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As a sprinter you need to train the same way in the weight room that you would in the pool. A big misconception that sprinters have is that they have to lift heavy weights all the time to get strong. That would be like doing all resistance training in the pool, which nobody does.

Most sprint swimming programs go through different phases of training during a season. Typically they do a variety of endurance, power, and speed work. The same thing needs to be done in the weight room as well.

A Variety Of Workouts

To get the most out of training, you need to change what you do every so often because your body gets used to the same thing over and over again. It wouldn't make sense to do the same workout in the pool every day so why would you do the same thing in the gym every single day.

If a season starts in April and goes into September like a typical summer season you need to balance the type of lifting you do. April should consist of endurance lifting, May power lifting, June speed lifting, July power lifting, and August speed lifting. By the end of the summer you will be stronger and faster with more endurance, which is the goal of a sprinter.

For example, if you need to be able to go 48 seconds as fast as you can in the 100 free, that requires all of the components discussed above. The fastest sprinters in the world do not really pace the 100. The first 50 split is within a second of their best 50 time. When you take away the time it takes to turn you are looking at only a couple tenths of a second slower. That means the first 50 is approximately 98% effort so you definitely need endurance to finish off the race.



Choosing The Proper Exercise

Choosing what exercises to do is hard for a swimmer. Not everything obviously translates from the weight room to the pool.

That is why the weights are very important, but when it comes down to it the swimming workouts are even more important.

Getting the most out of the gym means being smart and not doing exercises that put a lot of stress on the knees and back such as power lifting exercises. That is why I do not do any squats, cleans, or dead lifts.

I have seen way too many people get injured doing these exercises, and the benefit you will get in the pool does not outweigh the chance of injury. I would suggest lifting 3 times per week doing exercises of every muscle group each time. This would consist of doing approximately 12 exercises every workout. Using more free weights and machines that are independent for each side of the body are the best. If there are hammer strength machines in your gym, those are the best to use to get the most out of each arm or leg independently. You need to learn to balance each side in the gym like you would do in the swimming pool.

■ Upper Body

Chest

For chest I would choose incline chest press because in freestyle the upper chest and shoulders are important which this exercises utilizes. The lower chest and middle chest do not get used in freestyle like the upper chest.

Back

In swimming the back muscles are the most important which is why I do 3 exercises. These would be lat pull downs with a wide grip, seated row with a narrow grip, and standing pull downs. This one obviously is the best exercise for swimming since it is very similar to the actual stroke.

Triceps

For triceps I would choose some sort of standing triceps exercise with a curved bar or rope.

Biceps

The best exercise to do for bicep curls is seated independent free weight curls.

Shoulders

To finish up with the major muscle groups of the upper body, I would suggest standing shoulder extensions. You get plenty of work on the shoulder in the pool so be careful about how much weight you do on this exercise. The most common swimming injury is the shoulder.

➡ Lower Body

Quads

For the quad muscle I would do seated quad extensions.

Hamstrings

For hamstrings I would suggest a hamstring machine on your stomach that is slightly curved in the middle.

Calves

The best machine for calves is a seated independent calf machine to ensure you work each side equally.

The Leg Press

There are many different machines you can do for leg press. The one I have found to be most beneficial for swimming is a seated leg press instead of a laying down machine.

When you push off the wall after a flip turn you are in a seated position so by trying to mimic that in the weight room is the best way to increase your power off the wall.

Most people want to go all the way down on this machine but in swimming you push off the wall at a 90 degree angle so there is no need to go any further than that on this machine.

Step Ups

Lastly, one legged step ups on a plyometric box that is tall enough to bring your leg to a 90 degree angle.

Early Season-Endurance Lifting, Mon-Wed-Fri

Superset Exercises Grouped Together With Only 15 Seconds
Between Sets Goal Is To Keep Weight The Same As Reps
Increase

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Incline Hammer Strength Chest Press	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Standing Pull Downs	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Narrow Grip Seated Row	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Seated Shoulder Raises	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
One Arm Standing Tricep Press	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Seated One Arm Curls	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Wide Grip Lat Pull Downs	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Step Ups	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Seated Quad Extensions	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Hamstring Curls	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Seated Independent Calf Press	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25
Seated Leg Press	3x12	3x15	3x20	3x25

Middle Season-Power Lifting, Mon-Wed-Fri

Superset Exercises Grouped Together With About 45 Seconds
Between Sets Increase Weights As Reps Decrease

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Incline Hammer Strength Chest Press	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Standing Pull Downs	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Narrow Grip Seated Row	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Seated Shoulder Raises	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
One Arm Standing Tricep Press	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Seated One Arm Curls	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Wide Grip Lat Pull Downs	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Step Ups	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Seated Quad Extensions	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Hamstring Curls	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Seated Independent Calf Press	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6
Seated Leg Press	3x12	12-10-8	10-8-6	10-8-6

5 Weeks Before Competition-Speed Lifting, Mon-Wed-Fri

- Week 1-30 Seconds Rest.
- Weeks 2 And 3-1 minute Rest.
- And Week 4-2 Minutes Rest.

Goal Is To Keep Speed At 1 Rep Per Second

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Incline Hammer Strength Chest Press	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Standing Pull Downs	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Narrow Grip Seated Row	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Seated Shoulder Raises	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
One Arm Standing Tricep Press	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Seated One Arm Curls	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Wide Grip Lat Pull Downs	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Step Ups	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Seated Quad Extensions	3x12	3x10	2x10	10
Hamstring Curls	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Seated Independent Calf Press	3x21	3x10	2x10	10
Seated Leg Press	3x21	3x10	2x10	10

Tapering Off

To finish off it is necessary to learn how to taper in the weight room. Some people believe in taking 1 month to 6 weeks off of weights before their big competition. That never made sense to me. They don't take 6 weeks off in the pool. They gradually do less and less so their body is rested properly. That is the same philosophy I take when it comes to weights.



Hammer Grip Incline DB Bench Press



Triceps Pushdown



Cable One Arm Tricep Extension



Concentration Curls



Wide-Grip Lat Pulldown



Barbell Step Ups



Leg Extensions



Seated Leg Curl



Calf Press On The Leg Press Machine



Leg Press

