

## Swimming Laps is GREAT Exercise

Swimming laps is one of the best things you can do to strengthen your heart and lungs. If you're a decent swimmer and enjoy lap swims, spend a few minutes a day at it to warm up for toning and stretching.

Otherwise, walking or running in the pool is just as effective. It may sound easy, but just try it! If you go in up to your shoulders and run, you'll get your heart rate up with no problem. It may be very difficult to sustain at first, but try to build up your time to at least twenty minutes. One very important thing to remember is to keep your feet as fully planted as possible while you do your pool exercises, especially when walking and running. If you tiptoe (which people tend to do without realizing it), your calves will be killing you the next day. Keep those heels down!

The wonderful thing about water is that it gives you natural resistance with absolutely no impact to the joints. For those with severe arthritis or other joint problems, it offers the perfect alternative to lifting weights. You really can tone up in the pool. Just like weight training, your muscles are contracting against resistance, becoming stronger with each session.

There are exercises you can do for every muscle group, and your risk of injury is extremely low. Think about exercises you do with free weights. The beauty of resistance training is that it is very easily modified. Anything that you do with dumbbells can be translated into a water exercise. If you already have a routine with free weights, you have a license to create your own water move that does the same thing.

Be creative, but also be mindful at all times of your body position (which can be thrown off in the water). Keep your weight distributed evenly and check your posture often. Keep your abdominals tucked in to support your back throughout every exercise. Don't bend, stretch or reach any further than you do on land. It takes time to grow accustomed to the gravitational difference in water, but as your experience grows, your body will become more in-tune with the water.