

Teaching Swimming: Fun and Effective Instruction

Swimming Ideas, LLC

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Swim Instructor Training Workbook

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Going Underwater

Joyful underwater attempts are the foundation of swimming

Provide a safe environment filled with fun

Aim for voluntary underwater attempts

You demonstrate; they learn

Parents and instructors should go underwater with the learning swimmer.

Get at eye level. Smile frequently. Laugh often. Go under too.

Demonstrate joyful, happy, laughing underwater examples and provide opportunities for learner to join.

Build into every activity a chance for learner to experience going underwater with their own agency and interest.



Get eye-to-eye

Loving underwater takes time

For a new learner to love being underwater takes time and many joyful experiences. We want to give swimming learners lots of positive experiences to remember when they confront the discomfort and pain of choking on water; inhaling water is uncomfortable, scary, and terrifying.

Play games! Sing songs!

Do things that build the learner's trust and comfort in the aquatic environment. Remember that the water is a vastly different place than the child's typical living. On land they can breathe without difficulty, issue, or pain.

Inhaling water teaches the learner to be afraid of going under. We want to build positive joyful experiences with going underwater that teach the learner they can hold their breath (or keep their lips closed) and enjoy swimming without the pain and discomfort it could have.

Focus on:

- Demonstrate every activity, challenge, game, and song. Do the things too.
- Smile, laugh, have fun, be involved as your joy and comfort will transfer to the learner.



Underwater Progression

Earn trust by being consistent, predictable, and safe

Follow the underwater progression step-by-step

Do the careful deliberate work first, then build on trust

Create trust

Build trust by never letting go of the swimmer to let them fend alone.

Always support the learner with no surprises.

Telegraph all of your actions: demonstrate clearly what will happen by doing it yourself or with another participant.

Fun now leads to joy later



Celebrate success



Blowing bubbles

Build smiling joy into every early swimming activity or challenge/ game.

The effort you put into the learner's positive experiences doing supported front glides will blossom into excited independent streamlines later.

All activities lead to bravery



Jumps from side



Joyful flops

All of the supported glides & jumps, challenges and games done in a beginner's swim lesson will echo into the future.

Build trust. Go slow.

The time you take now to be careful and loving will create bravery later.

Reach to the next step

Incremental improvements

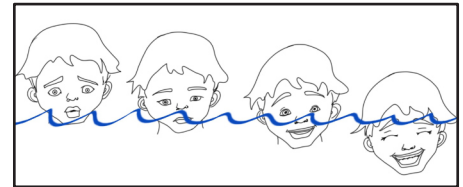
Going underwater is a slow progression where learners experience the unique feeling of being submerged.

Your role is to safely and gently teach a learner that the water is different, fun, and exciting while also potentially hazardous.

Go slow. Build step by step: 1 small step after another small step.

The Underwater Progression:

- Shoulders
- Chin
- Lips
- Nose
- Eyes
- Whole face
- Entire head



Progress Slowly. Step-by-step.



*Never skip a step of the underwater progression.

Avoid asking a learner to put their chin in the water and then their eyes. Skipping steps of the progression erodes trust. We want to build trust by being predictable and consistent.

Work on each step until comfort is consistent knowing each increment is important.

Go slow and master each step

Encourage going underwater

Do different things to achieve an underwater goal

Build a foundation through earned trust

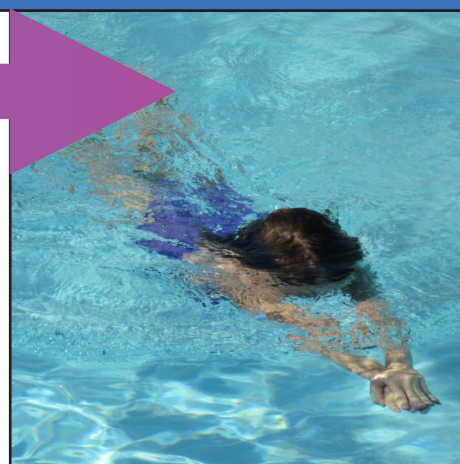
Supported Front Glides lead to Streamline



Constantly encourage the swimmer to “kiss” the water whenever you do a supported front glide.

Over time, eventually the swimmer will put their face in the water willingly.

Building a habit of looking down in a supported front glide will make streamline easier.



Supported Back Glides lead to water comfort

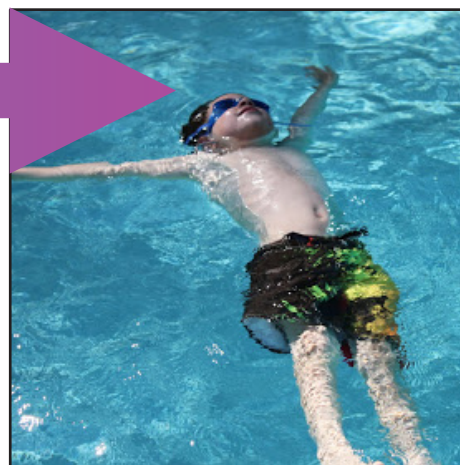


Upside down, backwards, unable to see, total trust in a stranger (INS), can't stand.

Back glides can be terrifying.

Teach how to float, move, stay on surface with arms and kicks, how to recover, stand, and return to shallow water.

Comfort and confidence grows slowly.



Jumps, games, encouragement leads to JOY!



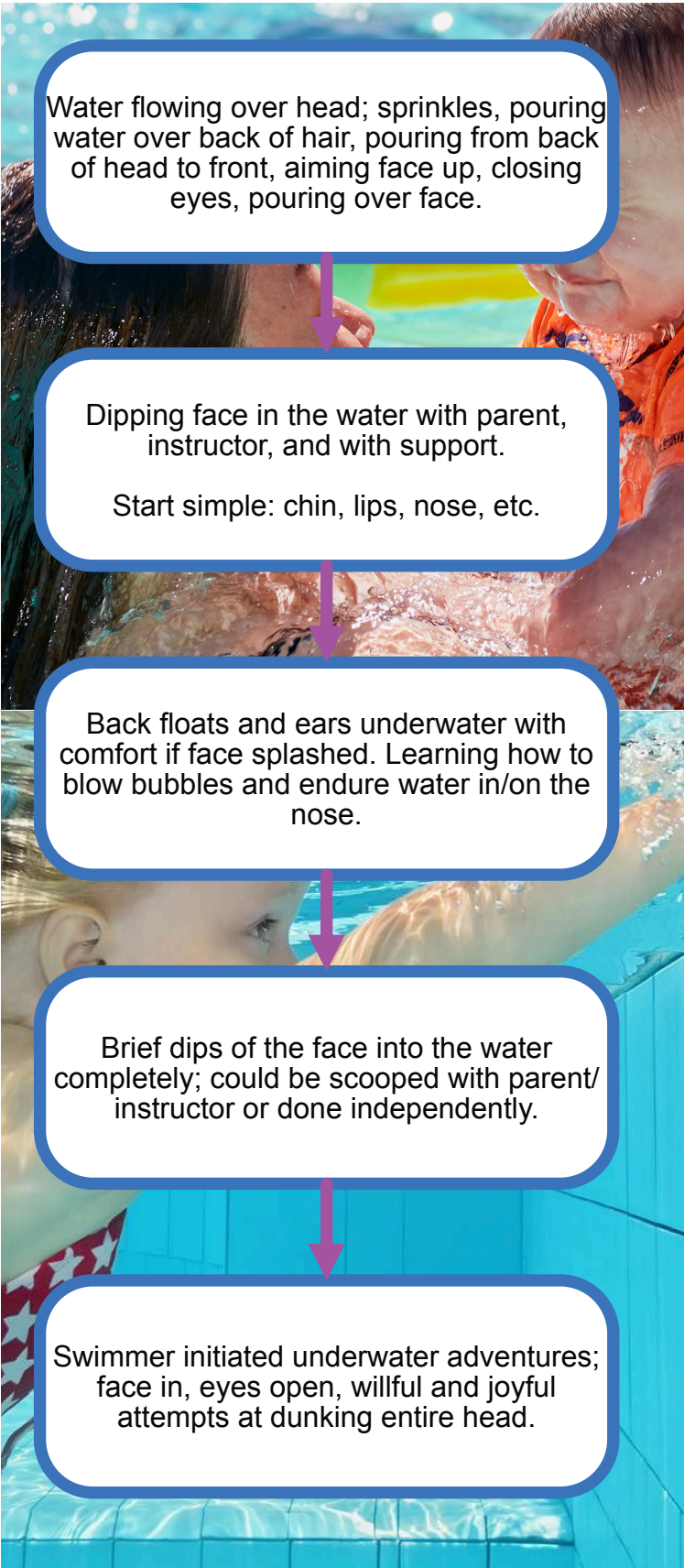
Initial jump reluctance comes from fear of being dropped, going under, and falling.

Scoop from wall to hugs, support the hands and keep swimmer's face from going under if not desired.

Over time, excitement and pure fun will develop into reckless jumps of joy!



From the timid beginner to the joyful underwater adventurer



Water flowing over head; sprinkles, pouring water over back of hair, pouring from back of head to front, aiming face up, closing eyes, pouring over face.

Dipping face in the water with parent, instructor, and with support.

Start simple: chin, lips, nose, etc.

Back floats and ears underwater with comfort if face splashed. Learning how to blow bubbles and endure water in/on the nose.

Brief dips of the face into the water completely; could be scooped with parent/instructor or done independently.

Swimmer initiated underwater adventures; face in, eyes open, willful and joyful attempts at dunking entire head.

Going underwater is a fundamental step to learning how to swim.

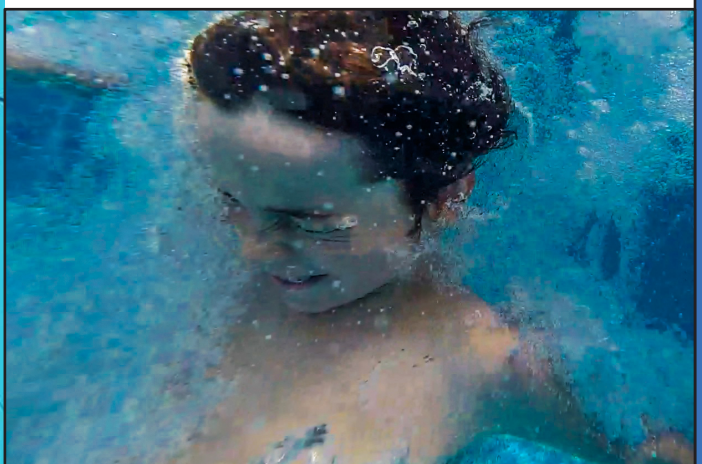
Encourage it gradually, over time, in a loving, caring, supportive environment.

Start with small actions; splashes on the face, self-directed play with toys, and good old-fashioned encouragement.

As the swimmer gets more comfortable with the lesson, the instructor, and their experience in the water they'll develop more bravery to do something totally unnatural: go underwater.

Going underwater can be scary. Do you remember inhaling water? Did you like it?

Be gentle and encouraging. Provide many opportunities to go underwater.



Free Motion & Play

Find the right fit; life jackets should be snug

Play games and let the learners move, laugh, and race

Independent movement is best; if it is safe and shallow

Play in shallow water

Leverage floating aids, life jackets, and play games in shallow water where learners can stand and float; about chest deep.

Every bit of play and fun you can work into a lesson will help learners understand how the water feels.

Much of learning to swim is the learner experiencing what it feels like to be submerged, feeling how to move through water, and feeling what happens when they push against the water.



Group play is fun and promotes learning

Games, Life Jackets, Moving

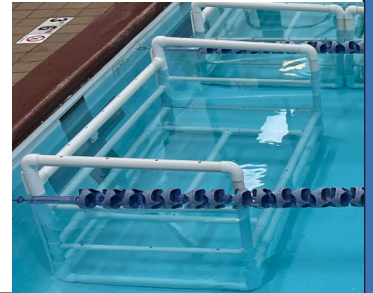
Every challenge has a purpose

Play games and allow for independent movement. Find shallow water or provide a swim bench.

Learners need time and opportunity to explore the water for themselves.

Free motion & play teaches:

- How to move through the water
- How the water pushes against the body to make one move
- Buoyancy, breath control, and how to relax and float



Leverage shallow water



Bake a Cake



Too big!



Play to learn

Front Glides



Focus on forward horizontal movement

Body, line, and posture are the three keys to gliding

Progress from support to position 11 to streamline

Teach body position:

Achieve good body position with these key elements:

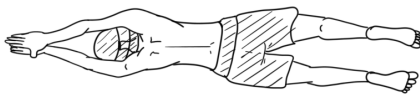
- Head/face aimed down
- Arms reaching forward above shoulders
- Body held straight and narrow kick moves person

Front Glide Script:

- Put your shoulders in water
- Put your hands out in front of you
- Put your face in water
- Push off with/to me

A great front glide is also Position 11.

This is “position 11.” We use this drill/position as a teaching tool. Every swimming stroke will flow through this position.



Streamline

All glides lead to streamline

SL = Streamline. Every supported glide, independent glide across benches, or forward horizontal motion builds towards the crucial swimming skill: streamline.

A good streamline is the ultimate goal, after we've established comfort gliding with the face in the water.

We use supported front glides as the next step in the incremental progression of skills.

They can be done with learners that go underwater and those that do not.

Your goal for supported front glides is to establish a good body posture, line, and balance at the surface so learners can adjust their head and arm position for better quality.

Streamline is the goal; front glides build to SL



*See Streamline section for specifics

Supported Front Glides

Use the script every time

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition; many attempts

Every attempt is another opportunity to go underwater

The script:

- Put your shoulders in the water.
- Reach your arms out to me.
- Put your face [chin, lips, nose] in the water.
- Push off [with, to] me.



A supported front glide; hands on shoulders

- Instructor demonstrating
- Learner trusts instructor
- Learner's arms reach for instructor's shoulders

3 types of support

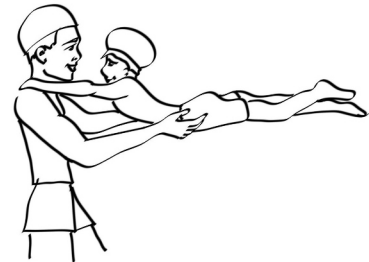
Hands on shoulders

The swimmer puts their hands on the instructor's shoulders.

Keep swimmer's arms straight and attempt to keep body straight. This support is usually used for swimmers that do not put their face in the water.

Lift the belly or outside of hips to manipulate the swimmer's body into a straight line.

The instructor should walk backwards to simulate movement and independent propulsion.



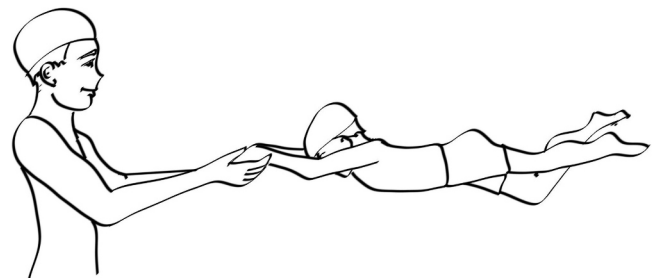
Hands in hands

Participant reaches forward in streamline with their face in the water.

The instructor will hold the participant's hands with their own. Keep the swimmer's hands near the surface and pull to provide motion.

Hold the swimmer at arms length. If needed, use other hand to support belly and body.

The goal is to keep participant's arms straight, their face in the water, and their body relaxed, stretched, and floating on the surface while the instructor moves backwards.



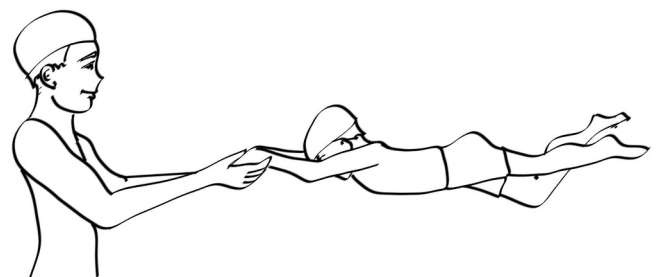
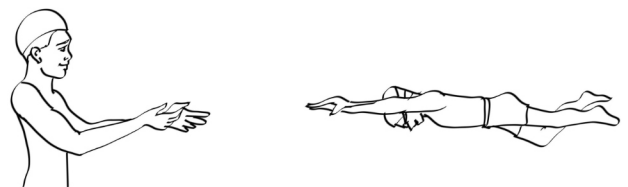
Short glide, then hand in hand

The Instructor stands a body length or two away from the swimmer and waits for them to glide to the instructor.

Goal is for participant to glide with their face down, in the water keeping their body straight.

Once participant gets to instructor, either support with hands on shoulders or hands supported on instructor's hand.

Once the swimmer starts independent glide the instructor MUST NOT MOVE. Catch the swimmer first, then walk backwards.



Front Glide: Progressions

Move at the swimmer's comfort.

We should always support the swimmer based on their ability to remain calm; do what they want, and...

Stretch (push) by asking the swimmer to do a very small, further than normal, distance without support.

Push swimmer to do things alone

- Provide support
- Never move once they start

Gradually adjust support

Full support glides → ½ alone ½ supported



The transition to independent attempts is paved with many many many opportunities to do a front glide alone.

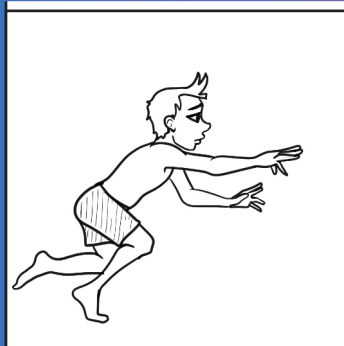


Start with holding the swimmer and aiming them at the wall. Let them fall to the wall, with their feet on your knees.

Grow and increase the distance.



Small brave attempts → Longer glides alone

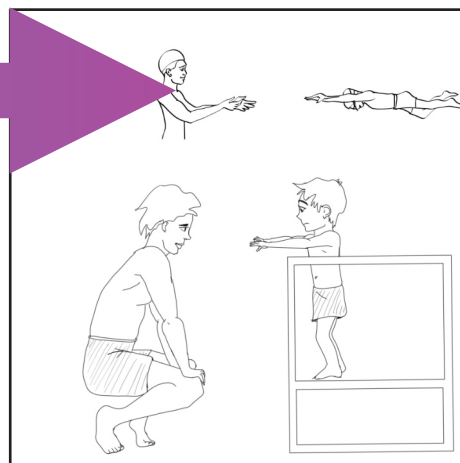


Let the swimmer reach for your shoulder, or the wall, or another bench.

Then, when they can stretch and reach about their body length, take 1 step back.

Let them fall forward, and PUSH with their feet to your shoulders/arms.

As mastery grows, start further away.



Staying put earns trust! → Swimmers thrive!



YOU MUST NOT MOVE!!!!

Once the swimmer initiates an unsupported glide, regardless of the distance, the instructor MUST NOT MOVE.

Build and earn trust by being where they last saw you. They're blind, underwater, alone, and desperate for your support. Provide it.



Build Confidence

Combat fear by being consistent

Beginners:

Hold them close. Their hands on instructor's shoulders. Keep them supported.

Introduce to what it feels like to be flat.

Build comfort:

Do the same thing, over and over and over. Establish expectations and habit; follow the scripts.

Introduce falling forward:



Fall like a "tree doing a TIMBER!"

Feet remain on ins knees, swimmer hands reach for the wall.

Stand 1 step away, then 2 steps...

STAY WHERE YOU ARE
until the swimmer reaches you.

Glide alone, then supported glide.

Gliding alone is Streamline!

The swimmer is confident in laying flat, face in, feet kicking, and arms stretched forward.

Can recover to standing without fear.

Front glides should focus on:

- Face in water
- Body flat and relaxed at surface
- Arms stretched, feet kicking

List of supported front glides:

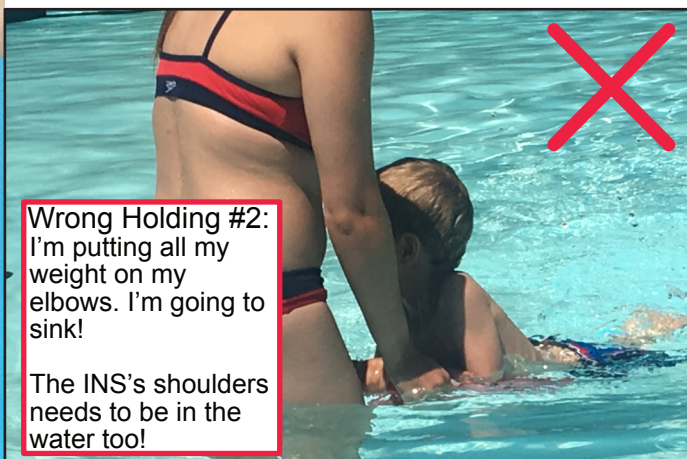
- Hands on shoulders
- Tree falling close start → Hands on shoulders.
- Tree falling close to wall → reach for wall
- Two benches: step across the gap
- Two benches: reach for the other handle
- Swimmer hand in instructor's hand
- Brief glide alone (1 body length) then hand in instructor's hand
- Short independent glides from bench to bench
- Long glide to instructor, stand w/o help

Wrong Holding #1:
I'm learning to push my belly down and lift my head and feet.



Wrong Holding #2:
I'm putting all my weight on my elbows. I'm going to sink!

The INS's shoulders needs to be in the water too!



Back Glides



Body flat at surface

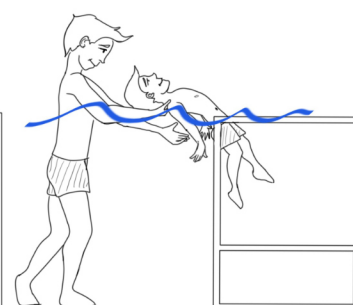
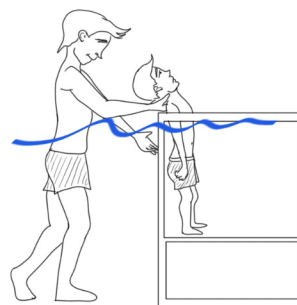
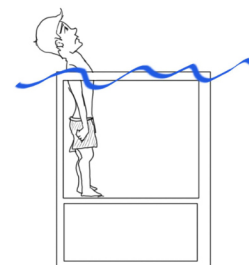
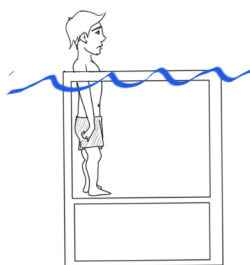
Belly and knees underwater

Gentle kick for movement

The Script:

- “Turn away from me.”
- “Put your shoulders in the water.”
- “Tilt your head back to me.”
- “Push off with my support.”

Progress slowly. Swimmers are upside-down and backwards; it can be very scary.



Banana Body vs Flat Body

We start back glides with a flat body; the head and chin are in a neutral, normal, position. Not tucked, not aiming up or back.

As confidence and mastery grows, then back glides and backstroke should slightly tuck the chin towards the chest creating a “banana” shape to the body.

Neutral Chin vs Tucked Chin

Beginner



Advanced



Build trust through support

Earn your swimmer’s trust.

Build trust by supporting the swimmer unconditionally. Do not let go. No surprises.

Provide full head and body support so that the swimmer’s body can relax.

A relaxed swimmer will float easier.

Fear vs Trust



3 Types of Back Support

Full support progresses to independence

Like all supported glides the back glide begins with complete and total support.

The instructor will hold the child at or above the water with their entire body supported by the instructor's shoulder and arms.

Head on Shoulder:

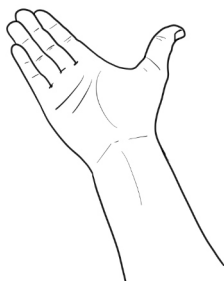
The instructor puts their shoulders in the water. The swimmer rests their head on the instructor's shoulder; their body is supported by the instructor's hands on their legs or lower back.

Move backwards together singing songs and kicking. Can hold swimmer by the knees and kick for them or allow independent kicking.

Priority: comfort in support laying on back.

Head in Hand:

The instructor puts their shoulders in the water and grasps the swimmer's neck and crown with their upturned palm, thumb out. The neck wedges into the web of the instructor's hand. See picture.



The swimmer rests at the surface with their face comfortably out of the water and lower body or legs supported by the instructor's other hand.

Priority: comfort with ears in water and support.

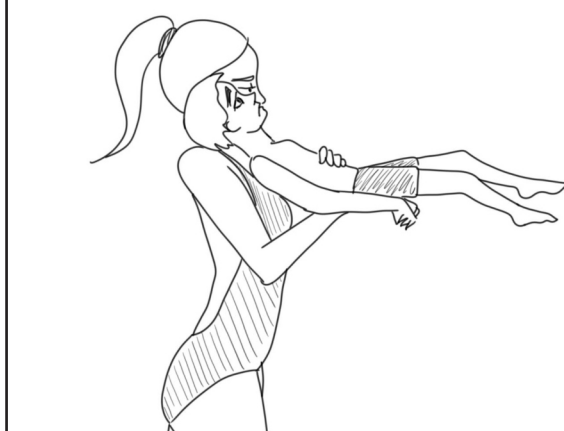
Limited Neck Support:

The instructor supports the swimmer at the surface by placing two fingers on their neck, or back of the head.

Instructor's support is mostly a reminder that they're there, not full physical support. At this stage the swimmer should be floating mostly independently but with the reassurance that the instructor is immediately available if needed.

Priority: empowering swimmer confidence by letting the swimmer trust the instructor.

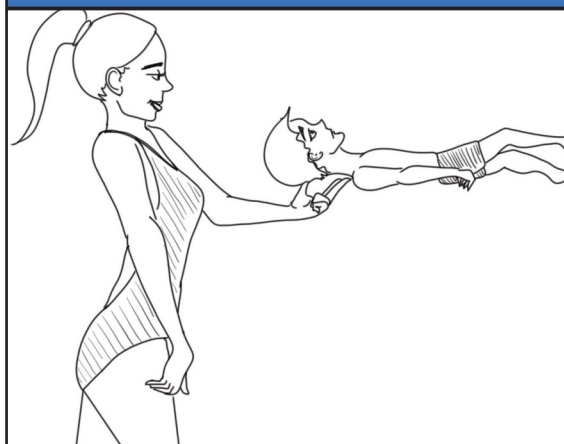
Head on shoulder



Head in Hand



Limited neck support



Back Glide Progressions

Full support of head, back, legs

Full head and neck support, limited back and legs

Minimal head and neck support with no leg or back

Brief independence followed by limited support

Earn trust by keeping the swimmer's face above water

Be predictable, consistent, and telegraph your movements

Build to Independence

Cheek to cheek → Comfort and bravery



Start with Cheek to Cheek connection.

Place the swimmer's head on your shoulder. Get your chest underwater and press your cheek into the swimmer's cheek.

The physical connection will help calm their fear and as comfort grows will develop into a joyful back glide.



Support the head → They control the body



Provide the majority of your direct support to their neck and back of the head.

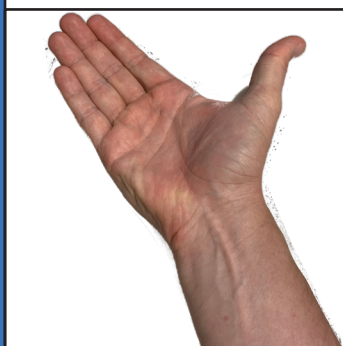
Keep the swimmer's face above water.

Assist the lower back or legs as needed; keeping near surface, kicking.

Let the swimmer manipulate their torso and legs to stay afloat.



Palm up on neck → Two fingers on neck



Support the child's neck with your upturned palm, aiming the web between thumb and pointer into their neck.

Cradle the skull with your palm. Provide total support.

When they are ready, reduce that support to two fingers under the neck. Remove your fingers and hover nearby.



Trust Over Fear

From the frightened beginner to the confident swimmer

1

Full head on shoulder support:

Let the child rest out of the water on your shoulder.
Keep your face pressed to their head.



2

Full head support in your hand:

Build up to comfort where the swimmer can put their ears in the water and relax. Provide total support of the neck and head.



3

Limited head & neck support:

Use your fingers on the back of the neck and head to keep the swimmer's face above water and encourage more and more independent floating/gliding.



4

Play with support and no support:

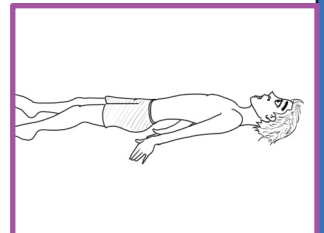
Do zooming glides with full support, and let go (with warning) to provide sense of fun and movement. Encourage kicking and moving from bench to bench.



5

Independent gliding:

The swimmer has done glides with and without support over short distances, uses their feet to provide propulsion, and knows how to balance in the water.



Glides: Wrong holding

There are wrong ways to provide support

Avoid doing counterproductive actions

These types of support are “wrong” because they promote body behavior that is counter to our desired outcome: good swimming that matches competitive stroke technique.

Avoid doing a supported back float that promotes a curving banana body by encouraging the child to bend.

Avoid doing supported front floats that promote belly down floating.



Front: head down & body flat

Encourage the face aiming down like the swimmer is Pinocchio who told a lie and is dragging their nose on the floor.

Avoid putting your hands on the child's stomach so that you are beside them. This promotes the head up, the belly down, and the legs up. Once you remove support they'll sink and their body will be in a “U” shape.

Good & Bad

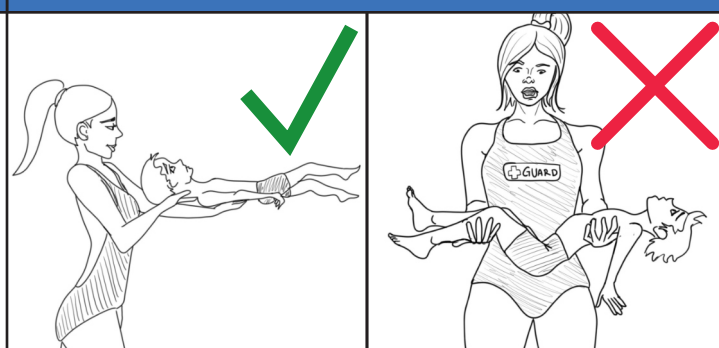


Back: head neutral & body flat

Our goal is to provide as much comfort and support as the swimmer needs, but not more than that. Once their trust and comfort is earned, we begin removing support; focusing only on the neck.

Holding the knees and back will lead to a saggy body that sinks once we remove support.

Good & Bad



Stop yourself! Follow the 3 correct types instead

The previous two sections are about the 3 types of support for both Front and Back glides.

Use those types of support. Use them only. They work. Avoid doing it wrong.

Here are the key elements that you should always adhere to:

- The swimmer's legs should always be pointed in the same direction as your belly button, that is, away from your chest, perpendicular to you.
- Every effort should be to support the head, not the body. By that, meaning the instructor's hands should lift the neck and head and limit the amount of lifting support on the lower back or hips.
- Encourage the swimmer to adjust and manipulate their stomach and legs to provide buoyancy; kick to keep body at the surface and move the torso to keep the belly and back near the surface without bending too much.



Front: WRONG



Hands on belly

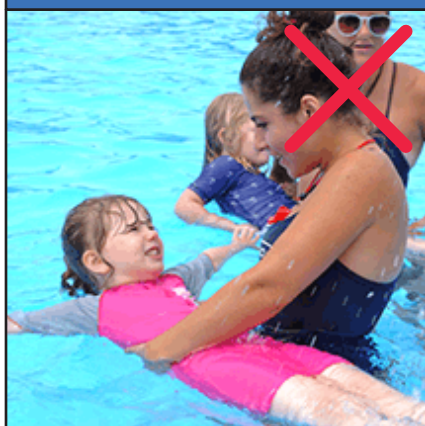
Front: WRONG



Front: WRONG



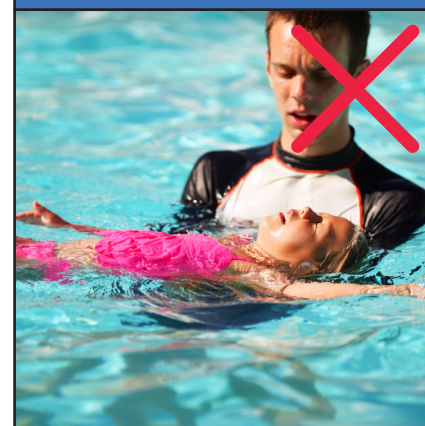
Back: WRONG



Back: WRONG



Back: WRONG



Quiz & Discussion #1

- 1) How would you describe the underwater progression to someone that doesn't know about it?

- 2) What type of supervision is required for independent play and exploration time with life jackets?

- 3) How do you build confidence over time when doing supported front glides?

- 4) What is the supported front glide script?

Describe how the swim instructor should be in the water with kids learning to do supported glides. Standing, kneeling, sitting, looming over, knees in water but not belly. Etc.

- 5) Describe where you put your hand on a swimmer's head/neck when doing supported back glides.

- 6) Describe a wrong way to hold someone with support and include two reasons why it would encourage bad body behavior.

Discussion Topic #1: Fear

Notes:

Can swimmers say “no?”

Dunk the kid without warning or gentle, loving, caring trusting atmosphere where children progress by gradual progress?

How do the three types of support for both front and back glides promote trust and remove fear?

Should you ever “drop” a swimmer accidentally to get them over their fear of going underwater?

Discussion Topic #2: Front Glides

Notes:

When we start providing support the child’s head is up, and their body curves in a way the “wrong” pictures show is wrong. Why?

Is there a point in doing supported front glides when the swimmer refuses to put their face in?

After gaining confidence gliding without support, is it okay to have the swimmer start gliding to the instructor and then while their face is underwater the instructor begins to walk backwards, refusing to support them until they go farther or take a breath or arm stroke?

Discussion Topic #3: Back Glides

Notes:

Should swim instructors put their cheeks to the cheeks of swimmers? What about adults that are afraid?

If you remove the lower back support too early (swimmer isn’t ready) the legs will fall. How do we keep their body flat and their legs up?

Have you seen the fear in swimmer’s eyes the first time they do a supported back float? Why do you think they’re so scared?

Flutter Kick

Kick used in freestyle and backstroke; often first learned

First focus on using the top and bottom of the foot

Begin kick from hips and roll through ankles; knee snaps

Start with splashes, progress to fluid movement

An excellent flutter kick would start with the hips and roll down the knees, ankles and toes like each leg was doing the “wave.”

Beginners: focus on splashing the water with the top and the bottom of the foot. Promote the feel of pushing on the water.

Learning: let the kick be a wider diameter initially, then narrow it to be as wide as the shoulders and body (the size of the leg/knee/foot moving).



Splashes → Movement → Efficiency

- Let them splash wildly at first
- Hone the kick over time as swimmer feels water pushing on their feet/legs

Build a better kick

Kick on the side



Introduce kicking by having swimmers sit on the edge.

Begin with large splashes that teach swimmers to push the water with the top and bottom of their feet.

Focus on the feeling of the foot pushing on the water.

Practice with face in and hands on wall next.



Kicking with face in water

Kick with support

Use any tool to help swimmer float. Make the primary method of propulsion, moving forward, be from the kick.

The goal is for swimmers to learn on their own how pushing against the water with the top and bottom of their feet in a “floppy” and fluid motion will make them move.

Do a mix of head in the water and head above water during the kicking of short or long distances.

Refine excessive bending knees over time.



Use kick boards, barbells, floats, life jackets

Kick to move

Remove the kick boards and do glides and streamlines with kicks over a variety of distances.

Start with short super achievable distances at first. Then, over time, encourage a strong kick over longer distances.

Add in arm strokes as well as a strong kick to provide movement.

Emphasize that kicking well will make swimmers move better at first, then arm strokes will take over priority as mastery grows.



Short distances of kicking movement

Streamline

An excellent streamline is a habit; over-emphasize building it

Repeat the 3 things to a good streamline over & over & over

Speak in “streamlines:” “Do a streamline first, then do 3 free”

Weird without a streamline

Your goal is to make the swimmers feel “weird” if they forget to do a streamline. They should have such an ingrained habit of always streamlining well that whenever they push off the wall without a good streamline it should feel “weird.”

Focus all feedback on the 3 things to a good streamline.

The shorthand of “streamline” is SL. This shows up often.

SL = streamline.



Practice on land, standing, laying, and floating

- Help swimmers by squeezing their elbows together
- Focus feedback on the three elements of SL
- Comfort in SL comes with a LOT of practice

3 things for Streamline

Lock your thumb

Stack the hands and wrap the top hand's thumb around the bottom hand's palm.

See picture.

Lock in the thumb and press into the thumb to make the ear squeeze easier.

If the thumb is locked in this way the rest of the streamline position becomes easier.

Make sure this is a tight, strong, locked hand on top of hand.



Wrap the top thumb around the palm

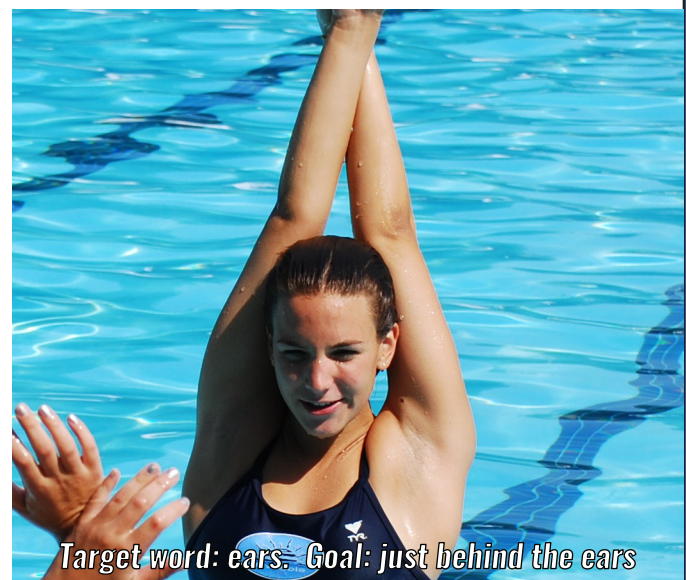
Squeeze your ears

At first talk about squeezing your ears with your elbows. We do this to target an easy and familiar body part.

Younger people think in relate-able targets: elbows squeeze the ears.

As mastery grows change this to "squeeze the back of the head with your elbows."

Shorthand: "squeeze your ears" or just press on your head with ears or arms.



Target word: ears. Goal: just behind the ears

Look down

The head should be aiming at the floor during most streamlines.

Tell swimmers to be Pinocchio and drag their long lying noses on the ground.

Put mirrors on the bottom of the pool to encourage swimmers to aim their face at the bottom.

Most incorrect SL body position is because swimmers want to see where they're going.

*Backstroke SL is "Look up."



Aim the face down; avoid looking forward

Position 11



Establish an excellent body position, kick, and arm location

Build the habit of fully extending into position 11

Every competitive stroke flows through position 11

Position 11 is in every stroke

Position 11 is a foundation drill. Every stroke extends the arms through the extended, in front of the shoulder, position.

Breathe by lifting the head quickly and then aiming it down again.

Begin with short distances: bench-to-bench, 5 body lengths, 25s.

Add fins to make movement easier.

Focus on all three things of an excellent position 11 and aim for excellence. Good position 11 habits lead to excellent swimming.



3 things for Position 11

Keep your arms straight

The arms should extend forward, or directly “above,” or in front of, the shoulders.

Elbows should be straight.

Palms face down. Fingers aim forward.

Body should be relaxed and neutral; flat on surface. Kick and maintain the arms at the surface of the water.

Swimmers will want to doggy paddle.

Keep arms straight even when breathing.



Locked elbows, flat palms

Stay on the surface

Position 11 should be done at the surface.

Kick to move forward holding the arms in “position 11” (because each arm looks like a 1).

It is natural for swimmers to bob up and down on surface when beginning. Emphasize they should “stay on surface” with a strong kick.

Avoid sculling with hands.

Breathing causes the most sinking issues. Reinforce a “strong kick you breath” to keep the swimmer at the surface throughout.



Stay at the surface even when you breathe

Look down

“Drag your Pinocchio nose” on the bottom.

Aim the entire face down.

Breathe quickly by lifting the head up then quickly returning to the balanced face aiming down position.

Breathing will interrupt their body position at the surface. It is a good way to constantly reinforce finding a good body balance and posture in the water again after the disruptive “banana” bend to the torso to breathe.



Return to looking down quickly after breath

Front Crawl Arms - Freestyle

What most think of as “swimming”

Start with body line and posture: Position 11. Build from there

Large slow arms first, then layer in kick, rotation, breathing

Long reaching arms

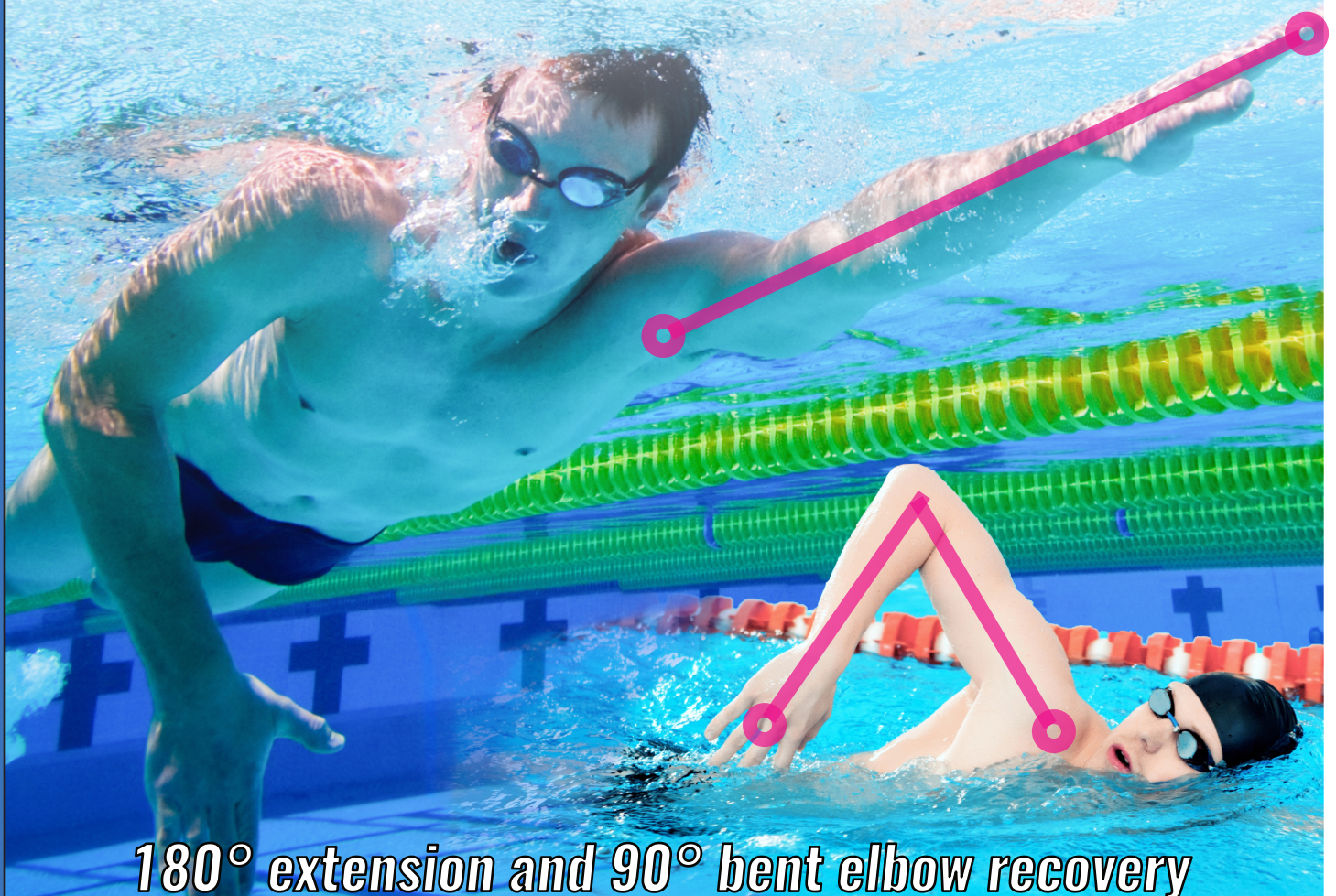
All freestyle swims should begin with a streamline.

Pull the water under the body, exit at the hip and recover over water to position 11.

Arms should start and end in Position 11.

Exaggerate a pause in 11 for beginners; Position 11 for 5 kicks then do 1 front crawl arm stroke, then do it again with other arm.

Chip away at the pause as technique improves.



Start and end in Position 11

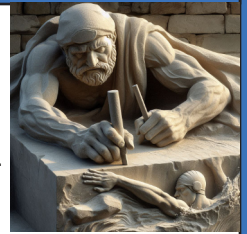
Become a sculptor

Begin with a solid block: Position 11. Then, slowly add a single arm stroke of freestyle. Spend time in Position 11 kicking, then do the other arm.

Catch-up drill is where you wait in Position 11 for 3-5 kicks, then do a single arm stroke of freestyle or front crawl arms. As swimmer's gain skill in doing the arms without sinking, twisting, or slapping the water wildly reduce the pause in Position 11 between arm strokes.

Limit the number of strokes. Use short distance swims of 3-5 strokes total to remove the anxiety and fear of breathing.

Promote returning to Position 11 for the start and finish of every arm stroke.



Rotate on the spinal axis; hold body in line

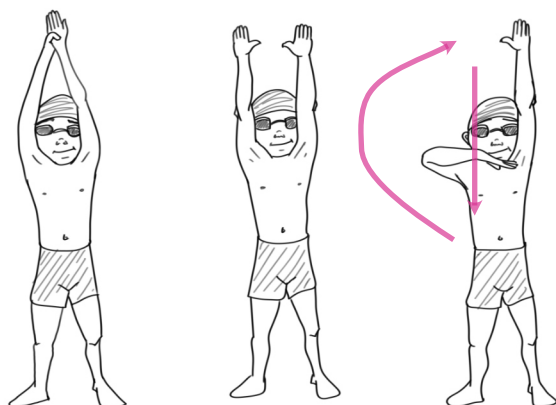
- Natural roll to the hips and shoulders with each stroke; not to exceed 90° to the surface of water
- Promote for long lines; arms, spine, legs, toes

Building Front Crawl Arms

Start with straight & wide arm strokes

Target Position 11 with every stroke's start and end

Catch-up Drill is great for beginners and easier to correct later



Deliberate dance on land

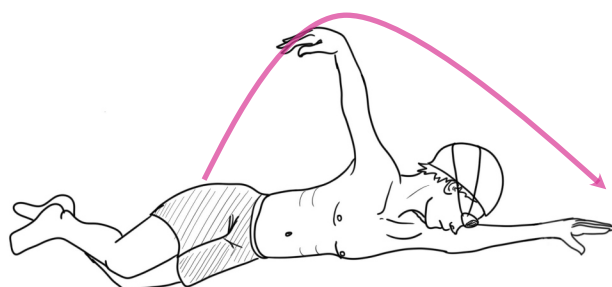
Streamline → Position 11 → Front Crawl Arms on land.

Go slow.

Do every arm stroke 1-at-a-time.

Limit the amount of arm strokes done on deck. Too many and learners will go too fast and be sloppy.

Slow motions lead to better muscle and motion memory.



Hand travels from hip high over elbow back to 11

Straight arms first

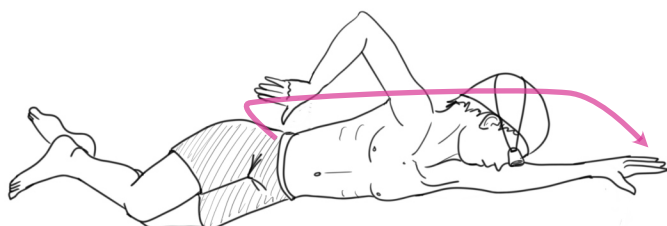
When the arms recover over the water new learners should have straight arms.

We can easily bend the elbow later like a sculptor working at chipping stone to refine the art.

Straight arm swimming is easier to “return to Position 11.”

Do 1 arm stroke at a time.

Keep the non-moving arm in Position 11.



Hand travels from hip forward just above surface

Bend the elbow after skilled

The elbow should be higher than the hand as the arm recovers back into Position 11.

Reserve this feedback and skill work for swimmers that can consistently swim with their arms returning to

Position 11.

High-elbow swimming should be done with very brief pauses in Position 11.

Hand should exit water near the hip line.

Intro: hands on shoulders

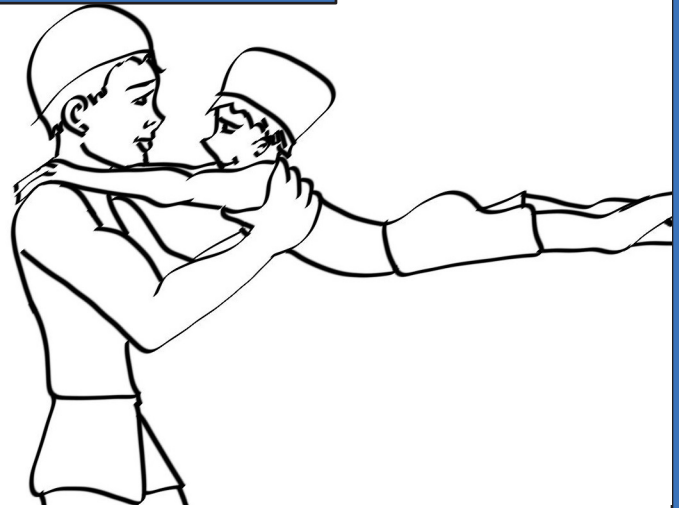
Start moving the learner's arms in front crawl motions while working on supported front glides.

The arm motion learned here is more about the wide circles.

Avoid thinking about what the hand will do.

Aim attention on the general movement:

Pushing water under body, exiting near the hips, and reaching back for the shoulders or Position 11.



Levels 1 & 2: hands on hands

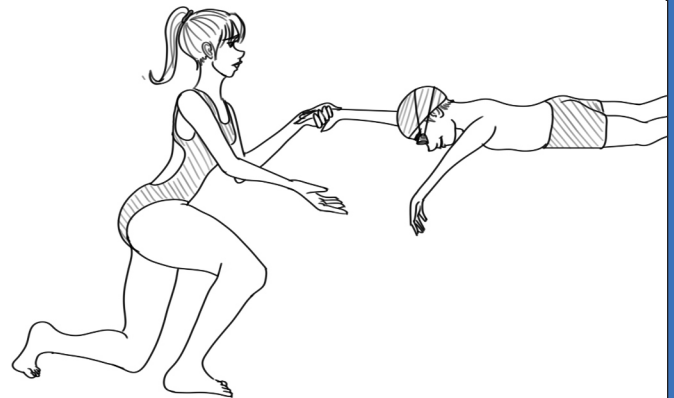
Hold the swimmer's hands in streamline or in Position 11. Then, one at a time, push the swimmer's hand down to initiate an arm stroke.

Hold the swimmer's non-moving arm. Wait with your hand for the swimmer to recover over the water and return to Position 11.

Do the next arm.

Go slow. Focus on doing Catch-up Drill (1 arm at a time with a pause between arms).

Encourage face aimed down in water.



Levels 3+: short independence

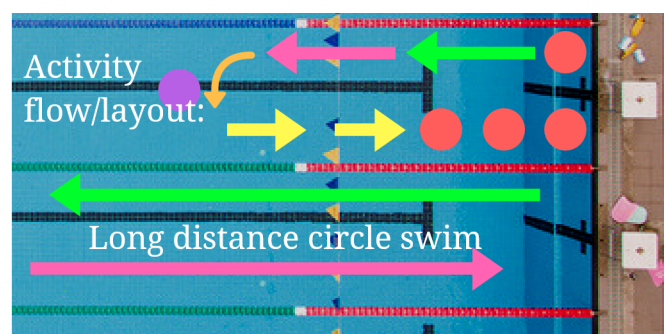
Streamline first then do a mix of short distance and longer swims with aides like kick boards, fins, or barbells.

Limit distance to avoid breathing. Breathing adds a layer of complexity that disrupts learning arm strokes well.

3x SL + 3 Free (no breaths). Return to wall.

5x SL + 5 Free arms + a front flip, return.

2x 25 Catch-up Drill with kick board. Breathe in Position 11 with both hands on kick board.



Progressions: Freestyle

Glides with kicks lead to streamline.

Streamline first, then do Position 11.

Introduce arm strokes during short distances of Position 11.

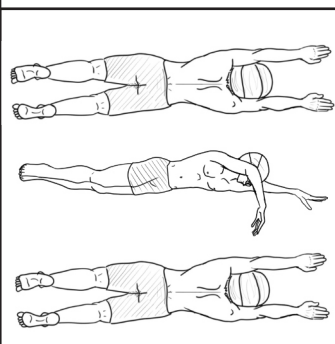
Position 11 for 5 kicks, then do 1 arm stroke. 5 more kicks in 11, then do the other arm stroke.

Begin every stroke in position 11

- Wild arms splash and flop
- Control head & body positions

Pull, recover, return to 11

5 kicks in P. 11 + 1 arm stroke → SL + 3 FREE



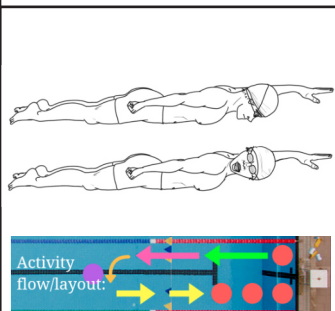
3x streamline, then do 5 kicks in position 11. Keep kicking and do 1 arm stroke of Freestyle. Then return to position 11 for 5 more kicks and do the other arm stroke. Repeat.

Slowly chip away at the number of kicks in position 11. Keep the stroke count low.

“3 Free” is three arm strokes.



SL + Position 1 → 3x SL + 5 Free + 1 Breath

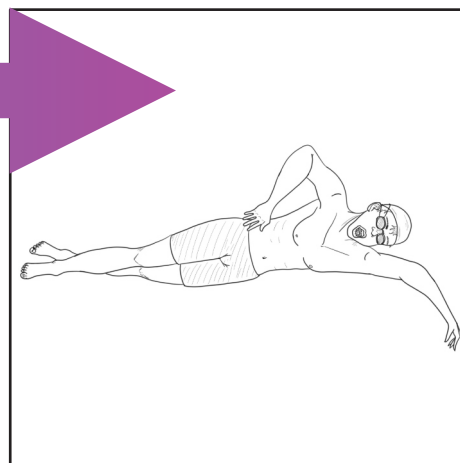


Position 1 is one arm in held stretched forward above the shoulder and the other held along the torso next to the hip.

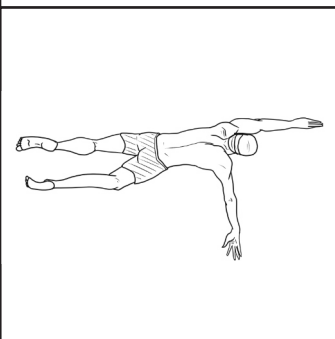
Look down when kicking.

Take a breath by looking away from the position 1 arm (the one next to the head).

Return to looking down.



Catch-up Drill → Independent arm strokes



Catch-up Drill: 1 arm stays in Position 11 while the other arm moves. Pause for a beat in Position 11 then do other arm.

Can be done with support like a kick board.

Limit distances before introducing breathing. Slowly increase as quality improves.



From glides to short swims to independence

1

Hands on shoulders:

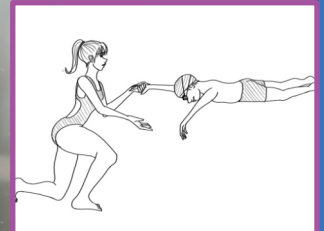
Large arm motions learned along with the feeling of being in Position 11 with total support.



2

Hands in hands:

With the face in the water and arms comfortably in Position 11 push swimmer's hands 1 at a time. Large arm motions remain the focus.



3

Catch-up Drill with float support:

Moderate distances of independent arm strokes without breathing while using a float support like a kick board.



4

Short and longer distances:

Increase the distances without support. Emphasize Position 11 and allow a straight arm recovery.



5

Refine arm recovery and add breathing:

Once a comfortable Position 11 and Catch-up swim is established add breaths and bent elbows.



Front Crawl Breathing

Turn the head and rotate the hips together.

Make it a quick breath.

Keep eye, cheek, and edge of lip in the water.

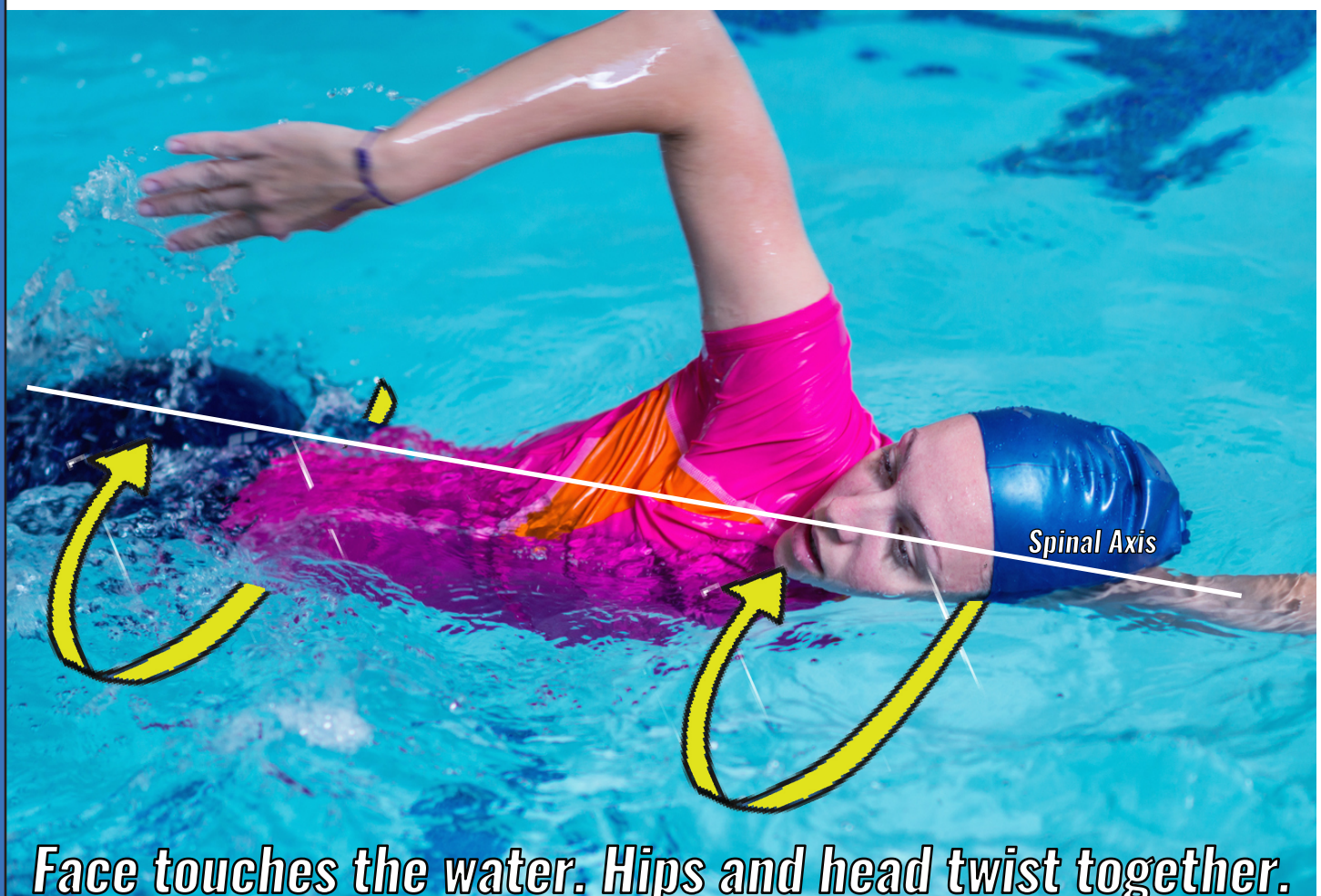
Rotating the hips and head

Twist head away from the extended arm.

Expel air quickly with a burst, then inhale.

Rotate head to aim down again when recovering arm begins the over water recovery; and no later than when the arm travels past the face.

Avoid bending the body like a banana. The hips and head twist together along the spinal axis to breathe.



Precise breaths

Quick, comfortable, practiced

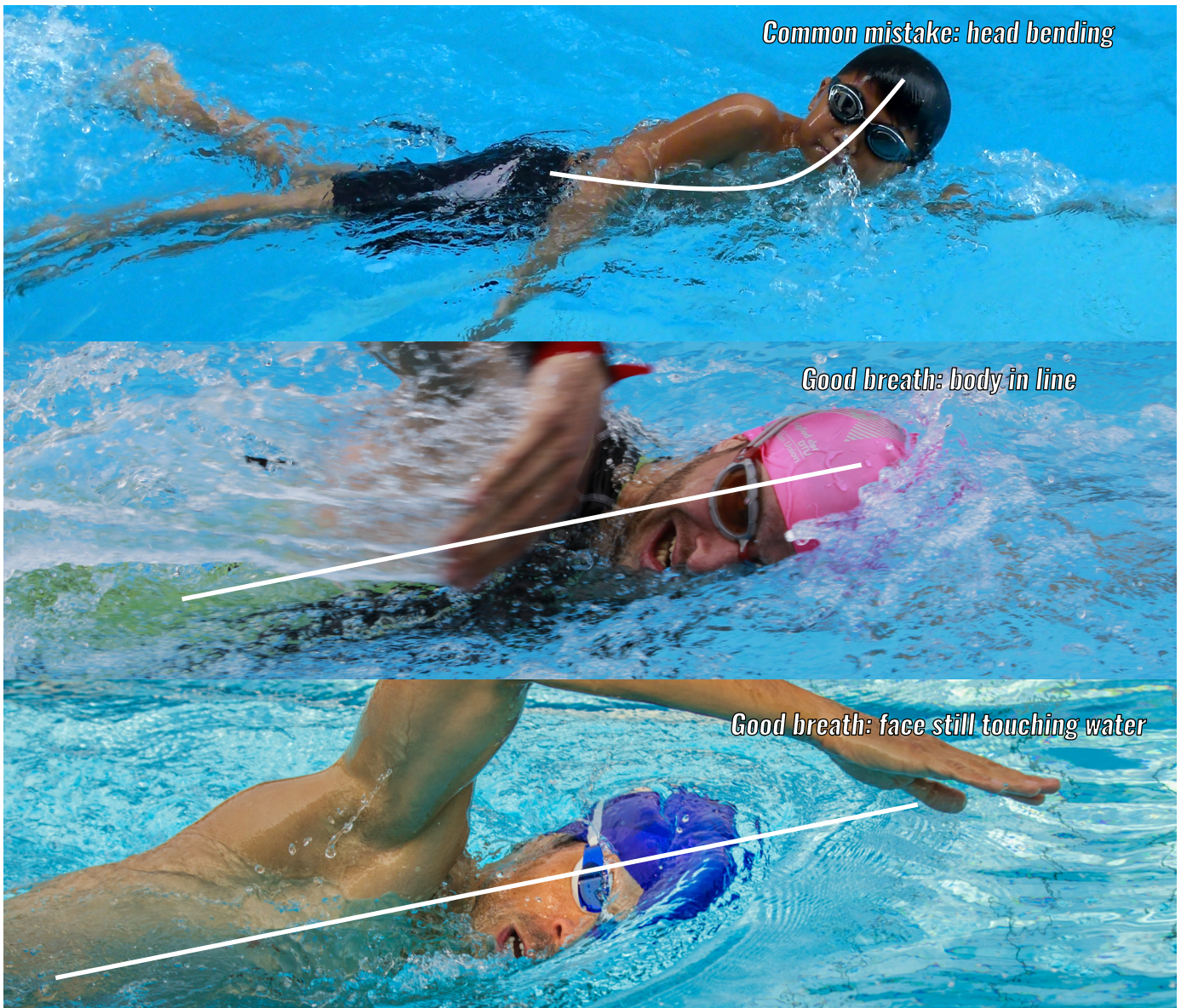
Breathing to the side in Front Crawl or Freestyle should be practiced repeatedly in a way that develops good habits. Avoid letting learners create sloppy or tilted breathing.

The head should be aiming down when not breathing.

To breathe, turn the head and the hip to the side towards the surface.

Stop turning when enough of the face is over the water line; roughly 2/3 of the face.

After the breath, return the face down, into the water with a twist of the head and hip.

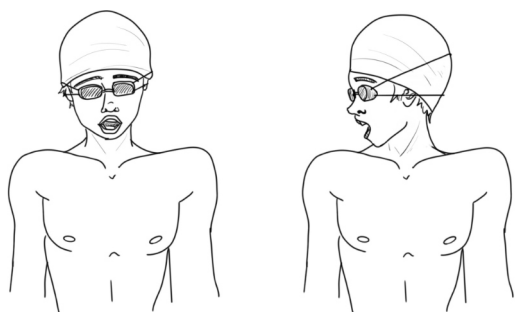


Progressions: Side Breaths

Build habits. Provide opportunities

Create good breathing habits before asking learners to swim longer distances. Remove fear and struggle by keeping distances short.

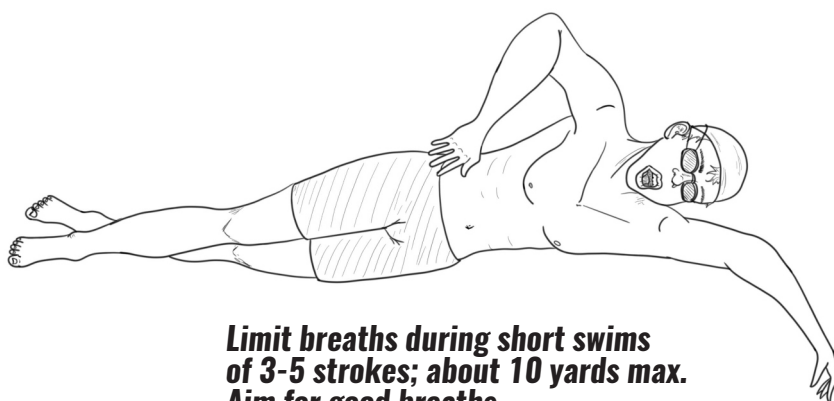
- Practice turning the head.
- Turn the head, and turn the hips with it.
- Practice putting face in the water, then turning head to the side so that half the face exits the water.
- Sneak in a single breath during a short swim like 3xSL + 5 FR + 1 breath on stroke #2, 3, or 4.
 - Repeat this step extensively.
- Long distance swims with support; kick boards, etc.
- Do many short distance drills; Position 1, Position 11 + arm, etc.



**Standing breaths to the side.
Breath to side with ½ step back**



**Face in water, turn and
keep ear, eye, and lip touching water.**



**Limit breaths during short swims
of 3-5 strokes; about 10 yards max.
Aim for good breaths.**

1 breath, then 2

Head turns with the hip

The head doesn't turn alone. The same side hip rotates with the chin and face.

As the learner rotates their head to the side to take their breath, the hip that is on the side the learner is turning to should rotate up to the surface as well.

Head turns to the right; right hip rises with it. The same side arm (right) recovers over the water.

The breath should be finished by the time the recovering arm reaches the face.

The face should rotate back underwater as the recovering arm crosses the head and returns to position 11.

Body rotation connected to the arms, hips, and face should be a primary focus for new Front Crawl breathing learners.

Position 1 with a breath:

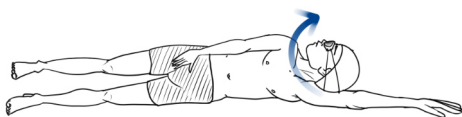
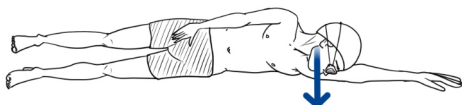
Streamline first, do 10 kicks in Position 1. Continue kicking and do 1 breath to the side. After the breath, return to Position 1 with the face down.



SL + Position 1 + side breath + look down.

Side kicking with a breath:

Streamline first. Do 10 kicks in side glide (Position 1 laying on your side) with learner's nose inside their stinky armpit. Take a breath to the sky (exaggerate the head turn) while continuing to kick. Keep kicking and look down again.



SL + lay on side + breath to sky + look down.



Quiz & Discussion #2

- 1) What are the three key elements of an excellent streamline?

- 2) What are the three key elements of an excellent Position 11?

- 3) Describe how Position 11 occurs in every competitive stroke.

- 4) If you ask swimmers to do Front Crawl Arms on deck how can you give effective instructions that avoid letting swimmers do sloppy floppy circles?

- 5) Why do we spend significant time focused on shorter distances vs long distance swims with poor form?

- 6) Describe a progression of drills or activities that would take a new learner from not knowing what side breaths are to practicing them in the water for the first time.

Discussion Topic #1: Bending knees

Many veteran swim instructors talk about “bent knees” and focus on wild kicks that “do nothing.” What is the benefit to letting learners have large wild splashing kicks with bent knees and stiff ankles?

Notes:

*Hint: be a sculptor.

Discussion Topic #2:

You should spend a significant amount of lesson time working on building physical habits.

Why is Position 11 a drill swimmers should spend a significant amount of time and distance doing?

Notes:

Discussion Topic #3:

Avoid correcting or instructing what the hand does for Front Crawl learners. Instead focus on large arm motions and slowly chip away at the form as their mastery and body control improves.

Why?

Notes:

Backstroke Arms

Precise rainbows

Arms exit near the hips, straighten and travel in a rainbow arch into Position 11. Underwater arms are initially straight elbow pushing and begin bending at the elbow as mastery increases.

Thumb exits, twist palm out at apex, enter water with the pinky.



Thumb, Hi, Pinky, Push

Pass through Position 11

Every arm stroke should travel through Position 11 but not pause or remain there.

Focus feedback to learners on long reaching arms and hip rotation after the body line is mastered.



Practice on deck first. Go slow. Start in soldier:



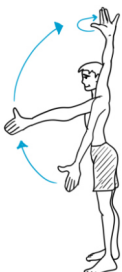
From soldier position, raise the hand directly in front of the arm and raise to Position 11.

Move 1 arm at a time.

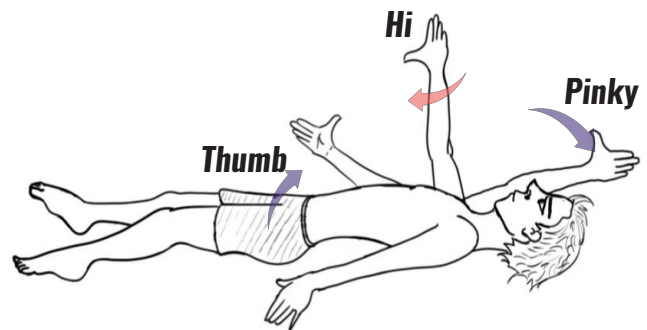
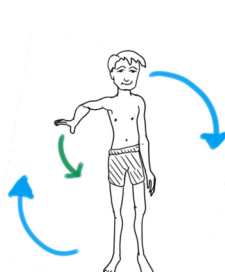
Hand should lead with the thumb, then rotate to “hi” by twisting out so palm faces away from the body.

At Position 11 “enter” the water with the pinky finger and push down while bending the elbow to clap the palm on the same side thigh.

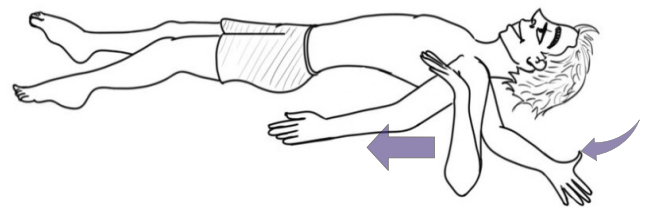
Practice arms on deck:
Thumb, Hi, Pinky



Bend elbow and
clap the thighs with palm



Above water recovery:
thumb, hi, pinky



Under water push:
anchor palm with elbow and push



Hips rotate with the arms:
Recovering arm side hip rotates up
Pushing arm side rotates down

Backstroke

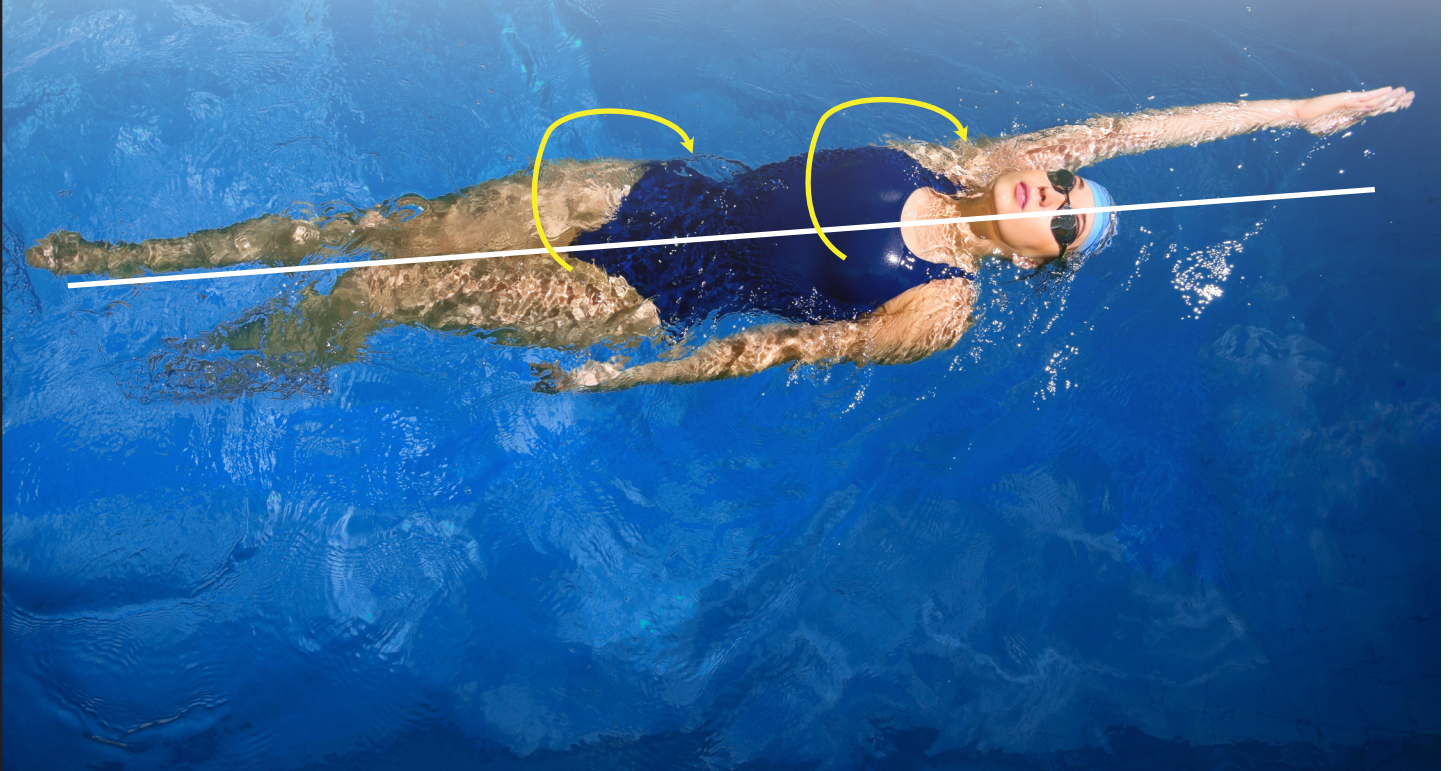
Body Posture & Rotation

Focus on body posture first; a long flat body held neutrally at surface. Add hip and shoulder rotation drills later as basic body line and balance is mastered.

The hips and shoulders should rotate with the arms as they spin through Position 11, underwater, and to the hip-line.

Main Points:

- Body should be mostly flat or neutral at the surface from chin to toes.
- Rotate on the spinal axis.
- Chin slightly tucked; avoid banana body.
- Arms travel through Position 11 but do not pause; any pauses should be minimal and in “soldier” or at the hips.
- Hand exits the water with the thumb up, at apex of the arm stroke (90° to water) rotate palm out, then the pinky finger enters the water in Position 11.
- Maintain a constant flutter kick.



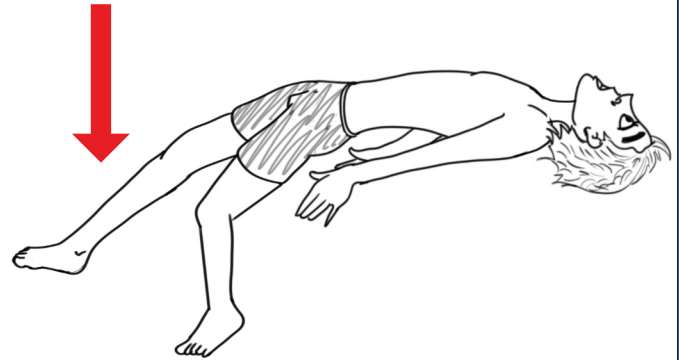
Common Mistakes

Mistake: Dangling Feet

A weak kick, no movement in the legs, or distraction causes the feet to sink.

Encourage swimmers to “boil the water” near the surface with their flutter kicks to keep feet near the surface and maintain that good long body line and posture so that the body can rotate well.

Fix this common mistake by asking swimmers to kick, squeeze their tummy gently, and slightly tuck their chins.



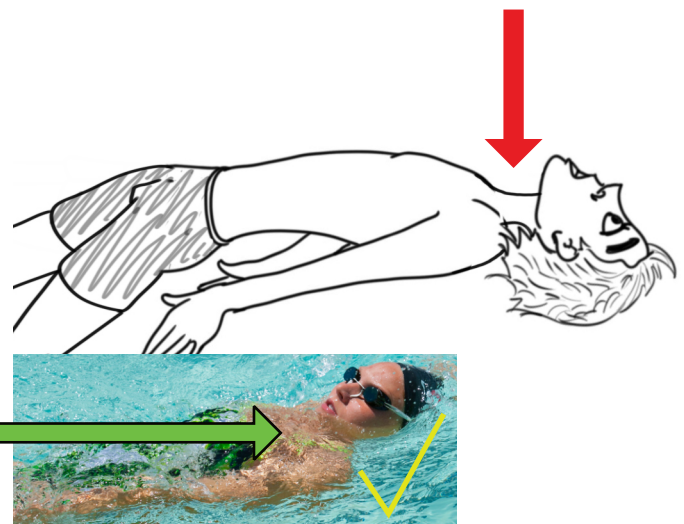
Mistake: Vampire Neck

Tilting the chin too far away from the chest leads to “vampire neck” (an exposed neck perfect for a vampire to bite).

This often happens when swimmers are looking at where they’re going or over-puffing their stomachs up to the surface from

Fix this common mistake by slightly tucking the chin into the chest.

It should be a very SLIGHT tuck.



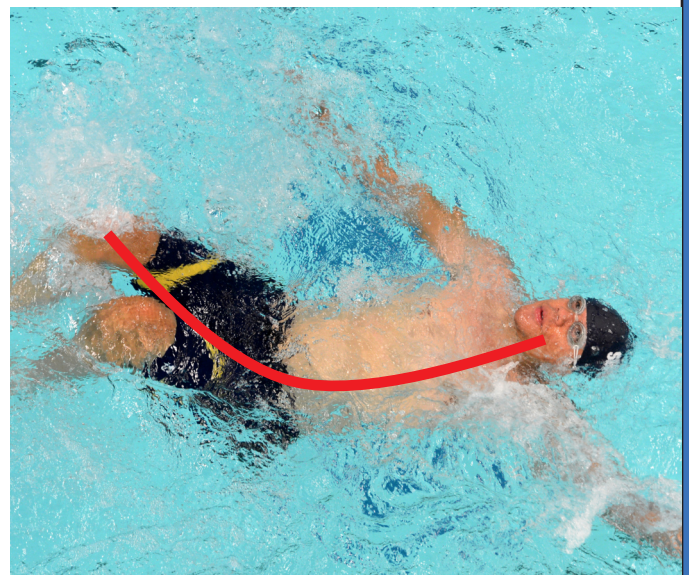
Mistake: Wiggle Hips

When the hips and spine are curved like a banana the body will wiggle while swimmers move their arms.

The natural rotation of the body will create a dramatic wobble, wiggle, and movement that looks weird.

Correct “wiggle hips” by enforcing a straight narrow line of the spine from the chin through the toes.

Focus on good long body posture to fix.



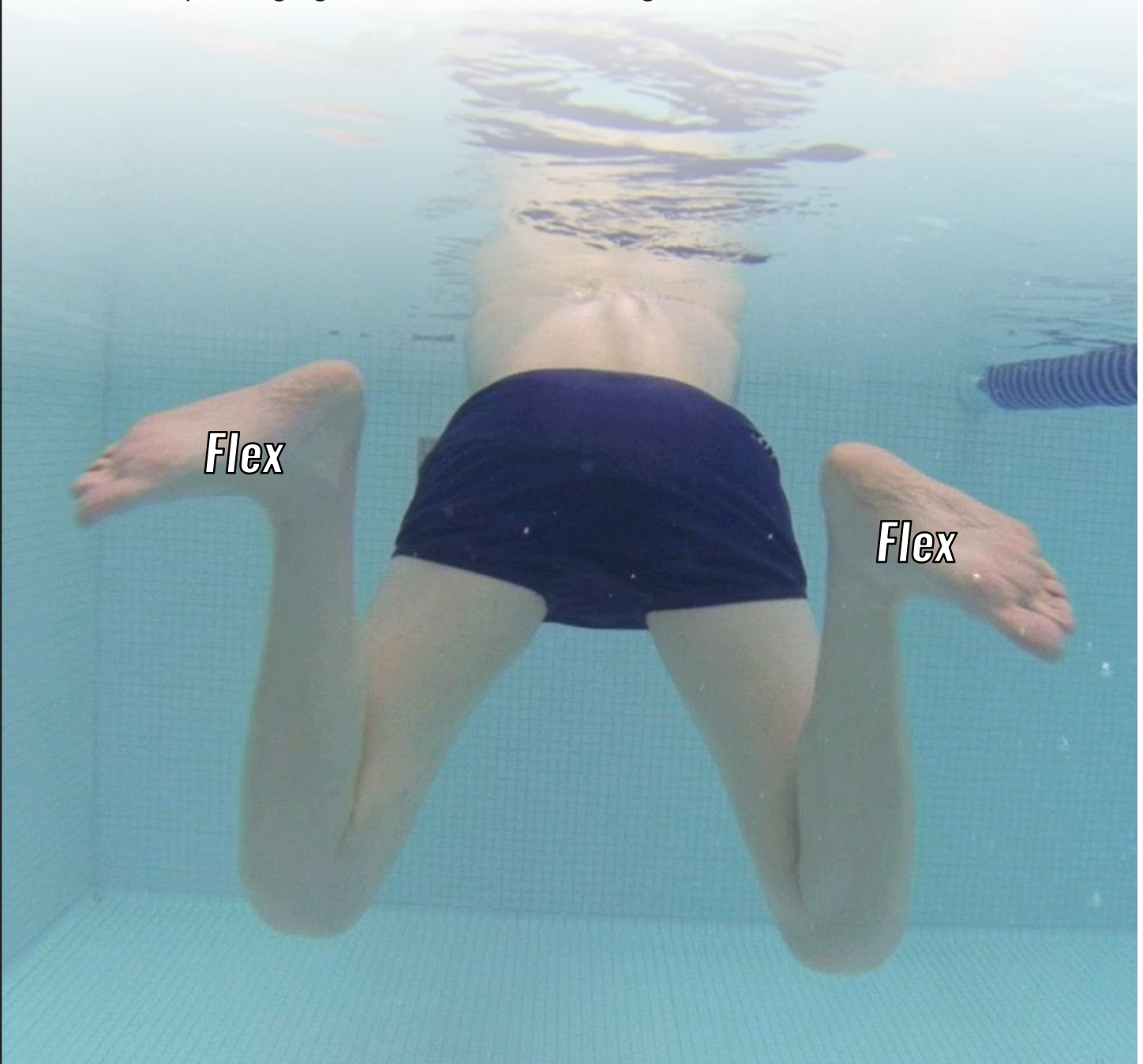
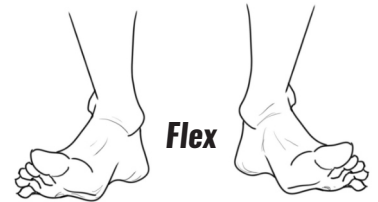
Breaststroke Kick

Flex & inside foot pushing

Sometimes called the “whip” kick because the feet accelerate like a whip by snapping the legs and squeezing the knees.

Primary focus for new learners: Flex.

Once learners understand flex, aim attention on the inside of the feet pushing against the water as the legs extend.



Lift, Flex, Push

Siting on the side

Use the edge of the pool or a bench.

Learners sit with their butt on the edge so that they're almost falling in.

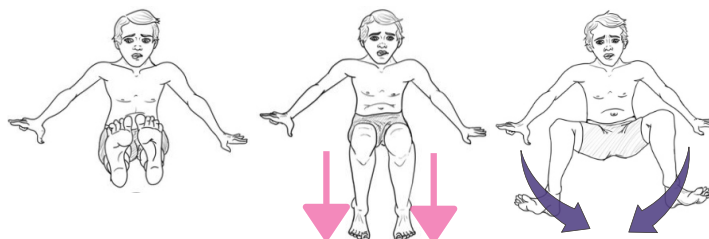
Lean backwards and support body with hands.

Begin with legs extended straight.

Bend the knees and feet down.

Flex toes to outside (away from each other).

Circle and Squeeze feet together back to start.



Streamline and Kick Progression

Build the feeling of flex, lifting and flexing, and finally pushing on the water.

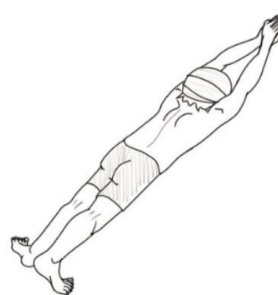
Go slow. Repeat each step many times.

SL + Flex:

Do a streamline and hold "flex" for a few body lengths.

SL + Lift & Flex:

Do a streamline then lift the feet up, and flex them. Pause in this position for a few beats.



SL + Flex



Lift & Flex

Single kick with an exaggerated glide

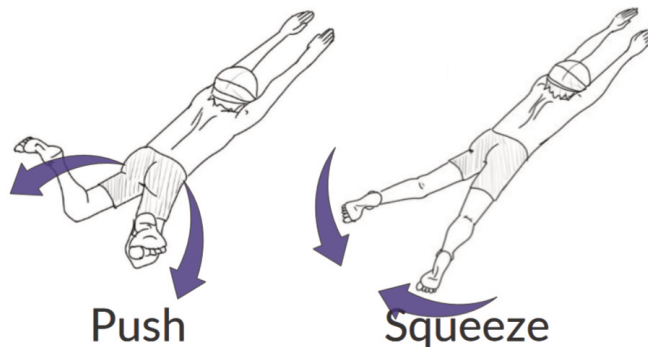
After flex and lift & flex are mastered begin providing opportunity for learners to PUSH the water with the inside of their feet.

Encourage swimmers to feel the power and strength of a single breaststroke kick. Prolong or exaggerate the glide after the kick.

SL + 1 BR K:

Push off in streamline (no kick) at the surface remain in streamline or move to Position 11, then do a single breaststroke kick.

SL → Lift → Flex → Push → Squeeze



Breaststroke Arms

Shoot back to Position 11

Start in Position 11.

Bend the elbows and pull backwards with the palms catching the water.

Sweep the hands towards the chin as the head rises.

Squeeze elbows to the torso, drive the hands forward with an explosive kick to return to Position 11.

Glide and repeat.



11, Eat, 11

Choreography first

Break the complex dance move that is breaststroke arms into small “chunks.”

Position 11 and Eat.

Teach the choreography, or the dance moves first without embellishing or adding flare.

- Avoid talking about spreading pizza sauce or drawing a circle.
- Avoid big sweeping arm motions.
- Avoid chicken wings (where elbows dip down into the hips).

Start by standing on the deck and doing each movement exactly: 11. Eat. 11. Go slow. Repeat frequently.

Add a breath. Change Eat to Eat & Breathe.

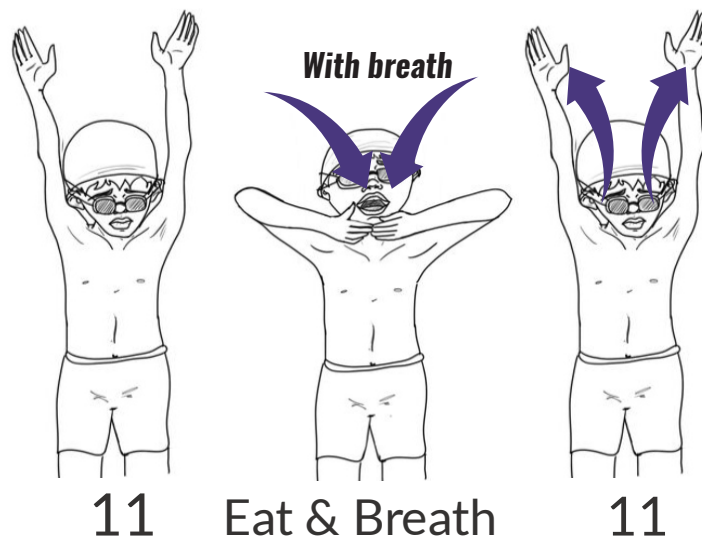
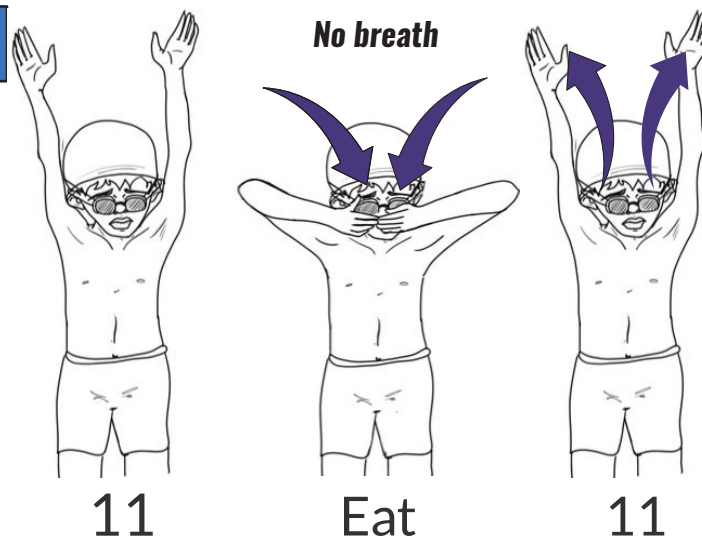
Isolate the arms in the water; no kick:
Streamline, 11, Eat, 11. Stop.

Add the breath; no kick:
Streamline, 11, Eat & Breathe, 11. Stop.

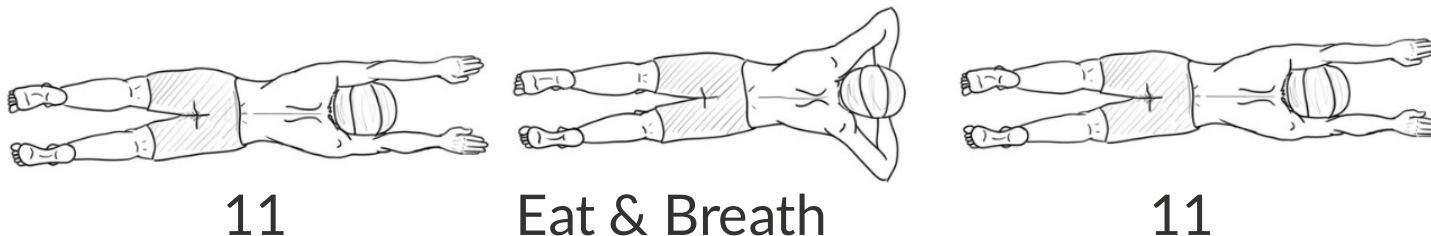
Start with slow pauses between each movement.

11, pause. Eat, pause. 11 pause.

Chip away at pauses as mastery improves.



SL and just the arms (no kick) viewing from above while swimmer is in the water



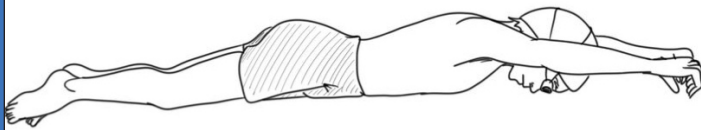
Breaststroke

Extreme pauses and glides at first

Once precise technique mastered remove pauses and glides

The kick pushes the hands forward; narrow the gap between the start of the kick pushing and the hands starting to travel forward

Streamline into Position 11

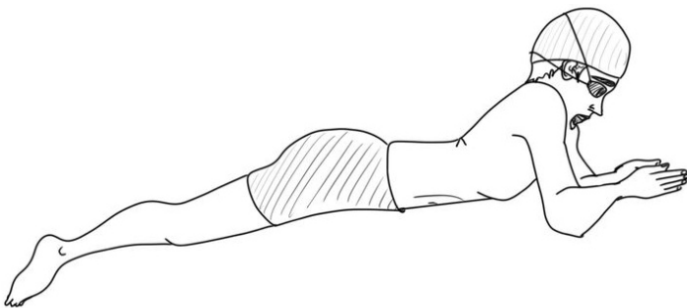


Do a streamline and then pause for a few beats in Position 11.

The streamline should have no kick.

Skip the **underwater breaststroke pullout** until the arms and kick and timing are mastered.

Eat and Breathe



Move from Position 11 to the Eat and Breathe sequence.

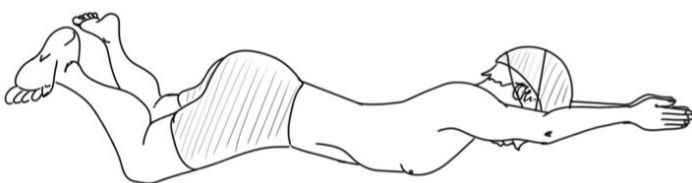
Do not do a kick.

The arms and the breath happen without the feet.

Distinctly isolate the glide, the arms and breath, and the kick.

Each stage is done alone.

Return to 11. Kick.



Finish the arms by returning to Position 11 and then placing the face in the water again.

Do the kick once the arms have completely returned to Position 11.

This dramatic separation of steps helps learning.

Glide, Timing, Rhythm

Reduce the time in each step of the stroke

Boxes indicate time spent doing the action. Read from left to right. The longer the box is the more time is spent doing that action. Stacked boxes mean the events happen at the same time; arms moving while the kick begins and finishes.

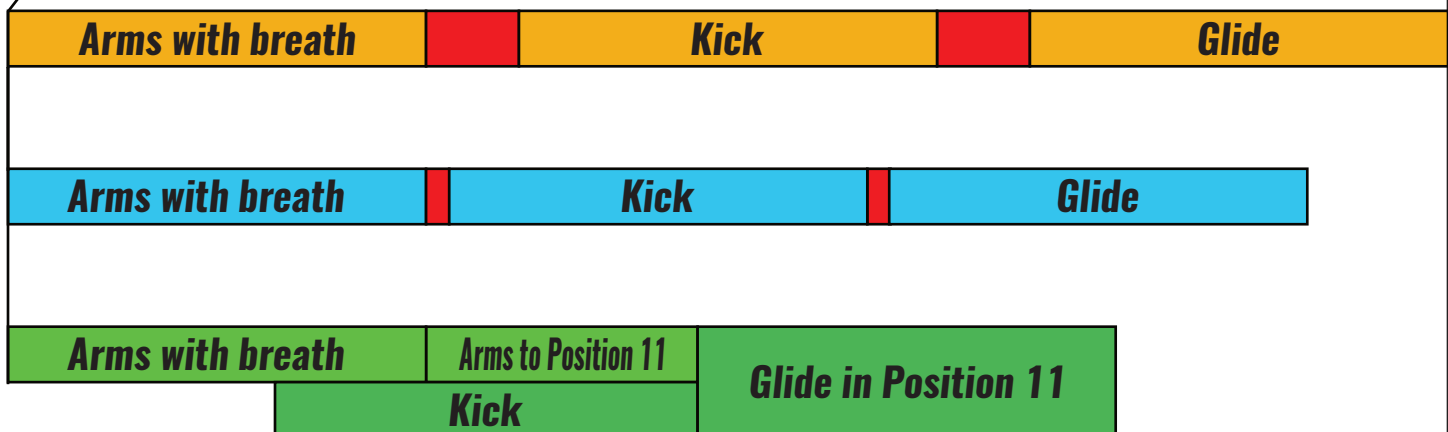
Red: pause in Position 11 or Streamline.

Orange: beginner learning the unique steps; arms and kick.

Blue: developing skills where learners are doing the breath but still exaggerating the different steps.

Green: Mastery and layering the arms with the kick; the kick happens in the middle of the arms before they return to Position 11.

Streamline first, and begin in Position 11 for all:



Hinge at the hips; push water with the crown

Breaststroke is called a “short axis” stroke because the hips hinge and move a little like butterfly.

Improve speed and power by driving the hips forward to breathe and then shoving the hips up like a Butterfly kick as the kick drives the hands into Position 11.

Adding this element of hip movement contributes to the rhythm of the stroke and will help with timing for the arms, breath, kick, and glide.



Quiz & Discussion #3

- 1) You can help a new swimmer learn backstroke arms by holding their elbow. Why hold the elbow?

- 2) How would you describe the hand exiting the water, twisting in the air, and entering the water during backstroke?

- 3) What are some common mistakes for backstroke?
How do you correct them?

- 4) What do we mean by choreography first?

- 5) Breaststroke kick is hard. Why do we teach it in small little chunks?

- 6) What about spreading the pizza sauce and waxing on and off? Why only Position 11 and Eat? “That isn’t swimming.”

Discussion Topic #1: Spinal Axis

Notes:

The spine twists during backstroke. What is a good way to get swimmers to start rotating on their spine while keeping their whole body in alignment?

Why do we emphasize what the hands do on backstroke when we de-emphasize it during front crawl arms?

Some instructors refuse to let swimmers push with a straight arm on backstroke. Why or why not? When should we introduce the bent elbow push underwater?

Discussion Topic #2: Chunking

Notes:

Streamline with flex, SL + Lift and Flex are chunks of the more complex “Breaststroke kick” skill.

Why are we having swimmers hold flex while they float in the water? What purpose does it serve?

What are the benefits of teaching flex and how can we get swimmers to learn to push the water with the inside of their feet?

Discussion Topic #3: Timing

Notes:

We ask you to be like a sculptor chipping away at a block of stone. Beginner breaststroke has a lot of pauses between the arms and the kick.

Why do we have excessive pauses?

How should we slowly remove those pauses between the arms, the breath, and the kick on breaststroke?

Should we let swimmers do longer swims of breaststroke wrong? (bad arms, bad kick, no glide, etc)

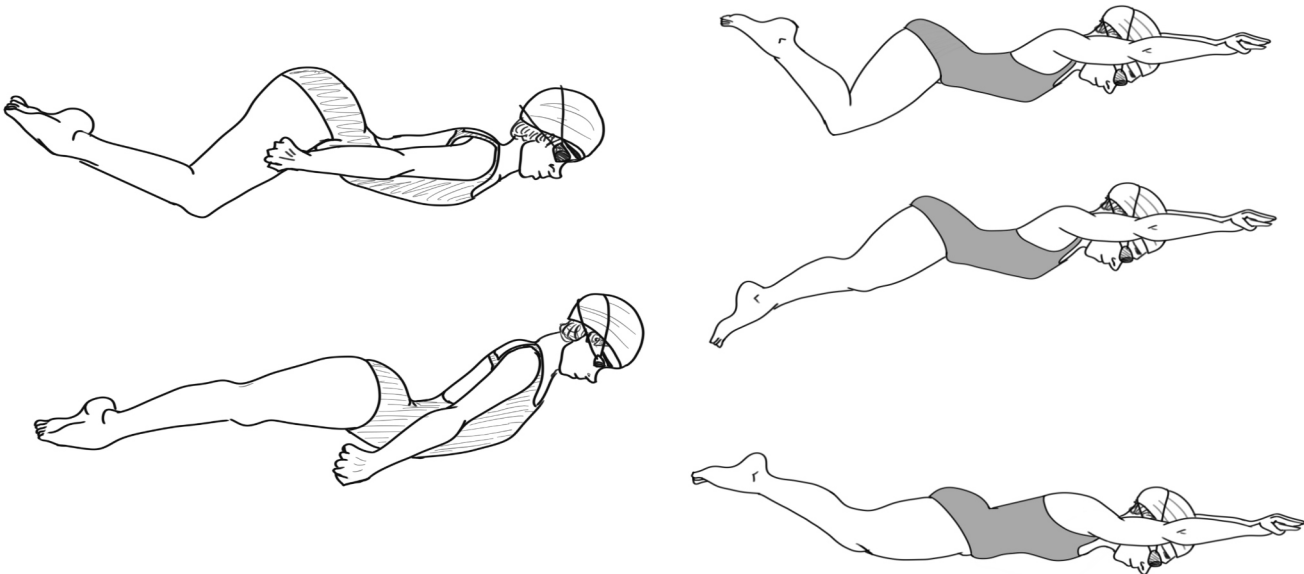
Butterfly Kick

Dolphin, Sine Wave, Flow

Demonstrate the fly kick in the water for the best results.

Here are some key points to doing an effective butterfly kick:

- Keep the body rolling and flowing like a constant wave
- The kick starts with the chest pushing forward
- The stomach and the hips move
- The knees snap the legs and also move
- The feet are pointed but also snap and flow and move the most.
- All movement is against the water; chest, stomach, hips, thighs, knees, feet



Body Motion & Power

Undulation = Rolling Fly Kick

Emphasize the rolling wave motion starting from the chest, flowing through the body, and snapping the toes.

Push against the water with the entirety of the body and feet.

Body Position:

Use the whole body in soldier to begin.

Build from soldier kicking to doing fly kick in streamline underwater.

Leg and feet movement:

Keep the feet close together and move legs and feet together as if they're glued from the thighs to the ankles.

Hip and Core Engagement:

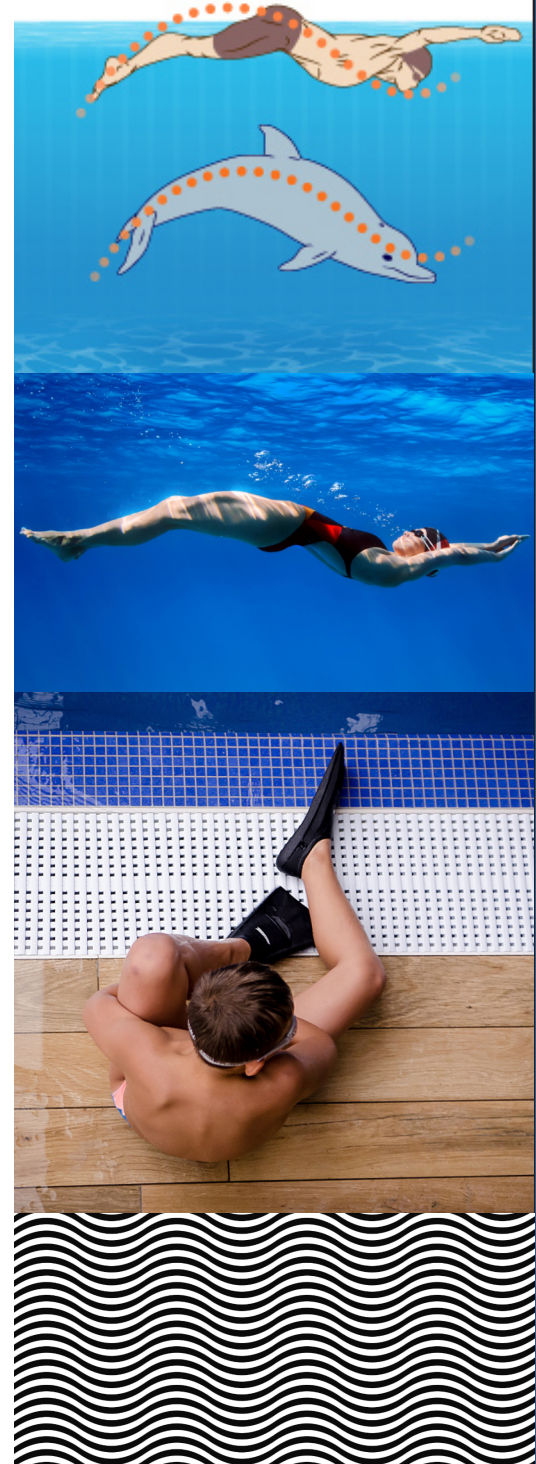
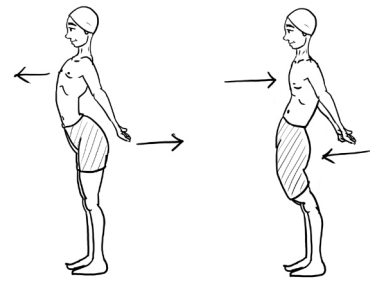
Drive the movement with the hips by flexing the quads and hamstrings and squeezing the belly.

Press the chest forward to create a divot in the lower back, then fill the lower back and retreat the chest.

Leverage fins:

Using fins and doing lots of kicking in soldier helps teach the breathing, strength, and the need for flowing constant motion.

Fins will help give power to the fly kick, but work with them in combination of no fin kicking too.



Butterfly Arms

Extend to 11 & Airplane

Start with slow deliberate motions to learn the choreography or dance move that is the butterfly arms.

Most issues with new swimmers will be solved if you focus on the motion over the swim or the power of the arms.

Position 11:

Begin and finish each stroke cycle in position 11. Emphasize long reaching arms in position 11.

Airplane:

After the arms push water down under the body, they flair outwards into “airplane” which is arms wide, elbows straight, and thumbs aimed down at the bottom of the pool.

Sweep forward with the back of the hand leading.

Clap the back of the hands over the head, and finish in position 11.



Progression

Slow, limited, specific

Start teaching the arms on deck with slow movements focusing on large motions.

Use familiar target language like “streamline,” “position 11,” and “airplane.”

Start on deck:

Create a flow of motions with the arms moving very slow. Okay to mention butterfly arms, but use target position language.

“Start in position 11, push down to your hips, then sweep wide through airplane back into position 11.”

Limit strokes in water:

Restrict the number of arm strokes after a streamline.

SL with 2 fly arms, no kick.

Focus on doing the motion, not providing power.

Add the kick after motion learned.

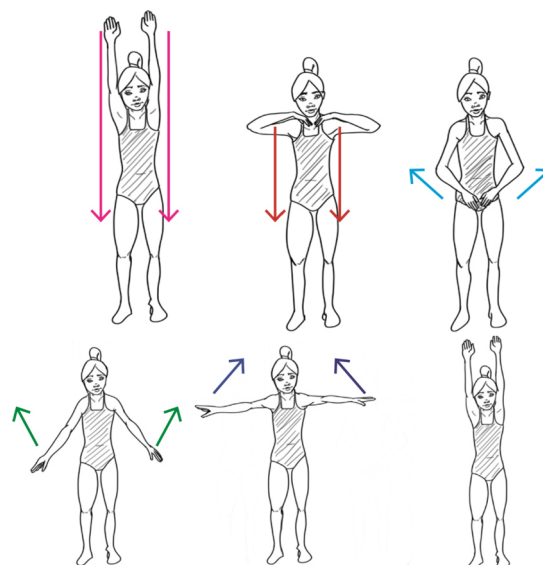
Position 11



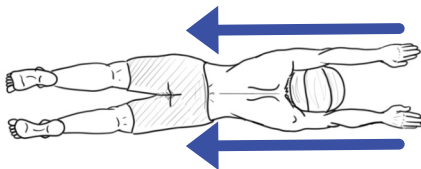
Airplane



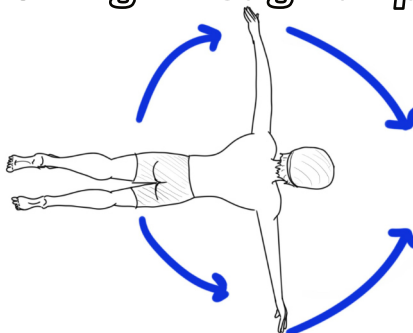
Deck practice



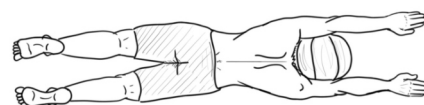
Push down



Swing through airplane



Return to 11



Butterfly Timing

Timing and Flow

The kick and body motion drives Butterfly.

The arms provide power, but should not be primary focus for the timing and flow of the stroke.

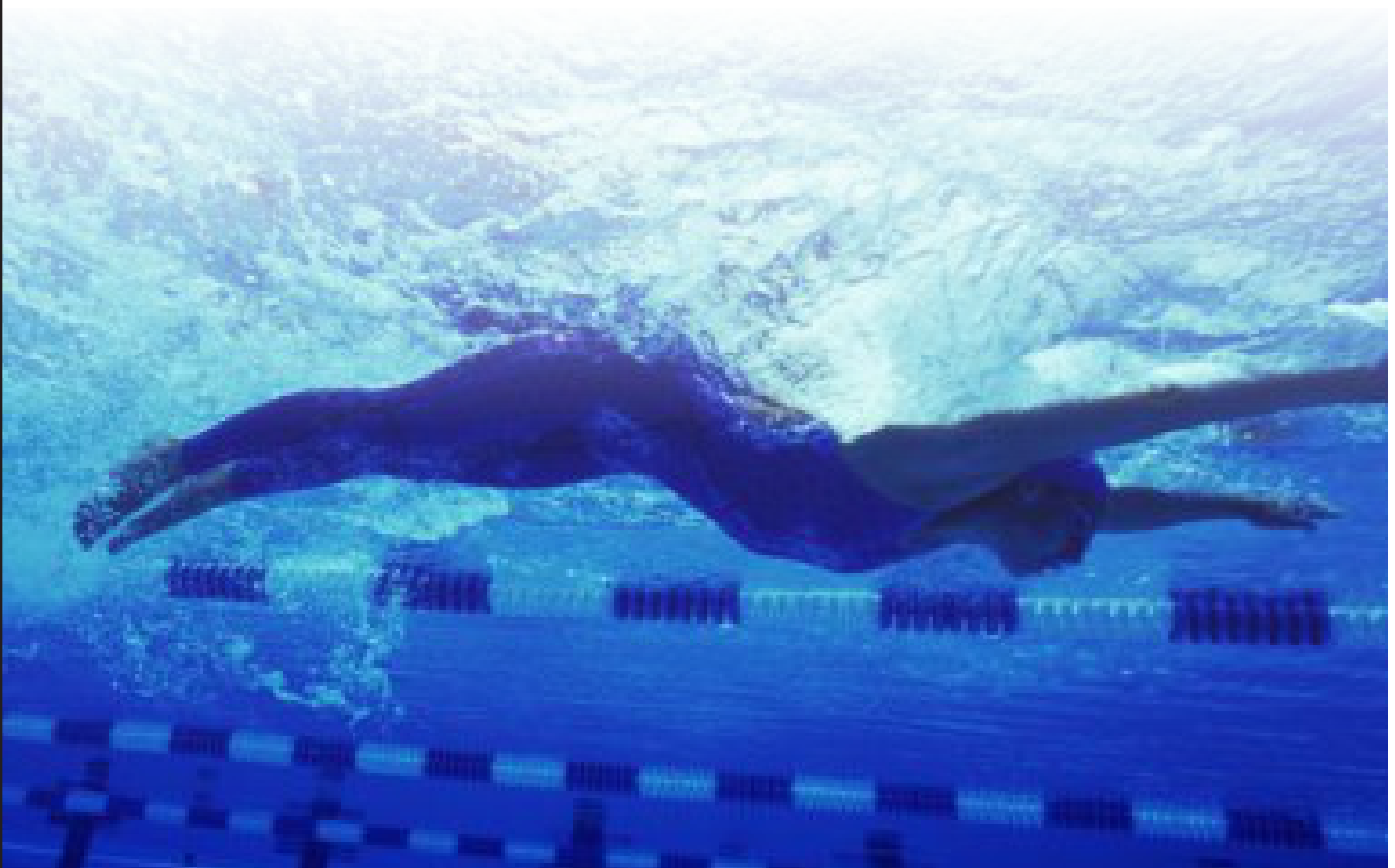
Arms begin in position 11.

Pull underwater to the hips, then exit the water.

Recover with straight elbows, thumbs a, and the back of the hands aiming forward.

Arms and Kick:

When the arms are in position, 11, the hips should be pushing up towards the surface of the water. When the arms are pulling down and exiting the water, the hips should be pushing down while the head rises to breathe. Timing is crucial and focus on these two body positions.



The kick drives the arms

Rolling hips, easy arms

Hips up, arms in 11:

Use this language for beginner swimmers. The picture to the right is exaggerated, but an effective position for new learners.

Arms pull and hip drop:

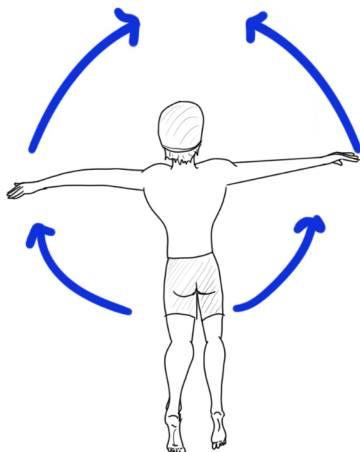
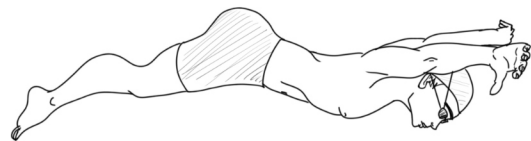
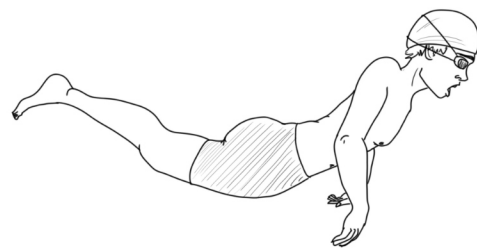
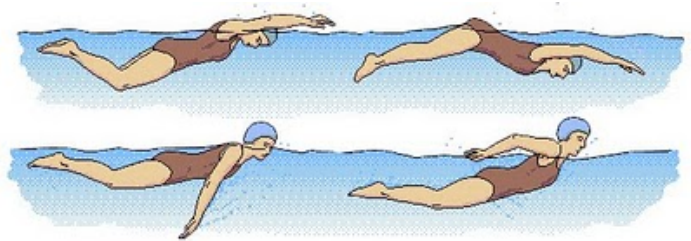
Drive the hips forward or down as the arms pull water below the body.

Throw hips up and recover:

Thrust the hips or butt up to swing arms out of the water and initiate the recovery.

Thumbs down, clap the back of hands above head:

Recover, or return to position 11 by keeping the thumbs pointed at the bottom of the pool while leading the motion with the back of the hand. For beginners use the language clap, the back of the hands above your head.



Butterfly

Powerful kick, long arms

Pepper butterfly into your instruction. Avoid dwelling too long on butterfly as it can be difficult and complicated for new swimmers.

Do small amounts of butterfly often.

Focus on short distances and limited arm strokes.

It is crucial to emphasize a strong kick and hip motion. Most common mistakes come from swimmers that tried to muscle their way through butterfly, but only using their arms.

Proper kicking and strength from the core and thighs will help make the kick stronger and be the anchor point for the rest of the stroke.

Suggested sets:

3X streamline +2 butterfly fly arm strokes

3X streamline + 2 fly arms with breath on #2

2x 25: 2 strokes fly then fly kick rest of the 25 with fins

2x 25: Fly swim to ½ way with breath in even strokes. Fly kick second ½ all with fins.

1x 50: 4 strokes fly swim breath in 2 and 4, then fly kick in solid rest of each 25. NO FINS.

2x 25: Fly swim. Breaths in even strokes.



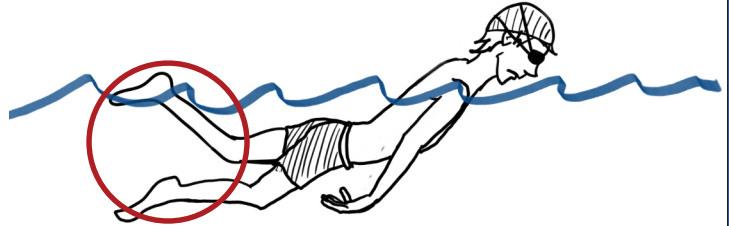
Common mistakes

Finesse first, then power

Most problems occurs when coaches teach butterfly too aggressively.

Take your time. Introduce the motion first. Layer in the arms and kick, then finally breathing.

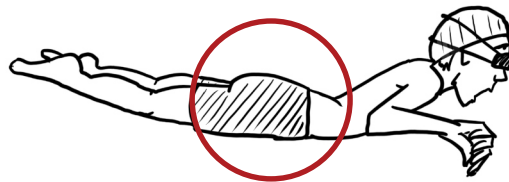
Restrict full 25 swims and do them with fins first. Slowly build to more strokes after initial streamline off each wall.



Weak recovery:

Bent elbows and splashy recovery is usually from a poor kick and bad timing.

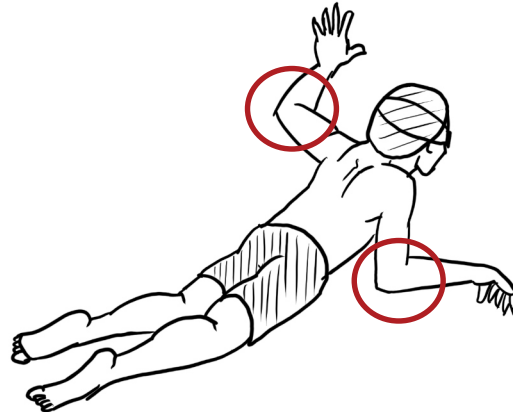
Fix by focusing on hips up in position 11 and hips down when pulling arms underwater.



Excessive fatigue:

Arms start to sink on recovery, position 11 falters and swimmers get exhausted.

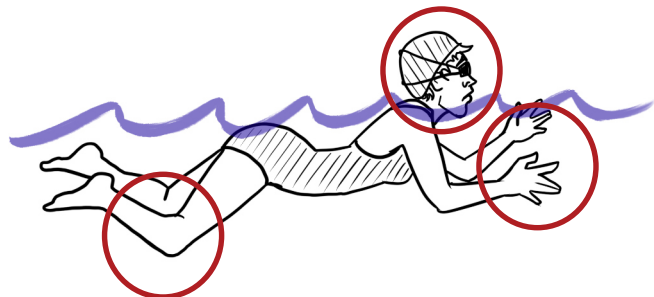
Fix this by focusing on the kick. Most often swimmer is using only the arms to move. The kick should provide most of the power at first.



Breathing looks hard:

Swimmer is breathing at the wrong time. The breath should happen as the arms pull water down. The face should be turning down and breath finished while the arms recover out of the water in airplane.

Fix by tying the breath to the arms; arms in 11 then face in the water. Arms near hips, then be breathing.



Flip Turns



Body control and comfort

Flips are difficult for beginners because of two main things: discomfort with water up the nose and fear of getting lost underwater. Teach bubbles by saying “close your mouth and hum.”

Build to comfort by doing challenges and activities that integrate flips and twisting. Layer in foot targeting against the wall.

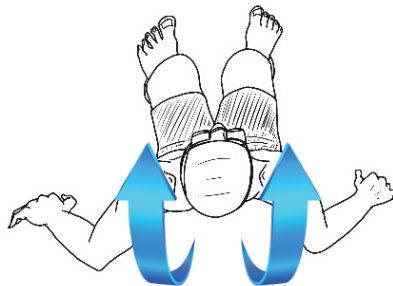
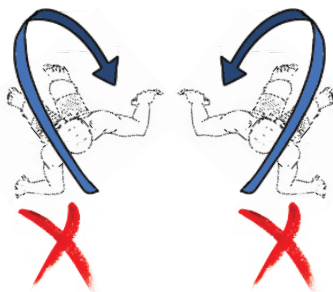
Flips from standing are more difficult than moving,

After a streamline tuck the chin and lift the hips and the feet will roll over the body.

Flip turn should have feet hit the wall with the swimmer laying on their back.

DO NOT TWIST ON THE WALL.

Push off the wall in streamline on the back. Roll to stomach during the streamline before surfacing.



Flip progressions

Upside-down & Bubbles

Like always, build to flip turn with a progression of skills and activities. Teach bubbles and body control to keep water out of the nose and enable return to surface without fear.

Lay on the bottom

Shoulders on bottom, feet touching wall.

Look up and blow bubbles.

Sink and spin body

Fully submerge and practice spinning in a ball.

Handstands and turning into flips

This is fun! Practice this often. The flip happens immediately after holding handstand for 3 seconds.

Standing flips

Stand facing the wall and do a front flip attempting to not use the arms to spin.

Flip with foot targeting

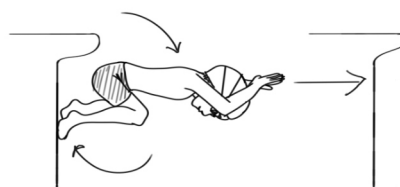
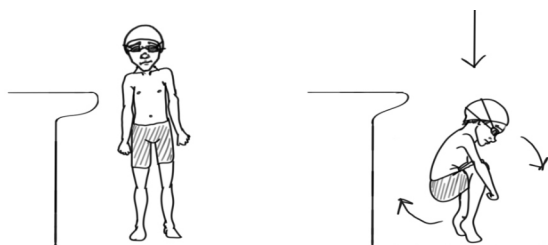
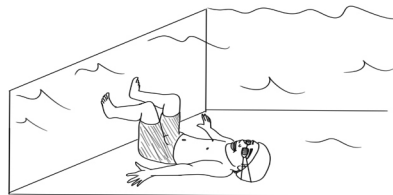
Stand arms length from the wall, do a standing flip facing the wall and pause where the feet land on the wall at a specific target like the horizontal line of the + mark on the wall.

Flips that become streamlines

Do the front flip with targeting and then push off on the back in streamline.

From flags swim into wall and flip

Start at the flags, swim freestyle into the wall, flip after the T mark, target with feet. then push off in streamline on back.



Open Turns

Open turns are the legal competitive swimming action done at the wall when turning around in a lane and required for two strokes:

- Breaststroke
- Butterfly

Minimize flailing, lay on side:

An open turn can be done quickly. Introduce open turns by breaking it into chunks and teaching it slowly.

Slow open turns during practice, short distance training, and learning will lead to precise movements and speed as comfort and mastery improves.

Open turns are always allowed in competitive swimming but are required in Breaststroke and Butterfly.



Progression

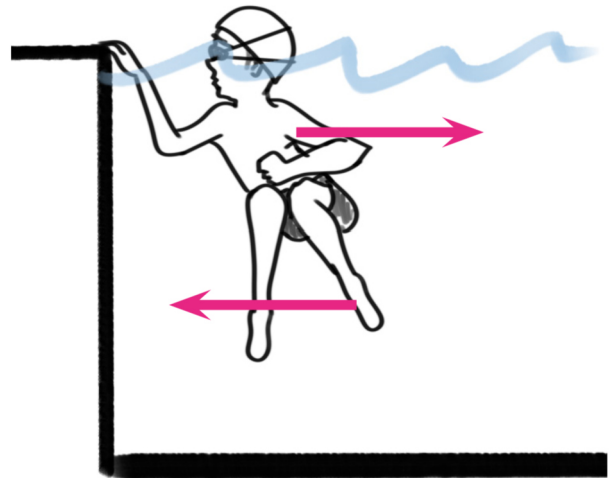
Swing feet like a bell:

Pulling on the arm grabbing the wall, pull the knees into the chest and swing the body sideways.

The feet should swing like the striker of a bell and quickly plant on the wall stacked sideways vertically.

In the picture, the right foot would land on the wall with the toes pointed left, and the right foot would be about at shoulder width on the wall above the left foot.

Keep the head facing the wall; avoid twisting.

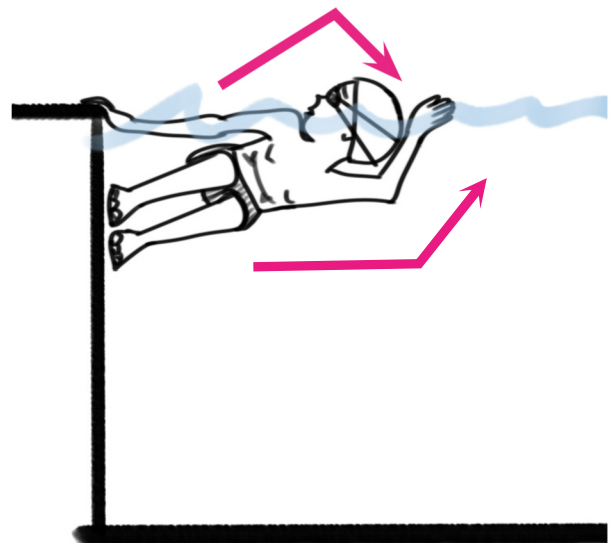


Thrust elbow & Karate Chop:

Once planted on the wall shove the left or bottom elbow backwards and twist hand so that it is prepared for a streamline near the crown of the head.

After feet planted, push off the wall with the right hand and "karate chop" yourself in the head. The right hand should join into the left hand to prepare for a streamline.

While karate chopping the head and thrusting the elbow backwards, let the body fall underwater. The head remains facing towards the sky or ceiling.



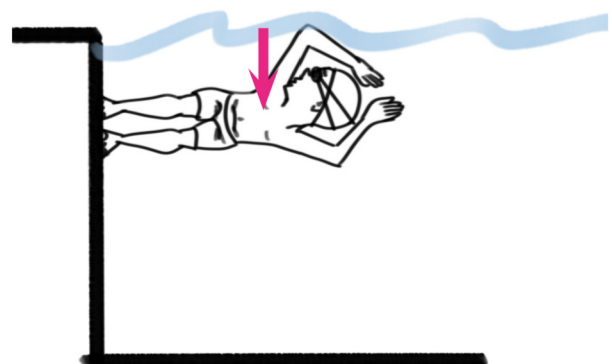
Sink & Streamline:

Keeping the body on the side and the face aiming at the ceiling sink underwater to prepare for the streamline.

Initiate the streamline and grow the arms and body while finally turning the head so that the eyes rotate down and face the floor.

The body rotates with belly button facing down once the feet leave the wall of the streamline.

Push off the wall on the side. Rotate to belly during the streamline.



Quiz & Discussion #4

- 1) What should you focus on when introducing the butterfly kick to swimmers new to it?
- 2) Using fins or flippers is really good for butterfly kick. Why?
- 3) Introduce butterfly arms on the deck. How should they be done? Describe in detail including speed, number, and words used to describe the motion.
- 4) When swimming butterfly what should drive the strokes, like what sets the tone for movement?
- 5) During butterfly swim when the arms are reaching into position 11 where should the hips be?
- 6) How do you start introducing flip turns?
- 7) What is the language you should use to describe an open turn when breaking the movement into chunks and actionable steps?

Discussion Topic #1: Fly swimming

Notes:

Most swimmers approach butterfly with fear because they think it's hard.

Discuss how peppering in butterfly swim makes it more approachable and easier to swim.

If the hips drive the arms, what does that mean and how can there still be a lot of power to the stroke without getting exhausted?

Discussion Topic #2: Flip turns

Notes:

Like butterfly we recommend peppering flips, turns, and spins into your practices challenges or activities.

What are some things you can do that will help your swimmers do flip turns that don't involve a wall?

What chunks would you break the swimming freestyle flip turn into?

Discussion Topic #3: Open turns

Notes:

What are likely the most common issues related to swimmers trying to do an open turn quickly?

What are the strokes you must legally do an open turn for? Can you do open turns on other strokes?

Communication

What you say matters; every word changes swimmers.

Teaching swimming is using your words to create action and movement in someone else.

We physically help swimmers move their bodies. Physically interacting with them is super important but our words drive most of the actions.

What you say and how you say it is the most profound and important area to focus your attention.

The “green” section is all about teaching you how to effectively convey and deliver your instruction in a way that produces results.

You should use this section to learn how simple techniques can dramatically improve the quality of your classes.

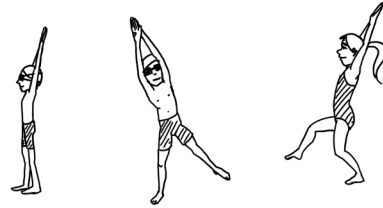
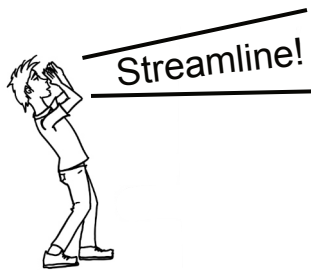
Green = method and delivery of information.

Key points found in this section:

- Speaking in sentences
- Removing the word “okay” at the end of sentences; speak what you mean.
- How to provide constant feedback
- 80 / 20 rule when speaking
- The importance of non-verbals
- How to conduct lessons
- Rotation method
- Traffic cop versus coach
- Waves, one on one, automating
- Time in task
- Multiple attempts with feedback
- Formula for lessons success



Words create action



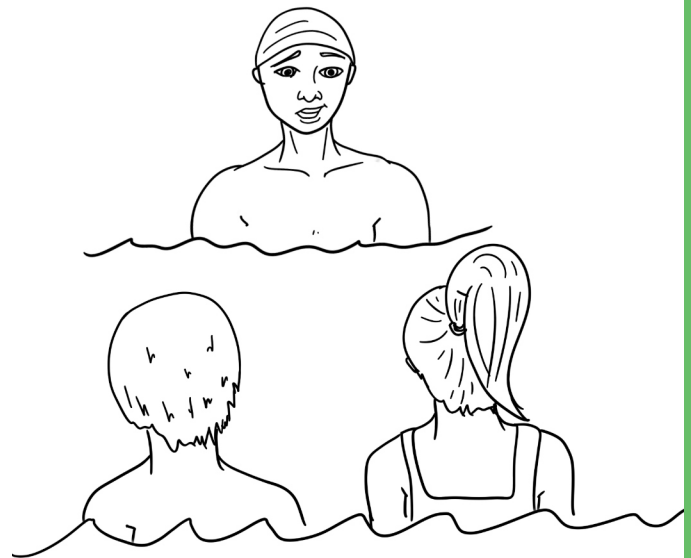
When you speak, swimmers listen and then do.

In a swim lesson the instructor is the master and the learner is there to physically do something they don't know.

The swimmer may not have ever seen the skill before. Teaching children is introducing them to something they've never even considered or conceived of before.

You must craft your language and instruction with the fundamental knowledge that your audience has no idea what you're talking about.

You must establish context, build on prior skills, and demonstrate, define, and show swimmers just what the heck you're talking about.



Craft effective language; choose your words.

Be deliberate with your choice of words.

The scripts, the progressions, and the way we convey swimming activities are all deliberate, tested, and refined sentences and commands.

A great example of deliberate effective language is the three things for streamline.

Lock your thumb. Squeeze your ears. Look down. Each one of those elements is a concise command targeting a specific action and behavior. When paired with visual cues they create immediate learning and a change in the swimmers technique.

Evaluate your language and adjust for effect.



Feedback

Watch and direct

Teaching swimming well is communicating your knowledge about swimming skills and getting others to physically express your thoughts.

We improve our learner's ability through our language, and we call those words "feedback."

Feedback is telling a swimmer what they did, and then how they can improve their actions to closers resemble the skill they're working on.



Feedback formula:

[state swimmer action] + "next time" + [future alternate action]

"John, you did your streamline with your face aimed forward. Next time, lock your thumb, squeeze your ears, and aim your face down,"

"Sally, you kept your face above water. Next time, kiss the water when you move from this bench to the next."

"George, you didn't do a streamline and three arm strokes of freestyle. Next time do all three things for streamline and do three strokes of freestyle like this (demonstrate catchup drill returning to position 11)."

Your feedback must be **ACTIONABLE**

Giving high quality feedback is the MOST important thing the swim instructor should do.

Craft your words with care; be deliberate.

Use the formula and focus your instruction on those 20% of changes that will yield the best improvements.

1. You did this.

2. Next time....

3. Do correct action.



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Praise & Non-verbals

How good feedback sounds

“You locked your thumb! Awesome!”

“That was wonderful. Great job on that streamline!”

“There you go. Your kick was so strong.”

Be positive. Do your best to reinforce the positive things swimmers do when they're putting in good faith and effort to improve.

Celebrate swimmer achievements. Smile. Increase your volume, give high fives, and be genuine in your excitement.

Silence is the enemy:

Good feedback and praise requires one simple thing: the swim instructor must be critically paying attention to swimmer attempts and giving actionable feedback that will help the swimmer improve.

Swim instructors must talk. You have to watch and speak. Tell swimmers specifically what they can do to improve.

You have to be speaking for most of the lesson.

Rotation and a habit for feedback:

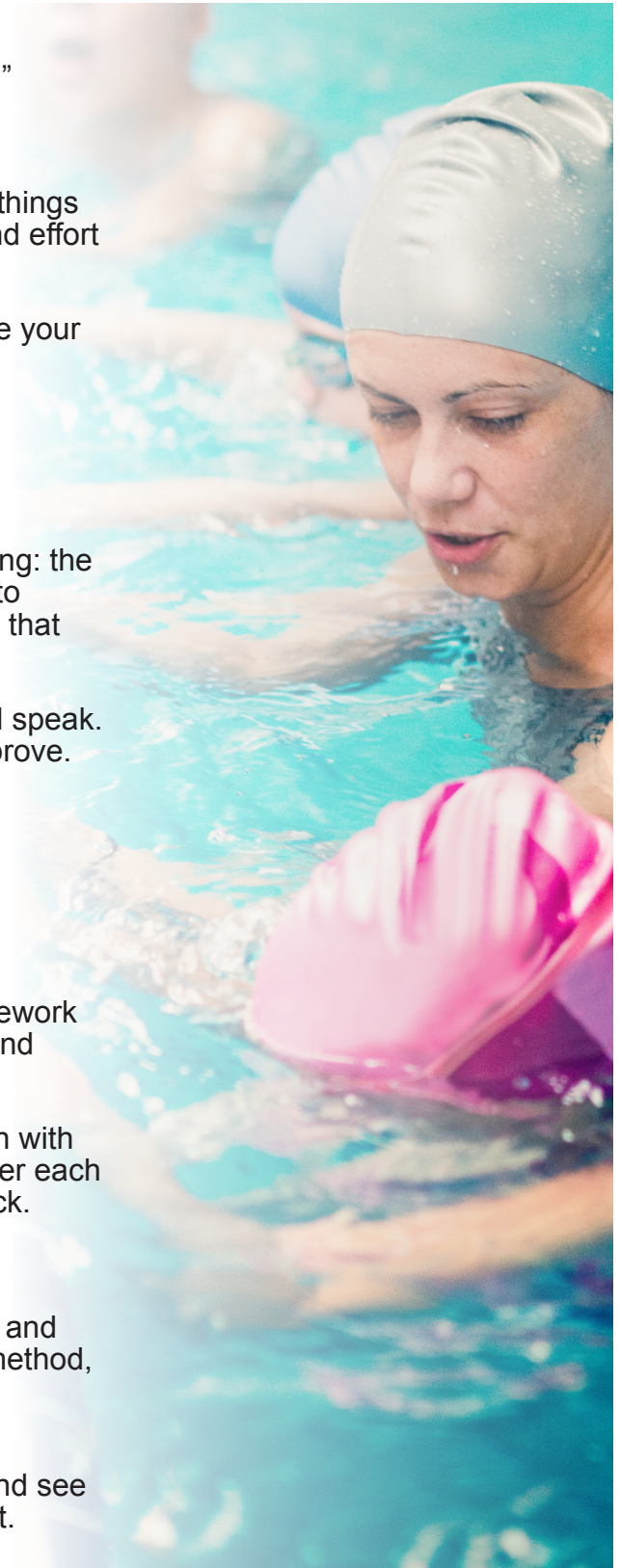
When you leverage the rotation method as a framework for all lessons the swimmers will come to expect and demand feedback after each of their attempts.

If you consistently give high quality feedback laden with praise and nonverbals your swimmers will stop after each round of their attempts and look at you for feedback.

They crave it. They want it. They long to improve.

You must foster that desire by stopping swimmers and giving them feedback, by leveraging the rotation method, by being talkative, by speaking, by directly helping swimmers improve.

You have to take action. Demand that they hear and see your feedback, and make it positive so they want it.



Feedback Types

Praise the effort

Avoid generic comments like “great job” with no specific follow up. It is as bad as saying nothing.

Instead, praise the swimmers effort at attempting to improve.

“I saw you attempt to lock your thumb; you’re almost there. Wrap the thumb around next time.”



Thumbs up as a currency

Strategically use non-verbals to communicate your praise. You can give a smile, a thumbs up, or a celebratory cheer.

Point to your squeezed ears on a streamline and then smile and give a thumbs up.

Swimmers are smart, they crave feedback and interest; give it to them and they’ll thrive.



You can “fail”

Is saying “that was a fail” bad?

Embrace failure and remove your fear of addressing it. You can say, “that was a fail, and here is why.”

Failure is how we learn. We learn by making mistakes. Create an environment of trust and failure’s negativity fades into opportunity.



80/20 Rule

What will produce the best result?

Use your extremely valuable and limited time with a swimmer to deliver high quality feedback that produces results.

But how?

Knowing intuitively what will dramatically improve a swimmer's technique will come with experience, but thankfully there is help! This book!

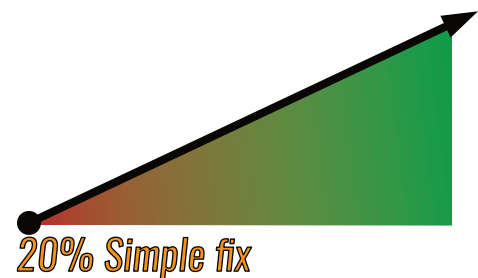
The blue section highlights for each swimming skill are distilled 20% of things to focus on that will create outsized results for swimmers.

Still not certain on what to focus on? Use our lesson plans and supplemental skill sheets available as an Aquatics Professional (or be part of a team that subscribes).

When in doubt, say something. Silence and not giving any feedback is the worst thing you can do.

Say something, see how it works, and remember if it gets results.

80% HUGE Results



The Pareto Principle suggests that 80% of outcomes result from 20% of causes.

A small portion of your efforts can produce significant impact.

When you see a disaster where do you start?



How can you fix this swimmer?

Issues:

Head up, poor kick, sinking belly, no position 11 or streamline arms.

Most essential fix:

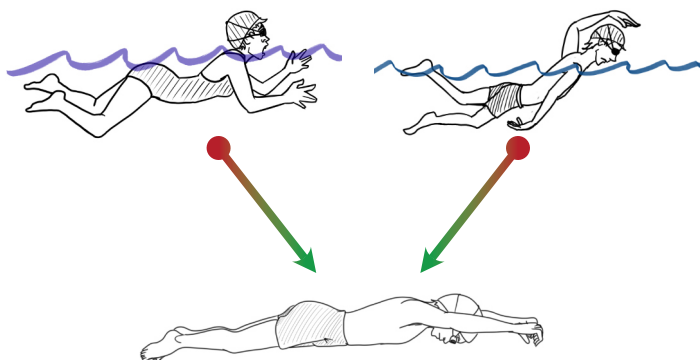
Aim head down, hands to position 11.

Doing these two things will lead to a good body position and allow the kick to move person forward.

20% items of GLIDES for awesome results!

Focus on:

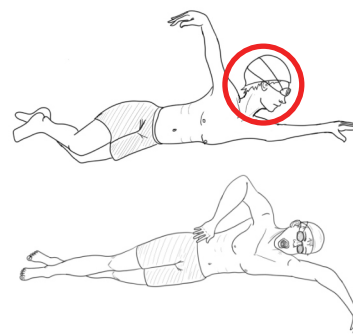
- Starting with face in the water
- Support that removes fear
- Swimmer's body posture; tall and long
- Kicking that provides movement



20% things for Front crawl with breathing

Focus on:

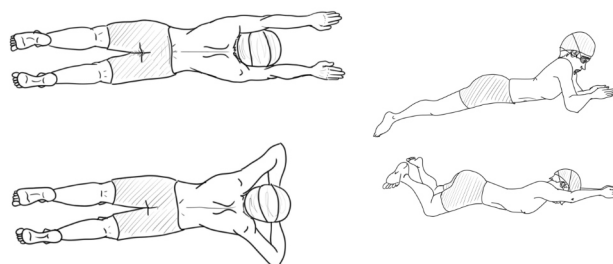
- Initial position 11 swimming; reducing pause
- Body line and tall posture; rotating along spine
- Effective arm strokes that recover over water
- Limit distance for well-timed breaths
- Kicking that provides movement



20% things to improve Breaststroke

Focus on:

- Timed dance movements, not swimming 1st
- Feeling of feet pushing against water
- Arms first, then, in Pos 11 a kick, repeat
- Arms help breath, kick makes movement



Class setup

Adapt to your space, leverage shallow water

Every pool is different. The depth and layout will determine how many classes you can run at one time and how you'll run each class.

Will you use the wall, shallow ends, benches or platforms, or other aids to help get non-swimmers safely in the water.

Your primary goal is safety. Then your goal is organizing your lessons so that every class can maximize the amount of time they spend doing things.

Where you put your level 1 classes and how you teach them is just as important as knowing what skills to focus on.

Setup your classes for success.

- Zero depth water is awesome for teaching. Use it for Guppies, Level 1, Level 2.
- Ideal depth for swimmers of all abilities is chest deep; comfortable standing, easy to stand up.
- Without deep water, use benches or platforms to adapt depth.
- Deep water should only be used for swimmers that can move independently without support and without touching the wall or bottom.
- Strategically position swimmers and instructor to maximize time spent doing swimming.
- Lane lines provide natural separation for ability and levels.

Your facility will dictate how you organize your classes and how you teach different levels of ability.



Benches & Walls

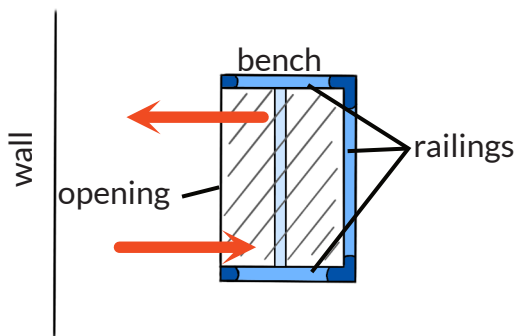
When you don't have shallow water, adapt with benches or strategic instructor placement. Priority is supporting the swimmer while providing maximum opportunity to do things.

Bench to wall; Levels 1&2

Aim the bench at the wall and use the wall space as a teaching tool.

Reduce the gap between the wall and bench as needed and increase it to provide a greater challenge.

Instructor should be on the bench, in space between, and in arms length from beside.

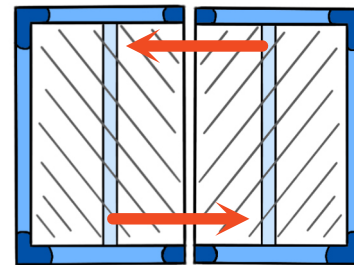


Bench to bench: Level 1

Push two benches together facing each other to create a closed in space of shallow water.

Move around the inside in circles with different objectives at corners or crossing benches.

Instructors can be inside with swimmers or outside directing behavior. Empower independent movement on benches.



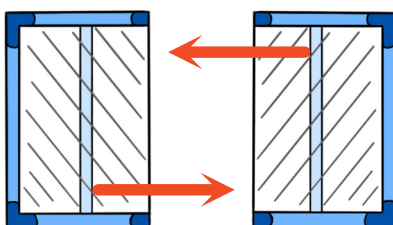
Two benches facing each other

Bench to bench; Levels 1-3

The gap between benches should start close, and then grow further apart over time.

The distance should be one inch further than a swimmer is comfortable doing on their own without support.

Build trust by swimmers successfully making attempts across the gap between benches.

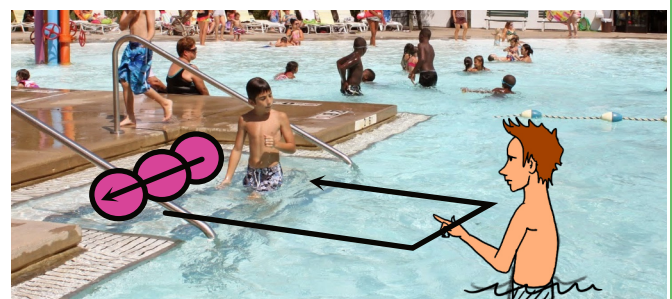


Wall/stairs to instructor

All levels appropriate.

Swimmers move one at a time to the instructor, receive feedback, move over slightly and return.

Focus on keeping swimmers moving quickly and minimizing the time swimmers wait for their turns.



Class setup continued

Without benches or zero depth

Pools are diverse and varied. You'll see a huge range of designs. Here are some examples to help you make good choices on how you structure or place your students and swim instructors.

RECOMMENDATION:

Keep your class sizes small, no more than 5 swimmers for each 1 instructor; a 1:5 ratio.

Walls and stairs:

Have the instructor stand facing the wall. Have swimmers stand next to the wall, or sit on the side. If you have stairs, have swimmers sit or stand on them to keep themselves above water.

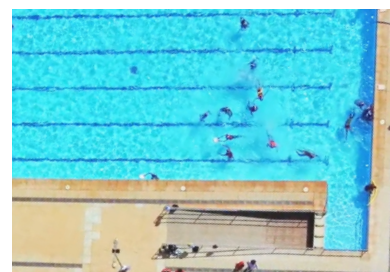
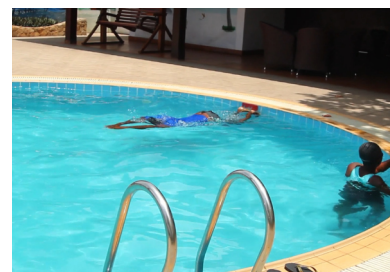
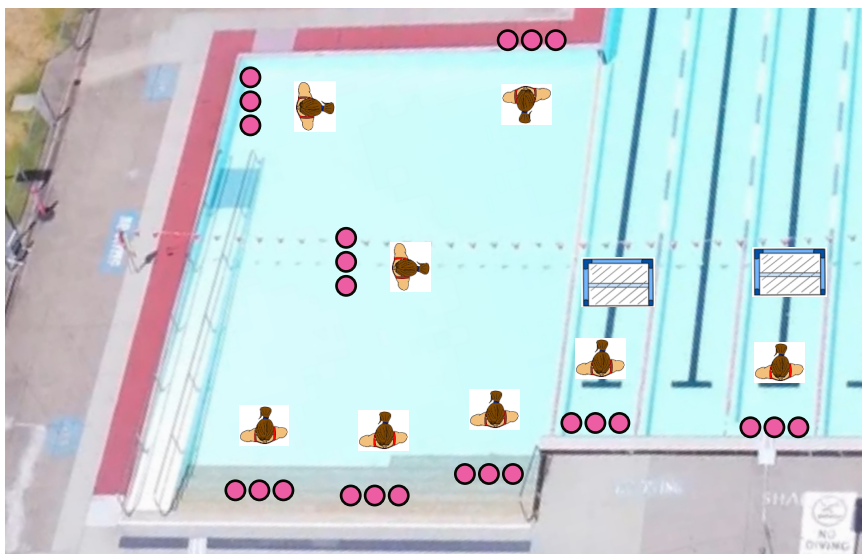
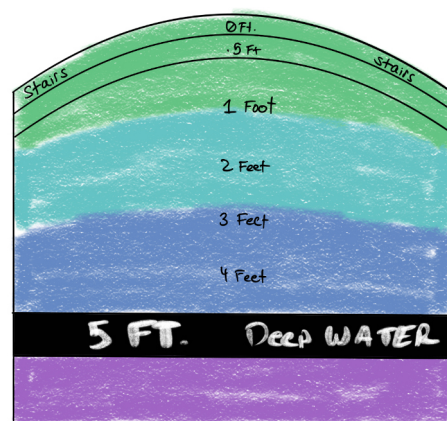
Deep water:

If you have water that swimmers cannot stand with their head above water easily we recommend benches. Without benches have swimmers hang on the edge, or sit in the side of the water while waiting for their turn.

Middle of water:

With a large body of shallow water you may have space away from a wall. Establish a common starting place.

Prioritize shallow water



Where they can stand

One of your primary goals should be putting your swimmers where they can stand in about chest deep water. If you can do belly button deep water that is best.

Use wide stairs if possible or zero depth water. Ideally, you would go out of your way to maximize shallow water so that swimmers can stand without fear of sinking to the bottom. Removing fear is one of the best steps you can take to providing excellent swim lesson placement.



Walls and sitting on the side

If you run out of shallow water, it is OK to use the edge of the pool in deeper water for swim lessons. However, it is not ideal.

Have swimmers hold onto the edge at all times repeating the phrase “keep one hand on the wall.”

You can also have swimmers sit on the edge of the pool with their feet in the water. This is great for less confident swimmers so that you can devote more attention to the ones in the water with you.

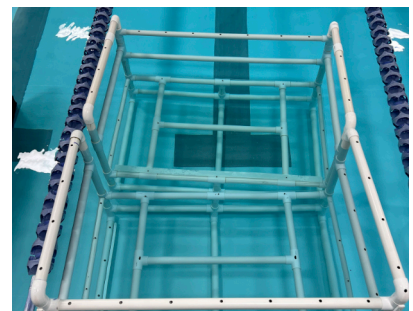


Benches whenever possible

The success of using benches or support devices inside the water cannot be overstated.

They are one of the most adaptable tools that can increase teaching efficiency and effectiveness of almost any pool and depth.

Use benches in depths of water around 3 1/2 feet to 5 feet. This will dramatically increase the instruction area of your pool.



Instructor placement

Be where feedback flourishes

Where the instructor chooses to be during a lesson makes a profound impact.

Be strategic with where you stand and give feedback.

Beginner swimmers will require significant more direct interaction and closeness.

Advanced swimmers can move independently and will require less direct physical intervention.

Traffic cop:

Spending all time controlling the flow of movement. Saying “ready go, stop. Your turn.”



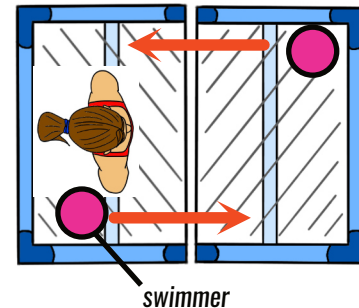
Instructor:

Spending significant/majority of time giving feedback in swimmer's attempts.

Position yourself to give the most feedback and be close enough to support a swimmer if necessary.

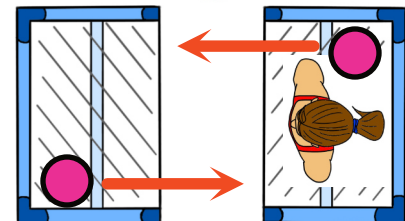


Level 1

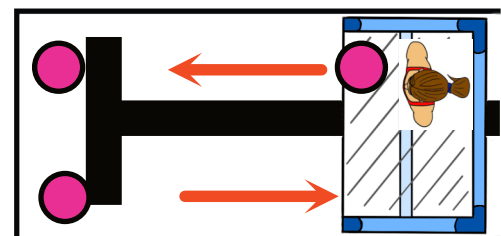


swimmer

Level 1 & 2



Level 2+

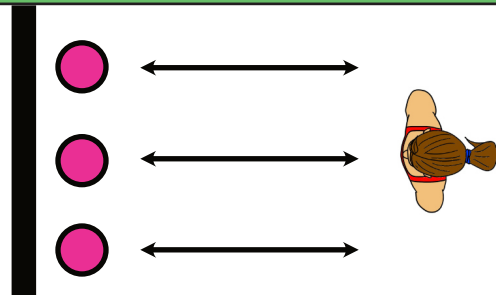


Location matters

Stand as target and barrier

Without barriers like another bench or lane line the instructor should be the target for learners to swim to, and the barrier to keep them from going too deep or far.

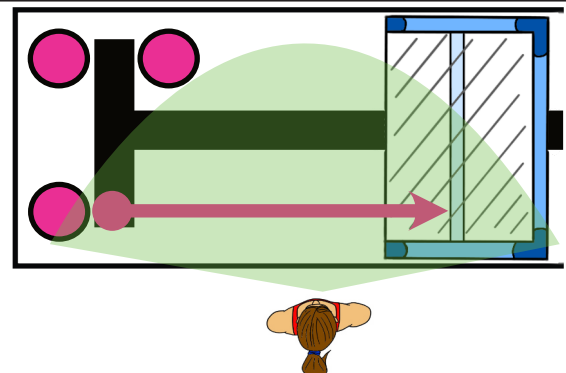
Stand at the apex of learner's independent comfort. Pick up the learner physically and help boost them back to the wall or start location.



Position for feedback

Instructors should stand where they can see every attempt the best. Maybe that's standing on the deck watching. Maybe it is in the water nearby.

After every attempt the swimmer should receive specific actionable feedback on how they can improve their swimming and the particular skill being worked on.

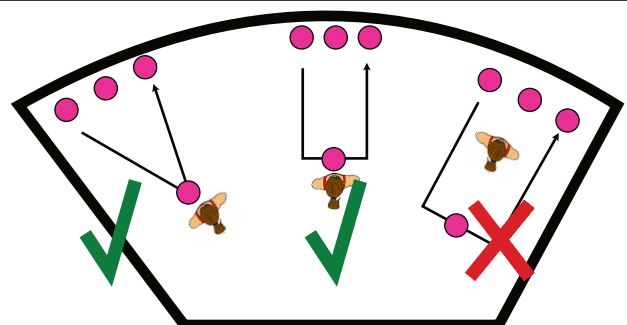


Keep swimmers in field of view

As swimmers make their attempts, the instructor should always have all members of their class in their field of view.

All swimming should be done where the instructor can see to protect and give feedback.

Note the rightmost setup. Avoid poor position.



Give feedback when swimmer arrives at instructor, and then again after they return to the wall.

Rotation Method

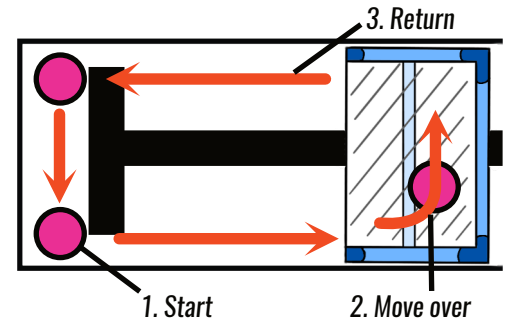
Keep swimmers moving

The rotation method is a way to structure activities in your lessons. The goal is to give swimmers a task and a familiar path or framework to do those activities.

The method is an adaptation of circle swimming for smaller spaces like two benches facing each other or in a swimming lane from the wall to the flags (5 yards).

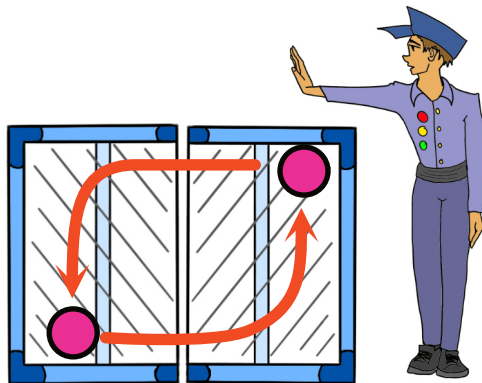
The first person should always be on the right (swimmer's perspective). Cross a distance, move across the bench or lanes and return on their new right hand side. Just like driving in a car and doing a u-turn).

You can count reps as times swimmers cross a gap or when swimmers compose a full rotation (returning to where they started). The key is to be consistent.



The rotation method works.

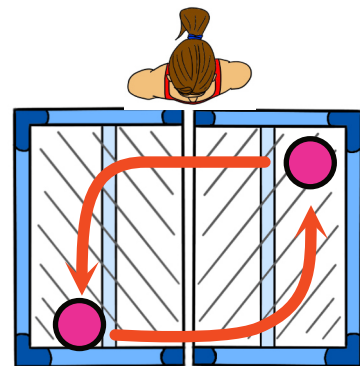
I cannot over stress how effective it is when it's done well, consistently, and the instructor transitions away from the traffic cop to providing feedback quickly.



Teach traffic flow

Start as the traffic cop directing the flow of swimmers moving. Tell them when to go, where to go, and what to do every step of the way.

Establish expectations and ensure compliance.



Automate & Feedback

Once swimmers know when to go without being told and know the method, you can start giving feedback.

Swimmers move independently through multiple rounds without stopping and you can watch attempts.

Multiple attempts

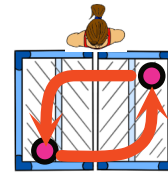
Don the traffic cap

When you have a new class you'll have to put the traffic cop hat on and spend the majority of your class time setting up the framework of the rotation method.

Direct traffic and swimmers to move in the circular pattern without pausing or stopping or waiting for you to tell them to go and stop.

Say this:

"Walk from this corner to that corner, move to the next one and return to the original bench and touch the last corner. Do this 4 times. Each time you get to a corner kiss the water."



Institute automation; set the expectation

The traffic cop directs swimmers where to go and when. Once the class knows the framework, you need to start making swimmers do things on their own. Have them follow the traffic cops "laws" without you having to tell them.

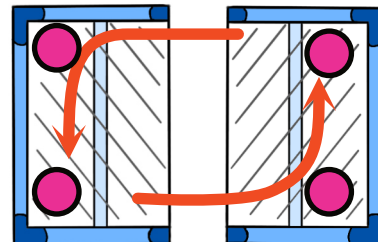
Automate the rotation method.

"Do this four times..." "Go five times...."

"Go from bench to bench 6 times.

Kiss the water every time you cross the gap.

Start on the right, move over, and return in the other side. Ready go."



Once automated, focus on feedback

This should become a familiar refrain: giving high-quality feedback is super important.

After swimmers understand the rotation method framework (you've established expectations and held them accountable to moving on their own) you should dedicate yourself to watching every attempt and telling swimmers what they did well and how they can improve.

***Tell swimmers
how they can
improve.***

SPEAK!

Preparing for class

Start with a plan, then adapt

When you are beginning leverage the expertise and experience of people that learned the hard go trial and error.

Use lesson plans and follow them strictly until you understand both the progression of skills and how to reset swimmer attention with fun and effective challenges and games.

Study the plan before entering water:

Make sure that you've read through the lesson plan before you start teaching. Understand each activity and challenge and give yourself a chance to research or ask a supervisor how to do not understand.

Check out www.swimminglessonsideas.com/games/ for a full list of games and challenges and how to play them.

Get familiar with the progressions and reference the skill sheets (single sheets for each core skill). Know what the terminology is, what the next step is, and how to conduct a lesson without relying entirely on the lesson plan itself. Use all of your materials to provide context and guidance.

Before you start ask:

- What level?
- Where?
- Ages?
- Roster?
- Lesson plans?
- Teaching aides?

Lesson plans are amplified by skill sheets

Swimming Lessons Level 3: Day 4 of 4

Goals:

- Comfortable freestyle arms reaching to position 11 with each stroke.
- Freestyle breaths to the side without lifting or struggling. Focus on kicks and body position strength.
- Do lots of reps of streamline + free and SL + BK to master the strokes.
- Use longer distances at tests.

Activity 1: Streamline + 3 FREE + Flip

3 x Streamline then do 3 free without breathing. Then do a front flip.

- Attempt no breathing.
- Focus on good SL underwater and good arms above.

Activity 2: Streamline to flag + 3 BK

3 x Streamline underwater on back.

- Stay in SL to the flag.
- After the flag, do 3 BK strokes counting when thumb exits the water.

Challenge 1: Push off the wall in Airplane

Push off the wall in airplane position on the ...

- surface
- underwater

See who can go the farthest without kicking or breathing!

Activity 3: Swimline!

Do a 50 FREE or BK.

Swim as often as needed.

GOAL:

- On the whole distance without stopping.

Activity 4: Streamline + 5 FREE + Breathe

3-5 x Streamline underwater, then at the surface do 5 free strokes. Must take 1 breath during the 5 FREE.

Challenge 2: Lay on the bottom

Get to the bottom of the pool, put your belly button, 1 big toe, and your nose all on the bottom at the same time.

- for 2 seconds
- for 5 seconds

Activity 5: BK Kick on the side

Do 10 slow breaststroke kicks while sitting on the side.

Activity 6: Streamline + 5 FREE + Breathe + Flip

3-5 x Streamline underwater, then at the surface do 5 free strokes. Must take 1 breath during the 5 FREE.

Challenge 3: Facing the wall, make waves high enough to splash the deck (lie over the edge).

- Hands must NOT go above the surface. Create waves UNDERWATER to make splashes.

Swimming Lessons Breaststroke

Introduce Arm Motion:

11 Eat & Breathe 11

Practice in water. Motion first.

For beginners, arms provide VERY little forward pull. Teach the arm MOTION.

"Eat" should help the head breathe. Connect so when arms move forward, feet pull underwater.

Swimline with no kick + 1 x (11, Eat, 11)

Swimline with no kick + 1 x (11, Eat & Breathe, 11)

Feel the Kick:

11 FLEX

SL + Flex LJ & Flex Push

Practice Kick on side of pool

Task: "FLEX" feet back together then out, toes up.

- 1) Legs straight, but on edge of ledge.
- 2) Flex knees, push feet down.
- 3) Feet of feet draw circle, push and squeeze water.

Knees closer together feel vs. but allow for large motion.

Arms, Kick, Glide:

Glide. Begin in 11.

Begin next breaststroke swimming with short distance. Limit to 1 or 2 strokes. Increase distance until a ability increases.

Swimline, glide in 11 at surface.

Eat and breathe.

Separate the arms from the kick to begin, as ability increases time passed between arms and kick.

Beginners: Do the arms alone, independent of legs.

Must breath on every "eat."

Return to 11.

At or breath, as hands move forward, press head down between elbows.

Aim head down.

Return to Position 11

Kick and Glide.

In position 11 do a BK kick.

LJ and Flex, push and squeeze.

Focus on strong kick.

Glide in Pos. 11 for 2 seconds.

Repeat to Eat and Breathe.

Handling going underwater

Offer a choice and follow through

Going underwater for new swimmers is often the scariest thing they'll face. We must treat that fear with compassion and consistency.

Give swimmers a voice and a choice in their underwater journey. Ask, "do you want to go underwater?"

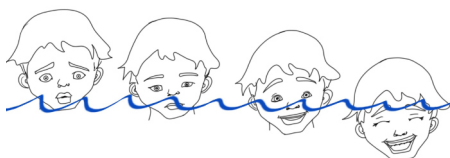
Listen to their answer and respect it. Keep them from going underwater if they don't want to do it.

We do not force swimmers underwater. Instead, we follow the underwater progression and scoop swimmers to their level of comfort.

This can be a long slow process over many lessons and months. That is okay. We open the door, make it fun, and let swimmers walk through when they're ready.

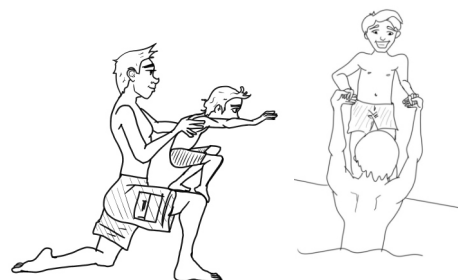
USA Swimming recommends a loving, caring, safe, and fun environment for learning to swim and Swimming Ideas fully endorses the same concept.

Do not forcibly dunk swimmers. It is counterproductive and will erode any trust your swimmers have in you.



The Underwater Progression:

- Shoulders
- Chin
- Lips
- Nose
- Eyes
- Whole face
- Entire head



Do you want to go under?

"No."

"How about to your chin?"

"Okay."

Do you want to go under?

"No."

"How about to your lips?"

"Okay."

Do you want to go under?

"No."

"How about to your nose?"

"Okay."

Do you want to go under?

"No."

"How about to your eyes?"

"Okay."

Do you want to go under?

"Yes."

"Awesome. Let's do it together."

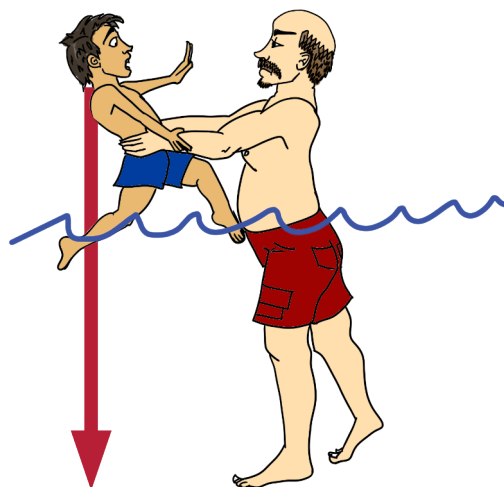
Scooping

Dunking versus Scooping

The difference is fear and “aggression.”

Dunking is abrupt, frightening, and forceful. The quick downward motion creates an automatic fear response that creates a gasp of air often making swimmers choke.

Scooping is an expected, at their level of comfort pull through the water into a caring hug.



Scoop with a step back

Scoop with compassion and clear warning about what will happen. As you scoop step backwards.

“We’re going to go underwater up to your [chin, lips, nose, eyes] one time.”

Adjust the depth of your U shaped pull through the water based on comfort level.



Scoop into a hug

After every scoop smile and celebrate the experience. “you went under to your nose!”

Begin with 1-2 scoops in a lesson and build up to more over time based on the comfort level of the swimmer. Let them lead and control their depth.

For infants it is okay to do 1-2 full face scoops based on comfort.



Earning trust

Respect, support, and encourage

We must earn the trust of both the swimmer and the parents. Swimming is unique in that our negligence or inattention can lead to drowning.

Swimmers know that water is inherently dangerous. They must learn to trust us to support them in the water, not let them drown, and pick them up and return them to safety if we take them somewhere they can't exit the water on their own.

Respect the swimmer and their fear.

Support the swimmer at all times. Never let them go without warning, preparation, and clear expectations.

Constantly encourage the swimmer's efforts and provide maximum until they demonstrate confidence and competence.

You must earn the swimmer's trust by your consistent actions. The things you do will determine how much they trust you.

Earn the trust by being consistent, predictable, and honest. Do what you say, be where they can predict, and help them in their need.



Respect

Treat swimmers with respect. Acknowledge their fear, their feelings, and their choices.

Never mock them, tell them they're wrong for being afraid, or that they're being stupid.

Meet them where they are.

Honesty

Do what you say, and clearly tell swimmers what will happen before it does.

Never lie, trick, or surprise a swimmer with an abrupt dunk or activity that is a violation of their desires.

We must be honest and consistent to earn trust.

Compassion

Practice empathy and compassion. Your support and care will go farther than rude and aggressive actions that force swimmers to do what you say from fear or physical might.

Earn trust through your kindness and encouragement.

Believe in you

Be predictable

The youngest swimmers should be able to predict what is going to happen next and how it will happen.

Announce what will happen next.

Demonstrate the activity; yourself or classmate.

Use a familiar framework; script, rotations, etc.

Clear examples.

Tell, show, do.

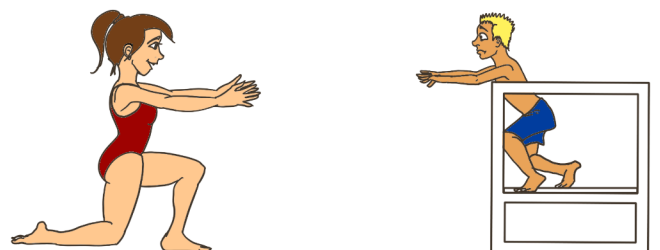
Go slow. Help often.

Never back up or deny support

Every time a swimmer initiates an independent swim you **must** remain in place.

Plant your feet and remain where you were. The swimmer is bravely trusting you to stay there.

The single worst thing you can do is deny your physical support by not helping when they get to you or by backing away. **Never** do this.



Announce changes or new skills

Similar to being predictable, you want to telegraph or announce in advance new skills and prepare swimmers for what they'll be doing next.

Abrupt changes, in location, style, and language frightens swimmers and leads to hesitation and erosion of trust.

Different instructors? Scripts and frameworks become more important.



Fear: Expressions

Recognize terror

People express their fear in different ways. Sometimes you can see it on their face; wide eyes, shaking, crying, physical attempts to remove self.

Most other times fear lies hidden under the facade of reluctance, hesitation, distraction, and avoidance.

You can learn to read the signs of fear and terror and use these strategies to overcome it.

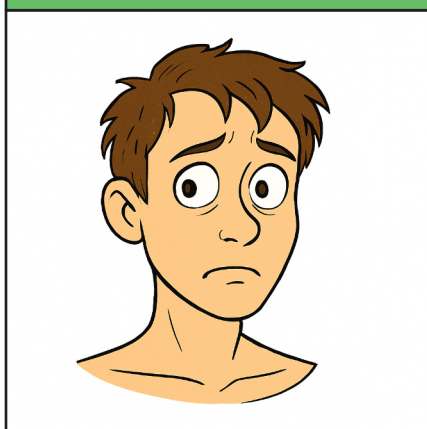
Much of what is recommended in this book sets instructors up to overcome fear before it manifests. However, you can't avoid facing fear when you begin asking swimmers to go underwater or swim independently.

Remember that drowning is a real thing and can be extremely frightening. The first time a swimmer slips under, can't recover, and inhales water they've learned to fear swimming.

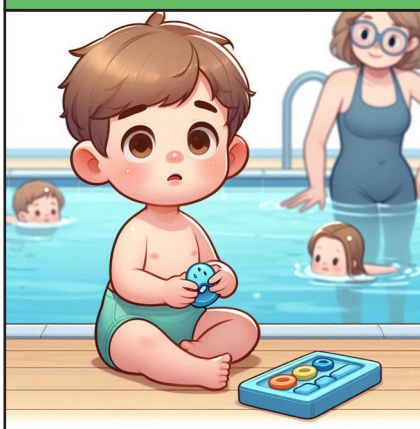
Our job is to prevent that from happening, recognize the signs of fear and directly address them without escalating that fear and making it worse.



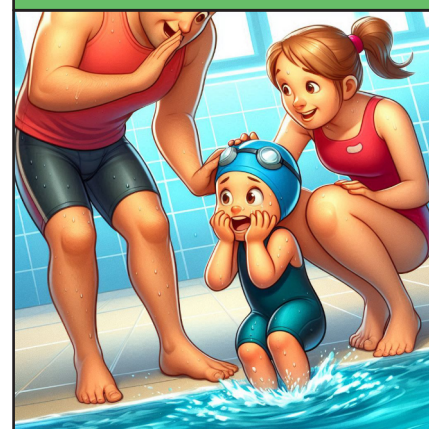
Wide eyes



Distraction



Crying



Empathy

Get eye level & match emotions

Empathy in Action:

Kneel or sit beside the swimmer. Mirror their body language. Offer calm facial expressions and soft tone.

Script Example:

"I see you're feeling nervous. That's okay. Let's take a deep breath together."

Why it works:

Being at eye level shows respect and makes the instructor less intimidating. It also builds trust and connection quickly.



Offer choices to build confidence

Empathy in Action:

Ask the swimmer if they'd like to try a smaller task. Let them choose what they're ready for.

Script Example:

"Do you want to splash your toes or pour water on your shoulder first?"

Why it works:

Empowering the swimmer with choice reduces fear by returning a sense of control and honoring their emotional state.



Celebrate small success

Empathy in Action:

Notice even the tiniest brave attempt—like a finger in the water—and praise it.

Script Example:

"You touched the water with your fingernail! That's amazing!"

Why it works:

Empathy focuses on effort, not outcome. Celebrating bravery reinforces progress and keeps the experience joyful.



Fear: Responses

Respond with honesty

When a swimmer cries or refuses to participate, respond with empathy—not pressure. Calm, intentional actions build trust over time.

Stay Calm and Supportive

- Lower yourself to eye level.
- Speak softly and smile.
- Keep your body language relaxed and inviting.

Offer Simple Choices

- Let the swimmer choose: hold your hand, sit nearby, or play with a toy.
- Respect their decision.
- Praise any effort, no matter how small.

Keep the Class Engaged

- Maintain fun energy with the group.
- Invite the hesitant swimmer to watch without pressure.
- Let them join when they're ready.

Celebrate Small Wins

Participation can look like:

- Sitting nearby.
- Splashing toes.
- Holding a kick board.
- Any step toward comfort is progress.



Addressing crying

Stay calm, and listen

Speak gently.

Use a soft tone and calm words to help the swimmer feel safe.

Don't assume.

Avoid guessing why they're upset—never say, "Are you cold?"

Offer support.

Say, "It's okay to feel nervous. I'm here to help." Your calm energy creates a sense of safety for everyone.



Keep moving, offer invitations

Continue leading the rest of your class with enthusiasm and energy.

While doing so, check in occasionally with the crying swimmer. Acknowledge their presence with short, supportive comments like, "You're welcome to come splash when you're ready."

Create easy opportunities for them to join without pressure. Let them watch, hold a toy, or help with a group activity. Including them in small ways maintains structure and gives them space to engage when they feel ready.



Your energy must be contagious

Lead with joy. Your energy is contagious. Smile, laugh, and keep your group engaged with playful instruction.

Use music and movement. Incorporate songs, splashes, and games that encourage group participation and excitement.

Invite without pressure. Say things like, "You can come splash with us when you're ready." Let the hesitant swimmer watch and join at their own pace.



Make it interesting

Interaction and attention

Your words and attitude create the atmosphere for every swim lesson.

The best instructors bring joy, games, and challenge into the water. They play with the swimmers and build relationships through fun.

Your goal isn't to entertain but to engage—and that happens through interaction, consistency, and enthusiasm.

Use your energy to inspire learners to try hard things.

Play with purpose. Swim lessons aren't all games, but you can use pretend, challenges, and entertainment to drive real learning.

Gamify your repetitions. Give learners something fun to work toward. When you show interest in them, they'll invest in you.

Children learn better when they feel safe, connected, and curious. Use standard language with clear instructions to create routine, then break the monotony with variety, play, and encouragement. Repetition builds skill, and connection keeps them coming back.



Connection and Play

Interaction builds connection

Learners respond to teachers who care about them. Your words and actions tell them you're invested.

- Smile and greet each swimmer by name
- Engage between attempts—ask about favorite games, colors, shows
- Play in the water alongside them
- Show interest in their progress and celebrate wins



Play is the world of children

Games, imagination, and competition are tools—not distractions. Use them to drive real skill development.

- Pretend to be pirates or adventurers
- Use toys, rings, races, and songs
- Create challenges: “win the crocodile,” “get the treasure,” “can you be brave?”



Consistent language creates comfort

Use the same phrases, scripts, and feedback every time. This builds routine and reduces anxiety.

- Use scripts from this workbook
- Repeat core phrases: “Lock your thumb, squeeze your ears, look down”
- Avoid filler words like “okay?”
- Predictability builds safety and trust
-



Consistency & Standardization

Structure creates safety

Predictable routines, familiar phrases, and consistent expectations reduce fear and create space for growth. Swim learners—especially children—thrive in environments where they know what to expect. Repeating the same words, scripts, and progressions allows swimmers to focus on what matters instead of wondering what's coming next.

Consistency is your ally.

It removes guesswork and lets swimmers build on previous lessons confidently.

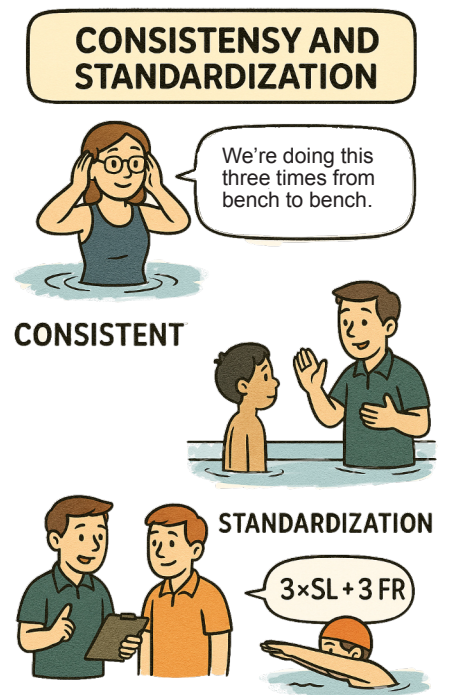
Using standardized language across instructors.

It builds trust not just between one swimmer and one teacher, but between your whole program and every swimmer in it. When all instructors use the same phrases, learners grow faster, and families see cohesive instruction.

Repetition doesn't mean boring—it means reliable.

Use variety within a framework. Keep your voice, but stick to the core scripts, feedback loops, and skill language laid out in this workbook.

Predictability unlocks performance.



Establish rituals for how your class begins, how you rotate through activities, and how you give feedback. These routines reduce anxiety and foster a safe, effective learning environment.

The goal is to create comfort through consistency and language clarity.

- Use the same phrases every time.
- Demonstrate clearly and often.
- Create structure in how you move through the lesson.

*When swimmers know what's coming, they can focus on mastering skills
instead of wondering what to do.*

Same words

Scripts build trust

Learners crave structure. When they know what's coming, they're more confident trying new things.

- Use the same phrasing every time
- Familiar words = faster skill development
- Repetition = comfort = progress

Front glide script:

- Put your shoulders in the water.
- Reach your arms out to me.
- Put your face [chin, lips, nose] in the water.
- Push off [with, to] me.

Back glide script:

- Turn away from me.
- Put your shoulders in the water.
- Tilt your head back.
- Push off [with, to] me.

Same words = stronger program

When every instructor speaks the same language, swimmers build habits that last—even when teachers change.

- Stick to this workbook's terminology
- Use the same phrases for streamlines, glides, feedback
- Promote consistency across all classes and teams
- Parents notice when it's unified

Breaststroke Arms

Script:

- 11
- Eat / Eat and Breathe
- 11

Position 11

Eat, Return to 11

***Eat and Breathe**

Goals:

1. Long reaching arms extending in front of the body above the shoulders.
2. Quick push directly to the face, keeping elbows high.
3. Return to 11 without embellishment reaching forward and placing face back in the water.

Body should be flat, still, and neutral. Aim face at the bottom of the pool.

Arms Extend forward pressing against the ears and framing the head.

Palms lay flat on the surface of the water. Stretch forward.

Sweep the hands down, or in, towards the face. Scoop water down and in like attempting to throw water into the mouth.

Elbows remain bent and upraised. Avoid chicken wing flapping elbows.

Return to position 11 shooting up.

Add after "eat" is mastered.

As the hands scoop into the "eat" position, lift the head up out of the water to take a breath. When the hands extend to 11, return face underwater.

Be you. Be predictable.

You can be fun, creative, and personable—while still using the consistent framework that works.

- Put your own energy into scripts
- Use the same cues, even with different delivery
- Swimmers don't need surprise—they need reliability
- Predictable cues = predictable success



Playing games & challenges

Bring the Lesson to Life with Imagination & Improv

The best instructors become characters—pirates, mermaids, sea monsters, astronauts—and they do it with intention. Pretend play adds excitement, reduces fear, and keeps swimmers engaged while still teaching real swimming skills.

The instructor should think like an improv actor: say “yes, and...” to keep the story going while steering the lesson forward. The magic of these games is in the delivery: use enthusiasm, tone of voice, props like toys or kick boards, and playful gestures to transform a lesson into an unforgettable adventure.

Pretend play lets you disguise repetition and challenge.

You’re not just gliding—you’re sliding away from a sea monster. You’re not just retrieving rings—you’re discovering treasure at the bottom of the sea.

Good pretend games are safe, skill-focused, and short.

Use your energy to guide the story and make swimming feel like play with purpose.



Instructor Tips: Play with Purpose

- Say “Yes, and...” to swimmer ideas—keep the story going
- Stay safe and on task even while pretending
- Use your voice, face, and body to bring the world to life
- Play for 1–3 minutes, then transition back to structure
- Reframe drills with fun names and simple props

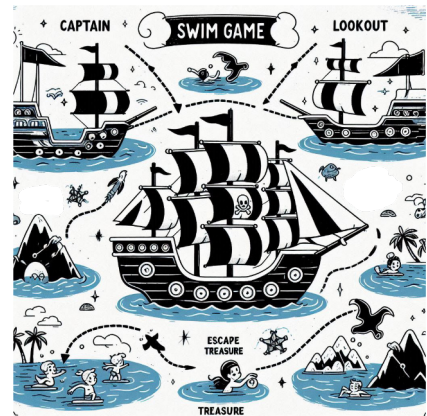
Stories into Skills

Pirate adventures

Use kick boards as ships. Swimmers collect treasure (toys) from around the pool.

- “We’re sailing to the treasure cave!”
- Assign roles: captain, lookout, diver
- Glide to islands, dive for treasure, escape sea monsters

Targets: kicks, glides, underwater retrieval, teamwork



Animal games (pretend)

Act like different animals while doing swimming skills.

- “Let’s swim like dolphins!” (Streamline + kicks)
- “Be a sleepy sea otter” (back float)
- “Shark chase!” (race and return to the wall)

Targets: posture, floating, turns, breath control



Magical challenges

Use spells, potions, or missions to make skill drills more exciting.

- “This kick makes you invisible to the sea monster!”
- “Swim through the magic tunnel (streamline through hula hoop)”
- “Complete 3 glides to unlock the treasure chest!”

Targets: repetition, streamlines, diving, breath holding



Creating Challenges

Pick a skill, add a roadblock

I recommend you follow Swimming Ideas lesson plans that are full of challenges and games that are both fun and effective.

When you're ready to start creating your own challenges and games, you can follow this brief guide.

How to create a challenge

1. Pick a specific swimming skill you want to improve.
2. Put a roadblock between the swimmer successfully doing the skill so that it creates a "challenge" or a clear metric of success or failure beyond the skill's inherent expression.
3. Adapt the roadblocks to adjust for different levels of verticality. Create simple roadblocks for level 1 and more complicated blocks for level 4.



1. Skill	2. Roadblock	3. Success/Fail
Buoyancy	Lift toes above water	Face falls underwater
Streamline	Push off wall in airplane to flags	Can't reach flags, kicks, breathes
Body positioning	Remain underwater laying on back with feet on wall	Both feet not on wall, back not flat, face not aiming up

Make your own

Skills

Pick a core skill that you want to improve. It can be anything directly or indirectly related to a competitive stroke.

Ground your choice in something the swimmer needs to improve on.

The skill will form the basis for your new challenge.



Roadblocks

Create a hurdle or a difficulty to accomplishing the skill. Make the skill difficult to do, accomplish, or put a rule on doing the skill that makes it wrong, or harder.

The roadblock should be simple, but challenging enough that a swimmer must put effort into accomplishing the task with the limitation.

Think of it like tying one hand behind your back to play a sport. You can do it, but it makes everything harder and you get better at using the other hand.



Success or Fail

Define a clear metric for success or failure and adhere to it strictly.

Make the definition of success so obvious and clear that swimmers have an exact target to aim for.

The more refined and simple your challenge is while remaining difficult will make it more fun.



Parent Tot

Ages 6months - 3 years

The Parent Tot class introduces infants and toddlers to water in a safe, fun, and welcoming environment with a parent present. The goal is water comfort—not swim skills—but the building blocks of swimming begin here.

Repetition, songs, and games are crucial tools to help young children enjoy being in the water while forming positive memories.

Swim instructors must be confident, outgoing, and prepared to lead both adults and babies. This includes confidently explaining and demonstrating how to hold children (football hold, palms up, head on shoulder), how to do supported glides, and the importance of cues like “1, 2, 3!” before going underwater. Instructors should model energy and joy—dancing and singing are part of the job!

Be ready to speak to parents about their goals. Many parents enroll to bond with their child and to learn how to help them become comfortable and safe in the water. Instructors should guide parents with specific directions, demonstrations, and encouragement. Remember: repetition is comfort, and every activity can be tailored to different ability levels.



You are the expert

Parents are paying you to lead a swim lessons for them and their infants.

Rest comfortably on your training and knowledge. The parents have not spent the time and effort learning that you have.

Be confident. They crave your insight and instruction.

Be Bold

Fill yourself with confidence and bravely tell parents how they can work with their kids in the water.

Boldly tell them how to hold the child and offer to demonstrate.

Give clear directions on time and repetitions and interrupt to lead songs and activities.

Sing! Smile!

Your smile and behavior will help your confidence grow. Smile often,

Sing with volume and embrace dancing and laughing.

Perform and be outgoing and strong.

You set the tone for the class.

Key Instructor Points

Confident Demonstration:

Show how to do football hold, scooping, supported front and back floats. Use a doll or demo with a swimmer.

Cueing is Crucial:

Teach and model cue systems (e.g., “1, 2, 3, go!”) before submersion and before every activity. Important for child.

Adult Communication:

Speak clearly and directly to parents. They want your guidance. They crave direction. You are the expert.

Games + Songs + Education:

Repeat songs and activities. Predictability = comfort.

Engagement:

Be in the water, be loud, be fun. If the instructor doesn't sing, parents won't either. Be overly enthusiastic and outgoing.



Watch for and teach:

Parent Skills:

- Football hold
- Palms up belly support
- Cheek-to-cheek back floats
- Scooping with breath cues

Swimmer Skills:

- Comfort with face in water
- Fun and comfort doing different games and songs
- Relaxed body in supported floats
- Attempts at going underwater

Class Goals:

- Build positive water memories
- Teach basic holds and cues
- Encourage parent-child bonding
- Ensure everyone is having fun
- Adapt holds and expectations to each child's comfort



Parent Tot: Expectations

Gradual progress, no huge leaps

Small improvement over time:

Make it clear to parents that progress will happen slowly over time. The goal of the parent tot class is to provide a loving and safe environment for infants and toddlers to thrive and love swimming.

Not going to learn to swim:

Infants can't learn to swim independently. They can float naturally, but they have no control over their bodies in a true swimming sense.

Our goal in this class is teaching them habits, building joy, and offering time in the water so that they create a healthy and happy relationship with swimming.

Early participation in swim lessons will lead to earlier success swimming when physical development allows.



Underwater to “comfort”

Sections in this book will frequently describe “going underwater to comfort.”

Comfort means that you should have the swimmer go underwater up to the level of their personal comfort on the underwater progression.

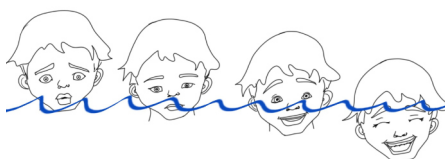
In the parent tot class, we will move through the progression super slowly.

Spend significant time at each stage until the child is so comfortable that they seem unfazed or completely unaffected by going underwater at their level of comfort.



The Underwater Progression:

- Shoulders
- Chin
- Lips
- Nose
- Eyes
- Whole face
- Entire head



Go slow

Parent Fear = Swimmer Fear

If the parent is afraid of going underwater or doing something the infant will immediately pick up on their emotions and act out.

Teaching the parent to be calm and receptive to your activities and songs is the major focus of this class type.

Teach parents confidence and they'll thrive.



Pool time is most important

The single most important metric for swimmers that love the water is how much time they get to spend in it.

The parent taught class is typically 30 minutes and the goal is to provide a consistent and predictable lesson where infant swimmers will develop clear expectations.

Make it clear that for real progress to occur, parents and swimmers need to spend significant time in the pool



Parent Tot: How to Hold

Supported Front Glides

Palm up support:

Push your palms under the infant's chest or belly and wrap your thumbs around their shoulders. Good for calm or relaxed children

Football hold support:

Hold your hands like you're about to catch a football, thumbs facing each other's palm facing out from you.

Wrap your fingers around the child's ribs and have your thumbs on their chest. Bend your elbows and control their depth.

Let swimmer keep their face above water and encourage kissing water and willful attempts at face in.



Supported Back Glides

Chest to back:

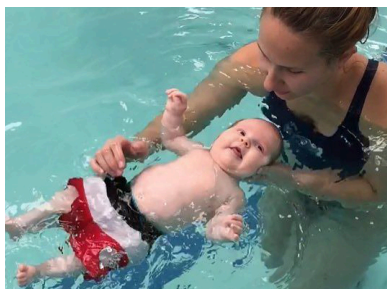
Use palms on back or football hold to press child's back to your chest. Let them get comfortable. Keep ears above water.

Head on shoulder:

Press your cheek against child's cheek. Lodge head against your shoulder and control depth. Avoid ears in water until child is comfortable.

Head in hand:

With your palm up, wrap your fingers and thumb around the base of the child's head and neck. Keep child's face above water and ears in water.



Go slow. Be loving and gentle

Never do something that will traumatize the child. Provide support at all times to swimmers.

Never dunk or throw a child in water to let them “sink or swim.”

When progressing to underwater do so slowly, over many lessons and after hours and hours of time spent in the water having fun.

USA Swimming and all other national programs promote a loving, caring, gentle approach for infants. So does Swimming Ideas. If you are doing something that is not grounded in compassion do not do it; letting infants fall in and struggle to the surface is not loving.

Scoop, not dunk.



Working with parents and child

Tell parents to keep their own face in front of the child's as much as possible. When doing back glides it is good to have the instructor start them with the child facing the parent. Or do in a group.

The child will calm when the parent is in view.

Doing back glides or floats in a group is helpful to distract child from fear of not seeing parent.

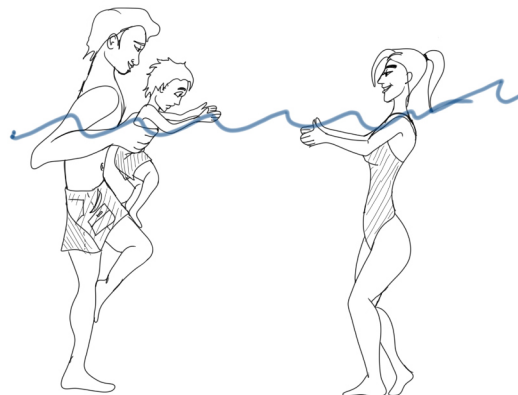


Ask to do activities too:

Be involved with each parent and child. Offer to do front glides and back glides with the child while the parent watches. Create a connection between you and the child and the parent. Your interaction will build trust and comfort.

Show and explain:

As you do activities with the child and parent explain why you're doing it, and how it relates to a larger swimming skill. Parents like to know “why.”



Parent Tot: Passing

Passing to the wall

Front glide from parent to the wall:

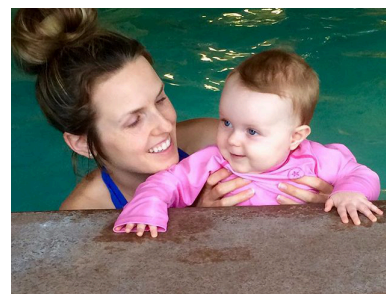
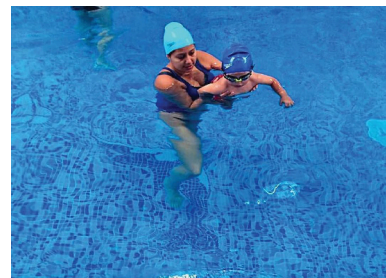
Start in child back held to the parent's chest. Cue, and extend arms using football hold (fingers around chest, thumbs encircling ribs).

Child should reach for wall. Parent assists child exiting the water. Boost as necessary.

Climbing out:

We're chaining together the front glide and reach for the wall with getting out of the water and grip strength.

Having the infant and toddler learn how to get themselves out of the water is a skill. Do this many times and let the child struggle and have parent help until child can do alone.



Passing from instructor to parent

After you've establish rapport with the parent and child offer to do a pass to the parent.

Hold the child in the football hold and the back to chest position so that the child is facing the parent.

Cue. Extend your arms orienting the child horizontally but keeping the head above water.

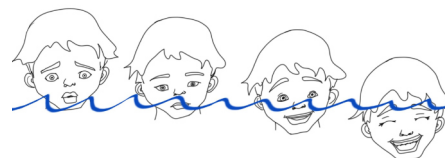
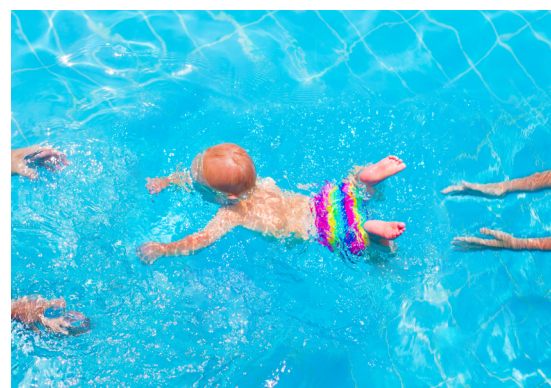
Parent receives the child in the football front glide support and brings the child into a celebratory hug.

Smile and praise the child for their effort.

Over time, follow underwater progression on passes.

The Underwater Progression:

- Shoulders
- Chin
- Lips
- Nose
- Eyes
- Whole face
- Entire head



Pass and Scoop

Pass often to build comfort

Use cues:

Start every pass with the same cue.

“1, 2, 3!”

”Ready, steady, go!”

Consistency is important. Use what you’re comfortable with and what the parent does.

Cueing tells the infant that something is going to happen and allows them to prepare instead of being startled.

Underwater with comfort:

Start all passing and glides with the infant’s face above water.

Work up to going underwater with predictable extremely slow increments.

Follow the underwater progression. When the infant is ready to move to the next step you’ll know because they do cry or seem fazed by their mouth or nose or eyes going under the water.

Scoop once a lesson:

At the end of every lesson encourage parents to do 1 underwater scoop with the child.

Cue, step backwards, and pull the child underwater completely into a hug.

Scoop in a flat “U” motion.

Scoop into a hug and celebrate.

Limit the scoop to once a lesson until child is very comfortable.

The one scoop

Start in a front glide support position using the football hold.

Cue. “1, 2, 3.”

Take a step backwards and at the same time pull child underwater keeping horizontal.

Scoop child into a hug. Celebrate and smile.



Parent Tot: Activities

Sitting on side



Games and toys while seated:

Put lots of toys on the edge of the pool. Let the infants play.

Practice splashing water with feet, throwing toys, and growing comfortable with the water.

Enforce child asking to enter the water.

Falling / Jumping in



Cue and pull into a hug:

Build up to jumps. Start by pulling swimmer in the water to a hug without going underwater using the football hold.

Make it fun, smiling, and a game.

Only allow underwater to comfort.

Glides



Frequent front and back glides:

Go somewhere in the pool? Do a front glide.

Every movement around the water or activity should include one of the glides.

Chain together jumps, glides, and songs with toys.

Movement



Travel though the water:

Encourage your parents to move around the water location you have. Use different parts of the wall, the water. Go to different depths or water features as available.

Get toys, sing songs, and do glides to visit new locations and do activities.

Throw a toy and get it



Use floating toys; chain activities

Encourage child to throw toys, do a fall or jump into a front glide, go to the toy, pick it up and do a back glide back to the wall.

Exit water with support and repeat.

Excellent chain of activities!

Bucket-head



Pouring water game for laughs:

Let the child pour water over the instructor's head, and yell "bucket head!"

Have the child pour water over the parent's head. Do it to the child.

Adjust by pouring water over shoulder.

Pour & float toys

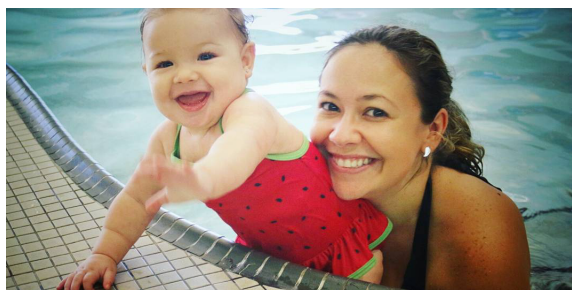


Provide lots of floating fun:

Floating toys are awesome fun for infants and can be used strategically for toddlers.

Throw them, chew on them, play with them, and use them in all manner of ways. Chain with other activities.

Exiting water



Let swimmers struggle out:

Parents and instructor should provide total support, but let the child struggle and figure out how to exit water.

Two hands on the wall, throw a leg on the wall, and boost or roll out.

Provide support and push as needed.

Parent Tot: Songs

Ring Around the Rosie



Great song for groups of people together. Have parents and swimmers facing each other in a circle.

When you get to “all fall down” change the lyric to “everyone splash” or “splash your face.”

Can encourage going under water to level of comfort too.

Wheels on the Bus



This song can be adapted to many different swimming things.

For every lyric round, do a different motion with the child.

Doors open and shut = child moves forward and back

Wheels go round = spin around

If You're Happy & Know



Fun group song that can be done together with everyone facing each other in a circle or independently.

The goal here is to get swimmers to clap or jump or sing or splash the water in tune with the lyrics because they are happy and having fun in the pool.

Motorboat



this song is for swimmer, sitting on the edge of the pool or for children, capable enough to hold a kick board .

Have swimmers, splash, or kick their feet and ever increasing speed as the lyrics progress.

Have fun with speed and “step on the gas” and whip around at speed.

Repeat all at every lesson

London Bridge



Use a floating mat or a noodle to create a bridge.

For every round of lyrics the bridge gets lower and lower. Encourage parents and swimmers to get super close to the water and let only the bravest go completely under together on the last round.

Twinkle Twinkle



Sing this song during back floats and give the child a toy to play with.

Press swimmer cheek to parent cheek and sing gently in their ear.

Provide total support. Encourage looking up at the lights or sky for twinkling stars.

Humpty Dumpty



Sing this song while children are sitting on the side of the pool. Parent remains in the water and at the end of song pull the child into a hug or front float.

Remember to do cue at the end of song before pulling into a jump or front float.

Hokey Pokey



Use this song as the final song of every lesson.

Only do 3 or 4 total verses.

Change lyrics to "splash it all about."

Encourage parents to play along and do everything as well. Let kids have fun.

Lesson Plans



Parent Tot: Page 1

Expectations for Parents:

Intent of the class is to establish fun and routine to build comfort.

Go slow, have fun, sing, play, laugh, and enjoy the water. Create a loving and encouraging environment.

Practice skills with lots of repetition, then play games and songs as a group. Individual practice, group play.

Activity 1:

Sit on the side and splash

Sit on the edge of the pool and kick the water.

Sing:

Motorboat, Motorboat go so slow.
Motorboat, motorboat, go so fast!
Motorboat, motorboat, step on the gas!

Activity 2:

Review Jumping in together

Hold swimmer's hands. They stand on deck, or sit.

Ask: "Do you want to go underwater?"

Adhere to their answer.

Cue: 1, 2, 3, Go!

Pull into a hug. Start with lips in water, then nose, then face.



Song

Ring around the Rosie: Play 1 x

Start standing or sitting on the side.

Sing song together as a group 2x.

On "all fall down," do a jump into the water after a "1, 2, 3, Go!" cue.

Use QR code at top right for song.



Activity 3:

Demo Front Floats with support

Instructor uses dummy, or a swimmer participant to demo.

Hold like football

Hold with palms up, hands under belly and chest

Move through the water.

Activity 4:

Throw a toy and get it. 4 x

Sit on side. Throw a toy into water.

Sing "humpty dumpty" or "ring around the rosie."

Do a jump into a hug, and turn that into a front float.

Go get the toy. Return to wall and do it again.

Song:

Wheels on the bus: Play 2 x

With a streamline and no KICKING get to ½ way:

- with only 3/5 FR strokes
- with a single Underwater breaststroke pullout (w/ kick).
- with only 3 FLY arms.
- with 5 BK strokes.

Front floats

Hands on shoulders:

Focus on comfort, going slow, and moving through the water.

Let the parents walk backwards and visit parts of the pool. Play.

Go places by doing front floats together.



Palms up,
under chest



Football hold,
wrapped around chest

Flow of class:

Activity, Activity, Song.

Play games and sing songs as a group!

Give instructions in-between games and songs:

Do "x" 4 times and when you're done we'll move on.



Parent Tot: Page 2

Expectations for Instructors:

Get in the water!
Play songs on tablet
connected to speaker.

Demonstrate first, then direct parents
on what to do, how many times, then
let them do it.

Roam during activities and introduce
self. Offer to help. Give feedback.
Explain why skills are helpful.

Activity 5:

Visit parts of pool

Doing a supported front float all
walk somewhere in the pool.

- Visit a water feature.
- Visit a side, and jump in.
- Encourage moving and going
under.

Activity 6:

Reaching for toys and exiting

Put lots of toys in the water that
float. Parent does supported front
float to toys. Child reaches for it.

Bring toys to the wall 1 at a time.

Practice exiting the water with help.

Arm, arm, leg, belly. Boost the feet or
butt to help.

Jump in and repeat 4 x.

Song



If you're happy and you know it: 2x

With each section of the song do the
activity.

Splash your hands.

Splash your feet.

Rise in the air and say "Hurray!"

Activity 7:

Demo Back Floats with support

Instructor uses dummy, or a
swimmer participant to demo.

Hold baby's back to parent's chest.

Rest baby head on parent shoulder.
Keep cheek to cheek connection.

Move backwards through the water.

Activity 8:

Travel in the pool

Chain together all activities:

- Sit on the side and play.
- Jump in
- Supported front float; go under
- Get a toy, supported back float
- Return to wall and exit (let child
climb out as much on own as can).

-

Song:

Hokey Pokey!

Play the song. Lead the singing.

Be expressive and set the tone.

Splash hands, splash feet, whole
body, lips in for bubbles.

Celebrate and come back again!

Back floats

Go slow! Difficult skill:

Start with baby back to parent chest in
seated position.

Transition slowly to baby head on
shoulder.

When comfortable, transition to baby
head in parent hand.

Goals:

Ears in water, belly up and flat, comfort
and smiles. Sing Twinkle Twinkle.



**Baby head resting on
Parent shoulder.
Cheek to cheek.**



**Head in hand;
palm up under neck**

London Bridge:

Go under spray water, or mats

Great game to play where
parents and
swimmers
move through
tunnel singing.

Do front and
back floats
through.



Expectations for Parents:

For repeat Parent Tot attendees; check in with Parents to see progress.

Go slow, have fun, sing, play, laugh, and enjoy the water. Create a loving and encouraging environment.

Practice skills with lots of repetition, then play games and songs as a group. Individual practice, group play.

Activity 1:

Entries and Movement: 3 mins

Parents and children should enter the water as they please; slide in, jumps, together or not as their comfort dictates. Let them do songs, floats, and play with toys. Provide lots of options. Movement and laughter should be the focus until all are comfortable with water.

Activity 2:

Front Glides to the Wall 4x: 3 min

Parent holds child; both facing wall. Child stands on parent's knee(s) about 1 body length away from wall.

Put child underwater to their shoulders. Arms reaching forward.

On a count of 3 (cue), push the child to the wall in a front glide.



Song

Ring around the Rosie: Play 1 x

Start standing or sitting on the side or in a large group circle all together.

Sing song as a group 2x; play song.

On "all fall down," do a jump into the water after a "1, 2, 3, Go!" cue, or fall "underwater" into a back glide or under up to child's comfort. Use QR code at top right for song.



Activity 3:

Front Glide Fun Stations: 5 mins

Set up 4 different locations around pool edge. At each station put toys; pour buckets, rings, floating items.

Parents and child go 1 at a time following the order 1-4. Front float between each location, play w/ toys for 30 seconds then move on.



Activity 4:

Cannonballs & Jumps: 3 mins

Cannonballs are throwing toys high up in the air so they land in the water and create a splash.

-Push child to the wall, have them climb out.

-Have parent or child throw the toy between them and the wall.

-Child jumps in w/ or w/o support to parent going underwater to comfort.

Song:

Wheels on the bus: Play 2 x

Sing along with the song from the QR code for Wheels on the Bus.

For each new "the [something] on the bus," do a different activity.

Doors = push child out and in
People = lift up and down to water
Baby = splash the water

Front floats

Hands on shoulders:

-Focus on comfort and being comfortable.

-Walk backwards. Movement helps keep feet up at surface.

-Constantly encourage to go underwater; kiss water, chin in, lips in, nose in. Etc.

-Go places by doing front floats together.



Football hold, wrapped around chest

Flow of class:

Activity, Activity, Song.

Play games and sing songs as a group!

Give instructions in-between games and songs:

Do "x" 4 times and when you're done we'll move on.

Parent Tot Advanced



Parent Tot Adv: Page 2

Expectations for Instructors:

Get in the water!
Play songs on tablet
connected to speaker.

Demonstrate first, then direct parents
on what to do, how many times, then
let them do it.

Roam to each parent during activities
and introduce self. Offer to help. Give
feedback. Explain how skills progress.

Activity 5:

Back Glides, Songs, Stations: 3mins

-Review supported back floats/
glides. Demo w/ child or doll.
Setup 4 stations along pool edge.
-Can be same as Front Glide
Stations.
-Do Back glides and sing between
stations.
workstar, any other songs parents
please.

Activity 6:

Scoops and Challenges: 3 mins

Demonstrate how to do a proper
scoop with a cue, quick dip, and step.

Let parents scoop their child to the
child's underwater comfort; must do
at least chin or lips.

Offer additional challenges:
Get rings, touch bottom, whole head
under, front to back float, jump in.

Song



If you're happy and you know it: 2x

With each section of the song do the
activity.

Splash your hands.

Splash your feet.

Rise in the air and say "Hurray!"

Activity 7:



Passing: Front Glides: 5 mins

Two options: parent > ins, or
parent > wall.

Stand 1 body length apart. Aim child
at parent. Cue. Extend arms and
pass the child from INS to the
parent.

Stand 1 body length away. Push to
wall. Encourage going under.

Activity 8:

Free Play & Individual Goals: 5 mins

Give parents open opportunity to do
any skills they like. Play games, do
challenges, etc.

Speak individually with each parent/
child and discuss their goals.

Give feedback on that parent/child's
progress. Give specific tools to push
them to their goals.

Song:

Hokey Pokey!

Play the song. Lead the singing.

Be expressive and set the tone.

Splash hands, splash feet, whole
body, lips in for bubbles.

Celebrate and come back again!

Back floats

Go slow! Difficult skill:

Start with baby back to parent chest in
seated position.

Transition slowly to baby head on
shoulder.

When comfortable, transition to baby
head in parent hand.

Goals:

Ears in water, belly up and flat, comfort
and smiles. Sing Twinkle Twinkle.



Baby head resting on
Parent shoulder.
Cheek to cheek.



Head in hand;
palm up under neck

London Bridge:

Go under spray water, or mats

Great game to play where
parents and
swimmers
move through
tunnel singing.

Do front and
back floats
through.



Guppies: Games

Safety Tips:

Know where swimmers are at all times; keep a watchful eye.

Shallow water $\neq$ safe water; 2-4 years can fall, struggle, and get stuck. Stay attentive to all swimmers.

If sharing a public space (splashpad) then engage parents, but have them stay to the side. Be respectful of other children.

Follow the leader

Gather class together. Be the "leader" first.

Walk through your shallow end putting your hands in position 11 for 2 steps, then clapping; repeat.

Designate a new "leader" and have class, including INS follow them. Repeat.



Treasure Hunt

Gather horde of "treasure" (toys) for your ship (kickboard). Have a mix of floating and sinking toys.

Visit various locations in shallow end.

Hurricane (splashing) knocks your treasure to the bottom of the sea.

Participants go get treasure and return it to the ship.



Dumpy in the Dingas!

With your shoulders in the water, ask swimmers if they want to go underwater.

If they refuse, they must push the instructor and say "Dumpy in the Dingas!"

The instructor then goes underwater.

Repeat!

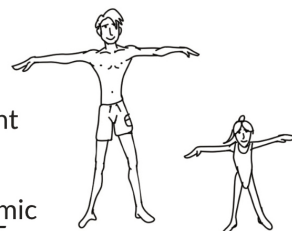


Strike a Pose!

Instructor walks with swimmers to different locations in the shallow end or splash-pad.

At each place, the instructor must do a "dramatic" swim pose like Streamline, or front crawl, or airplane.

Swimmers must all mimic the pose and hold for 5 seconds.



Keeping your class collected

Eyes on swimmers, back to others.

Keep your eyes on all of your swimmers at all times. This can be super challenging in a shared space like a splash-pad. Herd your swimmers together with your voice and physical presence.

Avoid turning your back to a swimmer.

Avoid abandoning a swimmer or forgetting where they are. Keep them close!





Guppies: Goofiness

Instructor Tips:

Smile! Smile often, frequently, a lot. Always. Your smile drives play.

Be the “life of the party.” Your actions set the tone for the class. Earn fun by being entertaining.

Be deliberate with your play; follow the games and challenges, or create your own but tie everything to a swim skill.

Mushroom Man

If you have a spray feature that creates a “mushroom” or an umbrella of water.

Visit the mushroom man. To get in, you must go UNDER the waterfall.

Talk to the mushroom man inside the dome. Escape same way.



No spray feature? Use buckets, a hose, or a hula hoop. Improvise!

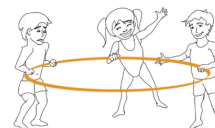
Bake a Cake

Hula Hoop. Hold the hoop in a circle.

Take turns adding ingredients to the cake. Mix it up with your arm in the water. Put it in the oven underwater. Check on it with face in the water.

Eat the cake with splashes to the face or driving whole face in the cake.

The amount of fun you have increases your swimmer’s fun.



Ring around the rosie

If you have life jackets, use them.

“Ring around the rosie, pockets full of posy, ashes, ashes, we all sing again!”

x3, on last refrain say “we all fall down!”

Hold hands in a circle and walk clockwise as you sing going faster and faster with each round.



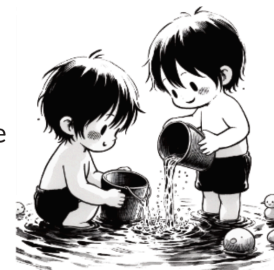
Toys and Scoops

Create a pile of buckets, scoops, floating toys, and objects.

Let swimmers pick from the pile and play with them.

Pour water and buckets on yourself and others.

Demonstrate with great enthusiasm how to play with each toy in the pool.



All games lead to underwater

Whatever you’re doing suggest, request, ask, for the swimmers to put their face in the water.

Guppies has 3 main goals:

- Creating water comfort and trust through games and fun.

- Teaching swimming specific terms early so when they’re in a “level” class they know what to do.

- Start swimmers going underwater before level 1.



Level 1: Day 1 of 4

Goals:

- Learn student names
- Earn trust:
- Focus on fun and routines
- Introduce self
- Demonstrate all activities first,
- Introduce framework
- Give clear expectations
- and offer modified alternatives
- Smile, laugh, play

Activity 1:

Bubbles and Bobs

Ask everyone their age. Do that number of bobs with bubbles.

If swimmer does not want to go completely underwater, offer alternative following underwater progression:

Shoulders, Chin, Lips, Nose, etc.

Activity 2:

Walk around the pool

Push benches together, or in a space they can stand, walk in a square or circle.

Keep swimmers moving. Each time they get to a corner, kiss the water.



Challenge 1:

Lift one foot out of the water, including all five toes.

Bonus: Do it without holding onto anything.

Super Bonus: Lift 10 toes out of the water.

Activity 3:

Walk around the pool with bubbles

Continue walking in the same square space or across two benches.

Kiss the water in the corners, but when passing from one bench to the other must put lips in and blow bubbles.

Activity 4:

Introduce supported front glides with instructor.

Begin close, and support swimmer so that they do not go underwater.

Encourage chin in water.



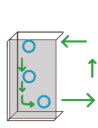
Challenge 2:

Get a ring from the bottom of the pool with the following:

1. Get with your foot.
2. Get with your hand and INS help.
3. Get with hand, but no help.
4. Get with hand and mouth in the water too.

Activity 5:

Reaching for the wall



Stand just out of arms reach from the wall; orient bench aimed at wall. Reach for wall with both hands. Monkey walk along wall, and reach back to the bench.

Activity 6:

Supported front glide with a reach.



Stand a little further away, have swimmer reach for INS shoulders.

Encourage putting lips, nose, in the water during support.

Challenge 3:

Bake a Cake Game

- Add ingredients by splashing
- Mix them up with arms
- Put in oven (under bench)
- Do front glides or activity
- Check on cake (eyes in water)
- Help lift cake
- Blow on it to cool off
- Eat with face or splashing cheeks



Level 1: Day 1 of 4 p. 2

Cues:

“Ready, Go.” “Put your chin in the water. Great!” “Would you like to go underwater?”
 “We’re doing front glides. Now put your lips in. Wonderful!” “Put your hands on my shoulders.”
 Who wants to go first? “Kiss the water like this...” “Kiss the water in the corners.”

Activity 7:

Super Splashes

Hold the bench with both hands and make the biggest splashes possible with both feet.

If possible splash INS’s face.

Hold a bucket near splashes and see if they fill it.

Activity 8:

Supported Back Glides

Head resting on shoulder.

Sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.



Challenge 4:

Jump high enough so that your belly button gets above the water.

Challenge 4.5

Jumps from the side.

Ask:

“Do you want to go underwater?”



Activity 9:

Lowering Hula Hoop

Hold a hula hoop so that the circle is $\frac{1}{2}$ in the water and $\frac{1}{2}$ out.

Swimmers must kiss water as they walk or glide through.

Lower hoop each round until they go underwater.

Activity 10:

Supported Back Glides

Transition from Head on Shoulder to Head in Hand position during the glide.



Challenge 5:

Lay on your back with only 2 fingers helping you stay afloat. Do supported back floats.

Hold swimmer at surface without falling underwater with two fingers on back of neck. Adjust for anxiety.

Activity 11:

Treasure Hunt Game

Using a kickboard as your “boat,” collect toys scattered around the pool. Each time a swimmer brings one back they must carefully add it to the boat pile. Collect toys by putting lips in the water or by doing supported glides to get.

Activity 12:

Tornado Twister Game

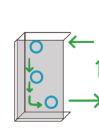
With as many toys you have available create a “tornado” where they all fall off your “treasure ship.”

Swimmers must collect toys by blowing bubbles to herd them back or get off the bottom.

Challenge 6:

Monkey walk to leave

Start on the bench aimed at the wall.



Front glide with lips kissing the water to reach the wall.

With both hands and feet monkey walk sideways to the exit.

Level 2: Day 1 of 4

Goals:

- Learn all swimmer names.
- Demonstrate first; either INS lead or with a returning swimmer.
- Keep swimmers moving! The more glides and kicking you can do the better to build confidence.
- Establish routines.
- Point out beginner alternatives.

Activity 1:

Bobs and Bottom

Go underwater 10 times.

Jump off the bottom of the pool each time.

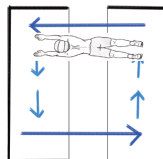
- If on a bench, then bend knees and submerge.
- If comfortable use bottom.

Activity 2:

Position 11 across benches.

Do 6 x glides from bench to bench, or Shallow to shallow location. Start close.

Keep swimmers moving.
This is a warm-up.



Challenge 1:

Sit and read

Go underwater and read how many fingers INS holds up.

Use goggles. Or let them touch INS hand.

- Encourage opening eyes.
- Goal is comfort underwater.

Activity 3:

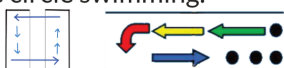
Kicking with Support



6 x Kick from Point A to B.

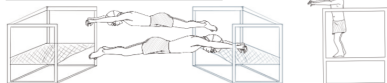
Continue to use the benches, or same space as earlier.

- Establish quick moving flow like circle swimming.



Activity 4:

Streamline Glides



6 x streamline from one bench to the other.

- Keep moving. Autonomously.
- Go when the way is clear.
- Avoid telling swimmers to "go."

Challenge 2:

Back float, toes up.

Float on your back;

- holding on to side or bench OK. Best is w/ no support.

- Keep 5, or 10 toes above the surface for 3 seconds.

Activity 5:

On Deck: Free Arms

Go slow!

Do 10 Free arms together.

- If you have mirrors use them!
- Start in 11, push down, then swing wide on the recovery back to position 11.

Activity 6:

Glide and swim



Begin with a front glide, starting with face in the water, then do front crawl arm circles with kicks the rest of the way. Do many; 6x

Challenge 3:

Spin without touching

With your head above water the entire time, spin 2x without touching the ground or the bench.

Use hands and feet to rotate body at least two times.



Level 2: Day 1 of 4 p. 2

Safety Tips:

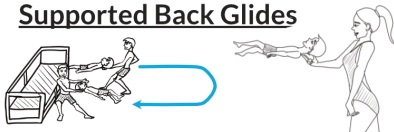
Be consistent with support. Hold swimmer with confidence.

Keep a watchful eye. Always aim your chest at swimmers; even when working with single ones.

If asking a swimmer to reach for you without support remain planted. DO NOT MOVE once they leap for you.

Activity 7:

Supported Back Glides



One at a time with the instructor.

Provide movement and pull on the surface to use water to push hips and feet up.

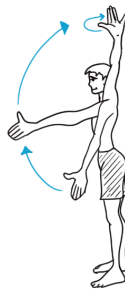
Activity 8:

Back Crawl Arms on Deck

Standing on deck. Start in soldier.

INS lead with demonstration:

Thumb, Hi, Pinky, Push

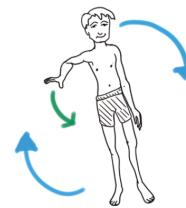


Challenge 4:

Float on back, and spin/rotate using one arm.

Float with or without support from INS.

Swimmer should rotate on the surface like a clock hand.



Activity 9:

Kicking to move

Use floating assists or lifejackets, go somewhere in the pool by kicking.

Force swimmers to use kicks to move.



Activity 10:

Glide then Swim with 3 strokes

From bench to bench, or wall to INS.

Back glide first, then 3 BK crawl arms across to bench, or INS.

Front glide, then 3 FR crawl arms back.

6 x across benches, or 2 x to INS.

Challenge 5:

Roll over, roll over!

Lay on your back, with or without support.

Spin to roll over on to belly, face down.

Hold for 3 seconds, then roll on back. Hold for 3 more seconds.

Activity 11:

Glide, then get toys

Push off in position 11 or streamline.

Go to instructor with kicks or swimming. With help, get toys from the bottom.

Glide or swim back to start.

Activity 12:

Holding toys, glide with kicks

Go 6 x from bench to bench.

Hold a ring, or toy in both hands like position 11.

Front glide with kicks across bench.

Back glide with toy held on the belly back to the start.

Challenge 6:

Jumps and counting.

Swimmers must count to 3 before they jump in using a language different than their primary one.

Uno, dos, tres. Un, deux, trois, etc.

Or they can say their favorite...

Level 3 Repeatable

Goals:

Significant short distance training in front crawl breathing backstroke and introductions to Fly and BR.

Limit challenges and games to less than 4 minutes. Keep the focus on learning.

Chunk complex skills into smaller bites and then put the pieces back together for longer swims.

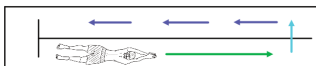
Activity 1:

Streamline to the flags

3 x Streamline w/ all 3 things.

If possible use a lane.

Otherwise, use a space of about 5 yards/meters.

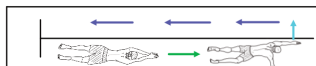


Activity 2:

Streamline then do 3 FREE

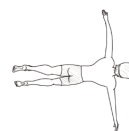
Streamline underwater, and at the surface do 3 freestyle strokes.

After the third stroke, stop, and return to the starting location.



Challenge 1:

Airplane to flags:



Holding arms in airplane, push off wall and get to flags without kicking or breathing.

Beginners: on the surface.

Advanced: push off underwater and remain under.

Activity 3:

Streamline + 2x (Position 11 + 5 kicks + 1 Free arm)

Hold position 11 for 5 kicks, continue kicking and do a single arm stroke. Return to Pos 11 for 5 kick and do other arm.



Activity 4:

Streamline + 5 FREE + Breath

3-5 x Streamline underwater, then at the surface do 5 free strokes. Must take 1 breath during the 5 FREE.



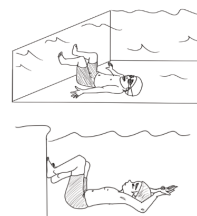
Challenge 2:

Underwater on Back

Start with 2 hands and 2 feet on the wall.

Hands in soldier.

BONUS: In SL.



Activity 5:

Breaststroke arms on deck:

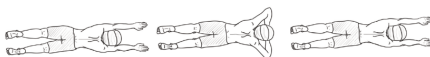
5 x "11, eat, 11" as a group. Focus on movement with pauses in both positions.



Activity 6:

Streamline + 2x (11, Eat, 11)

No kicking. No breath. Float on the surface. Focus on arm movement. Pause in each step.



Challenge 3:

Around the world

Streamline underwater. While under do 2 fly kicks on every side before getting to surface.





Activities & Challenges

Goals:

Significant short distance training in front crawl breathing backstroke and introductions to Fly and BR.

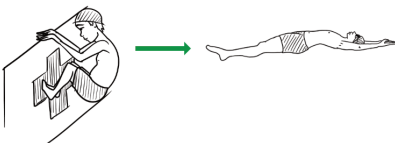
Limit challenges and games to less than 4 minutes. Keep the focus on learning.

Chunk complex skills into smaller bites and then put the pieces back together for longer swims.

Activity 7:

Streamline on back to flags

3-5x Push off the wall on your back in **streamline**. Kick until you get to the flags.



Activity 8:

Streamline on BK + 3 BK

3-5x ALL on surface.

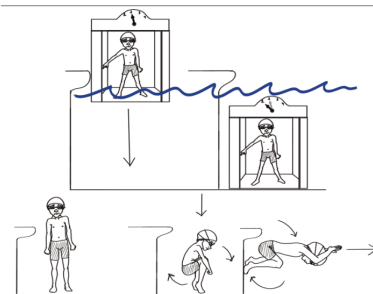
Streamline to the flags with kicks on back.

After the flags keep kicking and do 3 BK strokes.

Count when thumb exits water.

Challenge 4:

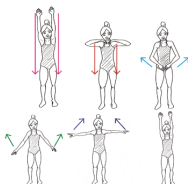
Take the Elevator Down



Activity 9:

Fly arms on deck

10 slow fly arm strokes. Done well. Focus on the movement. Not power or speed.



Activity 10:

SL + 2 Fly arms; no kick

3-5x All on surface.

Without kicking, do 2 slow fly arm strokes.

Okay if recovery pushes swimmer backwards. Motion most important.

Challenge 5:

Belly surface legs under

While floating in back with belly button above water, do

4 breaststroke kicks where the knees and legs do not breach the surface.

Activity 11:

1 x 25 FREE with Kickboard

- Hold the kickboard at the bottom, like doing Position 11.

- Focus on kicking.

- 1 arm moves at a time (catch-up)

- Breathe every 3 or 2.

Activity 12:

SL x 25 BACKSTROKE

- Push off in streamline; hold streamline until the flags.

- Swim with a strong kick.

- Touch the wall on back.

Avoid Vampire Neck:



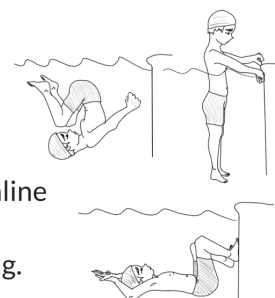
Challenge 6:

Flip 1st, Streamline on Back

Flip towards the wall.

Front flip, then streamline on back.

No breathing.



Level 4 Repeatable

Goals:

With longer distances ensure that swimmers are keeping good posture and form.

Pepper breaststroke and Butterfly into practices, but don't dwell too long on either.

Instructors need to provide constant relevant feedback and be directly involved in sets.

Activity 1:

1 x 100 IM kick

One length of every stroke; fly, back, breast, free

All done in soldier. No hands. Fly & breast, lift head to breath. Freestyle, rotate to breath.

Activity 2:

2 x 25 Position 11



1st 25 review 3 things for Position 11.

2nd 25 review 3 things to make Position 11 easier.

Focus on strong kick, long arms

Challenge 1:

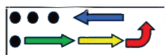
Question of the Day:

Come up with a simple swimming question related to strokes, terminology, or pool details.

Correct answer: 50 fun swim

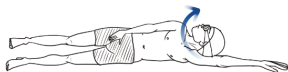
Wrong answer: 100 kick

Activity 3:

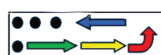


3 x SL + 2x(3 FR + 18 K)

After streamline do three strokes of freestyle. Then, laying on your arm, do 18 flutter kicks on your side, breathing to the sky. Repeat.



Activity 4:



SL + BK to flags + 3 BK + flip

3-5 x Streamline underwater, then at the flags do 3 back strokes. Then roll to belly and do a front flip without pause.

Challenge 2:

Flip 1st + SL on BK past flags

Start facing the wall. Do a front flip, push off on your back in streamline, and stay underwater until you pass the flags.



Activity 5:

4 x 25 on 1:00 1 arm only FR

Odd: right arm only, breath left
Even: left arm only, breath right

Focus on strong kick and body rotation while maintaining long body line.

Activity 6:

2 x 100 Kick

One freestyle kick with a board, one backstroke in soldier.

Adjust for need. Main goal endurance and confidence building.

Challenge 3:

Streamline + 4 Fly Kicks

With only a streamline and four total kicks make it to ½ way.

Breath could be at any time. Any extra kick or arm paddle leads to fail.



Activities & Challenges

Goals:

Give adequate rest to swimmers between sets so they're done well. Adjust distances as needed.

Limit challenges and games to less than 4 minutes. Keep the focus on learning.

Give feedback after every swim or during a distance. Okay to interrupt a swimmer to correct.

Activity 7:

6 x 25 on 1:00 2 BR + Free Rest

Streamline with no kick. At surface do 2 strokes breaststroke holding the glide after the kick for at least 2 seconds. Free swim rest of 25.



Activity 8:

2 x 50 2 Fly + Fly k rest + Fins

With fins, do streamline with fly kick and at surface do 2 strokes of fly with a breath on second stroke.

Then do fly kick in soldier rest of each 25.



Challenge 4:

4 BR kicks at surface no knees

Floating on back with belly button above the water line, do 4 breaststroke kicks without their knees breaking the surface.

BONUS: start at the T mark and get self entirely past the flags with kicks not breaking surface with knees and keeping belly up.

Activity 9:

4x 25 Flip 1st then CH

Face the wall, do a flip and push off in streamline on back. Then swim your choice of stroke for the 25; fly back breast of free.

Focus on flip turn quality.

Activity 10:

5x Open turn progression

Touch wall on side, Ring the bell (your feet) under body to the wall. Drive lower elbow backwards. As falling down, karate chop face. Drop underwater, push off in streamline on your side.



Challenge 5:

Handstands that turn into flips

Do a handstand for 3 seconds with legs straight and held together.

Then, do a front flip.

Land on your feet and jump off the bottom in streamline; belly button must get above surface.

Activity 11:

4 x 50 IM by 25

1st 50: Fly / BK
2nd 50: BR / FR
repeat

Focus on open turns.

Activity 12:

4 x 50 on 1:30 FR with fins

Focus on strong kick, long reaching arms and a flip turn that pushes off on back.

Fins make flip turns harder, can do without fins if needed.

Challenge 6:

Make your own challenge

Think of a skill you want to improve. Put a roadblock in front of doing it well, clearly define failure and success.

Refine for fun and difficulty.

Thank you!

Thank you for supporting Swimming Ideas. My goal is to provide everyone with fun and effective tools so that they're swimming instruction is the best it can be.

Swimming Ideas is an online resource filled with courses, documents, and training materials for aquatic programs, aquatic professionals, and individual private swimming instructors.

Whether you're coaching a swim team or teaching swim lessons out of a backyard pool swimming ideas provides a full range of games, challenges, and solutions so that your parents and swimmers come back enthusiastically year after year.

Thank you for being a part of better swimming.

Jeffrey Napolski is an Aquatic Professional and master swim game and challenge creator. He has been involved in aquatics and teaching swim lessons for and master swim game and challenge creator. He has been involved in aquatics and teaching swim lessons for 30 years. Jeff started teaching swim lessons at 15 at his local high school and outdoor pools where he served as a lifeguard, swim, instructor, and eventual pool manager. He started the summer league program that still exist to this day. In 2009 Jeff joined a Level 4 USA Swimming club where he was the Head Developmental Coach. In his spare time he enjoys drawing, yoga, running, and spending time with family.

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