduce the jump height.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase rhythm speed slightly or perform alternating-foot skipping while maintaining control.



Static Jogging

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Jog on the Spot

What does it help improve?

Static Jogging gradually raises body temperature while encouraging relaxed rhythmic movement through the whole body. It helps swimmers organise posture, coordination and light foot contacts without needing to move quickly or explosively too early in the warm-up.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimmers arrive on poolside physically present but not fully switched on for movement. Static Jogging provides a simple starting point that helps the body begin working rhythmically while reinforcing posture, balance and coordination before more demanding movements are introduced.

Perform

30 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with your chest up
- Jog lightly on the balls of your feet
- Drive your knees forwards in a relaxed rhythm
- Keep your steps quiet and controlled
- Let the arms move naturally with the rhythm
- Stay relaxed through the shoulders and upper body

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heavy or flat-footed contacts
- Excessive tension through the shoulders
- Leaning backwards or collapsing posture
- Loud or uncontrolled steps
- Losing rhythm or coordination

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the jogging speed and focus on maintaining posture, balance and smooth rhythm.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase rhythm and foot speed slightly while maintaining relaxed posture and controlled movement throughout.



High Knees Jogging

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High Knees Jog

What does it help improve?

High Knees Jogging increases body temperature while developing coordination, posture and front-side movement control. It encourages swimmers to organise quicker leg action while maintaining balance, rhythm and trunk position.

Why does it matter for swimming?

As movement speed increases, many young swimmers lose posture and coordination. High Knees Jogging teaches swimmers to stay tall and organised while moving quickly, helping develop more controlled athletic movement and better body awareness on poolside.

Perform

25–30 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall and jog on the spot
- Lift the knees upwards with quick, controlled actions
- Stay light on the balls of the feet
- Keep the chest up and posture tall
- Use relaxed arm rhythm to support movement
- Maintain a quick, steady rhythm throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Leaning backwards
- Heavy or noisy foot contacts
- Knees lifting without control
- Excessive upper-body tension
- Losing rhythm or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the knee height slightly while maintaining posture, rhythm and light foot contacts.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase foot speed and knee drive while maintaining posture, coordination and controlled movement throughout.



Pogo Jumps

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Ankle Bounces

What does it help improve?

Pogo Jumps develop quick reactive contacts through the feet and ankles while developing reactive stiffness through the ankles and lower legs. They help swimmers learn to bounce lightly and efficiently from the ground without excessive knee bend or heavy landings.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimmers struggle to stay reactive through the feet during jumps, starts and fast movement on poolside. Pogo Jumps help teach quick ground contact, balance and lower-leg control while encouraging lighter, quieter movement patterns.

Perform

20–30 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with feet hip-width apart
- Keep the legs relatively straight throughout
- Bounce lightly from the ankles
- Stay quick and reactive on the balls of the feet
- Keep the jumps small, quiet and controlled
- Maintain posture and rhythm throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heavy or noisy landings
- Bending the knees too much
- Jumping too high
- Flat-footed contacts
- Losing rhythm or balance

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the jump height and focus on quick, light ankle bounces with good posture and control.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase rhythm speed slightly while maintaining quick contacts, balance and controlled posture throughout.



Heel Flicks

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Butt Kicks

What does it help improve?

Heel Flicks develop lower-body rhythm, coordination and relaxed movement speed while continuing to raise body temperature. They encourage quicker leg recovery and help swimmers move lightly and smoothly without unnecessary tension.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many young swimmers become stiff or heavy when movements speed up. Heel Flicks encourage relaxed, rhythmic movement while helping swimmers stay light on their feet and coordinated through the lower body during poolside preparation.

Perform

25–30 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall and jog lightly on the spot
- Flick your heels upwards behind you
- Stay light on the balls of the feet
- Keep movements quick and relaxed
- Use the arms naturally to support rhythm
- Maintain posture and coordination throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heavy or flat-footed contacts
- Excessive forward lean
- Forced or tense movement
- Excessive upper-body tension
- Losing rhythm or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement speed slightly while maintaining posture, rhythm and light foot contacts.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase rhythm and movement speed while maintaining relaxed posture and controlled coordination throughout.



Mountain Climbers

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High Plank Knee Drives

What does it help improve?

Mountain Climbers increase body temperature quickly while developing trunk control, coordination and active hip movement. They also help swimmers learn to move the legs quickly while keeping the upper body stable and organised.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimming skills rely on being able to create movement from the hips and legs without losing body position through the trunk and shoulders. Mountain Climbers help swimmers practise staying strong and controlled through the middle of the body while the legs move dynamically underneath.

Perform

6–10 reps each leg

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start in a strong plank position
- Keep your hands under your shoulders
- Drive one knee towards your chest
- Switch legs smoothly one at a time
- Keep the body still and controlled
- Maintain steady breathing throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Hips bouncing excessively
- Sagging through the lower back
- Rushed or uncontrolled leg movement
- Shoulders collapsing forwards
- Losing body tension or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Slow the movement down and focus on maintaining a strong body position and controlled knee drives.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement speed while maintaining trunk stability, posture and controlled leg action throughout.



Jumping Jacks

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Star Jumps

What does it help improve?

Jumping Jacks develop whole-body coordination, rhythm and movement timing while continuing to raise body temperature. They encourage swimmers to coordinate the arms and legs together while maintaining balance and light foot contacts.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming requires coordinated movement between the upper and lower body rather than isolated actions. Jumping Jacks help swimmers practise moving multiple body parts together smoothly and rhythmically while staying balanced and organised on poolside.

Perform

15–20 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with your feet together
- Jump your feet out wide as your arms go up
- Return smoothly to the starting position
- Stay light on the balls of the feet
- Keep the movement rhythmic and controlled
- Land softly and quietly throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heavy or noisy landings
- Arms and legs moving out of sync
- Excessive tension through the shoulders
- Losing posture or balance
- Rushed or uncontrolled rhythm

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the jumping speed or perform step-out jacks while maintaining coordination and rhythm.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement speed while maintaining posture, timing and controlled landings throughout.



Fast Feet

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Quick Steps

What does it help improve?

Fast Feet develops quick reactions, coordination and rapid foot movement while increasing movement sharpness and alertness. It encourages swimmers to stay light, reactive and balanced while moving at higher speeds.

Why does it matter for swimming?

As swimmers move into faster or more explosive activity, movement quality often disappears first. Fast Feet helps swimmers stay organised and controlled while moving quickly, reinforcing posture, balance and reactive footwork during poolside preparation.

Perform

15–20 seconds

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with feet under hips
- Take small, quick steps on the spot
- Stay light and fast on the balls of the feet
- Keep the body tall and balanced
- Use relaxed arm movement to support rhythm
- Stay quick without becoming frantic

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heavy or flat-footed contacts
- Excessive upper-body movement
- Leaning too far forwards or backwards
- Losing rhythm or coordination
- Feet becoming noisy or uncontrolled

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement speed slightly while maintaining posture, rhythm and light foot contacts.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase foot speed while maintaining balance, coordination and controlled posture throughout.

Neck Side Tilt

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Lateral Trap Stretch

What does it help improve?

Neck Side Tilt helps improve neck mobility and reduce unnecessary tension through the upper shoulders and neck. It encourages swimmers to move the head and neck in a slow, controlled way while maintaining relaxed posture.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimmers carry unnecessary tension through the neck and upper shoulders, especially before racing or harder sessions. This movement helps swimmers become more aware of posture and relaxation through the upper body, supporting smoother head position and more relaxed movement in the water.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Sit or stand tall with shoulders relaxed
- Gently tip your head towards one shoulder
- Keep the movement slow and controlled
- Avoid lifting or shrugging the shoulders
- Return smoothly to the middle before changing sides
- Stay relaxed through the jaw and neck throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Forcing the stretch too aggressively
- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Rotating the head instead of tilting
- Holding tension through the jaw or upper body
- Rushing the movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on relaxed, controlled motion without forcing the stretch.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the end position while maintaining relaxed shoulders and smooth breathing throughout.

Spider-Man Switches

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Hip Mobility Switches

What does it help improve?

Spider-Man Switches improve hip mobility, trunk control and movement coordination while encouraging swimmers to move through larger ranges under control. They also help prepare the hips, groin and upper body for more demanding movement later in the warm-up.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies on good movement through the hips and trunk while maintaining stability through the shoulders and upper body. Spider-Man Switches help swimmers practise controlled movement through multiple joints at the same time, improving body awareness and overall movement organisation.

Perform

6–8 switches

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start in a strong plank position
- Step one foot to the outside of your hand
- Keep the body steady and controlled
- Switch sides smoothly one at a time
- Stay long through the spine and chest
- Move with control rather than speed

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Hips lifting too high
- Sagging through the lower back
- Rushed or uncontrolled switches
- Shoulders collapsing forwards
- Short or restricted movement range

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Slow the movement down and reduce the step length while maintaining control and posture throughout.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement flow and range while maintaining trunk stability and smooth coordinated movement throughout.

Wall Slides

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What does it help improve?

Wall Slides improve shoulder mobility, posture and upper-body movement control. They encourage swimmers to move the arms overhead while maintaining alignment through the shoulders, chest and upper back.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimmers struggle to maintain good shoulder position overhead without arching the back or losing posture. Wall Slides help swimmers practise controlled overhead movement while keeping the upper body organised and stable, supporting better streamline and stroke positioning in the water.

Perform

8–10 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand with your back against the wall
- Place your arms in a goalpost shape against the wall
- Keep your chest tall and ribs controlled
- Slide your arms upwards smoothly
- Keep contact with the wall where possible
- Return slowly and under control

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Shoulders shrugging upwards
- Losing contact with the wall too early
- Rushed or forced movement
- Elbows or wrists collapsing forwards

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement height and focus on maintaining posture and controlled shoulder movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement range while maintaining upper-body control, posture and smooth wall contact throughout.

Shoulder Rotation

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Internal and External Rotation

What does it help improve?

Shoulder Rotation improves controlled movement through the shoulder joint while encouraging better posture and shoulder awareness. It helps swimmers move the shoulders through internal and external rotation without compensating through the trunk or upper back.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming places repeated demands on shoulder control and positioning. Many swimmers move excessively through the back or shoulders instead of controlling movement properly through the joint itself. This exercise helps swimmers practise smoother, more organised shoulder movement while maintaining posture and control.

Perform

8–10 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with your back against the wall
- Lift your elbows to shoulder height and bend them to 90 degrees
- Keep the elbows connected to the wall where possible
- Rotate the hands upwards and downwards slowly
- Move through a comfortable controlled range
- Keep the chest tall and relaxed throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Arching through the lower back
- Elbows losing position from the wall
- Rushed or forced movement
- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Twisting through the trunk to create movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on smooth controlled shoulder rotation without losing posture.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase the movement range slightly while maintaining shoulder control, posture and smooth movement throughout.

Kneeling Rotations

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Quadruped Thoracic Rotation

What does it help improve?

Kneeling Rotations improve movement through the upper back while encouraging trunk control and spinal rotation. They help swimmers separate movement through the thoracic spine from movement through the hips or lower back.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimmers become stiff through the upper back, especially around the shoulders and ribcage. Good thoracic movement helps swimmers maintain posture, rotation and upper-body organisation during skills such as breathing, backstroke rotation and overall stroke movement.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start on all fours with hands under shoulders
- Place one hand behind your head
- Rotate your elbow upwards towards the ceiling
- Keep the hips and lower body steady
- Move slowly and under control
- Return smoothly before changing sides

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Twisting excessively through the hips
- Rushing the movement
- Collapsing through the shoulders
- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Forcing range instead of moving smoothly

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the rotation range and focus on smooth controlled movement through the upper back.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the top of the rotation while maintaining trunk control and steady hip position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Thoracic rotation control supports smoother freestyle breathing mechanics and backstroke rotation.

Side Openers

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Side Lying Thoracic Openings

What does it help improve?

Side Openers improve movement through the upper back and chest while encouraging controlled rotation through the trunk. They help swimmers move more freely through the ribcage and thoracic spine without forcing movement through the lower back.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Good upper-body rotation helps swimmers maintain smoother movement patterns through strokes such as freestyle and backstroke. Many swimmers become stiff through the chest and upper back from repeated swimming posture, making rotation and shoulder positioning more restricted over time.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your side with knees bent and stacked
- Reach your top arm across your body
- Open the arm slowly towards the opposite side
- Keep the hips still throughout
- Move smoothly and under control
- Return slowly before repeating

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Rolling excessively through the hips
- Forcing the movement range
- Rushed or uncontrolled rotation
- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Losing relaxed breathing or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on smooth controlled rotation through the upper back.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly in the open position while maintaining relaxed breathing and controlled trunk position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Thoracic rotation control is especially important for freestyle and backstroke body rotation mechanics.

Hip Turn In

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Prone Hip Internal Rotation

What does it help improve?

Hip Turn In improves internal rotation through the hips while encouraging controlled movement through the lower body. It helps swimmers access hip movement without twisting excessively through the pelvis or lower back.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Hip mobility plays an important role in kicking efficiency, body position and lower-body coordination. Many swimmers develop restricted internal hip movement over time, particularly through repetitive training and prolonged sitting outside the pool. This exercise helps swimmers move more freely and comfortably through the hips while maintaining control.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your front with knees bent
- Keep the knees close together throughout
- Let the feet move slowly outwards to the sides
- Move through a comfortable controlled range
- Keep the hips relaxed and steady
- Return smoothly before repeating

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Forcing the movement range
- Knees separating excessively
- Twisting through the pelvis or lower back
- Rushed or uncontrolled movement
- Holding unnecessary tension through the hips

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on smooth controlled hip movement without forcing the position.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the end range while maintaining relaxed hips and controlled lower-body position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Supports controlled movement through the hips, which can contribute to more organised lower-body positioning across the swimming strokes.



Hip Lateral Lunges

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Lateral Lunge

What does it help improve?

Hip Lateral Lunges improve movement through the hips, groin and ankles while developing lower-body control and side-to-side stability. They help swimmers move through larger ranges while maintaining posture and balance.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming is often very forward-focused, which means many swimmers lack strength and control when moving sideways. Lateral Lunges help develop hip control, balance and movement awareness in different directions, supporting more rounded athletic development and better overall movement quality.

Perform

8–10 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart
- Step to one side and bend that knee
- Keep the opposite leg straight
- Sit the hips back while keeping the chest tall
- Push back smoothly to the starting position
- Move with control throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Knees collapsing inwards
- Excessive forward lean
- Losing balance or posture
- Rushed movement or poor control
- Pushing through the toes instead of the whole foot

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the depth of the lunge and focus on balance, posture and controlled movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement depth and range while maintaining hip control, posture and smooth side-to-side movement throughout.



Hip Flexor Lunges

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Split Stance Hip Flexor Lunge

What does it help improve?

Hip Flexor Lunges improve movement through the front of the hips while encouraging balance, posture and lower-body control. They help swimmers open the hips gradually while maintaining stability through the trunk and pelvis.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Long periods of sitting, school and repeated training can leave many swimmers tight through the front of the hips. Restricted hip movement can affect posture, kicking mechanics and overall movement quality. This exercise helps swimmers move more freely through the hips while staying balanced and controlled.

Perform

8–10 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Step one foot forwards into a split stance
- Keep the chest tall and hips level
- Gently tighten the glute of the back leg and keep the pelvis controlled
- Lower the back knee towards the floor under control
- Feel a gentle stretch through the front of the back hip
- Push back up smoothly to the starting position
- Stay balanced and controlled throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Leaning too far forwards
- Losing balance or hip position
- Rushing the movement
- Forcing the stretch aggressively

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement depth and focus on posture, balance and smooth controlled movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement depth slightly while maintaining hip control, posture and balanced body position throughout.

Calf Stretch Lunge

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Standing Calf Stretch

What does it help improve?

Calf Stretch Lunges improve movement through the calves and ankles while encouraging posture, balance and controlled lower-body positioning. They help swimmers gradually access ankle range without forcing the movement.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Good ankle movement supports kicking, push-offs and controlled lower-body movement both on poolside and in the water. Many swimmers develop tightness through the calves and ankles, which can limit movement quality and make lower-body positions feel restricted.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Step one foot forwards into a split stance
- Keep the back leg straight with the heel on the floor
- Lean forwards slightly while keeping the chest tall
- Feel a gentle stretch through the calf of the back leg
- Hold briefly before returning smoothly
- Stay balanced and controlled throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Lifting the back heel too early
- Leaning excessively forwards
- Forcing the stretch aggressively
- Losing posture or balance
- Rushing the movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the stretch depth and focus on posture, balance and smooth controlled movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase the forward lean slightly while maintaining heel contact, posture and controlled positioning throughout.

Heel Drops

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Calf Raises Off Step

What does it help improve?

Heel Drops improve ankle movement, calf control and lower-leg strength through a larger movement range. They help swimmers develop better control through the ankles while encouraging smooth, controlled loading through the feet and calves.

Why does it matter for swimming?

The ankles play an important role in kicking, push-offs and reactive movement on poolside. Many swimmers have limited ankle movement or poor lower-leg control, particularly during loaded movement. Heel Drops help swimmers build strength and movement awareness through the ankles while improving overall lower-body control.

Perform

8–10 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall on the edge of a step
- Keep your feet hip-width apart
- Lower your heels slowly below the step
- Pause briefly under control
- Rise back up smoothly onto the balls of the feet
- Maintain balance and posture throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Dropping too quickly through the movement
- Bouncing instead of controlling the lowering phase
- Rolling the ankles excessively in or out
- Losing balance or posture
- Shortening the movement range unnecessarily

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on smooth controlled lowering and lifting through the ankles.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause longer at the bottom position or perform the movement one leg at a time while maintaining balance and control throughout.

Knee Extension + Ankle Dorsiflexion

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What does it help improve?

This movement improves flexibility and control through the hamstrings, calves and ankles while encouraging coordinated movement between the knee and ankle. It helps swimmers move through long ranges gradually and under control rather than forcing static stretches.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies on coordinated movement through the entire lower body rather than isolated joint flexibility. Restricted movement through the hamstrings or ankles can affect kicking mechanics, streamline position and overall movement quality. This exercise helps swimmers improve lower-body mobility while maintaining controlled movement patterns.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your back with one knee bent towards your chest
- Hold behind your thigh with both hands
- Slowly straighten your leg towards the ceiling
- Pull the toes towards you, then point them away
- Move smoothly and under control throughout
- Return gradually before repeating

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Forcing the leg fully straight
- Excessive tension through the neck or shoulders
- Rushed ankle movement
- Lower back lifting excessively from the floor
- Jerky or uncontrolled movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the leg extension range and focus on smooth controlled movement through the knee and ankle.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase the movement range gradually while maintaining relaxed posture and controlled lower-body movement throughout.

Side Lying Clams

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What does it help improve?

Side Lying Clams activate the muscles around the hips and glutes while improving lower-body stability and control. They help swimmers learn to move the hips without rolling or twisting through the pelvis.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Good hip control helps swimmers maintain stronger body position and more stable kicking mechanics in the water. Many swimmers compensate through the lower back or pelvis instead of controlling movement properly through the hips. This exercise helps build awareness and control around the hip joint.

Perform

10–12 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your side with knees bent and feet together
- Keep your hips stacked on top of each other
- Lift your top knee without moving the pelvis
- Keep the feet connected throughout
- Lower slowly and under control
- Stay relaxed through the upper body and shoulders

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Rolling backwards through the hips
- Separating the feet during the movement
- Rushing the lift or lowering phase
- Twisting through the trunk
- Using momentum instead of control

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on keeping the hips steady and controlled throughout.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the top position while maintaining hip stability and controlled movement throughout.

Forward Punches

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Double Arm Serratus Punch

What does it help improve?

Forward Punches activate the muscles around the shoulders and upper ribcage while improving shoulder control and movement awareness. They help swimmers learn to move the shoulder blades smoothly without shrugging or tensing through the neck.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Strong shoulder blade control is important for efficient arm movement and stable shoulder positioning in the water. Many swimmers rely too heavily on the upper traps and neck during pulling actions instead of using the muscles around the ribcage and shoulder blade effectively. This exercise helps reinforce smoother, more controlled shoulder movement.

Perform

10–12 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with both arms straight out in front
- Keep the elbows straight and shoulders relaxed
- Reach the hands forwards without bending the arms
- Allow the shoulder blades to move naturally around the ribcage
- Return slowly and under control
- Maintain relaxed posture throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Bending the elbows during the reach
- Leaning forwards excessively
- Rushed or jerky movement
- Excessive tension through the neck or upper body

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the reach distance and focus on smooth controlled shoulder movement without tension.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the end of the reach while maintaining posture and smooth shoulder blade control throughout.

External Rotation

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Shoulder External Rotation

What does it help improve?

External Rotation activates the muscles that help stabilise and control the shoulder joint. It encourages swimmers to develop better shoulder positioning and controlled rotation without compensating through the trunk or upper body.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming places repeated demands on the shoulders, particularly during pulling and recovery actions. Many swimmers rely on larger muscles while the smaller stabilising muscles around the shoulder become weak or poorly coordinated. This exercise helps improve shoulder control and supports healthier movement patterns over time.

Perform

8–10 reps

BAND GUIDANCE

Supports shoulder control and stability important for freestyle, backstroke and butterfly arm recovery.

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with elbows close to your sides
- Bend the elbows to 90 degrees
- Keep the shoulders relaxed and chest tall
- Rotate the hands outwards without moving the elbows
- Return slowly and under control
- Maintain smooth controlled movement throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Elbows drifting away from the body
- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Twisting through the trunk to create movement
- Using too much band resistance

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Use a lighter resistance band or reduce the movement range while maintaining shoulder control and posture.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the end of the rotation while maintaining posture and controlled shoulder position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Supports shoulder control and stability important for freestyle, backstroke and butterfly arm recovery.

Superman Arms

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Quadruped Arm Reach

What does it help improve?

Superman Arms activate the muscles around the shoulders, trunk and upper back while developing balance and movement control. They help swimmers learn to move one arm independently without losing posture or stability through the rest of the body.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming requires controlled arm movement while maintaining body position through the trunk and hips. Many swimmers move the arm well but lose stability elsewhere. This exercise helps swimmers improve shoulder control and body awareness while reinforcing stable movement patterns.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start on all fours with hands under shoulders
- Keep your chest facing the floor
- Reach one arm straight out in front
- Keep the body still and balanced throughout
- Return slowly and under control
- Repeat smoothly on the other side

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Twisting through the trunk or hips
- Shoulders collapsing towards the floor
- Reaching too high instead of forwards
- Rushed or unstable movement
- Losing balance or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the reach distance and focus on maintaining balance and trunk control throughout.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at full reach while maintaining posture, balance and controlled body position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Reinforces long body positioning and trunk control important for streamline and butterfly body alignment.

External Rotation

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45° Shoulder External Rotation

What does it help improve?

This exercise activates the muscles that help stabilise and control the shoulder during elevated arm positions. It encourages swimmers to maintain shoulder control while the arm moves further away from the body, increasing the challenge on posture and shoulder stability.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming strokes often place the shoulder in positions away from the body where control becomes more difficult. Many swimmers compensate by shrugging, twisting or losing shoulder position as the arm elevates. This exercise helps swimmers develop stronger shoulder control and more stable movement patterns in positions that more closely reflect swimming actions.

Perform

8–10 reps each side

BAND GUIDANCE

Use a light resistance band that allows smooth controlled movement without straining or compensating through the upper body.

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with your elbow lifted slightly away from your body at 45°
- Bend the elbow to 90 degrees
- Keep the chest tall and shoulders relaxed
- Rotate the hand backwards without moving the shoulder position
- Keep the upper arm and elbow steady throughout
- Return slowly and under control
- Maintain smooth controlled movement throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Shoulder shrugging or tension through the neck
- Twisting through the trunk to create movement
- Elbow dropping during the rotation
- Using excessive band resistance
- Rushing the movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Use a lighter resistance band or reduce the movement range while maintaining posture and shoulder control.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the end of the rotation while maintaining stable posture and controlled shoulder positioning throughout.

Glute Bridge

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Double Leg Glute Bridge

What does it help improve?

Glute Bridges activate the glutes, hips and trunk while developing lower-body stability and control. They help swimmers learn to generate movement from the hips without overusing the lower back.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Strong hip control plays an important role in body position, kicking mechanics and transferring force through the body. Many swimmers rely too heavily on the lower back during movement instead of using the hips effectively. Glute Bridges help swimmers develop better awareness and control through the hips and pelvis.

Perform

10–12 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor
- Keep your feet and knees hip-width apart
- Brace gently through the trunk before lifting
- Push through the feet to lift the hips upwards
- Form a straight line from shoulders to knees
- Lower slowly and under control

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Knees collapsing inwards or drifting outwards
- Pushing through the toes instead of the whole foot
- Rushing the movement
- Losing control during the lowering phase

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the lift height and focus on smooth controlled movement through the hips and trunk.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the top position while maintaining hip control and stable body position throughout.

Superman Legs

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Quadruped Leg Reach

What does it help improve?

Superman Legs activate the glutes, hips and trunk while developing balance and lower-body control. They help swimmers learn to move one leg independently while maintaining stability through the pelvis and upper body.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies on coordinated movement between the hips, trunk and legs while maintaining body position. Many swimmers lose pelvic control or shift excessively through the trunk when the legs move dynamically. This exercise helps swimmers improve lower-body control and movement awareness while staying balanced and organised.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start on all fours with hands under shoulders
- Keep the chest facing the floor throughout
- Reach one leg straight out behind you
- Keep the hips level and body steady
- Return slowly and under control
- Repeat smoothly on the other side

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Hips rotating or lifting excessively
- Arching through the lower back
- Reaching too high instead of long
- Losing balance or trunk position
- Rushed or uncontrolled movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the reach distance and focus on maintaining balance and pelvic control throughout.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at full reach while maintaining posture, balance and controlled lower-body position throughout.

Locked Streamline

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What does it help improve?

Locked Streamline improves shoulder positioning, trunk stability and overhead body control. It helps swimmers practise holding a strong aligned body position while reaching fully overhead without losing posture.

Why does it matter for swimming?

A strong streamline position is one of the most important shapes in swimming. Many swimmers can reach their arms overhead but struggle to maintain body tension, shoulder position or alignment at the same time. This exercise helps swimmers develop more controlled and connected streamline positioning on poolside before entering the water.

Perform

8–10 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Raise your arms straight above your head
- Squeeze the arms close to the ears
- Reach tall without shrugging the shoulders
- Keep the trunk strong and ribs controlled
- Maintain a long straight body position
- Lower slowly and under control

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Shoulders shrugging upwards
- Elbows bending or separating
- Ribcage lifting excessively
- Losing body tension or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the overhead reach slightly while maintaining posture and controlled streamline position.

Harder option (Progression)

Hold the streamline position briefly while maintaining full-body tension and controlled overhead alignment throughout.

Side Lying Leg Lifts

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Straight Leg Hip Abduction

What does it help improve?

Side Lying Leg Lifts activate the muscles around the hips and glutes while improving lower-body stability and movement control. They help swimmers develop better control through the side of the hips without compensating through the trunk or pelvis.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Good hip stability helps swimmers maintain stronger body position and more controlled kicking mechanics in the water. Many swimmers lack strength and control through the side of the hips, which can affect alignment and movement efficiency during kicking and body rotation.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your side with the body long and stacked
- Keep the hips steady and facing forwards
- Lift the top leg slowly out to the side
- Keep the leg long and controlled throughout
- Lower smoothly without dropping the leg
- Maintain balance and posture through the trunk

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Rolling backwards through the hips
- Swinging the leg instead of controlling it
- Lifting the leg too high and losing posture
- Rushed movement or poor control
- Excessive tension through the neck or shoulders

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the lift height and focus on maintaining hip stability and controlled movement throughout.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the top position while maintaining pelvic control and smooth lower-body movement throughout.

Shoulder Squeeze

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Quadruped Scap Squeeze

What does it help improve?

Shoulder Squeeze activates the muscles around the shoulder blades while improving shoulder control and upper-body stability. It helps swimmers learn to control movement through the shoulder blades without bending the elbows or collapsing through the trunk.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Good shoulder blade control helps swimmers maintain stronger posture and more stable arm movement in the water. Many swimmers rely on larger upper-body muscles while lacking control around the shoulder blades themselves. This exercise helps improve awareness, control and stability through the upper back and shoulders.

Perform

6–8 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start on all fours with hands under shoulders
- Keep the elbows straight throughout
- Let the chest lower slightly between the arms
- Push the floor away to return to the start position
- Keep the trunk steady and controlled
- Move smoothly without rushing

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Bending the elbows during the movement
- Collapsing excessively through the shoulders
- Arching through the lower back
- Rushed or jerky movement
- Losing trunk stability or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement range and focus on smooth controlled scapular movement throughout.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly in the pushed-away position while maintaining shoulder control and stable trunk position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Especially valuable for swimmers working on shoulder blade control during freestyle, backstroke and butterfly movements.

Glute Bridge+

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1 Up 1 Down Glute Bridge

What does it help improve?

Glute Bridge+ develops stronger hip control, single-leg stability and trunk coordination. It increases the challenge on the hips and pelvis by asking swimmers to maintain balance and control while working primarily through one leg.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies on coordinated force transfer through the hips and trunk while maintaining stable body position. Many swimmers can control movement well with two legs but lose stability when the demand becomes more unilateral. This exercise helps swimmers improve pelvic control, hip stability and lower-body coordination.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Lie on your back with one foot flat on the floor and the other leg lifted
- Keep the hips level and trunk steady throughout
- Push through the grounded foot to lift the hips upwards
- Form a straight line from shoulders to knees
- Lower slowly and under control
- Maintain balance and smooth movement throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Hips dropping or twisting during the lift
- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Pushing through the toes instead of the whole foot
- Losing balance or trunk control
- Rushing the lowering phase

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Return to the Double Leg Glute Bridge while focusing on hip control and smooth movement quality.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the top position while maintaining pelvic stability and controlled body position throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Single-leg hip control helps swimmers maintain better pelvic stability during kicking and push-off movements.

Bird Dog+

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Quadruped Bird Dog

What does it help improve?

Bird Dog+ develops trunk stability, balance and coordinated full-body control. It challenges swimmers to maintain posture and body position while moving the opposite arm and leg together under control.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies on coordinated movement between the upper and lower body while maintaining a stable trunk position. Many swimmers can control individual limb movements well but lose balance or posture when movements are combined. Bird Dog+ helps swimmers improve body awareness, coordination and trunk control during more demanding movement patterns.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start on all fours with hands under shoulders and knees under hips
- Keep your back flat and hips level throughout
- Reach the opposite arm and leg away from the body together
- Reach long rather than lifting too high
- Move slowly and stay balanced throughout
- Return smoothly and under control before changing sides

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Twisting through the trunk or hips
- Arching excessively through the lower back
- Reaching too high instead of long
- Losing balance or body control
- Rushed or unstable movement

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Return to Superman Arms or Superman Legs while focusing on trunk stability and controlled movement quality.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at full reach while maintaining balance, posture and controlled trunk position throughout.

Box Push Ups

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Incline Push Up

What does it help improve?

Box Push Ups activate the chest, shoulders, trunk and arms while developing upper-body pushing control and body stability. The incline position allows swimmers to practise strong push-up mechanics with better posture and movement quality.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming requires swimmers to transfer force through the upper body while maintaining trunk control and shoulder stability. Many swimmers lose body position during pushing movements by sagging through the trunk or overusing the shoulders. This exercise helps reinforce stronger body alignment and more controlled upper-body force production.

Perform

4–6 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Place your hands on a box, bench or block
- Keep your body long and strong throughout
- Lower your chest towards the surface under control
- Keep the elbows tracking naturally by your sides
- Push away strongly to return to the start
- Maintain posture and trunk control throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Sagging through the hips or lower back
- Shoulders shrugging excessively
- Elbows flaring too wide
- Rushed or uncontrolled lowering
- Losing body tension or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Increase the height of the surface to reduce the load while maintaining body position and controlled movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Reduce the surface height slightly while maintaining trunk control and smooth push-up mechanics throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Supports trunk stability and shoulder control important for maintaining body position during swimming.

Band Swim Pulses

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What does it help improve?

Band Swim Pulses activate the shoulders, upper back and pulling muscles while reinforcing controlled arm positioning. They help swimmers prepare the upper body for quicker pulling actions without using large or heavy movements too early in the warm-up.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies heavily on coordinated pulling mechanics and stable shoulder positioning. Many swimmers lose elbow position or shoulder control as movement speed increases. This exercise helps swimmers rehearse early pulling positions while maintaining posture, rhythm and upper-body control.

Perform

6–8 pulses

BAND GUIDANCE

Use a light resistance band that allows quick controlled pulses without excessive tension or loss of technique.

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Hold the band in front of you with light tension
- Begin from the arm position shown and pull the band back through a small controlled range
- Keep the elbows high and shoulders relaxed
- Use small, quick controlled pulses
- Maintain posture and trunk stability throughout
- Return smoothly without losing tension

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Pulling too aggressively or too far
- Elbows dropping during the movement
- Excessive trunk movement or leaning
- Using too much band resistance

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Use a lighter resistance band or reduce the pulse speed while maintaining posture and controlled arm position.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase pulse speed slightly while maintaining shoulder control, elbow position and smooth movement quality throughout.

Zombie Squats

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Bodyweight Squat with Reach

What does it help improve?

Zombie Squats activate the legs, hips and trunk while developing posture, balance and squat control. The forward arm position helps swimmers stay upright and organised through the movement.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming requires good lower-body control and stable posture during starts, turns and athletic movement on poolside. Many swimmers collapse forwards or lose trunk position during squatting movements. This exercise helps reinforce balance, body alignment and controlled movement through the hips and knees.

Perform

8–10 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with arms straight out in front
- Keep the chest up and trunk controlled
- Sit down into the squat under control
- Keep the feet flat and knees tracking naturally
- Push through the feet to stand back up
- Maintain smooth balanced movement throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Heels lifting from the floor
- Knees collapsing inwards
- Excessive forward lean
- Dropping too quickly into the squat
- Losing posture or trunk control

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the squat depth and focus on posture, balance and smooth controlled movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase squat depth slightly while maintaining trunk control, balance and controlled movement quality throughout.



Split Squats

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Bodyweight Split Squat

What does it help improve?

Split Squats develop lower-body strength, balance and single-leg control while improving posture and movement stability. They help swimmers control movement through the hips, knees and trunk while working one side of the body more independently.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming movements such as starts, turns and push-offs rely on strong lower-body control and force production. Many swimmers struggle to stay balanced and stable when movement demands shift more onto one leg. Split Squats help improve lower-body coordination, posture and control under movement.

Perform

8–10 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand with one foot in front and one behind
- Keep your body tall and balanced throughout
- Lower straight down under control
- Keep the front foot flat on the floor
- Push through the front foot to return to the start
- Maintain smooth controlled movement throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Leaning excessively forwards
- Front knee collapsing inwards
- Losing balance or posture
- Rushed or uncontrolled movement
- Back heel twisting excessively

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement depth and focus on balance, posture and controlled lowering.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement depth slightly while maintaining balance, trunk control and smooth movement quality throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Useful for improving leg stability and force production during starts, turns and push-offs.



Reverse Lunge

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What does it help improve?

Reverse Lunges develop lower-body strength, balance and movement control while encouraging stable posture through the hips and trunk. They help swimmers control stepping and lowering actions without losing alignment or balance.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming movements such as starts, turns and push-offs require coordinated lower-body control and the ability to stay balanced while producing force. Many swimmers struggle to control posture and hip position during stepping movements. Reverse Lunges help swimmers improve stability, coordination and movement quality through the lower body.

Perform

6–8 reps each side

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with hands on hips
- Step one foot backwards into a lunge
- Lower under control while keeping the chest tall
- Keep the front foot flat and stable
- Push through the front foot to return to the start
- Stay balanced and controlled throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Front knee collapsing inwards
- Excessive forward lean
- Losing balance or posture
- Dropping too quickly into the lunge
- Pushing off weakly from the front leg

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement depth and focus on posture, balance and smooth controlled movement.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase movement depth slightly while maintaining balance, trunk control and smooth movement quality throughout.

Neutral Grip Row

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What does it help improve?

Neutral Grip Rows activate the upper back, shoulders and pulling muscles while developing posture and shoulder control. They help swimmers practise controlled pulling movement without excessive tension through the neck or upper body.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming relies heavily on coordinated pulling mechanics and stable shoulder positioning. Many swimmers pull primarily with the arms while losing posture or shoulder control through the upper back. This exercise helps reinforce stronger pulling patterns and better upper-body organisation.

Perform

8–10 reps

BAND GUIDANCE

Use a light resistance band that allows smooth controlled pulling without excessive tension or compensation through the upper body.

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall holding the band in front of you
- Keep the chest up and shoulders relaxed
- Pull your hands back towards your sides
- Squeeze gently through the upper back
- Return slowly and under control
- Maintain posture throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Leaning backwards excessively
- Pulling too aggressively or too far
- Losing trunk posture or balance
- Using too much band resistance

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Use a lighter resistance band or reduce the pull range while maintaining posture and shoulder control.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the end of the pull while maintaining posture and controlled shoulder positioning throughout.

Prisoner Squats

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Hands-Behind-Head Squat

What does it help improve?

Prisoner Squats develop lower-body control, posture and trunk stability while increasing the challenge on upper-body positioning. The hands-behind-head position encourages swimmers to stay tall and organised through the chest and upper back during the squat.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Many swimmers lose posture through the trunk and upper body during athletic movements, particularly as movement becomes more demanding. Prisoner Squats help swimmers improve squat mechanics while reinforcing stronger posture, balance and body control through the hips and trunk.

Perform

8–10 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Stand tall with hands behind your head
- Keep the elbows wide and chest up
- Lower into the squat under control
- Keep the feet flat and knees tracking naturally
- Push through the feet to stand back up
- Maintain posture and balance throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Excessive forward lean
- Elbows collapsing forwards
- Heels lifting from the floor
- Knees collapsing inwards
- Losing trunk control or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the squat depth and focus on posture, balance and controlled movement quality.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase squat depth slightly while maintaining trunk control, posture and smooth movement throughout.

Kneeling Push Ups

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What does it help improve?

Kneeling Push Ups activate the chest, shoulders, trunk and arms while developing controlled upper-body pushing strength. The kneeling position reduces the overall load, allowing swimmers to focus on posture, control and movement quality.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming requires swimmers to transfer force through the upper body while maintaining stable body position. Many swimmers lose trunk control or shoulder position during pushing movements. Kneeling Push Ups help swimmers build stronger upper-body control and better body alignment before progressing to more demanding push-up variations.

Perform

4–6 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start on all fours with hands under shoulders
- Keep your body long and trunk controlled
- Lower down with elbows close to your sides
- Keep the chest and hips moving together
- Push the floor away under control
- Maintain posture and balance throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Sagging through the hips or lower back
- Shoulders shrugging excessively
- Elbows flaring too wide
- Rushed lowering or pushing phases
- Losing trunk tension or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the movement depth and focus on posture, trunk control and smooth pushing mechanics.

Harder option (Progression)

Slow the lowering phase slightly while maintaining body position and controlled movement quality throughout.

Band Pull Downs

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What does it help improve?

Band Pull Downs activate the upper back, shoulders and pulling muscles while reinforcing overhead control and shoulder positioning. They help swimmers connect overhead movement with controlled pulling action through the upper body.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming strokes require swimmers to move from extended overhead positions into controlled pulling actions while maintaining posture and shoulder stability. Many swimmers lose shoulder position or trunk control during this transition. This exercise helps reinforce stronger overhead organisation and more controlled pulling mechanics.

Perform

6–8 reps

BAND GUIDANCE

Use a light resistance band that allows smooth controlled pulling without excessive tension or compensation through the trunk or shoulders.

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start tall with the band held overhead
- Keep the arms long and shoulders relaxed
- Pull the band apart slightly as the hands move down and back under control
- Keep the chest tall and trunk steady
- Finish with strong shoulder positioning
- Return smoothly to the start position

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Shrugging the shoulders upwards
- Pulling too aggressively or too far
- Excessive arching through the lower back
- Losing posture or trunk stability
- Using too much band resistance

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Use a lighter resistance band or reduce the pull range while maintaining posture and shoulder control.

Harder option (Progression)

Pause briefly at the finished position while maintaining shoulder stability and controlled upper-body posture throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Helps swimmers connect overhead extension into stronger catch and pull mechanics across all strokes.

Push Ups+

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Full Push Up

What does it help improve?

Push Ups+ develop upper-body strength, trunk stability and full-body movement control. They challenge swimmers to maintain posture and body alignment while producing force through the chest, shoulders and arms.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming requires swimmers to transfer force through the upper body while maintaining stable trunk and shoulder positioning. Many swimmers can perform pushing movements but lose body control as the demand increases. Push Ups+ help swimmers develop stronger upper-body coordination and more controlled full-body movement under load.

Perform

4–6 reps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start in a strong push-up position
- Keep your body long and trunk controlled
- Lower your chest under control
- Keep the elbows tracking naturally by your sides
- Push back up without sagging through the hips
- Maintain posture and body tension throughout

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Hips sagging or lifting excessively
- Shoulders shrugging upwards
- Elbows flaring too wide
- Rushed or uncontrolled lowering
- Losing trunk stability or posture

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Return to Kneeling Push Ups or Box Push Ups while maintaining posture and controlled movement quality.

Harder option (Progression)

Slow the lowering phase or pause briefly at the bottom position while maintaining full-body control throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Supports shoulder stability and trunk control important for force transfer during butterfly and freestyle swimming.



Streamline Jumps

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Reach Ups

What does it help improve?

Streamline Jumps develop coordination, explosive extension and full-body timing while reinforcing strong streamline positioning. They help swimmers learn to move quickly and powerfully while staying controlled through the trunk and upper body.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming starts and push-offs rely on being able to produce force quickly while maintaining a tight streamlined shape. Many swimmers jump powerfully but lose posture, balance or streamline position as speed increases. This exercise helps swimmers connect explosive movement with controlled body alignment.

Perform

4–6 jumps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start with a quick controlled knee bend
- Drive upwards powerfully into streamline
- Reach tall through the body and fingertips
- Keep the trunk strong and body aligned
- Land softly and under control
- Reset fully before the next jump

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Losing streamline shape during the jump
- Heavy or noisy landings
- Jumping without full body extension
- Rushed resets between jumps
- Losing balance or trunk control on landing

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Reduce the jump height and focus on streamline position, posture and controlled landings.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase jump height and explosive speed while maintaining streamline shape and balanced landings throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Reinforces explosive push-off mechanics and stronger streamline positioning from walls and starts.



Track Start Jumps+

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Explosive Reach Ups

What does it help improve?

Track Start Jumps+ develop explosive leg drive, coordination and force transfer from the lower body through to streamline position. They challenge swimmers to produce force quickly while maintaining balance, posture and controlled landing mechanics.

Why does it matter for swimming?

Swimming starts rely on generating explosive power from a staggered stance while maintaining body control and streamline alignment. Many swimmers can jump powerfully but lose timing, posture or balance as speed increases. This exercise helps swimmers connect explosive movement with coordinated full-body control.

Perform

3–5 jumps

HOW TO DO IT WELL

- Start in a strong track start stance
- Keep your weight balanced and body organised
- Drive forwards and upwards explosively
- Swing the arms powerfully into streamline
- Land softly with the knees aligned, then finish tall and balanced
- Reset fully before repeating

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Losing balance during take-off or landing
- Collapsing through the trunk or shoulders
- Weak arm drive into streamline
- Heavy or uncontrolled landings
- Rushing between repetitions

MODIFICATIONS

Easier option (Regression)

Return to Streamline Jumps while focusing on controlled take-off mechanics and balanced landings.

Harder option (Progression)

Increase explosive speed and, where space allows, jump distance while maintaining posture, streamline shape and controlled landing mechanics throughout.

STROKE INSIGHT

Especially useful for swimmers developing stronger track start mechanics, explosive leg drive and controlled take-offs.