

Swimming Strokes

A technical guide

To swim well you need a good stroke style. This leaflet is designed to help you understand the techniques of each stroke. Try to memorise the positions before you swim, but don't worry if you can't follow them exactly - you may need to adapt them slightly to suit you.

Whichever stroke you swim, you need to consider the same five things:

1. Your body position - this affects the whole stroke, so get it right first of all. Aim to stay as streamlined as you possibly can.
2. Your leg action - this helps to hold your body in a good position. You need to kick strongly to stay as horizontal as possible.
3. Your arm action - in all strokes except breaststroke most of the power comes from your arms. But they can only work properly if your body position is right.
4. Your breathing - many stroke problems come from breathing at the wrong time. Try not to let your breathing interrupt the leg and arm action.
5. The timing of the stroke - this is the way all the stages fit together to form the complete stroke.

Using a float to practice part of a stroke can help. Don't try to swim fast too soon. Get your stroke right first, then try to improve the distance that you can swim - this will build up your stamina. If you ask at your local swimming pool they will give you details of where your nearest ASA Swimming Club meets. They will help with your strokes and show you how to swim FAST.

Butterfly



Hands pull down, lower legs pushes down, toes pointed



Arms pull wide, head looking forward



Legs push up, hips push down, hands move in under shoulders



Legs continue upward movement, hips push down, hands move in under body, head comes up out of water



Legs begin downward movement, hands push back at side of hips, head clears water



Arms begin recovery over the water, head thrust forward to breathe

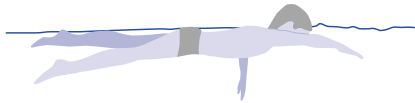


Arms come over straight and wide, face down in water



Hands enter in front of shoulder to repeat action

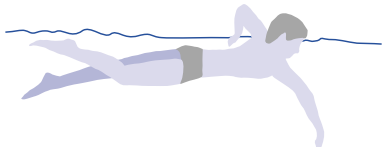
Front crawl



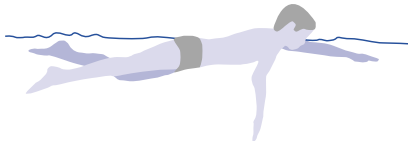
Body flat, eyes look forward and down



Hand enters the water just inside shoulder line. Arm pulls down and back with elbow bent, body rolls



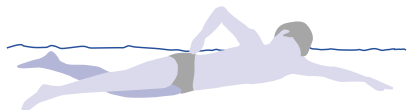
Arm recovery is an easy, relaxed action with the elbow higher than the hand



Arm pushes back, head starts to turn ready for breathing

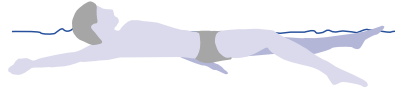


Head turns to side, breathe out and in quickly

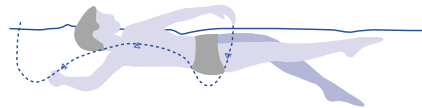


The face turns back into the water as soon as the breath is taken

Back crawl



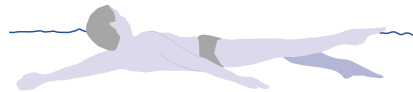
Little finger enters water first, the arm is straight



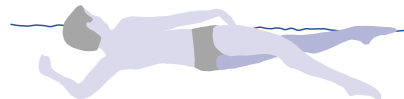
When the arm is at shoulder level the elbow bends, arm pulls sideways, body rolls



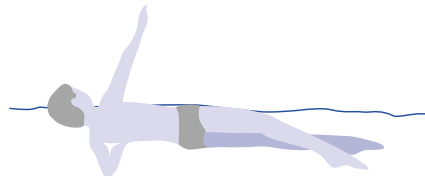
Aim for a flat body position, with head back and eyes looking upwards



The arm and leg actions are continuous

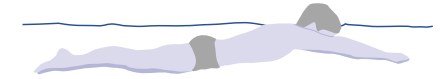


Breathe out as one arm recovers and in as the other recovers

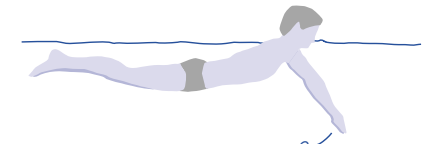


The recovering arm points straight up

Breaststroke



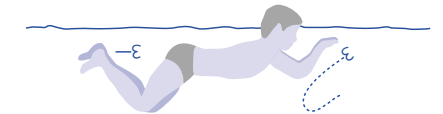
Body is streamlined but at a small angle, eyes look forward and down



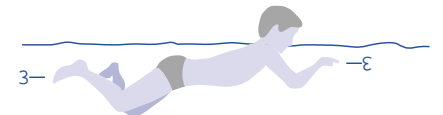
Arms pull to side back and down, hands stay in front of shoulders



Breathe out and take a breath quickly



As the arms complete their action, the legs are drawn up



As arms push forward legs drive back with feet turned out



Some swimmers find it restful to hold a short glide before the next stroke