



Exercise in Water

CHALLENGE
Swim or do
water exercises
3 days each
week.



Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the days you exercise in water (swimming, water aerobics, jogging in place, water polo, surfing, etc.).
2. Read "Exercise in Water."
3. To complete the Challenge, exercise in water on at least 3 days each week this month.
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When 7-year-old Dara Torres followed her brothers to swim practice, she wasn't there to just splash around. She realized she wanted to be a swimmer. So she jumped in and never looked back.

Taking it one stroke at a time, Dara's love for swimming eventually earned her 12 medals at five Olympic Games. At the age of 41, she set two American records during the 2008 Summer Olympics. With all that time in the water, she is still fit and fast. And she plans to keep competing.

In the months before Olympic competitions, Dara spends five days a week in the pool, swimming at least 16 miles a week. And that's a lot. But you don't have to be an Olympic swimmer to benefit from getting in the pool.

Get Wet. Get Fit.

Water exercise improves...

- Cardiovascular fitness
- Blood pressure
- Upper and lower muscle strength
- Good cholesterol levels
- Energy levels
- Stamina
- Mental outlook

Make a Splash

Swimming and exercising in water is a fun activity. And just about anyone can do it. Young or old, fit or not, pregnant women, paraplegics, and people recovering from sports injuries, can all benefit from water exercise.

You can swim, do water aerobics, or play water sports, and if you can't swim laps, you can "jog" from one end to the other in a shallow pool.

Enjoy Joint-Friendly Exercise

Water exercise is a gentle way to exercise joints and muscles, making it ideal for people with arthritis or other joint problems. The further you immerse yourself, the more buoyancy you experience. When submerged to the waist, your body bears half its weight. When you're in water up to your chest, you're supporting only a quarter of your weight.

Water also provides greater resistance than when you exercise "on land." You'll also build muscle strength when you exercise in water.

Get Your Gear

One thing that makes swimming such a great activity is that it doesn't require a lot of gear. As long as you're near a body of water, all you need is a swimming suit and a towel. You might like a pair of goggles or a swimming cap. If you're interested in other water exercise activities, you might want a kickboard or water-friendly weights.



Try Swimming Laps

Lap swimming is a great way to build cardiovascular endurance and strength without jarring your joints. You'll get in shape faster by swimming a few minutes more often, rather than going to the pool once a week for an hour. Many swimming pools have scheduled times for lap swimming (where you swim in a designated lane from one end of the pool to the other.) Try lap swimming for 20 minutes. You can gradually increase the amount of time you're in the water as you get stronger.

Swimming Lessons Are Not Just For Kids

If it's been a while since you've been in the water, you might benefit from a refresher course. You could learn the proper technique for the butterfly stroke or the crawl. An experienced trainer can help you turn your time in the pool into a super workout.

If you usually swim a half-mile, break the laps into a series of sprints followed by brief rests. For example, swim five laps as fast as you can, rest for 15 seconds, and swim five more. Or try swimming a lap quickly, and then swim a more leisurely lap, and alternate between the two. Many swimming pools and gyms offer classes like this that will give you a good workout and the chance to meet other people.

Watch these videos to learn basic swimming strokes. wellness.lattc.edu/real/strokes.html

Try These Swim Strokes



The Backstroke

- The backstroke helps develop strong legs.
- Float on your back with your nose pointed up.
- Kick your legs from the hips (not your knees). Keep your legs fairly straight (but not rigid) and your toes pointed slightly to the sides. Your splash should be minimal.
- Rotate your arms in a windmill-like motion. One arm should be at your side while the other is above your head.
- Bend your arms slightly, with hands cupped.
- Your hands should enter the water above your head, pinky first.



The Crawl

- The crawl is a great all-around stroke.
- Keep your head pointed in the direction you want to go.
- Kick from your hips – not your knees.
- Trace an “S” pattern with your hands through the water with each stroke.
- Roll slightly from side to side as you take each stroke. Stretch out your body with each stroke.
- Breathe on alternate sides. Slowly exhale through your nose over three strokes.

Get Stronger With Resistance Exercise

When you're in water, you're constantly working your muscles to keep your balance. It might seem easier to move around, but you're still strengthening your heart, lungs, and muscles. Water's buoyancy and resistance can also help you improve your balance.

Many of the same exercises you might do in an aerobics class can be done in water. Walk or jog in place. Try jogging laps. Do jumping jacks, practice cross-country skiing moves, do knee lifts, or see how high you can jump out of the water. And if you add resistance such as a weighted belt, you'll get even more strength training benefits from your workout.

Ask your local community pool, YMCA, or health club if they have a water-aerobics class. Exercising in water for 30 minutes can be just as good for you as a brisk two-mile walk.

Try these water aerobics exercises. www.ehow.com/how/5229_perform-water-aerobics.html

Safety

If you don't know how to swim, don't try to hide it or be embarrassed. Your life may depend on it. So take a class, ask for help, and be prepared in case of an emergency. To make swimming even safer, choose pools where there is a lifeguard on duty. Swim with a friend, group, or training partner. Or wear a life jacket or flotation device.

Read water safety tips from the American Red Cross. <http://tinyurl.com/6usovvs>

Jump In!

There's almost no limit to the kinds of exercise you can do in water. And they all can strengthen your heart and your muscles. Pools nationwide offer water-exercise versions of traditional fitness classes. These include:

- Water yoga
- Water Pilates
- Water kickboxing
- Deep-water interval training
- Aerobics for pregnant women

And if you're interested in group water sports, there's basketball, volleyball, and water polo. You might even try “Marco Polo” (the water version of “hide and seek”). Even on-water sports such as kayaking, surfing, and boogie boarding can give you a great workout.

Swimming or exercising in water can be loads of fun and valuable for your health. Take a class, go with friends, or bring your family. Jump in, and make a splash!





Exercise In Water

CHALLENGE
Swim or do
water exercises
3 days each
week.

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you exercise in water.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you exercised in water. You must exercise in water on at least 3 days each week during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of good health.
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____		
HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____		
HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____		
HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____		
HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____	HC <input type="checkbox"/> ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this month I exercised in water

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking



Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____