



Summer Olympics – Swimming

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1 Competitive swimming began in England in the 1830s. At first, people thought swimming was just a fun pastime. Swimming was also seen as a way to exercise. As more and more people became interested in swimming, clubs were organized and races were held.

2 The first Olympic swimming event took place in 1896. There were four events, and only men could compete. It was very different from the types of swimming competitions that we are used to seeing today. Rivers, oceans, and lakes were used for competitions, not pools. At the first Olympic swimming event, a boat dropped off the competitors into 55-degree water. The rule was that the first swimmer to reach the shore won. Hungarian, Alfred Hajos, was the first swimmer to reach the shore. He won the first Olympic gold medal for swimming.

3 In the 1908 Olympic Games, swimming events were held in swimming pools. In 1912, women competed for the first time in the Olympics. Australian, Fanny Durack, was the first woman to win a gold medal. She won the gold for the 100-meter freestyle.

4 There are currently sixteen swimming events for both men and women. Swimming is one of the most popular spectator events. Many people enjoy watching the speed, endurance, and athletic ability of swimmers. These swimming events captivate sports fans who hope to witness record-breaking achievements. Michael Phelps and Katie Ledecky are two Olympic swimmers who have made headlines by shattering world records. Both athletes began swimming competitively while in elementary school. Competitive swimmers spend years training and competing in swim meets before they can try out for a spot on the Olympic Team. It requires dedication and commitment. Athletes are honored to take part in the Olympics.

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Health Benefits of Swimming

5 Splashing around in the pool may sound like a lot of fun and a great way to cool off, but did you know that exercising in the water is a great way to improve your health? Swimming is a cardiovascular activity. That means that when you swim, your heart and lungs are working. It is a way to improve your health while having fun. If you swim laps at a fast pace, your heart rate stays up. When your heart is beating faster, it means that you are getting a good workout.

6 Swimming can increase your strength. The water provides resistance for your body. That means that you do not make sudden movements with your arms and legs. You have to push against the water to move. This makes your muscles work harder. Different types of swimming strokes target different muscle groups. The backstroke targets the muscles of the back. The front crawl stroke (freestyle) builds muscles in the arms and legs. The breaststroke moves the muscles of your upper body and lower body together. Finally, the butterfly stroke increases muscle strength in the shoulders and back.

7 Swimming also increases your stamina, or how long you can exercise without getting tired. Swimmers' muscles are constantly moving as they push themselves through the water. One of the goals of swimmers is to decrease their time swimming laps. Many swimmers set goals and work toward them. They want to beat their own time or the times of their competitors.

8 Kids who swim can improve their health and have fun at the same time. It is important that everyone is safe in the water. Anyone who exercises in water should know how to swim. Swimming lessons are offered at many community centers.

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Olympic Swimmer - Michael Phelps

9 Michael Phelps was born in 1985. He was seven years old when he took his first swimming lesson. His mother described him as a kid with a lot of energy. She hoped that swimming would be a way for Michael to focus his energy into a sport. Michael's older sisters enjoyed swimming and belonged to a swim team. Michael watched them swim and wanted to be on the team too . At first, he was afraid to put his face under water. He spent a lot of time floating on his back. The first stroke he mastered was the backstroke. Eventually, Michael got over his fear and mastered the butterfly stroke.

10 Michael grew up watching the Olympic swimming events on television. He began to dream of becoming a champion. Michael worked with a coach to improve his swimming technique and timing. He spent many hours before and after school practicing. His weekends were spent traveling to swimming competitions. Michael was known for being very competitive. He wanted to not only win swimming competitions but to beat his own time.

11 Michael was fifteen when he became the youngest American male swimmer to compete at an Olympic game in 68 years. He did not win any medals at the 2000 Olympic Games, but he did not let that discourage him. Michael said, "You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get." Michael knew that participating in the Olympics was an honor. He used his experience there to learn from the other swimmers. After the Olympics, he continued to set world swimming records while he trained for the next Olympic games.

12 Michael not only earned a spot on the 2004 Olympic team, but he also participated in the next five Summer Olympic Games. Michael's determination paid off. He has earned 23 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 2 bronze medals. He is the most decorated Olympic athlete in the world. The 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was the last Olympic Games he participated in before he retired.



13 Michael knew how much time training took up, and he wanted to spend more time with his young son and family. He also wanted to spend more time helping people, especially kids. He created the Michael Phelps Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is to offer children the opportunity to participate in water sports. Many kids do not consider swimming a competitive sport, but Michael wants to change that. He spends time talking to kids and parents at schools and community centers about swimming. He teaches children about living a healthy lifestyle by eating healthy foods and exercising. His foundation also promotes water safety. Michael knows that some children do not know how to swim. He wants every child to be safe in the water. His foundation gives out scholarships for swimming lessons. Michael Phelps' new goal is to combine the two things that are important to him, children and his love of swimming.

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Olympic Swimmer - Katie Ledecky

14 Katie Ledecky was born in Maryland in 1997. She was encouraged to swim by her parents. Her mother was a member of her college swimming team. Katie and her older brother both began swimming competitively at the age of six.

15 Katie's coach encouraged her to use her leg muscles to make powerful kicks in the water. Her kicks helped her move quickly through the water. Even at a very young age, Katie was known for her strength and fast pace. Katie looked up to Olympic swimmer, Michael Phelps. When she was nine years old, she even waited in line to get his autograph. She wanted to swim as fast as he did.

16 When Katie was in high school, she was a standout star on the United States Junior Championship with wins in three freestyle swimming events. Katie practiced before and after school. Most of her weekends were spent competing in swim meets and attending more swim practices. Swimming was important to Katie, but so was doing well in school. She did her homework on the way to practice and between swim meets.

17 Katie always wanted to compete in the Olympics. She knew that it took hard work and dedication to be part of the Olympic Team. When Katie was in high school, she entered the United States Olympic Trials. The Olympic Swimming Trials are a special swim meet where athletes compete against each other to secure a spot on the Olympic team. There were many swimmers there who had more experience than Katie, but she did not let that stop her. Katie said, "I knew if I put my mind to it, I could do it." Katie won the 800-meter freestyle swim and a spot on the U.S. Olympic Team.

18 As a member of the U.S. Olympic Swim Team, Katie competed in many swim meets. She set records in freestyle events in swimming competitions around the world. When she was fifteen, she competed in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England. She was the youngest member of the U.S. Olympic Team. Another member of the U.S. Olympic Swim Team was Michael Phelps. After watching Michael compete in swimming events her whole life, they were now on the same team. She won a gold medal and broke the record for the fastest time.



19 Katie knew that she was not done with the Olympics. She wanted to break more records and set new times. The 2016 Olympics took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Katie was there. She won four gold medals in freestyle events. She even broke her own world record by two seconds. Katie also helped her teammates win a silver medal in a freestyle relay race.

20 Katie is currently a college student at Stanford University. She is on the college swim team and trains every day. She continues to compete in swimming meets and trains to improve her time. Swimming is important to Katie, but so is doing her best in school. She still gets up early to attend swim practice before her classes begin and makes sure that she has plenty of time to study. Katie has many more Olympic Games in her future. Someday she may earn as many medals as her teammate, Michael Phelps.

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King Cobra

1 There are many types of snakes in the world. One snake, in particular, that is very venomous is the cobra snake. The cobra snake is one of the largest venomous snakes in the world. In size, they are eighteen feet long. Can you imagine seeing a cobra snake this big? Cobras are said to be able to grow the height of a giraffe! They are usually seen in South and Southeast Asia. These types of snakes can be found in forests or swamps.



2 Cobra snakes have special skin around their necks called “hoods.” The hood around their neck is used in protection from their predators. The hood is made up of muscles and ribs that spread out when they feel threatened.

3 Cobras love to feast upon small animals such as small mammals, lizards, and birds. When cobras hunt for their food, they raise their head off the ground and slither around. As they slowly slither around, they flicker their tongue out, creating a hissing sound. When it sees prey, the cobra strikes out at it. The slow slithering turns into fast, swift movements. Then the cobra strikes out at it, sinking its venom-filled fangs into the animal. After the snake poisons its food, it swallows it whole. The poisonous bite is known to be powerful enough to be able to kill an adult elephant.

4 Cobras have babies by laying eggs. They protect their eggs by creating a nest for them. After the nest is created, the mother cobra lays on top of the eggs until they are ready to hatch. Once hatched, the baby snakes immediately leave the nest. The baby snakes leave the nest and begin their own life journey.

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Nile Crocodile



5 The Nile crocodile is one of Africa's most feared animals. These animals are carnivores. Carnivores love to eat meat which may include humans. They can usually be found in swampy areas. The Nile crocodile is Africa's largest crocodile. The crocodile can grow to a size of about twenty feet. Twenty feet tall is about the same height as an adult giraffe.

6 The crocodile is a cold-blooded animal that uses body temperature to maintain energy. These crocodiles have a life span of 70 to 100 years. Nile crocodiles have eyes, nose, and ears on top of their heads. When hunting for prey, their body is able to be completely in the water. The top of their head is shown outside of the water to breathe, hear, and smell. The Nile crocodile has over sixty teeth in its mouth. They use these teeth to chomp down their prey. If a tooth comes out of their mouth while attacking their prey, a new one grows back. They primarily feed on fish because they are in the water near them and easy to get. Other reptiles on land can also be prey for crocodiles. When they spot an animal on land, they swim out of the water slowly. The crocodile creeps up on the animal and leaps out towards it. They can run after their prey at a fast speed of nineteen miles per hour. Large crocodiles can go for more than a year without feeding on other animals.

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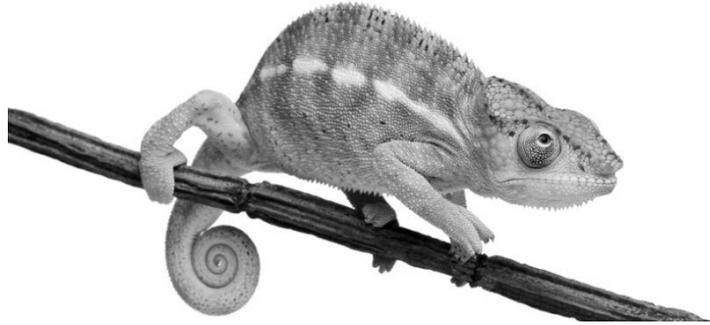
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Chameleons



7 Chameleons are a very interesting reptile. There are over 160 species of chameleons. Chameleons mostly live in the rainforest and deserts in Africa.

8 The color of their skin helps them to camouflage with their habitats. Chameleons that are found living in trees change their color to the color of the tree. They have special pigment under their skin that allows them to change colors. Chameleons can have multiple patterns on their skin. Chameleons can be pink, blue, red, orange, green, and many more colors. The color change of their skin sometimes shows their emotions. When a Chameleon is angry, the color of their body may be very dark. Sometimes they change their skin to a dark color to scare away other animals.

9 Chameleons have amazing eyesight. They have eyes that can rotate. Their eyes can focus on two different objects at the same time. They can even see small insects 5-10 meters away. When Chameleons eat, their long tongue stretches out and forms a suction cup. The suction cup is used to catch its prey. The speed of their tongue is so fast that it can reach its prey in less than 7 seconds. Large insects are a treat for Chameleons to feast upon. Large insects such as locusts, grasshoppers, crickets, and many more are meals for Chameleons.

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