

PRE-SWIM ACTIVATION ROUTINE FOR MASTERS SWIMMERS



Written by Kareena Preston

Images: Hannah Lawton, Wikipedia

Sources: Western Australian Institute of Sport, Australian Institute of Sport and attendance at High Performance Swimming Clinics conducted by Swimming Australia.

A pre-swim activation routine readies the body for swimming by;

- Increasing the mind-body connection
- Raising body temperature and heart rate
- Targeting our larger muscles to “wake up”

There are many activation routines around and this is just one example of a short, simple 5-minute routine targeting the large swimming muscles we need to recruit in order to swim safely and efficiently. This routine can be added to or changed to suit the individual swimmer.

As with any exercise routine, ease into each exercise and be gentle on yourself until you know how each exercise affects your body. You may find you are a little sore in the day or two after completing the exercises (delayed onset muscular soreness – DOMS) if you have not done this kind of activity previously. This soreness will pass and with consistency, you will have less and less soreness.

Repetition is key here, so complete the sequence each time before you swim and build up gently to as many as 20 or more repetitions of each arm and leg exercise, or until you feel looser and warm. For the squats, start with 3-5 and build from there.

PLEASE NOTE: as coaches, we are not acting in the role of therapists of any kind. Swimmers should always be encouraged to self-monitor and follow the advice of their own health care practitioner. These are general activation guidelines only.

BEGIN WITH YOUR ARMS

MOVEMENT 1:

Swing your arms side to side across the front of the body and overhead trying to keep your swings loose and not rigid.

Targets: latissimus dorsi (lats).



MOVEMENT 2:

Swing arms back to front, crossing in front of body and behind body. Swing high to activate the correct areas.

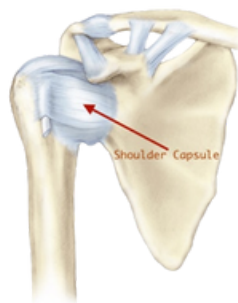
Targets: pectoralis major (front of chest) and rhomboids (between the shoulder blades)



MOVEMENT 3:

Gently swing arms backwards, starting slowly and increasing momentum as your shoulder loosens. You may find it easier to swing one arm and then the other arm. Keep arms straight and close to the body.

Targets: shoulder capsule and pectoralis major.



MOVEMENT 4:

As above but moving in the opposite direction.

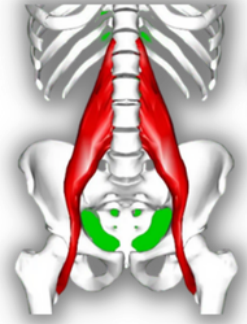
Targets; shoulder capsule and rhomboids.

MOVE ON TO YOUR LEGS

MOVEMENT 5:

Grab hold of a pole or wall for stability on this one. Swing your leg from front to back keeping hips square and facing forwards. Start slowly so you don't over do it. As your leg loosens off, try to straighten the knee and swing higher in each direction.

Targets: hip flexors and hamstrings



MOVEMENT 6:

You will still need a pole or a wall for stability on this one. Swing your leg side to side across the front of you, keeping your hips square to the pole.

Be gentle with the groin, as many of us are tight here!

Targets: ilio-tibial band (side of upper leg) and groin (inside leg).



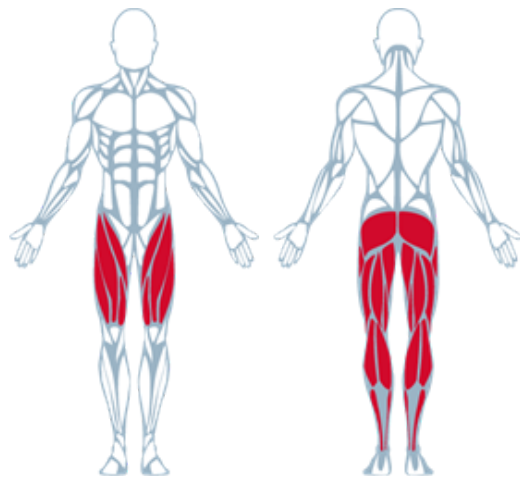
FINISH WITH SQUATS

MOVEMENT 7:

Use a bench or chair to sit on, if you are unstable when you squat. Stand with feet at shoulder width apart. Drive hips backwards, keeping the spine straight, the torso upright and heels on the ground. Track knees over the toes as you squat down. Only squat as far as you can maintain this form. Be mindful of how many you do. Start with 3-5 and build slowly from there.

TIP: look at something ahead of you so you don't bend forward.

Targets: Ankles, calves, knees, hips and glutes.



Some swimmers add in other variations of land warm up like skipping or cord work, but the above is fairly standard.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact Coach and Swimmer Development Coordinator, Kareena Preston on coaching@mswa.asn.au