


Stroke Tips

Freestyle

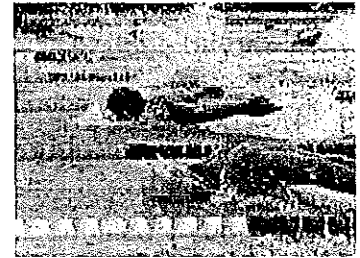
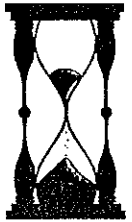
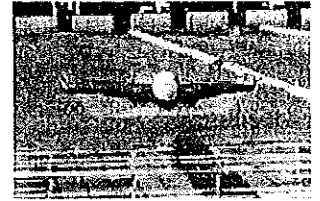
1. Keep your elbow high on the recovery with the finger tips close the surface. *This will help reduce the weight of the arms being out of the water and produce a faster recovery.*
 2. Hand Entry
 - a. Have the hand enter the water with the thumb first, the arm at a 45° angle win **no bubbles**. *No bubbles means the hand entered the water effortlessly followed by the wrist and elbow entering through the same hole.*
 - b. Have the thumb low and the elbow high as you begin the pull for maximum leverage as you start the pull.
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3. The hand should stay under the body during the pull to create the maximum forward motion from the pull and never at any time during the stroke be above the elbow. Touch the thumb to the thigh with the little finger up on the exit during practice to insure completion and follow through of the pull.
 4. The faster the hand as it leaves the water the better the recovery. *The power comes during the last 2/3rds of the pull.*
 5. Body Position
 - a. Have your body riding high and level on the water. *This will create a streamline position and reduce drag.*
 - b. Roll the entire body from the hips to breathe. *Lifting the head to breathe on see the wall on a turn destroys the streamline position and creates drag which will slow you down.*
 6. Kick the entire leg starting at the hips. Keep the feet extended and toes pointed; only the heels break the surface. Hips and legs turn as one unit in conjunction with the shoulder roll.

Freestyle Turn

1. Make the last pull to the wall forceful with a strong kick. *The faster you go into the turn, the faster you will be able to flip and get your feet on the wall.*
2. Drive the chin to the chest and the nose to the navel and slap your legs down had on the water when executing the turn. *The will get you into the tuck position and flip you quickly around.*
3. Push off the wall while still on your back or side. *Punch the wall with your feet, streamline, and then perform the roll to the stomach in a streamline position.*
4. When your feet touch the wall you want your hands together forming a hand-sandwich. *By doing this you will be a position to immediately push off the wall.*

Butterfly

1. Develop a religious breathing pattern – most swimmers do best breathing every other stroke in a 100 yard race and every three strokes in a 50. *You must train your body for this in practice.*
2. During the recovery, keep the thumbs down, the palm open and a 45° angle with the hand and arm. *Work on getting the most distance out of every stroke.*
3. The arm pull is similar to drawing an hour glass or Coke bottle with the hands almost touching under the chest – *The butterfly arm pull is very similar to the underwater pull used in the breaststroke.*
4. Push through to the thigh and slide the hands out with the little finger up and throw the arms forward. *Doing this will help keep the arms straight on the recovery.*
5. Kick as the hands enter the water and again as they exit. *One kick position the body for the pull and the second gets the shoulders and back up for the recovery. The upward and downward force of the kick should be equal.*
6. As the hands go it – the hips go up. *The will streamline the body for the pull forward.*
7. The kick starts at the chest, Passes through the hips and exits through the toes. *Using the entire body for the kick produces a powerful boost.*
8. At the turn, touch the wall with both hands simultaneously and the shoulders level. Immediately pull one hand up to the shoulder, turn the body sideways and fall back towards the opposite end; as you are falling back, bend the knees and bring the feet to the wall as quickly as possible. While the feet are traveling to the wall, the hand still on the wall takes a freestyle stroke bringing it near the face as you sink underwater to push off, streamline, glide and start the dolphin kicks

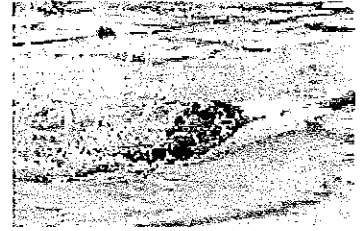


Backstroke

1. When swimming backstroke, hold the head still and maintain a streamlined body position the entire race. *When the eyes move, your head will move too.*
2. Raise the shoulder and roll the hips up as the hand comes out of the water. *Rolling will allow you to have a straight arm recovery as well as placing the pulling arm into the optimum position.*
3. The arm stays straight and relaxed on the recovery. Imagine that you are holding a paint brush and painting the ceiling. *Bending the arm usually results in overreaching on the entry, requiring additional energy to move the arm into the pulling position.*
4. Drive the hand in deep on the entry. *Like you are trying to break ice.*

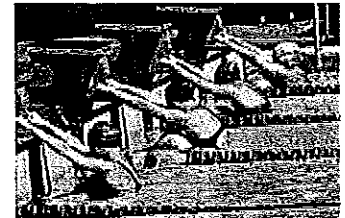


5. After the hand enters the water, the pull is deep, shallow, and deep again followed by a snap finish under the hip. *Have the arm bent at 45° to produce the best pull.*
6. Accelerate your speed as you approach the flags and sprint into the turn *Stopping to look at the wall after you roll on to the stomach slow you down in addition to slowing you down going into the turn.*
7. When approaching the turn, count your strokes after you see the flags above you. Roll to the stomach on the last stroke and pull yourself towards the wall and flip. After you push off, streamline and dolphin kick to the surface. You should have a set number of dolphin kicks you take off each wall after the turn.
8. At the finish, **STAY ON YOUR BACK** and throw the head back at the beginning of the last stroke to wall.. *Learn to use and trust the flags. I have seen many backstroke races lost by not attacking the finish.*



Backstroke Start

1. Grab the bar and set the feet in a comfortable position on the pad. They should be placed about shoulder width apart and at the same level. *You will be jumping backwards during the start.*
2. At the command to "Take your mark", pull the chest up towards the bar with eyes looking straight ahead. *Most swimmers tuck the head down but more and more are having the head back with eyes looking up.*
3. At the sound of the horn, push the hands against the bar and throw the arms to a position over the head and arch the back. *The important thing is to get into a streamline position for the entry into the water.*
4. When you can the ceiling or opposite end of the pull, push with the legs driving the body out over the water.
5. As the feet leave the pad, try to lift them up. *Getting the feet out of the water will increase the distance you travel on the start and give the body added impetus on the entry.*
6. Work or utilizing the dolphin kick to travel the first 15 yards before surfacing.
7. Have the body rise to the surface at a nearly horizontal level
8. Begin the first arm pull after you switch to the flutter kick and still underwater, you should be starting the second arm pull when your face breaks the surface. *Be swimming when you break the surface.*



Breaststroke

1. When swimming the breaststroke, keep the eyes looking down and slightly to the front. *For every inch you raise the head, the hips will drop down two.*
2. Keep the chin down and close the surface of the water when breathing.
3. Arm pull
 - a. Begin the pull with the elbows extended, palms open the turned out with the little finger up and scull wider than the shoulders and elbows.
 - b. When the hands turn in accelerate the hand speed, squeeze the elbows together, scoop the water and shoot the hands forward, squeeze the elbows together and then stretch downhill into the streamline position with the index fingers touching.
 - c. Begin the next pull when the feet touch at the end of the kick.
4. Kick – The feet are used like propeller blades
 - a. Lift the heels quickly and smoothly toward the butt.
 - b. Draw the heels up and point the toes out towards the side walls.
 - c. The power is supplied as the legs kick back as fast as possible, not becoming straight until the feet touch at the end of the kick.
 - d. Lift the hips up to the surface as the kick finishes and the stretch extends.
5. Breathing
 - a. Drive the head forward to breathe, keeping the chin down and forward at a 45° angle. *Think about lifting the shoulder and back to breath.*
 - b. Slip the chin behind the extending hands and then the head down between the arms.
6. Timing – ***Very important to developing a great breaststroke***
 - a. The heels are lifted to start the kick when the arm pull is at its widest.
 - b. The feet should touch finishing the kick as the arms reach full extension.
 - c. **Kick-Stretch-Pull**
7. Turn
 - a. Touch the wall with two hands simultaneously with the shoulders level. Immediately pull one hand up to the shoulder, turn the body sideways
 - b. Begin to fall back towards the opposite end; as you are falling back, bend the knees and bring the feet to the wall as quickly as possible.
 - c. While the feet are traveling to the wall, the hand still on the wall takes a freestyle stroke bringing the hand near the face as you sink underwater to push off, streamline, glide, and the pull down.

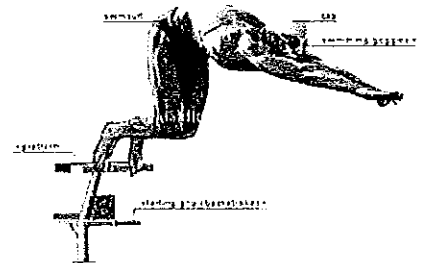


8. Pull Down – *40-50% of the race is covered with the underwater pull and kick off the turns and start.*
- Count 1000-1, 1000-2 after hitting the water on the start and after the feet leave the wall on a turn start the pull down. *Counting will prevent you from starting the pull too early.*
 - The pull pattern is a hour glass with the hands coming close together under the chest and finishing as the arms are extended at the sides.
 - It is now legal to take one dolphin kick during the pull down. *Think about swimming underwater butterfly.*
 - Keep the hands close to the body, to reduce drag, as they are pushed forward after the stroke.
 - As the hands pass in front of the face, begin the kick.
 - You can begin the 2nd arm pull while you are still underwater, but your head must break the surface before the arms and turned in. *As with all the stroke be swimming when you break the surface.*

The Grab Start

Keep the knees bent and relaxed – *Tightening the muscles in the legs too soon will stop the flow of blood to them.*

- The toes should be firmly curled over the front edge of the block, no more that shoulder width apart.
- If you do a "track" start – one foot will be forward and the other is placed back on the block.
- Keep your body loose and relaxed while listening for the starting command. *The legs should be "pouncing" position.*
- The hands should grab the front edge of the block as you lean back in preparation for the start.
- The eyes are looking down and slightly forward. *This will help the body position and balance.*
- When the horn sounds to start the race, the hands pull down and the body starts moving forward. After body is moving forward, the arms are thrown forward in preparation for entry into the water and the eyes follow the hands. The toes push back against the blocks driving the body forward. *All parts of the body should work smoothly together for the maximum thrust and distance on the start*



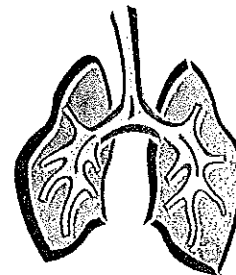
- Looking back at the toes on the entry will help keep the goggles one

8. The entire body should go through the same hole in the water. *By reducing the splash on the entry, you can reduce the loss of speed when you enter the water.*
9. Tuck the head down between the arms in the streamline position on the enter and then raise slightly as you approach the surface for the first pull.

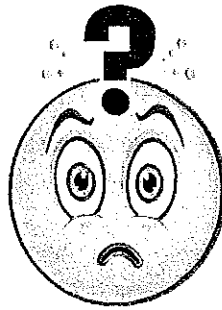


Breathing

1. Swim freestyle and butterfly, the face should return to the water before the hand(s) enter
2. There is no breathing between the flags and the wall on the finish of freestyle and butterfly. **Stopping to take a breath will cost you time and there is plenty of air after you finish.**
3. Breathe during the second stroke off the wall for freestyle and butterfly. *You are coming off the wall fast; maintain that speed by continuing to swim.*
4. Breathing after the start and turn
 - a. 50 Free – 5 – 7 strokes after the start and then 3 – 5 on the second length.
 - b. 100 Free – 3 – 5 strokes after the start and 2 – 4 strokes after a turn
 - c. 200+ Free – 3 – 5 strokes after the start and the 2nd stroke after a turn
5. Take quick bites of air – *When taking in gulps of air, you unconsciously slow your stroke rate down, and recover with a straight arm raising the fingers above the elbow.*
6. Breathing patterns
 - a. 50 Free – 2 to 3 breaths the first 25, 3 or 4 for the second
 - b. 100 Free - develop a comfortable pattern for the first 75 yards then reduce the number of breaths the last 25.
 - c. 200+ Free – 3-2 or 3-3 pattern
It must be comfortable in practice before it will be comfortable in a meet
 - d. Butterfly – every 3 stroke for a 50 and every other stroke for a 100
You only need to get the mouth out of the water for a breath
 - e. Breaststroke – breathe every stroke after you surface for a start or turn
 - f. Backstroke – Pike either hand and exhale every time that hand enters the water
Keep the face relaxed when swimming backstroke.



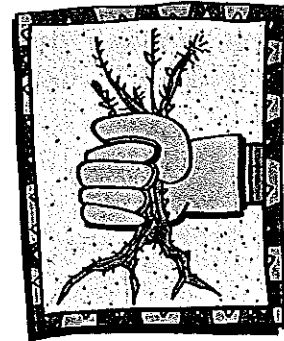
Who Am I?



*I am your constant companion
 I will push you up to success or down to disappointment
 I am at your command
 Half the things you do might just as well be turned over to me
 For I can do them quickly, correctly and profitably
 I am easily managed, just be firm with me
 Those who are great - I have made great
 Those who are failures – I have made failures
 I am not a machine, though I work with the precision of one
 And the intelligence of a person
 You can run me for profit, or you can run me for ruin
 Show me how you want it done – educate me – train me
 Lead me – reward me
 And I will...do it automatically
 I am your servant
 Who am I?*

I am a habit

If you make good habits, they in turn will make you. But like weeds in the garden, bad habits can take over your life. Make a decision today to pull those weeds.



The Magic Touch



A good "feel" for the water is often used to describe swimmers who get a lot of distance and/or speed from a limited number of strokes. While watching the great swimmers, Michael Phelps, Natalie Coughlin, Ryan Lochte etc. you can see them get through the first part of the race with less effort than the other swimmers and then put on a burst of power and pull away from the field for the victory.

The one thing that all great swimmers have in common is a good "feel" for the water. You can really see this when they make the "catch" at the start of the arm pull. I feel that this "catch" is the most important part of the stroke. How well you are able to "hold the water" at the start of the pull is vital to the efficiency of the stroke.

"EVF" (Early Vertical Forearm) is what you want to achieve in the freestyle more than any other, but getting into the catch as fast as possible will help you maintain speed while conserving your energy.

Having the "fingers, wrist, and elbow" all enter through the same hole in the water will automatically put your arm in the ideal pulling position.

Count your strokes per length while wearing hand paddles; and then maintain the same number of strokes without hand paddles is a good method of improving your stroke efficiency.

10 5 54
26 18



Another easy method of improving the "feel" for the water is swimming with the hand in a fist and then gradually opening the hand so you become more aware of the water pressure on the fingers.

On arm swimming the non-swimming arm extended is a good way to lengthen the stroke. The stroking arm should reach up to the other arm before starting the pull. The result will be fewer strokes per length and usually a better hold on the water.

