# Ross Edgley prepares to swim around Iceland for science and endurance



Ross Edgley, the athlete-adventurer known for being the first and only person to swim around Great Britain, is preparing for an ambitious new challenge: circumnavigating Iceland by swimming. This upcoming expedition, set to begin on 16 May with the support of Clipper Ventures, marks a departure from Edgley’s previous record-focused efforts. While the swim will still constitute a world record, covering a total of approximately 1,610km at a rate of more than 30km per day, it also aims to contribute to scientific research by collecting environmental DNA samples in collaboration with the University of Iceland and other scientists.

Edgley described the scientific importance of the mission, saying, “It was amazing speaking to scientists because they said if someone is stupid and stubborn enough to swim around Iceland and collect samples, that would be incredible for creating this entire picture of biodiversity. I was like, ‘Hold my beer’.”

The undertaking presents significant challenges distinct from those Edgley faced during his Great British swim. He must contend with extreme natural conditions, including waves reaching 100 feet, winds up to 100mph, sub-zero temperatures, and encounters with marine wildlife such as orcas, known colloquially as “killer whales.” Edgley expressed cautious optimism about the wildlife, noting, “There’s never been a reported case of an orca attacking a human, they’re that intelligent, so I think they’ll just come over and go, ‘What are you doing in the Arctic Circle? You’re not a seal, so we’ll just leave you alone’.” The Icelandic coastline itself presents further hazards, with sheer cliff faces offering limited refuge during storms. “If a storm rolls,” Edgley explained, “I’m hiding in a tiny crack in a mountain and hoping for it to pass.”

To prepare for this extreme physical and environmental ordeal, Edgley has adopted a rigorous training regimen that emphasises both endurance and resilience in cold conditions. He spent time in Ullapool, Scotland, undertaking cold-weather training, including extended periods partially submerged in lochs, to simulate the icy waters he will face. His weekly training typically involves 12 hours of swimming per day, following a biphasic sleep cycle—six hours swimming, six hours resting—and strength training focused on reinforcing ligaments, tendons and connective tissues rather than simply building muscle mass. Edgley explained, “When you’re swimming, particularly in waves, your whole body is contorting and your ligaments, tendons and connective tissues are all straining.”

Nutrition plays a critical role in sustaining Edgley’s intense training. He consumes around 10,000 calories daily to maintain and build body mass and energy levels, striving to achieve a balance of fat for insulation and muscle for thermogenesis, aspiring to emulate the “fatter and fitter” physiology of orcas. His diet incorporates high carbohydrate intake, targeting up to 120g every hour during swimming, supported by energy gels and supplements. Edgley described one of his preferred meals as “a 12in baguette rolled up inside a pizza. Essentially you have a calzone pizza baguette—it’s amazing.” He also follows protein goals aligned with International Olympic Committee recommendations and supplements micronutrients with green superfoods and medium chain triglycerides.

Collaborating with elite strongmen Luke and Tom Stoltman has influenced Edgley’s approach to weight gain and strength. He recounted a meal with the strongmen that involved multiple burgers, milkshakes, fries with cheese, and a regimen of multivitamins and supergreens—a combination he acknowledges might seem contradictory but is effective for his exceptional calorie demands. “People think that looks like such an oxymoron of a diet,” he said, “but under very unique circumstances, when you want to get fatter and fitter, it is actually the optimal diet for what I’m trying to achieve.”

Recovery is central to Edgley’s preparation, with particular attention paid to sleep, which he considers his primary recovery tool. The biphasic sleep pattern he plans to follow during the Iceland swim will be a significant adjustment due to the disruption of the natural circadian rhythm. To manage this, he intends to use supplements like zinc, magnesium and cherry extract to aid melatonin production and support alertness when swimming during periods typically reserved for rest. Edgley stated, “My body will wonder what I’m doing because I’m swimming when I should be asleep, so I’m saying, ‘Here, have some ZMA, stay alert’.”

Edgley anticipates starting the swim in Reykjavík on 16 May, weather permitting, as the region is known for volatile climate conditions that include storms with snow, sand, and volcanic ash. He commented on this unpredictability, saying, “It’s obviously called the land of fire and ice, and people have been talking about these storms of snow and sand and volcanic ash—that’s nuts.”

Throughout preparations, Edgley’s enthusiasm for adventure and sports science underpins his efforts. His aim is to extend his list of extraordinary feats by conquering the physical and environmental challenges of swimming around Iceland’s dramatic coastline, blending rigorous scientific collaboration with personal endurance.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.seakeepers.org/program-opportunities/the-iceland-big-swim/> - This webpage details Ross Edgley's upcoming 900-mile swim around Iceland's coast, emphasizing ocean conservation, though it slightly differs in distance from other sources.
3. <https://www.press.bmwgroup.com/united-kingdom/article/detail/T0449712EN_GB/the-great-icelandic-swim:-1-000-miles-in-100-days-killer-whales-130ft-waves-ross-edgley-takes-on-a-historic-open-water-challenge-%E2%80%93-powered-by-bmw?language=en_GB> - This article highlights Ross Edgley's plan to swim over 1,000 miles around Iceland in 100 days, sponsored by BMW, and focuses on the extreme conditions he will face.
4. <https://www.the-independent.com/health-and-fitness/ross-edgley-great-icelandic-swim-b2738219.html> - This article provides background information on Ross Edgley's previous achievements and details his upcoming swim around Iceland's coastline, including the challenges he will encounter.
5. <https://outdoorswimmer.com/featured/ross-edgley-great-icelandic-swim/> - This article discusses Ross Edgley's attempt to swim 1,000 miles around Iceland's coastline while conducting ocean conservation research, highlighting the extreme conditions he will face.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source article itself, which provides comprehensive details about Ross Edgley's Icelandic swim, including his preparation, scientific collaborations, and the challenges he anticipates.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/health-and-fitness/ross-edgley-workouts-great-icelandic-swim-b2739721.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data