

RETURN TO SPORT PROGRESSION: SWIMMING

The athlete must pass all functional tests and/or be cleared by sports medicine medical provider before beginning Return to Football Protocol. Recommend pursuing Transitional Therapy for return to sport activities during this phase. Transitional Therapy is a strength and conditioning program that is led by medical professionals with a sports medicine background with the goal of transitioning from therapy back to sport. The athlete may progress through the phases as tolerated. Cross-training can be performed on off days. (Cross training can be done by performing non sport specific activities i.e. swimming, biking, yoga, and/or PT home exercises, see attached instructions). The home exercises and training activities in each phase are a comprehensive guideline, it is not necessary to complete every activity and/or exercise on the day you are training. The athlete should pick 1-2 activities or exercises per section to avoid over training. Each phase should be performed 2-3 times with **one rest day between each session**, the athlete should progress to the next phase once he/she is able to complete the current phase without pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or difficulty. If the athlete experiences pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or difficulty during a phase, he/she should take a day off and go back to the prior phase where they were not experiencing pain and or difficulty completing activities. Do not keep moving through phases if you are having pain or difficulty. Seek medical attention if necessary. The athlete should ice the affected area for 15-20 minutes following the activity.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Physical therapy, mobility and strengthening exercises	•	•	•	•	•
Swim-Specific Drills and Progressive Strengthening		•	•	•	•
Advanced Training and Swim Practice at 50-75% effort			•	•	•
Progress to Swim Practice at 100% speed 100% effort				•	•
Ready for Competition / Meets					•
Competition Details	Swimmer needs to be cleared by medical provider to return to swimming competition after surgical procedures.				

Warm Up to be performed before each session:

- **Foam rolling:** large lower extremity and upper extremity muscle groups or specific areas of focus as instructed by Physical Therapist.
- **Dynamic Warm up:** Walking quadriceps stretch, walking hamstring stretch, inchworm walkouts, ½ kneel ankle rocking, forward lunges to 20 yard line, lateral lunge to 20 yard line, high knees, power skips, lateral shuffles to 20 yard line
- **Upper body warm up:** see PT home exercises for upper extremity

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Phase 1: Continue with Physical Therapy, Mobility and Strengthening Exercises:

- Continue with physical therapy exercises provided
- Mobility
 - shoulder circles, arm swings, arm pendulums, pec stretch, doorway stretch, childs pose
- Isometric Exercises
 - Isometric Shoulder Press: 3 sets of 10 seconds holds in each direction
 - Isometric IR/ER: 3 sets of 10 seconds holds in each direction
 - Isometric Bicep Curls: 3 sets of 10 second holds

Phase 2: Swim-Specific Drills and Progressive Strengthening

- Strength Training
 - Wall push-ups, tricep extension, bicep curls
 - Squats, glute bridges, deadlifts
 - Core strengthening
- Low Impact Cardio
 - Stationary cycling or walking: 20-30 minutes at a time 3-4 times a week
- Dryland Swim-Specific Drills
 - Drills to focus on swim technique such as high-elbow catches and streamline body positions on dryland
- Gentle Swimming
 - Avoid the butterfly at this time
 - Light swim sessions focusing on technique and form instead of time/distance
 - Kicking Drills with a kickboard

Phase 3: Advanced Training and Swimming at 50%-75% effort

- Longer Swim Practice
 - Overall – 50-75% of the team's practice distance for warm-up, practice, and cool-down
 - Focus on increased distance: 200-500 yards, focusing on endurance
 - Drill sets that incorporate race-specific drills
 - Focus on sprint sets (25-50 yards) at high intensity with adequate rest
 - Continue to focus on stroke technique
- Lower Body Power Exercises
 - Box Jumps
 - Depth Jumps
 - Vertical Jumps
- Drill sets to practice starts, turns, and finishes
- Pull sets
 - Start at a slow pace and low distance and progressively increase over time

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Phase 4: Progress to Swim Practice at 100% Speed and 100% effort

- Focus on race simulation during practice and sets at race pace
- Incorporate the use of fins and paddles
 - Start the use of paddles at a low distance and slow speed and progress slowly
- Should be able to complete full distance of swim practice

Phase 5: Progression Back to Competition/Meets:

- Ready to return back to competition once cleared by the medical provider
- Focus on stroke refinement