

Swimming Specific and Shoulders Strength Program

1. Machine Shoulder Press (Military)

Equipment: Machine shoulder press

Primary mover: Deltoids

- Sit down on the Shoulder Press Machine and select the weight.
- Grab the handles to your sides as you keep the elbows bent and in line with your torso. This will be your starting position.
- Now lift the handles as you exhale and you extend the arms without locking your elbows. At the top of the position make sure that you hold the contraction for a second.
- Lower the handles slowly back to the starting position as you inhale.
- Video: https://youtu.be/Ans_MZpSGPY

2. Dumbbell Shoulder Press

Equipment: Bench and dumbbells

Primary mover: Deltoids

- While holding a dumbbell in each hand, sit on a military press bench or utility bench that has back support. Place the dumbbells upright on top of your thighs.
- Now raise the dumbbells to shoulder height one at a time using your thighs to help propel them up into position.
- Make sure to rotate your wrists so that the palms of your hands are facing forward. Bring your forearm and arms to a 90 degree angle. Your elbows will be slightly under the line of the shoulder. This is your starting position.
- Now, exhale and push the dumbbells upward until they come really close at the top.
- Then, after a brief pause at the top contracted position, slowly lower the weights back down to the starting position while inhaling.
- Video: <https://youtu.be/o7EBaKfu5Hk>

3. Dumbbell Seated Lateral Raise

Equipment: Bench and dumbbells

Primary mover: Middle deltoid

- Select your dumbbells and sit at the end of a flat bench with your feet firmly on the floor. Hold the dumbbells with your palms facing in and your arms straight down with elbows slightly bent. This will be your starting position. Tip: The more you bend the elbow, the easier it gets. You can bend up to a 90 degree angle for beginners. The less you bend, the harder it gets.
- While maintaining the torso stationary (no swinging), lift the dumbbells until your arms are parallel to the floor. Exhale as you execute this movement and pause for a second at the top.
- Lower the dumbbells back down slowly to the starting position as you inhale. Tip: if you stop the arms just before they touch your sides, during the lowering phase, and push back up, it will keep the muscle contraction for the entire range of motion.
- Variation: This exercise can be done standing up, however seated will be better for beginners to keep proper form and avoid cheating.

- Video: https://youtu.be/Wx_jgzeDdhQ

4. Cable Rope Rear-Delt Rows

Equipment: Cable machine and rope

Primary mover: Posterior deltoid

- Attach a rope to a pulley about face height and grasp it with an overhand grip. Your arms should be extended and parallel to the floor.
- Keep your back upright, knees slightly bent, and slightly lean back. This will be your starting position.
- Pull the rope towards your upper chest, just below the neck, as you keep your elbows up and out to the sides. Continue this motion as you exhale until the elbows travel slightly behind the back.
- Go back to the initial position where the arms are extended, but hold your shoulders back. Inhale as you perform this portion of the movement.
- Variations: You can also perform this exercise using exercise bands.
- Video: <https://youtu.be/c38fhPoFq9w>

5. Freestyle underwater arm stroke

Equipment: Cable machine with a “D” handle

Target: Underwater freestyle pulling motion

- Set the pulley about shoulder height. Attach a “D” handle to it.
- Hold the handle with your palm facing down and take a few steps back to stretch the cable.
- Lean your upper body forward, push your hips back, arms extended, back straight, and knees slightly bent. This will be your starting position.
- Apply force pulling the cable straight down, towards the leg, and finish deviating slightly to the side of the thigh, just like the freestyle underwater technique. Tip: Elbows should be higher than hands.
- Stop when your hand pass the side of your upper thigh. Pause for a second and extend the arm back to the initial position. Do the same thing with your opposite arm.
- Avoid swinging your upper body, or rounding your back.
- Focus in pulling using more the lats.
- Variation: This exercise can be done using a resistance band.
- Video: <https://youtu.be/MNPmwpQYzK0>

6. Breaststroke underwater arm stroke

Equipment: Cable machine with a “D” handle

Target: Underwater breaststroke pulling motion

- Set the pulley about shoulder height on both sides of the cable machine. Attach a “D” handle to it.

- Hold the handles with your palm facing down and take a few steps back to stretch the cable.
- Lean your upper body slightly forward, push your hips back, arms extended, back straight, and knees slightly bent.
- Drive your hands in a circular motion, mimicking the breaststroke arm pull. Do the outswipe, inswipe, and bring the hands close together for the finish.
- Recover the arms close together, just like in the recovery phase of the breaststroke controlling the movement.
- Pause for a second and begin the next arm pull.
- Focus to begin the pull phase (outswipe) using your lats.
- Variation: This exercise can be done using a resistance band.
- Video: <https://youtu.be/EMeYclSysl0>

7. Medicine Ball Chest Pass (requires a partner)

Equipment: Medicine ball

Goal: Recruit fast twitch muscle fibers of the upper body

- I recommend using a 5-8 lbs ball for younger swimmers (middle schoolers) and a 10-15lbs for older swimmers (HS).
- With a partner, stand about 3 yards apart. Place one leg forward and one back for better support.
- Hands should be held about upper chest height.
- Extend the arms and push the ball straight forward towards your partner's hands. Your partner will receive the ball with arms extended and once in contact with the ball, allow the elbows to bend, come close to the upper chest and push the ball back.
- Do this exercise as quick as possible.
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIDnwIOAtKo>