

# Take your swim workouts to the next level

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(HealthDay)—Swimming is a great way to stay in shape while having fun and without stressing your joints.

If you're ready to take your lap swimming to the next level, consider joining a masters swimming program. U.S. Masters Swimming is a nonprofit that promotes the activity and works with 1,500 clubs around the United States. It's open to beginners as well as competitive swimmers and offers tons of online information, including charts to track your sessions and swim workouts for people who don't live near one of their member clubs.

Another way to step up a swim program is with water equipment to boost strength [training](#). Hand paddles increase the [resistance](#) of each stroke, giving you a more challenging [workout](#). Hydro-bells function like dumbbells but come in lightweight designs that enable water to flow through and provide resistance. Chest flys, arm curls and triceps kickbacks are just three of the exercises you can do with them.

A simple flotation belt enables you to stand upright while doing upper body work or more easily tread water for a leg workout. Consider a training session with an instructor to polish your stroke technique for maximum effectiveness.

Even as you ramp up your swim sessions, remember the basics, such as goggles to protect your eyes. You can even have them made with vision correction if you need it. And always bracket your [water](#) workouts with a warm-up and cool-down.

Finally, keep in mind that because swimming is not a weight-bearing exercise, you'll also want to include [resistance training](#) for bone health in your overall workout schedule.

**More information:** To learn more about the advantages of swimming and find a swim club near you, visit the website of [U.S. Masters Swimming](#).

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