

How to Develop an Awesome Underwater Dolphin Kick

1 TECHNIQUE

- ✓ **Early vertical ankle (EVA).** Remember that to maximize propulsion you should be kicking backwards, not just up and down.
- ✓ **Kick fast, kick small.** Remember to think of yourself under the water—and the magnitude of your kick—as being like a Ferrari, not a Mack truck.
- ✓ **Kick from your core, not your hips.** True power comes from the core—your mitro-powered engine—and not your knees.
- ✓ **Kick in front of your body.** Remember the extension of the kick should take place in front of your body.
- ✓ **Fast toes, fast transitions.** Think of the tips of your toes as a whip, snapping fast and without pause between transitions in the up and down phases of your kick.
- ✓ **Be a two-directional kicker.** Remember to use the upkick of your dolphin kick to generate propulsion as well.

2 FLEXIBILITY

- ✓ **Lacrosse/Tennis Ball to Bottom of Foot.** Standing or sitting, use a ball to loosen up the fascia on the bottom of your feet.

- ✓ **Foam roll calf.** Hit both sides of your calves with a foam roller.
- ✓ **Ankle rotations.** Supplement your arm and leg swings with big toed ankle rotations. Do them in both directions.
- ✓ **Wall lean stretch.** Standing facing the wall, plant your heel into the ground, toes reaching up the wall, and lean forward.
- ✓ **Ankle roller.** The money maker. If you only have time for one stretch, this is the one.

3 ANKLE STRENGTH

- ✓ **Dorsiflexion.** Point toes away from your body with band.
- ✓ **Plantar flexion.** Point toes towards your body with band.
- ✓ **Inversion.** Point toes inwards with band.
- ✓ **Eversion.** Point toes outwards with band.

4 PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

- ✓ **Make it a fixture of your training.** Progressively add it to your every day training and sets.
- ✓ **Controlled breathing to help lengthen your underwaters.** Practice breath control in your swimming to help your underwaters.
- ✓ **Vertical kicking.** Tack on 5-10 minutes of vertical kicking to your workouts.

5 BONUS SETS

As [mentioned in the post](#), vertical kicking is a fantastic way to improve your UDK.

Not only does it allow you to perform the kick in an ideal body position for an extended period of time, but there is a nearly endless array of ways to challenge yourself.

SET 1

10 rounds of—

:30 seconds of vertical kick [:15 seconds dolphin kick, :15 seconds freestyle kick. The transition between the two kicks should be seamless; don't bob under the water during the switch. Doing this simulates your racing conditions more closely. So many swimmers lose momentum between the transition between dolphin kicks and freestyle; this will teach you to power through without losing propulsion.]

:30 seconds rest

- Use fins or a weight belt for added resistance.
- Get creative and do race simulation. For a 60 second 100m freestyler, you could break it down in the same manner you would race it: The first 5 seconds do dolphin kicks. :10 seconds freestyle kick. And repeat three more times. (Or do two rounds of :5 sec fly and :25 seconds freestyle to simulate long course swimming.)
- Total time: 10 minutes

SET 2

10 rounds of—

:10 seconds blast dolphin kick vertical kicking

:20 seconds rest

:20 seconds of deep water push offs. How to do these: Sink all the way to the bottom (best done in the deepish end of the pool) and in a perfect streamline push off the bottom, kicking as fast as you can. The goal is to get as high up out of the water as possible.

:10 seconds rest.

- add fins for added speed and height out of the water.
- Total time: 10 minutes