



Quick strength/core conditioning and stretching

As the season kicks up and your training volume for swimming, biking, and running increases, it is very easy to neglect your strength and stretching routines. After you've completed an early morning Masters swim practice, a lunchtime interval run, worked all day, and cooked dinner for your family, the last thing you want to do is workout yet again!

I know a lot of you fall by the wayside on these, especially as the mileage ramps up and the body and mind grow tired. Don't neglect this part of training. Over the years we have worked up a couple fairly comprehensive bodyweight only routines for our athletes that don't take more than 30 minutes per session and really get the job done.

However, even that may be too much when you are already pushing the limits. So, the next best thing is to do just a bit of work after one of your swim/bike/run sessions. While there are a ton of exercises you could choose from, the example routines below take less than 15 minutes and do a good job of hitting the key areas you want to keep tip-top throughout the year.

Routine 1 (preferably after a run or ride)

1 x minute front plank then 10-20 pushups

Stretch hamstrings

1 x 30/30 seconds per side planks then 10-20 pushups (or pull-ups)

Stretch IT bands

1 x minute plank then 10-20 pushups

10-20 Clamshell each side or 10-20 alternating side leg raises

Stretch calves

5-15 pullups

Russian twists or V-situps

Lat stretch, shoulder stretch

Routine 2 (preferably after a swim)

1 x minute plank then 5-10 pushups

Stretch lats

1 x 10-20 lunges each leg

Stretch lats / triceps

15-25 calf raises

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1 x 30/30 second per side then 30 second front plank

Stretch shoulders

1 x minute front plank then 10-20 pushups

Arm swings

10-15 x squats or squat jumps (advanced)

Hamstring / IT band stretches

To make the planks harder include alternating leg raises or alternating arm raises, and then alternate leg raises while doing pushups. To make them easier, keep your knees on the ground.

There are plenty of other great exercises you could substitute into these routines; the key point is that you can maintain a lot of your strength and conditioning with just 2 or 3 short and simple routines during the week.

If you are one of the many athlete that starts slacking on this sort of core strength as the season gets busy, get into the routine of knocking it out immediately at the end of another workout. Your body will thank you in the final miles of your next big race!

Marty Gaal, CSCS, is the head coach of One Step Beyond, based in North Carolina. Marty and his wife Brianne provide online coaching, group triathlon training, and run a US Masters swim team from their headquarters in Cary, NC. You can read more training ideas and all about their services at www.osbmultisport.com.