

12-WEEK GYM PROGRAMME

MASTERS BREASTSTROKE DRYLAND STRENGTH



A 12-week gym programme for masters swimmers — building explosive power, plyometrics and static holds for a stronger, faster breaststroke whip kick.

— HOW TO USE THIS

WHY BREASTSTROKE TRAINS DIFFERENTLY

Breaststroke is the one stroke where the legs do most of the work — but not all of it. Most of the pace comes from an explosive whip kick: a fast hip and knee extension with the feet everted, driven by the adductors, glutes and quads. But the arms add real propulsion too through a powerful in-sweep, so they need genuine strength. The priorities are clear — legs and hips first, with a strong pull and a braced core close behind.

- **EXPLOSIVE HIP & LEG EXTENSION**

The whip-kick drive — trained with hinges, jumps and swings.

- **ADDUCTORS & GLUTES**

Kick power and pelvic stability through the propulsive phase.

- **PULLING POWER**

A strong, lat-driven in-sweep that adds real propulsion to the stroke.

- **HIP & ANKLE MOBILITY**

The recovery and foot eversion that make a legal, efficient kick.

- **ANTI-EXTENSION CORE**

Holding a tight streamline through the pull-out and glide.

- **KNEE RESILIENCE**

Loaded, controlled strength protects against breaststroke knee.

HOW TO RUN THE PLAN

Two gym sessions per week, sitting alongside your pool training.

Work through the three phases in order — four weeks each, twelve in total.

Each phase earns the next: build tissue tolerance before you add speed, and add load before you add jump height or volume.

FOUNDATION

1

Build tendon and joint tolerance before you add any speed.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Goblet squat Upright torso, controlled descent — grooves clean knee tracking.	3 × 10	STRENGTH
Romanian deadlift The hip-hinge pattern behind every explosive kick later on.	3 × 8	HINGE
Copenhagen plank Direct adductor strength — the prime mover of the whip kick.	3 × 20s / side	ADDUCTORS
Glute bridge / hip thrust Pelvic drive and posterior-chain strength.	3 × 12	GLUTES
Inverted row Horizontal pull — mid-back strength for posture and the catch.	3 × 10	PULL
Press-up Pressing base for the in-sweep and a fast arm recovery.	3 × 10	PRESS
Pallof press Anti-rotation — teaches a stable, quiet trunk.	3 × 10 / side	CORE
Dead bug Anti-extension control for the streamline position.	3 × 8 / side	CORE

PHASE GOAL

Earn the right to load. Quality reps, full range, no fatigue-driven form breakdown.

STRENGTH & POWER

Heavier, lower reps, plus your first dose of explosive intent.

2

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Trap-bar deadlift or squat Heavy and controlled — the base that power is built on.	4 × 5	MAX STRENGTH
Split squat Single-leg strength and balance through full hip range.	3 × 8 / 1 leg	UNILATERAL
Banded lateral walk + squeeze Loads the hip the way the kick's out-sweep demands.	3 × 15	ADDUCTORS
Single-arm dumbbell row Heavy unilateral pull — drives the powerful in-sweep.	3 × 8	PULL
Lat pulldown Loads the catch-and-pull pattern that powers the stroke.	3 × 8	VERTICAL PULL
Overhead press Shoulder strength that supports a long, locked streamline.	3 × 8	PRESS
Med ball slam or chest pass Explosive intent at low load — move it fast, reset, repeat.	3 × 6	POWER
Hollow hold First static hold — the braced trunk of a tight streamline.	3 × 20-30s	STATIC CORE
Tempo box step-down Slow eccentric — builds the knee resilience masters need.	3 × 8	KNEE CONTROL

PHASE GOAL

Bridge from strength to speed. Lift heavy, then express it fast with the med ball.

POWER & PLYOMETRICS

The explosive work — kept low-volume, high-quality, fully recovered.

3

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Box jump (step down) Step down between reps — never bound off. Land soft and quiet.	4 × 4	PLYO
Broad jump Triple extension that mirrors the kick's drive phase.	4 × 3	HORIZONTAL POWER
Trap-bar jump / KB swing Loaded explosive hip extension — the gym's closest kick match.	4 × 6	HIP DRIVE
Lateral bound Explosive side-to-side — power through the hip the kick uses.	3 × 4 / side	ADDUCTOR POWER
Pull-up Add weight if strong, use a band if not — top-end pulling power.	3 × 5	PULL
Med ball overhead slam Fast, lat-driven action — power for the catch and in-sweep.	3 × 6	EXPLOSIVE PULL
Weighted streamline hold Overhead, braced and long — strength in the race position.	3 × 20s	STATIC HOLD
Wall sit Static leg hold that builds the kick's tolerance to fatigue.	3 × 30-45s	ISOMETRIC

PHASE GOAL

Be fast, not tired. Stop a set the moment height or speed drops — that is the workout done.

THE MASTERS RULES

Adult swimmers respond to the same training as anyone — they just need to respect recovery and joints a little more. These five rules keep the plan working for the long haul.

01 WARM UP, EVERY TIME

Five to eight minutes of hip openers, ankle mobility and band activation before you touch a jump. Cold plyometrics are how masters knees and Achilles get hurt.

02 SEPARATE HARD FROM HARD

Keep plyometric sessions at least a day away from your heaviest pool kick sets. Two maximal stimuli on tired tissue is where overuse starts.

03 MIND THE BREASTSTROKE KNEE

If the knee flares, drop the deep-knee jumps and lean on hip-hinge power — swings and trap-bar work give the same drive with far less joint stress.

04 PROGRESS ONE THING AT A TIME

Add load before you add jump height or volume. Chasing both at once is the fastest route to a niggle that costs you weeks.

05 RECOVERY IS TRAINING

Sleep, protein and a day between sessions are doing real work. The adaptation happens between sessions, not during them.

HERTS SWIM COACH

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