



CANADIAN OLYMPIC ACTIVITY CHALLENGE



SWIMMING

Swimming is one of the world's oldest sports, dating back 6000 years. Although swimming was not part of the Ancient Olympic Games, it was one of the original nine sports at the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896. By then, swimming races had been happening around the world for almost 70 years.

There are four strokes used in competitive swimming: front crawl, backstroke, butterfly, and breaststroke. In a freestyle race, swimmers can use any stroke they like, but most use the front crawl because it is the fastest.

Swimmers compete in different distances, from 50 to 1500 metres. Usually, the same stroke is used for the entire race. In a medley race athletes will use all four strokes for equal distances. At the 2012 London Olympic Games, there were 32 events in the swimming pool, and a 10-kilometre open water swimming event.

For all events except the backstroke, the swimmer crouches on a starting block and waits for the starting gun. For the backstroke, the swimmer starts in the water. At the Olympic Games, there are qualifying heats in every event. The eight fastest swimmers move to the final, in which the medalists are decided.

The top swimmers focus on perfecting their form. Even small changes in their body position and movements can help them swim much faster. They also do a lot of strength and power training in the gym and pool to improve their performances.

To learn more about Swimming or to find a local club please visit, www.natation.ca.



FEATURED COUNTRY

EGYPT



The oldest drawings of swimming are 6000 year old paintings and sculptures made by the ancient Egyptians. They seem to show that the Egyptians swam and held competitions in the River Nile. There are also paintings of noblemen's homes with swimming pools.

Egypt's best result in the Olympic pool came at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. Rania Elwani reached the semi-final in two events, the 50-metre and the 100-metre freestyle. After retiring from the sport she became a medical doctor. She was elected by the athletes to represent them as a member of the International Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commission. The Commission's role is to make sure the athletes' interests are protected.

FEATURED ATHLETE



KYLIE MASSE

OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALLIST, RIO 2016

Canada has had a lot of success in the Olympic swimming pool. Kylie Masse continues to have success on the world stage. At her first Olympic Games in 2016, she won bronze in the 100-m backstroke and set a new national record. She then won gold in world record time at the 2017 FINA World Championships, then became the first Canadian to defend her world title in the 100-m backstroke at the 2019 World Championships. She is also a part of the new International Swimming League. She continues to prepare for the upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo. Will the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games bring her Olympic gold?

To learn more about Kylie please visit www.olympic.ca

SWIMMING ACTIVITIES

Described below are Daily Physical Activity swimming activities that can be used in the classroom and gym. Have fun!

FLUTTER KICK

A strong flutter kick is critical in the freestyle and backstroke events. This kick builds a strong core (abdominal muscles and hip flexors), powerful legs (quadriceps and calves), and solid gluteal muscles. Adding the flutter kick to your fitness routine will make you fit and strong for lots of sports and activities.

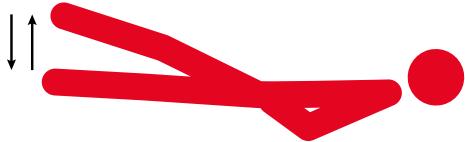
 **Participants :** Individual

 **Space :** Anywhere

 **Equipment :** None required

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Lie down on the floor and rest your head on the floor. Place both hands under the small of your back.
- Raise both feet 1cm off of the ground while keeping the legs straight and toes pointed. Begin alternating both feet, up and down, in a kicking motion. When one foot is up the other is down.
- Flutter kick quickly for 10 seconds, rest for 5 seconds, and repeat.
- Repeat this set four times over the span of one minute.



ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Try kicking with only one leg, and resting your other foot on the floor. Alternatively, bend your knees slightly, shortening the length of your flutter kick.
- Don't forget your back muscles! Lie on your front with your hands and arms folded under your head. Squeeze your legs together and lift your legs off of the ground slightly. Hold this position for a set period of time.

BLAST OFF!

Winning a swimming race can come down to hundredths of a second. After a dive start or a push off of a wall, swimmers need to move through the water in a streamlined position. By reducing drag in the water, they swim faster. A streamlined body position will increase the distance a swimmer can go underwater. This exercise will strengthen the leg muscles used during a powerful “push off”.

 **Participants :** Individual

 **Space :** Anywhere

 **Equipment :** None required

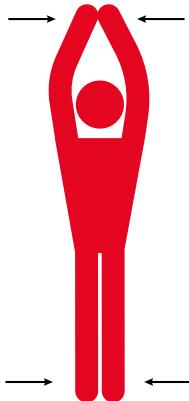
ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

STREAMLINE STANCE

- Start in a standing position, with your arms raised up above your head.
- Bring your palms together, reaching as high as you can. Squeeze your legs together tightly, achieving a streamline stance.
- Hold this position for 15-30 seconds.

STREAMLINE JUMPS

- Squat down with your fingertips touching the floor beside your feet.
- Jump up as high as possible while re-creating the previous streamline position. Remember to keep your legs and palms together, and to be as tall and tight as possible.
- Repeat this 2-4 times with a 5-second rest between jumps to reset into the squat position.



ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Adjust the amount of rest between jumps or the number of jumps. Log the total number of jumps you do each day in your Activity Tracker.
- With each jump, do a quarter turn in the air. Once four jumps are complete you should be facing the direction in which you started off.
- If you are unable to stand, hold the streamline position with your arms above your head. Complete sets of 30 seconds in streamline, 10 seconds rest, 20 seconds streamline.

STREAMLINE JUMP RELAY

Success in a relay needs a total team effort. This relay focuses on the entry into the pool, the sprint to the other side, and the hand-off between teammates. You'll use the fundamental movement skills of running and jumping.

 **Participants :** Groups of 4

 **Space :** Gym or large open space

 **Equipment :** Running/gym shoes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Review the Blast Off! activity.
- In teams of four, divide into two pairs. Each pair should stand, one behind the other, on opposite sides of the gym.
- The first person in line on a given side of the gym will start the race once they hear “go”.
- Each person has to complete 5 streamline jumps and then run across the gym to tag their teammate.
- Repeat this sequence until all students have completed the relay a set number of times.

ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Make it a freestyle relay! Mimic a swimming stroke (front crawl, backstroke or breast stroke) by moving your arms while you run.
- Rather than a sprint, make this a timed, endurance event. Complete this activity over a set amount of time. How many runs can your team complete in 5 or 10 minutes?

BRINGING IT TO THE CLASSROOM

Imagine you are the coach of an Olympic or Paralympic swimmer... write a small motivational paragraph of what you would tell your athlete before a big race!

Design a poster to encourage the Canadian swimmers throughout the races!