



Get swimming

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Do you know how to swim?
How about just standing around in chest-deep water?
Good.

Now that local beaches, both fresh and saltwater, no longer being quite so hospitable, getting into the local pool is a terrific alternative for fitness, programs, learning or improving to swim and fun, of course. The health and fitness benefits of swimming, and failing that, water-based exercise programs, are unmatched. Indeed, swimming has been called the perfect exercise because it provides an all-over body workout with nearly all of your muscles being used.

There are at least three reasons you should go ‘jump in the water’ for a swim. First there is the fact that it may save a life one day, maybe even your own. That’s great, but swimming is also great fun, too. And not least are the health benefits that accrue to swimming and water-based exercise.

Swimming works your whole body, improving heart and lungs, muscle strength, endurance, posture and flexibility all at the same time. Your cardiovascular system in particular benefits because swimming improves your body’s use of oxygen without overworking your heart.

These are the first benefits. There are more.

Swimming and water-based exercise will help with arthritis, joint and low back pain. Because of support from the water, joints will also benefit. And swimming is a great calorie-burner, too.

Equally important, if less obvious, are the stress-busting advantages of working out in water. swimming is very relaxing because it allows oxygen to flow to your muscles and forces you to regulate your breathing.

Other advantages of choosing the pool for fitness include a low risk of injury. Little or no stress on the bones, joints and connective tissue means damage is much less likely than working out on a hard surface. Swimming also helps to tone muscles, including the heart. As you exercise your heart becomes stronger and more efficient in pumping. In turn, this pushes oxygen more effectively to the body. As you become fitter and are able to swim longer, your resting heart rate and respiratory rate will be reduced, making the heart and lungs work better.

Fitness activity in water provides excellent low- (or no-) impact therapy, ideal for improving certain types of injuries or conditions. If you are not sure about how to benefit from these exercises, talk to your doctor who will help you decide on how to make the most of the workout.

Maybe you have not yet learned to swim? Whatever your age, it is never too late to join the fun, and to get fit of the sport. Get started by visiting your local Rec Centre and sign up for group or individual lessons. You will never regret the decision.

***Learn to swim.
You will never regret the decision.***