

Ankle and Hip Health - Basics

Ankle and hip mobility are important parts of swimming that are at risk of suffering while out of the water. Ankles in particular are not used the same way when not training – the following are a selection of exercises worth doing **2 or 3** times a **week**. T

The set of exercises won't take you very long (some can be done while watching the tv, Netflix, tiktok etc) and will benefit you in the long run if carried out regularly.

1. Deep Squat Hold

In this you are aiming to get as low as you can and hold in a squatted position with your feet flat on the floor. Try to hold for up to 20 seconds for 3 reps – try to get deep and feel a good stretch.

To get more from this stretch you can also stretch your arms up in the air while sitting in the squat.



2. Seated Hip Rotations

In this exercise you are aiming to achieve the position shown in the diagram alongside the description. However, **do not** push your body into any positions that feel uncomfortable these exercises are for keeping you healthy not pushing you too hard.

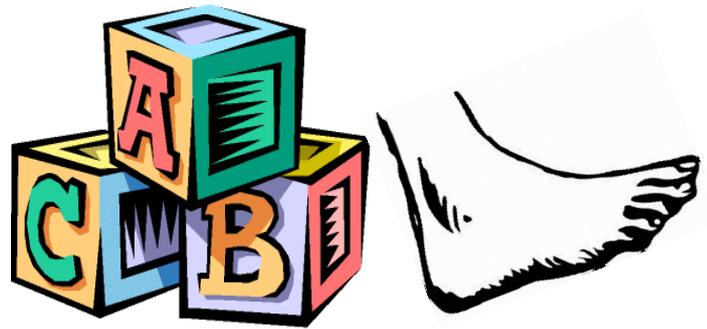
In these rotations you are looking to move steadily from your knees pointing side to side taking around 2-3 seconds to travel from side to side. Try to get the outside of your legs as close to the ground as you can while keeping your bum on the floor. Do this for 2 sets of 40-60 seconds. Remember this is about **movement** not straining yourself.



3. Alphabet Ankles

In this exercise you are aiming to write the alphabet with your big toe.

This is as simple as it sounds – pretend your big toe is a pen and write the alphabet in the air – aim to go twice through with both feet but be aware that first few times can be more tiring than you expect.

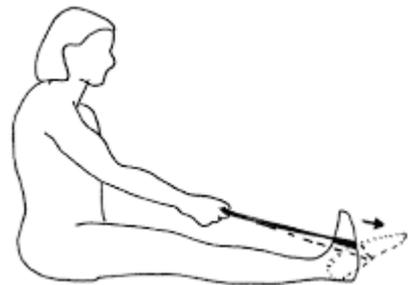


This can be done regularly while sitting and the better you get the stronger and more mobile your ankles will be.

4. Ankle Band Pulls

You will need a theraband for this exercise – a light one is preferable.

In this exercise you are hooking your theraband and pushing with your foot against the resistance – you do not need a lot of resistance for this exercise and you should aim to complete 3 x 10 reps on each foot.



5. Calf Raises

Calf raises aim to build the strength in our calves by using our own bodyweight.

In order to do a calf-raise – stand with feet roughly shoulder width apart, press balls of the feet down into the floor and stand tall with heels off the ground, then lower back to standing.

You are aiming to complete 3 x 20 of these exercises.

Progressions for calf raises can include

1. Using your hands as balance against a wall
2. Two feet with no balance help
3. Single foot using hands to balance against a wall
4. Single foot with no balance help

