



# CANADIAN OLYMPIC ACTIVITY CHALLENGE



## ARTISTIC SWIMMING

Artistic swimming (sport name changed from synchronized swimming in 2018) is a mix of acrobatics, dance and gymnastics performed to music. It was once referred to as 'water ballet'. Artistic swimmers perform figures, arm segments and lifts to music that plays through underwater speakers. They are scored by judges on their routine. Artistic Swimming has been an Olympic sport since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

This Olympic sport is open to females-only at the Olympic Games, however males are eligible to participate at all other international competitions in the mixed duet. Athletes compete as solos, duets, teams or combination routines. Each competition has two elements- a technical routine and a free routine. The technical swim must include specific moves. The free swim is more expressive. Three panels of judges score each piece on artistic impression, difficulty, and how well the routine is done. The judges may also give penalties. Touching the bottom of the pool, for example, is a fault. So is entering the pool too slowly or leaving out a technical move. A sum of the scores is used to award medals.

Artistic swimming routines range from two to four minutes. There are time limits. Swimmers are often underwater for up to a minute at a time. Nose clips make it easier for them to hold their breath. Each swimmer must follow strict rules on make-up, hair, and costume.

Artistic swimming is an artistic blend of movement and music. Performed with partners or teammates in the water, it is unlike any other sport in the Olympic program.

To learn more about artistic swimming or to find a local club please visit:  
[www.artistiqueswimming.ca](http://www.artistiqueswimming.ca).



SCHOOL PROGRAM



# FEATURED COUNTRY

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## CHINA



Originally known as “water ballet” artistic swimming was demonstrated at several world exhibitions and fairs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The sport began to take form in Canada in the 1920s under the name of “Ornamental Swimming.” This graceful and beautiful aquatic activity soon spread to the United States, where a display at the 1934 Chicago World Fair attracted international publicity. The popularity of this new brand of swimming continued to grow when swim star Esther Williams performed in a string of MGM “aqua musicals” in the 1940s and 1950s.

When the team event debuted at the 1996 Olympic Games, China finished in 7th place. As the country developed their technical expertise and slowly moved up the world rankings, China climbed to their first podium finish with a bronze medal swim at home at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. They have continued their podium dominance since 2008 with silver medals at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics Games and many medals at the World Championships, starting with 5 medals in 2009 in Rome. China continues to push the technical and artistic excellence of the sport and will strive to reach the top of the podium in 2020 which has been dominated by Russia since 2000.

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# FEATURED ATHLETE

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## JACQUELINE SIMONEAU

TWO-TIME PAN AMERICAN GAMES CHAMPION  
OLYMPIAN, RIO 2016

A star of the national artistic swimming team, Jacqueline Simoneau first joined the national team in 2012 when she was still a junior competitor, being the youngest member at the age of 15. That same year, she won a bronze medal in the solo event at the FINA Junior World Championships, and improved to the silver medal position at the 2014 Junior Worlds, in which she also won gold in the figures event. Simoneau won a pair of gold medals at the 2015 Pan American Games, standing atop the podium in the team and duet competitions (with partner Karine Thomas). In her Olympic debut a year later at Rio 2016, Simoneau finished seventh in the duet with Thomas. More recently, Simoneau and duet partner Claudia Holzner, delivered an inspiring performance in the duet free final to claim gold at the 2019 Pan American Games, which, doubled with another gold in the team event, secured two artistic swimming spots for Canada at Tokyo 2020.

To learn more about Jacqueline, check-out [olympic.ca](https://olympic.ca).

# ARTISTIC SWIMMING

# ACTIVITIES


Described below are Daily Physical Activity judo activities that can be used in the classroom and gym. Have fun!

## DRYLAND ARTISTIC SWIMMING

Artistic swimming athletes need to be great swimmers, acrobats and dancers in the water. During a routine, the artistic swimming athletes tell their audience a story through their movements and music. Artistic swimming captivates audiences with breath taking routines that include precision movements, incredible artistry and technical detail all while changing patterns. Have fun trying this out of the water as it will help you appreciate how difficult it is to do in the water!

 **Participants:** Groups of 2-8

 **Space:** Large open space

 **Equipment:** tape or four pylons

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Pick a fun, upbeat piece of music.
- As a team, create a routine a 2-minute artistic swimming routine to this music.
- Play the music repeatedly while you plan and practice your routine. When planning your routine consider the following:
  - You will have 10 seconds for deck work, movements done on the deck to enter the pool in a coordinated way.
  - Once in the “pool” participants will not be able to stand on their feet.
  - Incorporate one of each of the following types of movements in your routine:
    - Cadence action – a movement done by one athlete after another
    - Shapes or Patterns – move as a team to form into a shape or pattern
    - Sailboat – lay on your back and set the bottom of your foot on the inside of your knee like a sail on a boat
    - Ballet Leg – lay on your back and raise one leg straight up in the air to form an upside down “T”
- Have fun and remember to incorporate everyone’s ideas. artistic swimming is about teamwork.
- Celebrate your work by playing the music and watching each team’s routine.


### ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:


- Add 3-4 judges who will evaluate each performance out of 5 based on the technical difficulty, their use of patterns, shapes, speed of movements, and artistic impression, their use of music and creating a story through movements.
- Create larger groups who have to work harder to work together and be synchronized
- Have an artistic swimming competition between classes in your school. Mark off your “pool” in the middle of your gym and showcase the top routines from each class. Invite special guests and administrators to be your judges!

# ARTISTIC SWIMMING CIRCUIT

Artistic swimming is a hard sport, and the athletes have to be very fit. They must have great coordination, strength, agility, endurance, speed and flexibility. During competition, artistic swimmers are continuously using both the upper and lower limbs and their core to produce the movements. Try out this artistic swimming land circuit and see how you measure up to artistic swimmers across Canada!

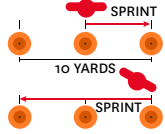




 **Participants:** All

 **Space:** Classroom, gym, or large open space

 **Equipment:** tape or four pylons and a timer

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Identify a spot within your space where you can complete all five exercises in the circuit: 10m side shuffle shuttle, plank, standing squats, push-ups and jumping jacks.
- Mark off a space with the pylons 10m apart for the side shuffle.
- Set a timer to 15 seconds.
- Complete each station, one after another, for 15 seconds each.
- Allow for a five second break between each activity.

10M SIDE SHUFFLE SHUTTLE	PLANK	STANDING SQUATS	PUSH-UPS	JUMPING JACKS
				
<p>Using a side shuffle movement, travel from cone A to cone B.</p>	<p>Place your hands flat on the floor, shoulder width apart. Hold your head, hips, knees and ankles in a straight line for 15 seconds.</p> <p>Try not to let your belly and back sag towards the ground or let your hips raise toward the ceiling.</p>	<p>Place your feet shoulder width apart. Raise your arms up, extending them straight out in front of you.</p> <p>Pretending as though you are going to sit on an imaginary chair behind you, bend from your hips, then your knees, to lower yourself into the sitting position.</p> <p>Then stand back up and repeat the exercise.</p>	<p>Place your hands flat on the floor, shoulder width apart. Keep head, hips, knees and ankles in a straight line</p> <p>Try not to let your belly and back sag towards the ground or let your hips raise toward the ceiling. Bend your elbows to bring your body (keeping the straight line) as close to the floor as possible. Push back up and repeat the exercise.</p>	<p>Start standing, with your feet together, and your arms resting along your side.</p> <p>In one movement, jump to spread your feet shoulder width apart and move your arms up over your head.</p> <p>Jump back to starting position and repeat for the duration of the 15 seconds.</p>
<b>Time = 15sec</b>	<b>Time = 15sec</b>	<b>Time = 15sec</b>	<b>Time = 15sec</b>	<b>Time = 15sec</b>

## ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:


- Complete the circuit with a partner. Alternate completing each station before moving to the next station. This will give you an opportunity to rest and encourage your partner while they are exercising.
- Challenge yourself and do this circuit three times in a row, the approximate duration of an artistic swimming routine.
- Get creative! Add a circuit exercise to the rotation and share it with your classmates to add to the circuit.

# HOLD IT!

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Team routines in artistic swimming are 4 minutes long. On average, athletes spend 60% of their time underwater. That's about 2.5 minutes underwater!! For the first figure, the opening of a routine, an athlete may be underwater for upwards of 30 seconds. In artistic swimming, holding your breath is a major skill that must be practiced!

 **Participants:** All

 **Space:** Classroom, hallway or gym

 **Equipment:** Music

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Play an upbeat song for everyone to enjoy.
- Practice counting the beat of the music in eights. To the beat, say “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8” and repeat this for the duration of the song.
- Once complete and you feel you have a handle on counting eights. Repeat the song.
- This time count out loud for eight counts, and then hold your breath for the next eight counts.
- Repeat this pattern for 32 seconds, counting eight and then holding your breath for eight counts repeated until 32 seconds is complete.
- Rest, breathe and enjoy the rest of the song.
- Remember to only do what you feel comfortable with.

## ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- By using music that is faster or slower, with different tempos, you can make this easier or more difficult to complete.
- As athletes have to be moving while holding their breath, complete this activity while running on the spot, doing jumping jacks or skipping. Rather than holding your breath for 8 counts, hold it for four, count to eight out loud and repeat these three times.

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# BRINGING IT TO THE CLASSROOM

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While mixed pairs can compete at the FINA World Aquatics Championships, men are still not able to compete at the Olympic Games. This is unusual, as every other sport in the Olympic Games program is now open to both genders. Write a letter or prepare a speech to the International Olympic Committee arguing whether men should be included in Olympic Artistic Swimming or whether it should remain a sport only for women.