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 toe-led 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.
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