

PROGRESSIVE STRENGTH PLAN

AGES 16+ STRENGTH TRAINING

A progressive strength programme for older age-group swimmers — structured, loaded training on solid technique, bridging youth land work into senior-level performance.

— HOW TO USE THIS

BUILDING SENIOR-LEVEL STRENGTH

By 16, most swimmers are physically ready for structured, progressive strength training — provided the technical foundation is there. This is where land training starts to look like proper programming: phases, progressive load, real strength and power. It is still built on sound technique, introduced sensibly and managed around a heavy pool and school week. The principles that protected younger swimmers still apply — they have simply earned more.

■ PROGRESSIVE STRENGTH

Structured, loaded strength built phase by phase.

■ TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

Every lift earns its load with sound, controlled form.

■ EXPLOSIVE POWER

Convert strength into speed off the blocks and walls.

■ ROBUST SHOULDERS & CORE

Durable, swim-ready strength through the trunk and shoulders.

■ SMART LOAD MANAGEMENT

Strength sits inside a big pool and school week — manage fatigue.

HOW TO RUN THE PLAN

Two to three gym sessions per week, around your pool training.

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

Warm up and mobilise before every session. Add load only when the movement stays clean — form leads, weight follows.

PHASE 1 / WEEKS 1-4

FOUNDATION

Confirm technique under load and build a balanced, full-body base.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Goblet or back squat Own the squat under moderate load — clean, full-range reps.	3 × 8	LEGS
Romanian deadlift Hip hinge with a flat back — the base of all pulling power.	3 × 8	HINGE
Press-up or dumbbell bench Pressing strength through a full range of motion.	3 × 10	PUSH
Dumbbell row Balanced pulling strength for posture and the catch.	3 × 10	PULL
Overhead press (moderate) Strict overhead strength and stability — no arching.	3 × 8	SHOULDER
Pallof press Anti-rotation control under load.	3 × 10 / side	CORE
Dead bug Anti-extension — a braced, connected trunk.	3 × 8 / side	CORE

PHASE GOAL

Confirm technique under load and build a balanced, full-body base.

STRENGTH

2

Build maximal strength with progressive load and strict form.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Back squat or trap-bar deadlift Heavier, but always a controlled, technically sound rep.	4 × 5	MAX STRENGTH
Romanian deadlift Progress the load as the hinge stays sharp.	3 × 6	HINGE
Weighted pull-up or pulldown Top-end pulling strength for a powerful catch.	4 × 6	PULL
Dumbbell bench or weighted press-up Build honest pressing strength under control.	3 × 8	PUSH
Single-arm dumbbell row Even, balanced strength from side to side.	3 × 8	UNILATERAL
Overhead press Heavier strict press — stable, swim-ready shoulders.	3 × 6	SHOULDER
Hollow hold The braced, connected line under load.	3 × 30s	STATIC CORE

PHASE GOAL

Build maximal strength with progressive load — form leads, weight follows.

POWER

3

Convert strength into explosive, swim-relevant power.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Trap-bar jump / KB swing Explosive hip extension — power for starts, turns and the kick.	4 × 5	HIP POWER
Box jump (step down) Land soft and quiet — controlled, athletic power.	4 × 4	PLYO
Med ball overhead slam Fast, lat-driven action for the catch.	4 × 5	EXPLOSIVE PULL
Med ball rotational throw Explosive trunk rotation — power across the body.	3 × 4 / side	ROTATIONAL POWER
Plyo press-up Explosive pressing for a powerful arm action.	3 × 5	UPPER PLYO
Hollow rock Dynamic core control under speed.	3 × 15	CORE
Weighted streamline hold Strength in the long streamline off every start and turn.	3 × 20s	STATIC HOLD

PHASE GOAL

Turn strength into power. Quality reps, full recovery, stop when speed drops.

— FOR SWIMMERS & COACHES

TRAIN HARD, TRAIN SMART

Older age-group swimmers can train hard — but the habits that keep them healthy and improving still matter. These six rules keep progressive strength work safe and productive.

01

EARN THE LOAD

Progressive strength is for swimmers with a solid technical base. If form breaks down, the weight is too heavy — full stop.

02

FORM LEADS, WEIGHT FOLLOWS

Add load only when the movement stays clean. Never trade technique for a bigger number on the bar.

03

MANAGE THE TOTAL LOAD

Strength sits inside a big week of pool and school. Watch fatigue — sleep, fuel and rest days are part of the programme.

04

STILL COACHED & PROGRESSED

Even at this level, lifts should be taught, watched and progressed sensibly — not copied off a phone between sets.

05

INDIVIDUAL READINESS

Age is a guide, not a green light. Progress the swimmer who is ready and hold the one who is not.

06

KEEP MOBILITY & RECOVERY

Do not let strength work crowd out the flexibility and recovery that keep a swimmer fast and healthy.

READY TO STEP UP?

WORK WITH A COACH WHO KNOWS YOUNG SWIMMERS

A printed plan only takes you so far. Performance coaching for age-group and competitive swimmers across Hertfordshire and North London — technical and physical development at every level, with a parent or guardian present for under-18s.

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