

30-MINUTE STRENGTH WORK-OUT By Glen Gore – MiWay Brand Ambassador

info@tri-lab.co.za

Intro:

When one sees an Olympic swimmer in motion, going sub-15 minutes for 1500 metres whilst simultaneously looking like he is swimming in slow motion, we can only but marvel at their athletic prowess. Apart from the many early mornings spent in the pool, these guys and girls are working hard in the gym every single day building their strength and power.

As a triathlete you don't need to go to those extremes - but a weekly trip to the gym (or 3 times per week during the winter hiatus) can certainly elevate your performance when you find yourself at the starting line of your next triathlon.

Dry-land training (aka gym workout) is ideal for the winter period. We can cut down the hours spent in the pool and instead, supplement this with dry-land swim training. A weak swimmer is a slow swimmer no matter how many miles you log in the pool. A strong swimmer can spend less time in the pool but swim faster.

You don't need a fancy gym membership with the latest in high tech equipment either. You need a maximum of 30 minutes and a few key exercise routines to get you on your way. If you don't have the time or the money to join the local gym and you've got some free weights hanging around at home, that will suffice as well.

For those with access to a gym facility, the below routine is short, sweet and very effective. Don't be intimidated by the gym bunnies and behemoths that frequent these places. You are not there to bulk up and look like Arnie. We're after strength and power gains to ensure you can perform at your best.

Warm-up:

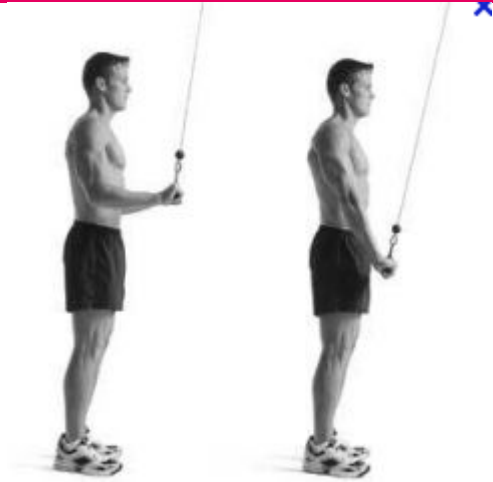
Start with 4 sets of 20-25 sit-ups to get the blood flowing nicely. Keep the rest period between all routines and exercises to the minimum.

5 UPPER BODY EXERCISE GEARED TO TRIATHLETES

Exercise 1 and Exercise 2: Super-set combining tricep pushdowns and bicep curls

First do 1 set of tricep pushdowns comprising 20 repeats, followed immediately by 1 set of bicep curls, also comprising 20 repetitions. You only rest briefly after both the tricep and bicep routine has been finished. Do this 4 times over.

The triceps and biceps are certainly put to good use when you swim, so this superset builds them up and ensures you develop and maintain muscle strength. You can do the exercises separately but the big benefits come in when you perform them as a super-set (one routine directly after the other).



Tricep pushdown



Bicep curl

Exercise 3: Shoulder Press

4 sets of 20 repeats using a barbell or dumbbells

- 10 press-ups that have the bar resting behind the neck and
- 10 press-ups that come to rest at the front of the chest

You need power in the shoulder area for an effective and strong arm pull. Added strength in the shoulder area also assists in preventing swimming injuries once you start clocking up miles in the pool. These exercises will also increase the flexibility of the shoulder region, which in turn will allow you to swim more effectively with a better technique.



Behind neck



Front chest area

Exercise 4: Straight Arm Pushdowns

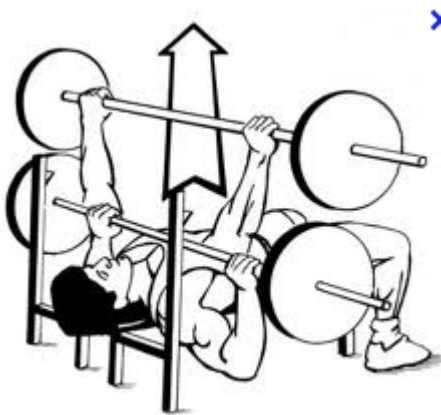
Using light weights to start with, complete 4 sets of 25 repetitions with minimal rest periods in between each set. As you get stronger, increase the weight load.

This is the BOMB when it comes to dry land workouts and direct strength gains you can transfer into the pool. Make sure the back is straight at all times, use your abdominals to keep your balance and ensure your arms remain in the locked position from the start right through the entire pushdown motion. By doing this one exercise religiously, you will immediately notice a difference in your power output, along with an improved forearm in the pool when you hit the summer swim sessions



Exercise 5: Bench Press

The fifth and final exercise requires 4 sets of 15 reps. Rest for 20 seconds between each set. To maximise this workout, do a set of abdominal crunches while you rest on the flat bench. We don't need a chest the size of a mountain but a solid pectoral workout will do wonders for your swimming come the summer months. The abdominal crunches in between each set will also be a bonus to fight off that winter flab and develop your core strength.



2 LOWER BODY WORKOUT ROUTINES GEARED TOWARDS TRIATHLETES WANTING TO SWIM FASTER

We could spend hours on legs alone but we don't have the time, so two basic exercise routines will give you some added strength gains in the legs. It'll be enough to give you a little boost in the kicking department when you hit the pool.

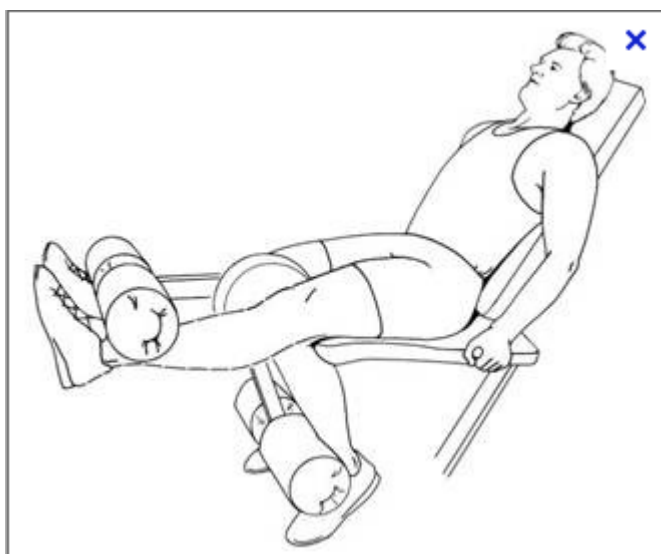
Exercise 1: Seated Leg Press

Do 5 sets of 30 repetitions. The rest period between sets is 20 seconds. Increase the weight fractionally per each set so the last set will be your hardest and heaviest. This exercise works your calves, thighs and hamstrings depending on where you position your feet on the flat board. A stronger, more powerful kick will definitely come from doing this gym routine three times per week



Exercise 2: Leg Extension

For this exercise, you'll be doing 4 sets of 30 repetitions while using a moderate weight load. You can increase the weight load gradually from set 1 to set 4. Strong thigh muscles are essential for a strong and powerful kick, which will make you faster and more buoyant in the water.



Conclusion

The seven exercises above should not take you more than 30 minutes to complete. As mentioned briefly, the rest periods between each exercise must be kept to a minimum to ensure an effective and hard work out.

If you do these seven exercises three times per week during the winter period, your swimming ability will definitely have improved notably come summer. You will notice that when you do start up with regular swim training once again that the arm pull is a lot stronger and in general, the body will be more up for a swim workout than ever before.

Try to keep this type of strength training workout going during the triathlon season. Two gym sessions per week will go a long way to ensuring that the benefits gained over winter carry on during the summer triathlon season. The above gym routine can be kept over time and does not really need to be tinkered with. As triathletes, we need to spend our time wisely in the gym and that means sticking to basic exercise routines which are short and sharp, yet effective.