



Love to Swim School

Cross-train in the Pool

Written Mary Reilly-Magee

If you've been running for awhile, you know running can become an addiction. And like any addiction, too much running can be damaging. One way to vary your workouts and still get the physical and mental challenge and the cardiovascular benefits of running is to workout at least once a week in the pool.

The pool offers a variety of ways to give your joints a rest from the constant pounding that comes with the rigors of running. Swimming, aqua aerobics and aqua jogging are a few of the things you can do in the water. There are multiple ways to work the body, legs and heart within each of these sports.

As a Head Master's Swimming Coach at Northside Aquatics Center, I get the opportunity to work with a variety of adult swimmers with different ability levels and competitive goals. Some of them swim for fitness, some swim to cross-train, some are triathletes or want to be, and some swim on the National Master's level. Whatever their goals are, they get a workout Monday through Friday from 11:30 -12:30 p.m. that fits their individual goals and fitness levels.

One great thing about swimming is that your upper body gets the much needed, much neglected workout it doesn't get from running. Hand paddles and a pull buoy can be added to increase resistance and slow down the hands to focus on stroke technique. To emphasize the legs, add a pair of fins and a kickboard and use all four competitive strokes to break up the monotony and work all the hip and leg muscles in completely different way than running or cycling. The heart gets worked in much the same way it does in running. For example, if you want to increase endurance, swim long and slow, to increase aerobic threshold, do a variety of repeat distances on an interval that gives you a short amount of rest, to increase speed, do short to medium distance fast repeats with a long rest (30 to 60 seconds) in between.

Really, the possibilities and the benefits are endless when it comes to what you can do in the pool.