

Here's To Your Health!

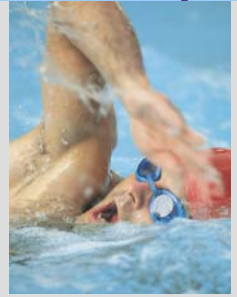
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A Beginner's Guide to Swimming

Stroke your way to a six-pack with this fat-scorching swim plan



1. Swim tall. "Water is 1,000 times denser than air," says Terry Laughlin, president of the New York-based swimming think tank *Total Immersion*. "So the single most important factor is to slip your body through the smallest hole in the water." Imagine a central axis extending from the top of your head to the opposite end of the pool. Rotate your body along this axis with each stroke, stretching your leading arm (the one reaching out front) as far forward as you can. Keep the muscles in your lower back and abs taut as you power through the water--doing so will keep the propulsion coming from both your arms and legs and stop your midsection from sagging like an old first-mate's belly.
2. Drop an anchor. Swimming with just your hands is like jumping with just your feet. Instead, grip the water with your entire forearm and hand, holding your forearm at a right angle to your upper arm and digging in like you're gathering sand with a shovel. Keep your hands broad, flat, and firm. You're not pushing your arm through the water as much as anchoring it and pulling your body over it.
3. Put yourself on heavy rotation. Each stroke begins with your leading arm having entered the water, and that side of your body--the low side--pointing almost at the bottom of the pool. The other side of your body--the high side--should be raised, with the arm that just finished its stroke getting ready to return to the water. Power is triggered when you drive down the high side of your body, Laughlin says, throwing your high-side arm forward along the central axis into the leading position and forcefully rotating your hips and torso. Meanwhile, your low-side arm becomes the pulling arm underwater, working with your rotating torso to provide acceleration.
4. Keep your head down. Freestylers used to hold their heads high. That forced the rest of the body to drop, turning it into a high-drag plow. "I look pretty much straight down at the bottom of the pool," says Olympic Gold Medalist Michael Phelps. Not only does this technique cut drag, it keeps your torso high, reducing strain on your neck and lower back.
5. Find your glide path. In the pool, fewer strokes are better. Your goal should be a high DPS--swim-speak for "distance per stroke." Elite swimmers like Phelps can easily traverse a 25-yard pool in seven strokes (each hand entry counts as a stroke). Try to keep yours below 20 by conserving momentum. Pull yourself over your anchor and continue to glide forward with one arm forward and the other back. "You'll travel farther and faster with your legs streamlined near your axis," says Laughlin. When you begin to slow, start the next stroke.
6. Drag your feet. "If you're a good kicker, you're a good swimmer," says Phelps. The secret is turning your feet into fins. Here again, leverage rules: Your legs should be taut, scissoring you through the water, while your feet remain flexible. This will help them snap at the downstroke of each kick, adding oomph and helping twist your torso along the central axis. If your feet don't flex well, buy a set of kicking fins (we like the Slim Fin, forcefin.com) to add flexibility.
7. Don't waste your breath. Gasping for air every time your head nears the surface is a great way to drown. Instead, make each breath count. Emphatically exhale the air from your lungs (all of it, not just 90 percent) before snagging a quick, full breath on the high side. Beginning swimmers need to breathe after each stroke, but as your endurance improves, try breathing on alternate sides--that is, after three strokes. It'll reduce the strain on your neck and shoulders that results from always breathing on the same side.

Source: Matt Bean for Menshealth.com

Just a few more portions of broccoli each week may protect men from prostate cancer, British researchers reported on Wednesday. The



researchers believe a chemical in the food sparks hundreds of genetic changes, activating some genes that fight cancer and switching off others that fuel tumors, said Richard Mithen, a biologist at Britain's Institute of Food Research. There is plenty of evidence linking a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables to reduced cancer risk. But the study published in the Public Library of Science journal PLoS One is the first human trial investigating the potential biological mechanism at work, Mithen added in a telephone interview. "Everybody says eat your vegetables but nobody can tell us why," said Mithen, who led the study. "Our study shows why vegetables are good." Prostate cancer is the second-leading cancer killer of men after lung cancer. Each year, some 680,000 men worldwide are diagnosed with the disease and about 220,000 will die from it.

Mithen and colleagues split into two groups 24 men with pre-cancerous lesions that increase prostate cancer risk and had them eat four extra servings of either broccoli or peas each week for a year. The researchers also took tissue samples over the course of the study and found that men who ate broccoli showed hundreds of changes in genes known to play a role in fighting cancer. The benefit would likely be the same in other cruciferous vegetables that contain a compound called isothiocyanate, including brussel sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, rocket or arugula, watercress and horseradish, they added.

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Death risk climbs as waist circumference grows

Even among people with a normal weight, having a big belly may be deadly, a new study shows. "People should not only look at their weight, but also consider their waist," Dr. Annemarie Koster of the National Institute on Aging, the lead researcher on the study, told Reuters Health.

Being overweight or obese is clearly bad for one's health, but the best way to gauge whether a person's fatness is putting them at risk has been "controversial," Koster and her team write in the American Journal of Epidemiology. Body mass index, or BMI, has been the standard measurement used, they add, but the way fat is distributed throughout the body -- especially at the waistline -- may be even more important than how many excess pounds a person is carrying.

To investigate the relationship among belly fat, BMI and mortality, the researchers followed 245,533 men and women participating in the National Institutes of Health-American Association of Retired Persons study. Study participants ranged in age from 51 to 72 at the study's outset, and were followed for nine years. Among men, the researchers found, those in the top fifth based on their waist circumference were about 22 percent more likely to die during the study period than men with trimmer waistlines, independent of BMI. A similar risk was seen among women. In addition, people considered to be abdominally obese based on World Health Organization guidelines -- a waistline of 35 inches or more for women, or 40 inches or more for men -- were 20 percent more likely to die over the nine-year study than their peers with slimmer waists.



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Heat Related Problems

People suffer heat-related illness when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs. Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions that can limit the ability to regulate temperature include old age, youth (age 0-4), obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug use and alcohol use.

Who is at greatest risk for heat-related illness?

Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include infants and children up to four years of age, people 65 years of age and older, people who are overweight, and people who are ill or on certain medications.

What is heat stroke?

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

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Broccoli, however, has a particularly powerful type of the compound called sulforaphane, which the researchers think gives the green vegetable an extra cancer-fighting kick, Mithen said. "When people get cancer some genes are switched off and some are switched on," he said. "What broccoli seems to be doing is switching on genes which prevent cancer developing and switching off other ones that help it spread." The broccoli eaters showed about 400 to 500 of the positive genetic changes with men carrying a gene called GSTM1 enjoying the most benefit. About half the population have the gene, Mithen said. The researchers did not track the men long enough to see who got cancer but said the findings bolster the idea that just a few more vegetable portions each week can make a big difference. It is also likely that these vegetables work the same way in other parts of the body and probably protect people against a whole range of cancers, Mithen added. "You don't need a huge change in your diet," he said. "Just a few more portions makes a big difference."

Source: Michael Kahn, *Study shows how broccoli fights cancer*, for Reuters Health.

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The findings were true for smokers and non-smokers, healthy people and those with chronic illness, and across all the ethnic groups the researchers looked at, which included non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. In fact, there was evidence that mortality risk climbed more quickly with waist circumference among Asians, particularly men.

While the danger of abdominal fat -- in particular visceral fat, which collects around the internal organs in the abdomen -- is becoming clear, Koster noted, the reason why a fat belly is bad for health is still not well understood. "More research is needed there," she said.

SOURCE: Anne Harding, *Death risk climbs as waist circumference grows*, for Reuters Health; American Journal of Epidemiology.

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What are the warning signs of a heat stroke?

Warning signs of heat stroke vary but may include the following:

An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F) red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating), rapid, strong pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness.

What should I do if I see someone with any of the warning signs of heat stroke?

If you see any of these signs, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the victim.

Get the victim to a shady area. Cool the victim rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the victim in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the victim with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the victim in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously. Do not give the victim alcohol to drink.

What is heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, those with high blood pressure, and those working or exercising in a hot environment.

What are the warning signs of heat exhaustion?

The warning signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting and fainting.

The skin may be cool and moist. The pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. See medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages. Rest. Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath. Seek an air-conditioned environment.

Wear lightweight clothing.

Can medications increase the risk of heat-related illness?

The risk for heat-related illness and death may increase among people using the following drugs: (1) psychotropics, which affect psychic function, behavior, or experience (e.g. haloperidol or chlorpromazine); (2) medications for Parkinson's disease, because they can inhibit perspiration; (3) tranquilizers such as phenothiazines, butyrophenones, and thiozanthenes; and (4) diuretic medications or "water pills" that affect fluid balance in the body.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

