

# The relationship between flexibility and mobility – and why swimmers should work on both

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Flexibility and mobility are terms that are often used interchangeably. In fact, they're quite distinct, but inextricably linked.

Flexibility generally refers to the ability of a muscle to be lengthened, but is also concerned with healthy range of motion in joints. Flexibility is often passive – a muscle can be guided into and held in a stretch but might not be able to stay in

that position without support.

Mobility is more active – it's the ability to move joints with control through their intended range of motion. Maintaining mobility is important for stability and effective movement, but good mobility requires flexibility. For joints to function well, the surrounding muscles need to move well, so to best support our bodies and avoid risk of injury, we need to work on both flexibility and mobility.

Developing core and overall strength, plus focusing on good posture, helps to make us stronger and more stable, which facilitates better movement. Dynamic stretches before a swim are a great way to build mobility and flexibility, as are static stretches afterwards. Yoga and pilates are both effective movement disciplines for improving flexibility and mobility, and a great way to support swimmers' fitness.