

Health Benefits of Swimming

Swimming is a great recreational activity for all ages and remains one of the best cardiovascular exercises. Whether done in an ocean, lakes or pool, swimming works the whole body. Many muscle groups in the arms and legs must be used, including your heart muscle. This improves the delivery of oxygen to muscles while improving other aspects of your health.

Benefits

Whether you already enjoy the sport or are considering it, here are some health benefits you gain when you swim:

- **Cardiovascular:** During a swim, your cardiovascular system benefits because you improve your body's use of oxygen without overworking your heart. The more you swim, the longer you will be able to swim. This can lower your resting heart rate and respiratory rate, making blood flow to the heart and lungs more efficient.
- **Low risk of injury:** Swimming provides a rigorous workout with a reduced chance of injuries. The buoyancy you have in the water makes it a low-impact sport that lessens the stress on bones, joints or connective tissues.
- **Increased mobility:** Athletes who have been previously injured often supplement their training with swimming to get back into shape. It is also a good workout for people who suffer from arthritis, Type 2 diabetes and other health conditions.
- **Whole-body conditioning:** Because so many muscles are used in the upper and lower body, you can tone your entire body with this one activity. The best strokes for complete body toning are freestyle, breaststroke and backstroke. Swimming will also burn calories at a rate of about three calories a mile per pound of bodyweight.
- **Psychological and emotional:** Taking a dip in water can be refreshing and freeing. If a swimmer concentrates on the water and the strokes during exercise, the rhythmic motion can bring peace and calmness. The amount of concentration it takes to not only stay afloat, but also move, allows one to release stress.

How do you get started?

- As with all new exercise, consult with a physician before beginning.
- Find a swimsuit that fits you comfortably and will not need any adjusting while you exercise. If you are swimming outdoors, remember to apply waterproof sunscreen.

- Experts suggest that beginner swimmers start with 12 to 20 minutes of swimming. Stop whenever you feel tired. You may feel more comfortable starting out with a kickboard. This is a light foam board that supports your upper body as you use your legs to propel you. Some pools may not allow this equipment, so it is good to check before you purchase anything.
- To keep yourself from becoming bored with your swimming workouts, be sure to mix up your strokes. This will also work different muscles, and you will have a more effective overall workout.
- If you find that swimming laps is not your thing, do not become discouraged with water workouts. See if your pool offers water aerobics, synchronized swimming or water polo. Also consider attending family swim and play with the kids. This way, you can still get a great workout in the pool without the routine of laps.

Resources

- Health.gov: www.health.gov
- American Heart Association: www.heart.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-LINK

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: LivingME

©2024 ComPsych[®] Corporation. All rights reserved. This information is for educational purposes only. It is always important to consult with the appropriate professional on financial, medical, legal, behavioral or other issues. As you read this information, it is your responsibility to make sure that the facts and ideas apply to your situation.