

SHOULDER HEALTH FOR SWIMMERS

A quick guide for swimmers of all ages

**Shoulder pain can happen at any age or level. It is not something to hide or push through.
Notice changes and tell someone early.**



NOTICE THE PATTERN

- Which stroke, drill, distance or intensity brings pain on?
- Does it affect technique or linger after practice or the next morning?
- Does it affect sleep, work, school or daily tasks?



REVIEW THE DEMANDS

- Review changes in metres, speed, sessions, paddles, gym or other sports.
- Include work or school demands, sleep and recovery.
- For younger swimmers, growth and development may also affect how training feels.



KEEP BUILDING CAPACITY

- Progressive strength work can build shoulder capacity.
- Exercises may target the shoulder rotator cuff and shoulder-blade muscles.
- Choose exercises to fit age, experience and needs; progress gradually.



MODIFY, THEN RETURN

- Temporarily reduce or change the parts of training that provoke pain.
- Keep comfortable activity if symptoms allow.
- Return progressively; if pain worsens or lingers, adjust and get advice.



GET ASSESSED

- Arrange an assessment if pain persists, recurs, worsens or affects swimming, movement or daily tasks.
- A physiotherapist or doctor can assess the shoulder and guide training changes.



URGENT REVIEW

- Call 000 if shoulder pain comes with chest tightness or difficulty breathing.
- After injury, seek immediate care for deformity, sudden swelling, intense pain or inability to use the arm.

A SIMPLE SHOULDER CHECK-IN

Use these prompts to describe what is happening to a coach, support person or clinician.

During swimming	After the session	The next morning

Build shoulder capacity over time with appropriate training, recovery and a plan that fits you.

General information only. It does not replace an individual assessment or medical advice. | Evidence reviewed October 2026.