

web workout

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LEG BLAST

With the possible exception of Ian Thorpe, all of us could probably develop a stronger freestyle kick. Swimmers of all shapes, speeds and goal orientation can benefit from the balance and stabilizing effect of a more consistent kicking pattern.

At the very least, a better kick assists in keeping the caboose higher in the water during longer workouts and sets. For competitive swimmers, this translates into less resistance and faster times in swim meets. For triathletes, it means better leg conditioning that will help make the swim of a triathlon less taxing on the quads, glute and hamstring, which are more critically needed for the bike and run. For fitness swimmers, kicking more helps strengthen and activate more muscle fibers in the legs and enables them to get more out of a training session.

This workout has but one purpose: to intensely train the legs. Yardage is sacrificed for increased leg intensity. Intervals and sets are based on time so that swimmers of varying speeds can start and finish sets at the same time.

workout notes

>>> The Warm-Up. This 10-minute swim can consist of 25 free swim and 25 free kick on the side posture, with the bottom arm extended toward the wall and the top arm resting on the hip. Alternate sides every other kick lap.

>>> Over-Kicking Drill. Most efficient kickers maintain a six-beat kick for stroke cycle during swimming. The effect is much like the waltz. The rest of us mere mortals alternate between one and five beats. The effect is a cross between hip-hop dancing and a one-legged man in a butt-kicking contest. Since kicking with a kickboard usually produces a steady kicking rhythm, you can start this drill with a 100 kick, then follow with 8x25s of over-kick swimming.

Each 25 should start with a steady nonstop kicking during the underwater breakout. Upon surfacing, maintain the nonstop kick while taking three strokes without a breath. Hold on to the nonstop kicking pattern during the 25. The idea is to eliminate any hitches in the kicking rhythm due to breathing mechanics. Most of us tend to eliminate kicks when we breathe. After the 15-minute drill, Swim five minutes (200 to 300 yards) easy, but try to kick a tiny bit more than the usual leg-dragging, toe-scraping easy swims.

>>> Vertical Kick and Wall Kick 100s. This 20-

the workout

warm-up

••• 10-MINUTE FREESTYLE

Swim 25
Kick 25

over-kicking drill (15 minutes)

- **100 KICK** (with kickboard if desired), rest 15 to 30 seconds
- **8x25s** over-kick swimming, resting 10 seconds between each
- **REST 15 TO 60 SECONDS** and repeat set for 15 minutes
- **SWIM 5 MINUTES** (200 to 300) with awareness on kick

100s with vertical and horizontal wall kicking (20 minutes)

- **SWIM 25 EASY**
- **ASSUME VERTICAL POSTURE AND KICK FREESTYLE IN PLACE** (24 kicks or eight rotations)
- **SWIM EASY SECOND 25**
- **SUBMERGE AND WITH HANDS UNDERWATER ON WALL, KICK HARD HORIZONTALLY** (24 kicks)
- **SWIM EASY THIRD 25**
- **REPEAT VERTICAL KICKING**
- **FINISH EASY 25**
- **REST 30 TO 60 SECONDS BETWEEN EACH 100**

grand finale

- **SWIMMER'S CHOICE OF 100s, 200s, OR 400s**, with 30 to 120 seconds rest
- **FIRST QUARTER** of chosen distance is done easy
- **SECOND QUARTER** with increased kicking intensity
- **THIRD QUARTER** with over-kick drill
- **FOURTH QUARTER** is sprint

minute set consists of 100s with 30 to 60 seconds rest between each. Start the 100 and swim first 25 easy (kick should be similar to above mentioned easy-swim kick). Assume a vertical posture in the water and kick freestyle in place while rotating sides every three kicks. Kick for 24 kicks, or eight rotations, and swim easy second 25.

Submerge and place hands underwater on wall without grabbing the side and kick horizontally as hard as possible for 24 kicks. Try to remember your first group swimming lesson. Swim easy third 25, repeat vertical kicking. Finish last 25 easy.

>>> Put It All Together Final Set. Choose among 100s, 200s or 400s as the distance for the final set and divide distance by four. The first quarter of the chosen distance is swum at easy pace with easy (but now more emphasized) kick. The second quarter is swum with an increased effort just on the kick. The third quarter is done as over-kicking drill, and the final quarter is as close to a sprint as possible. Rest 30 to 120 seconds between each distance.

