

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE PLAN

DISTANCE SWIMMER STRENGTH PLAN



A strength-endurance gym programme for distance swimmers — durable shoulders, core endurance and the strength to hold form deep into a long race.

HOW TO USE THIS

BUILT TO LAST THE RACE

Distance swimming is won by holding efficient technique when fatigue sets in. The gym's job here is not maximal power — it is durable shoulders, core endurance and strength-endurance, so the stroke stays strong over thousands of metres. It also builds the resilience to absorb a high training volume without breaking down.

- **STRENGTH-ENDURANCE**
Strength that holds up over long sets and long races.
- **SHOULDER DURABILITY**
Resilient shoulders for high weekly mileage.
- **CORE ENDURANCE**
A body line that stays connected when fatigued.
- **POSTURAL STRENGTH**
A strong mid-back to keep the catch strong late on.
- **INJURY RESILIENCE**
Robust tissue that absorbs a heavy training load.

HOW TO RUN THE PLAN

Two to three gym sessions per week, around your pool mileage.
Work through the three phases in order — four weeks each, twelve in total.
Favour moderate loads and higher reps — strength that lasts.
Keep it sustainable: this sits on top of a big week in the water.

PHASE 1 / WEEKS 1-4

FOUNDATION

Build a balanced, full-body base with durable shoulders.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Goblet squat Higher-rep squatting — strength-endurance from the start.	3 × 12	LEGS
Romanian deadlift Posterior-chain strength for the kick and body line.	3 × 10	HINGE
Inverted row Mid-back strength for posture and a durable catch.	3 × 12	PULL
Press-up Balanced, repeatable pressing strength.	3 × 12	PUSH
Face pull / band pull-apart Cuff and scap health — vital for high mileage.	3 × 15	SHOULDER
Side plank Lateral core endurance for a stable body line.	3 × 30s / side	CORE
Dead bug Anti-extension control over longer sets.	3 × 10 / side	CORE

PHASE GOAL

Build a durable base. Higher reps and shoulder health from day one.

STRENGTH- ENDURANCE

Moderate loads and higher reps — strength that lasts.

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EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Goblet or front squat Moderate load, controlled tempo, repeatable.	3 × 12	LEGS
Single-arm row Balanced pulling endurance side to side.	3 × 12	PULL
Lat pulldown Volume through the catch-and-pull pattern.	3 × 12	PULL
Dumbbell bench Repeatable pressing strength.	3 × 12	PUSH
Loaded carry Whole-body, posture and grip endurance.	3 × 40m	CARRY
Step-up Single-leg strength-endurance for the kick.	3 × 12 / leg	LEGS
Plank Hold a connected line under fatigue.	3 × 45s	CORE ENDURANCE

PHASE GOAL

Strength that lasts. Moderate loads, higher reps, steady tempo.

PHASE 3 / WEEKS 9-12

RESILIENCE & POWER-ENDURANCE

Add repeatable power without losing durability.

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EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Kettlebell swing Repeatable explosive hip extension.	4 × 12	HIP DRIVE
Box step-down Eccentric control for knee and hip resilience.	3 × 8 / side	CONTROL
Med ball slam (circuit) Repeatable explosive pulling action.	4 × 8	POWER-ENDURANCE
Loaded carry Posture and trunk endurance under load.	3 × 50m	CARRY
Pull-up Pulling strength-endurance — leave two in reserve.	3 × max-2	PULL
Hollow hold A long, braced, connected line.	3 × 40s	CORE ENDURANCE
Weighted streamline hold Hold a strong streamline when tired.	3 × 25s	STATIC HOLD

PHASE GOAL

Durable and repeatable. Power you can produce again, late in a race.

THE DISTANCE RULES

Distance swimming rewards durability over flash. These six rules build strength that lasts and a body that absorbs the mileage.

- 01** **STRENGTH THAT LASTS**
Distance needs strength-endurance, not maximal power. Favour moderate loads and higher reps.
- 02** **PROTECT THE SHOULDERS**
High mileage punishes shoulders. Prioritise cuff, scap and posture work in every week.
- 03** **CORE ENDURANCE OVER FLASH**
Long holds and control beat flashy ab work for holding a body line over thousands of metres.
- 04** **CONSISTENCY BEATS INTENSITY**
Steady, repeatable sessions build distance durability far better than occasional hard ones.
- 05** **MANAGE THE VOLUME**
The gym sits on top of big pool mileage. Keep it sustainable — fatigue is cumulative.
- 06** **KEEP MOBILITY**
Range of motion protects against the wear of endless repetition. Never skip it.

READY TO GO THE DISTANCE?

WORK WITH A COACH WHO KNOWS THE DISTANCE



A printed plan only takes you so far. Performance coaching for distance and competitive swimmers across Hertfordshire and North London — efficiency and endurance built around your events and your mileage.

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