

Indoor Swim Training Plan

Technique

Band work – this is the best possible method to maintaining technique of the arms without a swimming pool.

What do I need?

- Elasticated Paddles, TheraBand or an old inner tube
- Something to attached them to.

How?

This exercise is about activating the muscles you use during the catch phase. Keeping your hands in line with your forearm, slowly pull against the resistance keeping the elbow high. The elbow's "eye", at the same time, should slowly rotate inwards to face towards the ground. The elbow should stay at its original height or as near to it as possible. The elbow will move slightly more out to the side. Refer to the video explanation for a more detail. Stop once the forearm has reached a 90-degrees.

If you are new to this exercise it will work the shoulders. If your shoulders are finding this drill really difficult, it could indicate that some work on your catch position could be needed as this drill should replicate a good swimming catch.

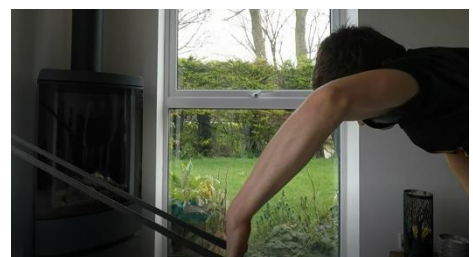
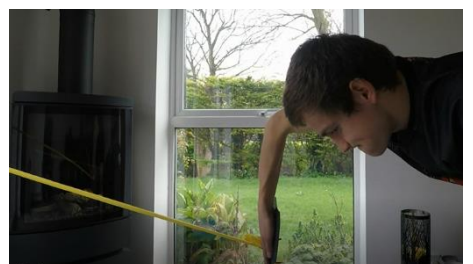
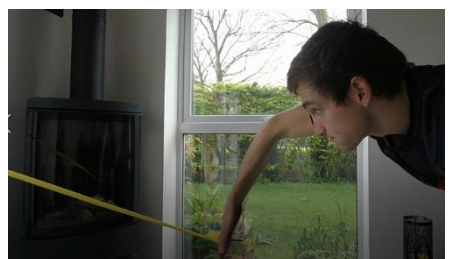
Once you have done the above, lock both elbows into the side of the body. Without moving your elbows, straighten the arms backwards until they are straight.

Now it's time to combine the two and pull through fully to complete a full swim stroke cycle (without the recovery phase). For this, once at 90 degrees, pull the forearm backwards maintaining elbow height and finally straighten the forearm until it is level with the body.

If you are using an inner tube you will only be able to get a small range of movement but it is enough to activate the muscles. DO NOT OVER DO THE RANGE OF MOVEMENT BECAUSE IT WILL OVERLOAD THE SHOULDER.

Why?

This exercise engages the muscles in your upper body without needing a pool. It can also act as an amazing warm up technique. I include this before every race I undergo. It is particularly useful if the water is cold or if there is no swim warm up. In 2017 there was a



warm up for a triathlon, but the water was cold and it was non wetsuit conditions. I was one of few that opted not to enter the water and I used this dry side warm up instead. Because my competitors body temperature dropped too much before the start of the race, I was able to get a clean start and one of the fastest swims of the day.

Variations

Double arm catch isolation – using both arms, pull down with the forearm until the elbow joint reaches around a 90-degree bend.

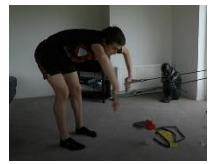
Single arm catch isolation - using one arm, pull down with the forearm until the elbow joint reaches around a 90-degree bend.

Double arm elbow extensions - Lock both elbows into the side of the body. Without moving your elbows, straighten the arms backwards until they are straight

Double arm full pull throughs – start with the “Double arm catch isolation” and push through fully as if you were swimming.

Single arm full pull throughs – start with the “Single arm catch isolation” and push through fully as if you were swimming.

Swimming action – repeat the “Single arm full pull through” but alternate the arms to mirror a swimming action.



Session structure:

Level	Double arm catch isolation	Single arm catch isolation	Double arm elbow extensions	Double arm full pull throughs	Single arm full pull throughs	Swimming action
1	10	12	10	10	12	2*20 (5 fast)
2	15	20	15	20	15	2*30 (7 fast)
3	20	30	20	20	20	2*40 (10 fast)

Conditioning

Equipment

- Yoga matt (potentially)
- Small Dumbbell or water bottle filled with water.

1) Side plank

How?

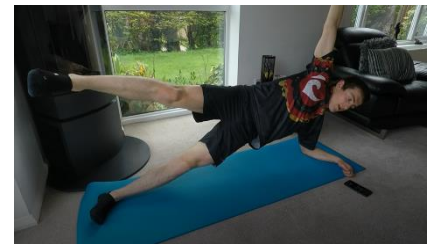
Position the body so it is on the side. One arm is facing the ceiling, the other is under the shoulder bent at the elbow. The idea is to balance on the bent arm and the side of your foot raising the hip off the floor. The legs can be split to offload pressure on the side of your foot as you can now balance with both feet.



Variations

Bent knee – bend your knee to 90 degrees and use the knee/lower leg to balance on instead of the foot. This will help if you find this exercise difficult.

Leg high- raise the non-balancing leg into the air to add resistance.



Why?

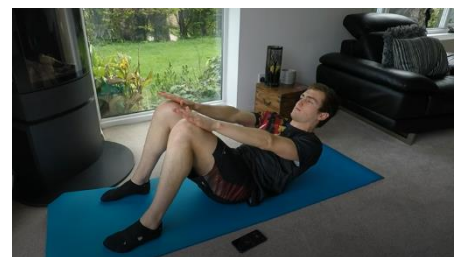
Whilst swimming, the body is moved in a side-to-side motion. This means that the body has to be strong at supporting itself when you are on your side. If this strength is compromised you can “fish tail” (legs move from side-to-side opposite to the body) or drop the hips and the legs. This is particularly important for triathletes as we have a lot of dense muscle mass in the legs which can make it harder for us to keep the legs high in the water anyway.



2) Small Sit ups

How?

Start in the usual sit up position. This is lying on your back with your leg bent and the feet on the floor. Straighten the arms and rest the palms on your thighs. Slowly glide your hands up your legs moving towards your knee. Go as high as you can, hold that top position for an extra second, and then slowly come down.



Variations

Weighted – hold a light weight in the hands and push this up your thighs to add additional resistance. THIS SHOULD BE SLOW, if you are needing to “jolt” or rush the movement, the weight should be removed.

Why?

This slow and gradual movement sifts the load between all of your main core muscles. This allows for a strong synchronised movement of the core. This can also help with things such as tumble turns.



3) Kicking legs

Lie on your back with the back pushed into the ground. Raise both legs off the ground and emulate a kicking action that you would use in the pool. If your back can't maintain contact with the ground refer to the variations.

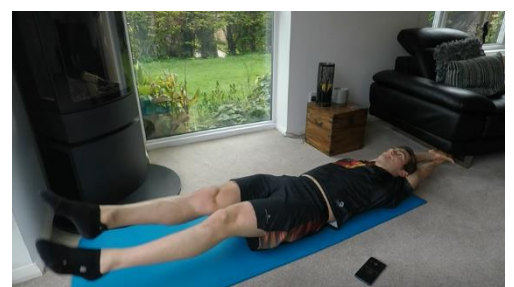
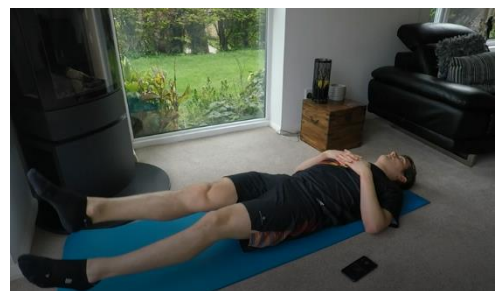
Variations

Bend arms – raise the back off the floor using the elbows. The hands should be in contact with the hips. Maintain a straight back

Streamline position – place the arms into a streamline position to make the exercise even more specific and to add more stress to the core as it is now extended.

Why?

This is your kicking action. Therefore, you want a stable base to minimise the loss of energy from wobbling. This causes drag and inefficient transfer of energy to propulsion.



4) Superman

How?

On your hands and knees, slowly extend your left arm and right leg outwards. Try your best to prevent the hips dropping to one side or the body twisting in any way. Return to the starting position and repeat for the other side.



Why?

In swimming we are always working in opposites. For example, the right arm and the left leg will work together to rotate the body. Therefore, your core strength and control across the body in a diagonal sense is very important.

5) Triceps raises

How?

Again, on your hands and knees. Lift one arm off the floor and lock the elbow into the side of your body. Straighten your arm by contracting the triceps. Use your water bottle weight or your dumbbell to add resistance.

Why?

This is the last part of your swimming stroke phase and can account for a large percentage of the overall propulsion. It is important therefore that your triceps are strong for this section. It is important to really squeeze the triceps when the arm is fully straight.



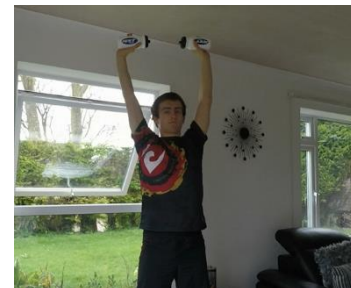
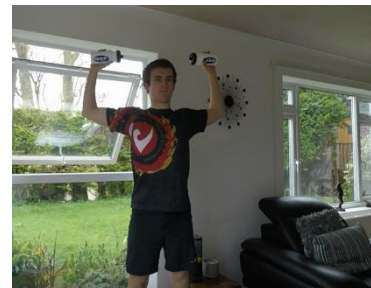
Shoulder press

How?

Stand straight in a "T" position. Bend the arms to 90 degrees with the fingers pointing to the ceiling. Raise the arm up until straight. Hold for a second, and then return to the starting position. Use your water filled water bottles or dumbbells to add resistance.

Why?

This helps condition the shoulders for the recovery phase where the arms are going above the head. This can help prevent future shoulder niggles and help maintain form when the muscles start fatiguing.



6) Press ups

How?

Both hands and feet should be in contact to the ground. The legs and back are straight. The hands should be a little wider than shoulder width. Bend the arms at the elbow lowering the chest to the floor.

Variation

Bent knee – the same position however, bend the knees and use them as the pivot point.

Tighter width of hands – have the hands at shoulder width.

Why?

This exercise works the pecs and triceps which are important to swimming. It also requires core strength to maintain a straight line through the ankles, hips and shoulders throughout the exercise.



Session structure

I would undergo every exercise for 1-minute total. This includes work periods and rest. The goal should be to do as much as you can within that time period whilst also resting before going into the next exercise.

Level	Work time	Rest
1	35	25
2	45	15
3	50	10

You can also experiment with other work-to-rest intervals such as 20 seconds work and 10 seconds rest. This can then be repeated to make the time up to a minute. The freedom of this structure is that you can adapt each exercise to maximise the minute time period. You may be really strong at small sit ups, so do 50 seconds work and 10 seconds rest. However, you might find press ups challenging, so do 35 seconds on 25 seconds off.

Flexibility

1) Floor angel

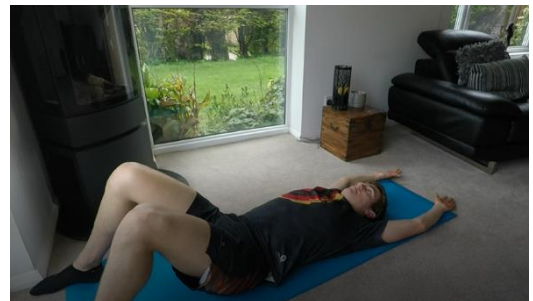
How?

Lie on the floor with bent legs (sit up position). Place the elbows out to the side parallel with the shoulders. The hands should be pointing towards the ceiling. Slowly allow the arms to fall toward the ground (away from the feet) until they touch the floor. If you are able to do this (many will not be able to) you can try moving you hands towards a streamline position. However, you must make sure the back, shoulders, elbows and wrists are all still in contact with ground.

Hold the stretch wherever that may be in the sequence and then return to the beginning to reset the stretch.

Why?

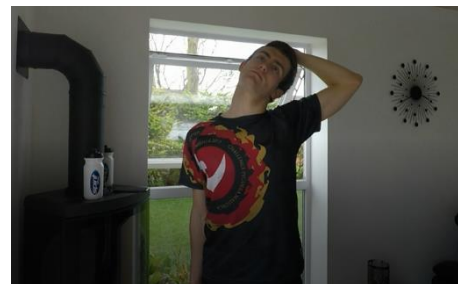
This helps monitor your upper body range of motion and flexibility. This range is vital for swimming as it is necessary for efficient front crawl technique. This exercise is also a common screening exercise to evaluate how physically competent athletes are and how much they are at risk of getting injured.



2) Neck stretch

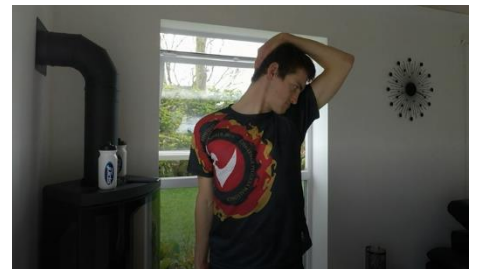
How?

With a nice tall posture, slowly drop the head towards one of your shoulders. You can use your hand to support this movement BUT DO NOT PULL. Repeat for the other side. After this, repeat the stretch for both sides however, this time, turn your head towards the direction you are stretching.



Why?

The muscles associated with this stretch commonly become tight in swimming as they are important in raising the arms above the head and the breathing action.



3) Arrow head

How?

In a tall stance, straighten out arms to the side. Move them backwards and then slowly move the arms in front of you. When the hands come in contact with each other cross them over. Maintaining good posture, push the arms out in front of you. Then lower your head to look at the ground.

Why?

This is a great stretch if you are doing a lot of typing in your day job. It allows for a satisfying stretch in between the shoulder blades. This is another area susceptible tightness.



Examples of sessions

There is no reason why you can't mix this all up to create your own sessions. If this is your first time doing these types of exercise be cautious. Below I have set up example sessions for 3 different levels.

Level 1 (15-20 mins)

Level	Double arm catch isolation	Single arm catch isolation	Double arm elbow extensions	Double arm full pull throughs	Single arm full pull throughs	Swimming action
1	10	12	10	10	12	2*20 (5 fast)

The rest after the cords work should allow for full recovery.

Exercise	Work	Rest
Side plank	35	25
Small Sit ups	35	25
Kicking legs	35	25
Superman	35	25
Triceps raises	35	25
Shoulder press	35	25
Press ups	35	25

Exercise	Stretch period
Floor angel (*2)	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch right	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch left	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch right facing to the right	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch left facing to the left	20-30 seconds
Arrow head (*2)	20-30 seconds

Level 2 (25-30 minutes)

Level	Double arm catch isolation	Single arm catch isolation	Double arm elbow extensions	Double arm full pull throughs	Single arm full pull throughs	Swimming action
2	15	20	15	20	15	2*30 (7 fast)

The rest after the cords work should allow for full recovery.

Exercise	Work	Rest
Side plank	45	15
Small Sit ups	45	15
Kicking legs	45	15
Superman	45	15
Triceps raises	45	15
Shoulder press	45	15
Press ups	45	15

Repeat the above for a second time.

Exercise	Stretch period
Floor angel (*2)	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch right	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch left	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch right facing to the right	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch left facing to the left	20-30 seconds
Arrow head (*2)	20-30 seconds

Level 3 (30-40 Minutes)

Level	Double arm catch isolation	Single arm catch isolation	Double arm elbow extensions	Double arm full pull throughs	Single arm full pull throughs	Swimming action
3	20	30	20	20	20	2*40 (10 fast)

The rest after the cords work should allow for full recovery.

Exercise	Work	Rest
Side plank	50	10
Small Sit ups	50	10
Kicking legs	50	10
Superman	50	10
Triceps raises	50	10
Shoulder press	50	10
Press ups	50	10

Repeat the above 2-3 times

Exercise	Stretch period
Floor angel (*2)	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch right	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch left	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch right facing to the right	20-30 seconds
Neck stretch left facing to the left	20-30 seconds
Arrow head (*2)	20-30 seconds