



Special Olympics Coaching Guide

AQUATICS



Special Olympics

September 2004



***Special
Olympics***

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE



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Advancing the public well-being through improved communication

Special Olympics would also like to thank the professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of the *Aquatics Coaching Guide*. They have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics: to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

Contributing Authors

Jenny Bombardieri, Special Olympics Australia
Venisha Bowler, Special Olympics, Inc.
Floyd Croxton, Special Olympics, Inc., athlete
Wanda S. Durden, Special Olympics, Inc.
Jan Hull, Special Olympics Oregon
Gordon Quinton, Special Olympics Great Britain
Dave Lenox, Special Olympics, Inc.
Shirley-Anne Milgate, Special Olympics Australia
Ellena Morris, Special Olympics Australia
Cindy Proell, Special Olympics Minnesota
Kellie Walls, Special Olympics, Inc.

Special Thanks To the Following for All of Your Help and Support

Starring Athletes

Moira Brown, Special Olympics Ireland, Global Messenger
Kester Edwards, Special Olympics, Inc., former Special Olympics Board Member, former Special Olympics
Trinidad & Tobago athlete, Global Messenger
Marina Frohlich, Special Olympics Malaysia, Global Messenger
Dina Galal, Special Olympics Egypt, Global Messenger
Paul Marretti, Special Olympics Virginia, Global Messenger
Florence Nabayinda, Special Olympics Uganda, Global Messenger
Victor Saavedra, Special Olympics Chile, Global Messenger
Yung Ying, Special Olympics China, Global Messenger

Special Olympics Texas, hosting the video filming

Sydney Brooksby

University of Texas A & M

Student Recreation Center Natatorium, filming venue
Recreation Center staff and volunteer students



The Benefits of Aquatics

Swimming is one of the most popular sports in world. Unlike other sports, swimming is a life skill that is taught, first, to ensure safety and, secondly, for sports and competition purposes. This coaching guide will assist the coach in teaching skills and strategy that will allow the Special Olympics athlete to become a successful swimmer and competitor.

This *Aquatics Coaching Guide* can best be used to teach aquatic technique; develop athletes' coordination, physical fitness and sense of accomplishment; and promote aquatics as a lifetime skill for sport and fitness. Special Olympics continually stresses the well-being of the athlete as well as fairness in competition. This guide offers suggestions on how to progress through the four competitive strokes and the individual medley event; how to arrange a basic training program for maximum efficiency; how to design a training program to obtain an advanced level of fitness for each athlete; and encourage athletes to have an attitude of success through personal achievement.

The best way to get athletes interested in aquatics is to get them to the pool. This guide is organized to instruct coaches in developing the nonskilled or low-skilled swimmer from an observer to a competitor. Skills are presented in an order that ensures the athlete immediate and tangible results. Skills progress as the athlete's interest grows to those that require greater attention to detail. However, the coach should always teach and coach those skills that best suit the individual's needs.

Swimming Events

The official distances for all Special Olympics events will be conducted in a meters pool. Local competitions may be conducted over any distance. However, official times from meter pools will be seeded in first priority for international competition over any distance. Swimming events range from 25-meter to 1500-meter events in freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Special Olympics also offers swimming events for low-ability level athletes.

Events Offering Meaningful Inclusion for Low-Ability Level Athletes

- 25-Meter Freestyle
- 25-Meter Backstroke
- 25-Meter Breaststroke
- 25-Meter Butterfly
- 15-Meter Walk
- 15-Meter Floatation Race
- 25-Meter Floatation Race
- 10-Meter Assisted Swim
- 15-Meter Unassisted Swim
- 15-Meter Kickboard event

Special Olympics also offers Unified Sports[®] relays in our aquatics program. Unified Sports brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to compete as teammates.



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AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

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Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Goals and Objectives



Goals

Realistic, yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to the motivation of the athlete both at training and during competition. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans. Sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation.

Benefits

- Increases athlete's level of physical fitness.
- Teaches self-discipline
- Teaches the athlete sports skills that are essential to a variety of other activities
- Provides the athlete with a means for self-expression and social interaction

Goal Setting

Setting goals is a joint effort between the athlete and coach. Following are the main features of goal setting.

1. Structured into short-term, intermediate and long-term
2. Stepping stones to success
3. Must be accepted by the athlete
4. Vary in difficulty – easily attainable to challenging
5. Must be measurable

Long-Term Goal

The athlete will acquire basic aquatics skills, appropriate social behavior and functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in aquatics competitions.

Individual Goal Setting and Evaluation Card

The card is used to plan the individual athlete's training and keep a record of targets met and timelines of achievement.

Coaching Point

- ☐ Keep the athlete's Assessment Card with their Individual Goal Setting and Evaluation Card – this becomes the athlete's individual training plan all the way to his/her promotion into squads.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season Goals and Objectives

Individual Goal Setting and Evaluation Card

Athlete Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Information _____

Start Date _____

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
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Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Goals and Objectives



Sample Individual Goal Setting and Evaluation Card

Athlete Name Kate Brown

Date of Birth 5/9/1995

Information Prone to ear infections; asthma

Start Date Jan 2003

Date	1/2003	Goals	Displays water confidence
Evaluation	Able to submerge in shallow water – eyes shut – no breathing		

Date	2/2003	Goals	Able to open eyes under water – blow bubbles and move to floating
Evaluation	Floats on back with assistance, eyes shut on submersion – blows on water		

Date	3/2003	Goals	Prone float – eyes open under water – blow bubbles in water
Evaluation	Prone floats with assistance – Eyes Open under water – blow bubbles in water		

Date	4/2003	Goals	Float independently – to push and glide – exhale under water
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Date		Goals	
Evaluation			

Example



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season Goals and Objectives

Assessing Goals Checklist

1. Write a goal statement.
2. Does the goal sufficiently meet the athlete's needs?
3. Is the goal positively stated? If not, rewrite it.
4. Is the goal under the athlete's control and does it focus on his/her goals and no one else's?
5. Is the goal a goal and not a result?
6. Is the goal important enough to the athlete that he/she will want to work toward achieving it? Have the time and energy to do it?
7. How will this goal make the athlete's life different?
8. What barriers might the athlete encounter in working toward this goal?
9. What does the athlete need to learn how to do?
10. What risks does the athlete need to take?



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Preseason Planning and Preparation

The aquatics coach needs to prepare him/herself for the upcoming season. The list below offers some suggestions on getting started.

1. Improve knowledge of aquatic sports and coaching skills by attending training sessions and clinics.
2. Locate a facility (community, school, hotel, club) with proper equipment for a practice session.
3. Recruit volunteer assistants from local swimming or diving programs. Train these assistants in techniques to ensure athletes' safety during training sessions.
4. Recruit volunteers to transport the athletes to and from practice and competition.
5. Ensure that all prospective aquatics athletes have a thorough physical examination before the first practice. Also, be sure to obtain parental and medical releases.
6. Establish goals and draw up an eight-week training plan such as the one provided in this guide.
7. Try to schedule a minimum of two training session per week.
8. Plan a mini-competition for your athletes during the halfway point in the training season.



Confirmation of Practice Schedule

Once your venue has been determined and assessed, you are now ready to confirm your training and competition schedules. It is important to publish training and competition schedules to submit to the interested groups listed below. This can help generate community awareness for your Special Olympics aquatics program.

- Facility Representatives
- Local Special Olympics Program
- Volunteer Coaches
- Athletes
- Families
- Media
- Management Team Members
- Officials

The training and competition schedule is not exclusive to the areas listed below.

- Dates
- Start and end times
- Registration and/or meeting areas
- Contact phone number at the facility
- Coaches phone numbers



Essential Components of Planning an Aquatics Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. For more in-depth information and guidance on these elements, refer to their specific sections in this guide.

The Warm-Up	25-30 minutes
Specific Event Workout	15-20 minutes
Conditioning or Fitness Workout	15-20 minutes
The Cool-Down	15-20 minutes

The final step in planning a training session is choosing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember, when creating a training session that includes the essential components, the progression allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

- ♦ Easy to difficult
- ♦ Slow to fast
- ♦ Known to unknown
- ♦ General to specific
- ♦ Start to finish

In organizing the team for effective teaching and learning experiences, the coach should always arrange the session so that:

- ♦ The safety of the athlete is ensured.
- ♦ Everyone can hear the instructions.
- ♦ Everyone can see the demonstration.
- ♦ Everyone will have an opportunity for maximum practice.
- ♦ Everyone will have an opportunity to be checked regularly for skill improvement.

The most important factor is to provide for the safety of the athlete. Every effort must be made to prevent an accident from occurring. A certified lifeguard must be on duty during all aquatics activities. Rules, such as no running, no dunking, no horseplay and no diving into shallow water, must be explained and enforced. Potential hazards should be pointed out. All athletes must be accounted for at the start of a period, at regular intervals during the period and at the close of the training. Coaches should remain in the pool area until the end of training and all swimmers are accounted for and have left the area. A lifeguard must be in a position to observe the safety of the swimmers at all times. The coach needs to be aware of any special medical conditions, such as seizures.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session

The procedures used for learning and practicing skills in the water are determined by the skill to be learned, the skill level of the swimmers, the size and shape of the facility, the extent of shallow and deep water areas available for practice, and the number, sizes and ages of the athletes. Following are factors to ensure successful learning, regardless of the type of teaching approach implemented.

1. Athletes, if at all possible, need to face away from the sun, bright light from windows or distracting influences during demonstrations.
2. Athletes must be able to see and to hear the instructions during demonstrations and practice sessions.
3. Athletes must have the opportunity to:
 - ♦ make the physical and mental adjustment to the water in relation to the skill to be learned;
 - ♦ find and maintain a good working position in the water as determined by the skill to be learned; and,
 - ♦ have maximum practice for accuracy, coordination, speed and expenditure of energy. This practice must include an analysis of each athlete's movements and appropriate and timely suggestions for improvement by the coach, an assistant coach, or a buddy.
4. Swimmers must have ample space to practice without interference by other athletes.

Patterns of a Training Session

Patterns of organization are formations employed by the coach to provide athletes with the opportunity to develop the desired skill. On the following pages are some common patterns of organization. Coaches need to become thoroughly familiar with all of them. They include formations for discussions, demonstrations, drills in which the athletes remain in one spot (static drills) and drills in which the athletes move from one point to another (fluid drills).

Coaches must constantly strive to provide maximum opportunity for skill practice for all athletes during each class period. Failure on the part of the coach to keep the athletes actively involved can cause the inactive athletes to become chilled, bored and restless, which can cause disruption and loss of control.

Arranging for Land Instruction

Formation	Semicircle of one or more lines (The same requirements apply for water instruction)
Use	When speaking to the group
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The sun needs to be behind the swimmers or divers2. Face away from the sun and other distracting influences3. Wind coming from behind the coach will help carry his/her voice to the athletes

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session



Arranging for Water Instruction

Formation	“L” formation of single or multiple lines
Use	When standing at the end or the side of the pool
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The coach works in a pocket directly in front of the athletes 2. If talking against the wind, the coach needs to talk toward the water to allow the sound to be carried over the water 3. Athletes need to be close to and high enough above to look down on the coach and/or demonstrator

Formation	Single line
Use	When working from a single runway or from the side of the pool or the deck when the group is small. Important Factors: Same as the “L” formation

Formation	Multiple lines
Use	When working from a single runway or the side of the pool when the group is large
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One group sits, the next group kneels, and the third group stands 2. Same as the “L” formation

Arranging Team for Static Drill on Land or in Shallow Water

Formation	Single line
Use	When the area is long and narrow and the group is small, either on land or in the water
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The athletes are far enough apart to not interfere with each other 2. The coach may stand in front of or at either end of the line

Formation	Parallel lines
Use	When the area is long and narrow and the group is large
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Especially effective when the athletes work as buddies 2. The coach position may vary as in the single line formation

Formation	Multiple lines
Use	When the area is short and wide and the group is large
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The swimmers are far enough apart not to interfere with each other 2. The coach must be seen by all swimmers and vice versa



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session

Formation	Circle
Use	When the area is short and wide and the group is large
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It is difficult to observe all the athletes at the same time with this formation2. The coach must be certain that all swimmers are able to see demonstrations3. The coach can have an observer outside of the circle for the safety of the athletes

Arranging Team for Fluid Drills

Fluid drill formations are used to improve the skill efficiency and the physical endurance of the athletes as well as to evaluate them. These drills should be varied to meet the needs of the athletes and the coach. The following factors should be considered when these drill formations are used: the level of skill proficiency of the athletes, their physical condition, the distance to be achieved for each swim, the intensity level of each swim and the frequency and length of rest periods between swims. Athletes should be comfortably tired but not physically exhausted at the end of the training session.

Formation	Wave
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ To divide a large group into smaller units to provide maximum supervision at practice♦ To allow the coach to observe fewer swimmers at one time in order to make comments for skill improvement
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The group is divided into smaller groups known as No. 1, No. 2 and so on2. The coach tells each group what to do and when to do it. Example: "Freestyle No. 1's, ready, swim"3. Each group swims as a unit on the appropriate command4. Each groups swims to a designated point and stops

The wave formation is one of the most often used of all fluid drill formations. Consequently, the coach must become skilled in organizing a team quickly. Following are some of the major factors to consider.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ For fluid and static drills on dry land or in shallow water, have the athletes line up in one straight line. Have them count off, according to number of groups desired, starting from one end. Have the athletes turn their heads in the direction of the count so that the next athlete can clearly hear the number being called out.
- ☐ Depending on the number of ranks to be formed, have the No 1's hold their positions, No. 2's step back two paces, No. 3's step forward two paces, etc.
- ☐ For fluid and static drills in shallow water, have the tallest athletes nearest the deeper water and the shortest athletes nearest the shallower water. A lane marker can also be used to divide deep from shallow water if there is a weak swimmer in the group.
- ☐ With patience, perseverance and the use of humor by the coach, the athlete can quickly learn to move only on the appropriate command, to stop and to remain in place at the designated location.

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session



Formation	Stagger
Use	When it is necessary to watch athletes individually and for final evaluation of many skills
Important Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The group remains in a single line2. Signal the first athlete to start swimming. If two coaches are available, start each end of the line simultaneously3. The athlete next in line starts when the swimmer just ahead reaches the spot designated by the coach4. The coach is able to follow the progress of each athlete for a few body lengths5. The coach usually moves along the deck to have a better view of the swimmers

Circle Swimming

When training for distances of more than one length of the pool or for distance swimming in an enclosed area that is narrow and long. Important Factors: builds stamina and permits individual attention by the coach

1. The swimming area is divided into smaller areas with lane lines
2. For the short course, divide the group by the number of areas available. If possible, one group is assigned to each area by similar abilities
3. For the long course, place the faster swimmers ahead of the slower ones
4. Designate the number of laps: one length or width of the pool to be completed before stopping
5. The swimmers keep a safe distance apart

Hints for Organizing a Good Training Session

1. Use the pool to your best advantage.
2. Organize stations by ability. Color code ability groups (i.e. Green-Beginner; Blue-Rookie, etc.). No one should be standing around while you arrange things. Keep everyone busy.
3. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
4. Introduce athletes to one another, and orient them to the instructional setting.
5. Demonstrate the sports skill as frequently as possible.
6. Keep the “fun” in fundamentals. Use a game approach.
7. Devote a part of each training session to group activity.
8. If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
9. If a swimmer joins the team after training has begun, skill assessment should be done in shallow water.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session

Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all active	Athlete needs to be an active listener.
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them.
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction.
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together.
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well.
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom.
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun; help keep it this way for you and your athletes.
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully• Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it• General to specific – this is why “I” am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have, and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively.
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities.



Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

1. Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
2. When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
3. Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
4. Review intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
5. Alter the plan according to weather; and the facility, to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
6. Change activities before the athletes become bored and lose interest.
7. Keep drills and activities brief so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise, even if it is rest.
8. Devote the end of the practice to a fun, group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun, always giving them something to look forward to at the end of practice.
9. If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
10. Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next session.
11. Keep the “fun” in fundamentals.



Training Session Safety Guidelines

Coaches are a major part of aquatics programs. They need to be well-informed and trained in all facility procedures, such as emergency action plans, completing and filing accident reports and complying with follow-up procedures to an incident that may have occurred while they were in charge.

Electrical Safety

Electrical shock is a very real hazard in the operation of swimming pools. Permanent or temporary electrical connections and wires used with the following equipment may come in contact with water, including:

1. Underwater lights
2. Tape recorders
3. Record players
4. Automatic timing devices
5. Place clocks
6. Electronic loud speakers
7. Start systems
8. Pool vacuum cleaners
9. Many other types of electrical devices operating on line voltages in the vicinity of the racing course involve wires stretched across the pool deck. These devices are connected to the power supply.

In case of electrical shock or electrocution, call emergency personnel, and follow the facility's emergency action plan. Shut off the power source and immediately check the swimmer's airway, breathing and circulation. Use nonconductive equipment to remove the swimmer from the source of electricity if the power cannot be turned off.

Assists and Rescues

Swimmers may be in danger of drowning from a head injury, heart attack, stroke, fainting, overexertion, seizure or incapacitating cramps as well as other causes.

How the Coach Can Assist

Teach swimmers that if they feel panicky, they should try to reach the lane lines and use the lines for support. You can use the reaching, throwing or wading methods described below to assist a swimmer in a water emergency. In most cases, at least one of these measures will be successful. While you attempt to make an assist, someone in your group must be prepared to call emergency personnel immediately, if necessary, to attend to the rescued swimmer.

Drowning Situation

In this situation, a swimmer is unable to call for help or to wave their arms. A distress situation may become a drowning situation when the swimmer, for whatever reason, is no longer able to keep afloat. Drowning situations may be classified as passive or active.

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session



Passive

In a passive drowning situation, the athlete may be conscious or unconscious. The swimmer may suddenly slip under water, making no attempt to call for help and may float facedown near the surface of the water. A passive drowning situation may result from any of the following causes:

- A heart attack or stroke
- An accidental blow to the head from another swimmer or an object, such as a kickboard
- Hyperventilation and blackout
- Cold water shock after sudden submersion in cold water. The athlete may feel a strong urge to gasp. Gasp may cause the swimmer to take in water which, in turn, may cause panic and eventual suffocation.

Active

In contrast to a passive situation, the athlete in an active situation is conscious. Actions may be violent or weak, depending on the amount of energy the athlete possesses. An active drowning athlete's buoyancy will alternate between neutral and negative. The athlete's arms may be extended outward from the sides, thrashing up and down in the water, not allowing forward progress. Instead, the athlete will alternately raise and lower him/herself in the water.

Buoyancy may be lost each time the athlete goes beneath the surface. The athlete becomes less able to take in air and has to work harder to stay on the surface. Panic will begin to set in during the process, and the athlete will be unable to call for help because of concentrating all his/her efforts on breathing. Swimmers must be supported so they can breathe freely after initial contact and during the carry to safety. In distress or drowning situations, the coach must use safe and effective forms of rescue.

Equipment

Pools and aquatic areas that are properly supervised usually have the equipment described at the end of this section. The equipment is kept in view at the pool or in the swimming area.

Do Not Endanger Yourself

Remember, you can help a swimmer in trouble only if you are in a safe position yourself and if you maintain control of the situation. The reaching, throwing and wading methods presented in this section will help keep you safe and in control. Swimming out to bring a distressed swimmer to safety requires special training. If a coach who has not had safety training approaches a distressed swimmer, he/she will be risking two lives. Leaping into the water to help someone may seem courageous, but choosing one of the methods described below is much more likely to result in a successful assist.

Reaching Assists

Reach with a pole, a kickboard or other object. Firmly brace yourself on the pool deck and reach out to the athlete with any object that will lengthen your reach, such as a pole, kickboard, rescue tube, shirt, belt or towel. When the athlete is able to grasp the extended object, slowly and carefully pull the athlete to safety.

Reach with your arm or leg. In the water, use one hand to get a firm grasp on the pool ladder, overflow trough, or other secure object; then extend your free hand or one of your legs to the athlete. Maintain your grasp at the water's edge. Do not swim out into the water.



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Planning a Training Session

Throwing Assists

You can throw a ring buoy, throw bag, rescue tube or other device for the athlete to grab and be pulled to safety. In order to throw:

1. Get into a position that is safe and allows you to maintain your balance. Bend your knees. Step on the nonthrowing end of the rope.
2. Aim your throw so that the device will fall just beyond the athlete and within reach.
3. When the athlete has grasped the device, talk reassuringly while slowly pulling the athlete to safety, leaning your body weight away from the athlete as you pull.

Ring Buoy

This is made of buoyant cork, kapok or foam rubber. The buoy should have 20-25 meters of lightweight line with a lemon or other object at the end. This will float the line if it falls in the water and prevent the line from slipping out from under your foot when you throw the ring buoy. The buoy and coiled line is hung in an easily accessible location so that anyone can quickly grasp it.

Free-Floating Support

A rescue buoy, kickboard, rescue tube and a ring buoy are examples of equipment that can be used as free-floating supports. To use a free-floating support, push it to the athlete and encourage him/her to grasp the support and kick toward safety.

Wading Assists

If the water is shallow (not above waist deep), you can wade in with an emergency device or buoyant object and extend it to the athlete. For this kind of assist, use a rescue tube, ring buoy, kickboard or pull buoy.

You can use the equipment for support in the water, and the athlete can grasp the other side of it. You can then pull the athlete to safety, or you can let go of the piece of equipment and tell the athlete to start kicking toward safety.

Always keep the piece of equipment between you and the athlete. If the athlete should panic and grab you, you could be in danger too. Keeping the piece of equipment between you and the athlete will help prevent the athlete from grabbing you.



Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

1. Establish clear rules for behavior at your first practice and enforce them.
 - ♦ Keep your hands to yourself.
 - ♦ Listen to the coach.
 - ♦ When you hear the whistle, “stop, look, and listen.”
 - ♦ Ask the coach before you leave the pool deck.
2. If at an outdoor pool, have a plan to evacuate athletes if there is danger of lightening.
3. Always rope off the swimming areas so that athletes do not obstruct other swimmers.
4. Make sure athletes bring water to every practice, especially in hotter climates.
5. Check your first-aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
6. Identify the nearest phone that is accessible during practice.
7. Ensure that the locker rooms and/or rest rooms are available and clean during practice.
8. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
9. Do not allow athletes to swim while wearing watches, bracelets or jewelry, including earrings.
10. Provide proper stretching exercises after warming up at the beginning of each practice.
11. Provide activities that also improve general fitness levels. Fit athletes are less likely to get injured.



Aquatics Practice Competitions

The more we compete, the better we get. Part of the strategic plan for Special Olympics aquatics is to drive more sport development at the local levels. Competition motivates athletes, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. We have provided a few suggestions below.

1. Host aquatics meets with adjacent local Programs.
2. Ask the local high school team if your athletes can compete with them at practice meets.
3. Join the local community aquatics league, club and/or associations.
4. Create your own aquatics league or club in your community.
5. Host weekly aquatics meets for the area.
6. Incorporate competition components at the end of every training session.

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session



Sample Program Structure

Training Period

The program runs 44-46 weeks per year, with a seven-week break for all swimmers, except any squad swimmers who have a forthcoming competition. Athletes may elect to attend one or more sessions per week.

Facilities

The program is conducted in five different pools at three different facilities.

Beginners	Two sessions available for youth and one session for adults in indoor heated 25-meter pools Youth groups have the option of shallow recreation space or lane space
Stroke Development Groups	Two sessions per week, both in indoor heated 25-meter pools
Squad Training	Three sessions per week: two in outdoor heated 50-meter pools, one in indoor 25-meter pool
Schools Group	One session per week in an indoor heated pool

Groups/Session Times

	Beginner Youth (red)	Beginner Adults (red)	Stroke Correction Youth (green)	Stroke Correction Adult (green)	Squad Training Level 1 (aqua)	Squad Training Advanced (blue)
School Group	45 minutes	N/A	45 minutes	N/A	N/A	N/A
Monday	x	x	x	x	1½ hours	1½ hours
Wednesday	1 hour	x	1½ hours	x	1½ hours	1½ hours
Friday	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1½ hours	1½ hours

Schools Group

One session is held each week, 28 weeks per year, for one primary school group. Sessions are held for athletes 8-12 years of age in an indoor heated pool. The beginners spend most of their time in a small pool, while the stroke development group utilizes the 25-meter pool. Schoolteachers provide all out-of-water and some in-water assistance to the program, staffed by two swimming coaches.

Beginner Youth Group

Two sessions are held each week. A minimum 1-3 ratio of coach/helper to youth is recommended. New youth, with no water adjustment, may be required to have a parent, care giver or older sibling accompany them into the water for the first few sessions.

Training will take place in the shallow recreational area of the pools, moving through to deeper water and then lane space as the ability of the youth increases.

The basic techniques for water adjustment and basic swimming skills are taught through games and activities.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session

Students from this group participate at the club's own swimming carnival in walking, assisted swim, treasure hunt and kickboard races with helpers supervising each swimmer and any other carnivals that provide these activities.

Beginner Adults Group

This group includes adults for whom swimming is a new sport and also those adults who may be transitioning from the Motor Activity Training Program. A 1-1 ratio of coach/helper to athlete is required for this group.

Activities take place in thigh-deep to shoulder-deep water in a poolside lane with a hoist for those unable to climb pool steps.

The program includes drills, skills, activities and appropriate games aimed to develop mental adjustment to water and basic swimming skills.

Stroke Development – Youth Group

Youth usually spend some time at this level, having moved through the beginners' group to a point where they are able to swim around, but have little technique. A 1-10 ratio of coach to swimmers and one assistant can be managed at this level.

Freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke are developed at this stage and the butterfly stroke is introduced. Starts, turns and race finish techniques are also taught at this stage, as youth are ready for them. Lap swimming is introduced and strength and flexibility are also developed in order for youth to be strong enough to move through to the squad program.

Swimmers will begin competing in club carnivals and other events at this level. When they are able to participate in two to three swim events, they will no longer be offered the earlier-level events.

Stroke Development – Adult Group

Adults join this group either having come through the beginners' program or having such poor technique that a period of time at this level is required to develop good technique. Others are just unable to maintain 25-meter swims and need to improve technique and build fitness.

Drills, skills, activities and pre-squad work are introduced to prepare the swimmer for competition and promotion to squads.

Competition opportunities open up as ability develops. Once 25-meter events can be undertaken, other developmental events are usually withdrawn.

Squad Group – Level 1

Most club swimmers will have spent some time in the previous groups before coming on to this level. At this stage, adults and youth are mixed, not necessarily in the same lane, but divided more by ability than age. One coach is responsible for all squad groups, with assistants utilized as required. Three sessions are offered each week, with swimmers attending one to three sessions.

Some competency of stroke and distance is required in order to join the squad, however, especially for swimmers with intellectual disabilities, constant reinforcement and repetition of skills is required in order to maintain skills. All work is required to be age appropriate to the group. Squad training with this group includes an emphasis on correct technique and development of competence in all events, starts, turns and finishes; strength and distance are developed within this group.

Swimmers from this group would usually compete in up to 14 short-course and four long-course events during each year, with additional opportunities for higher level competition.

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Planning a Training Session



Squad Group – Advanced Level

Swimmers at this level would undertake a full swim program, requiring at least two sessions each week. Three sessions are offered each week.

The program includes individual medleys, long distance events and a greater emphasis on endurance. Event specialization may occur at this level, with different swimmers working on various strokes and distances.

This group competes on a regular basis: at least 14 competitions each year, with opportunities open to them to compete in multidisability events in mainstream competitions.

Management

Each group has a qualified coach in charge, assisted by helpers, as required. Up to 10 volunteers work at any one session with up to 50 swimmers.

The program has an overall manager; a racing secretary, who manages competition entries and maintains all-time records; and a session manager for each session.

The club's sports manager and the management committee maintain overall responsibility for all programs and consult with all stakeholders to provide a service that meets the needs of the athletes.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Selecting Team Members

Selecting Team Members

The key to the successful development of a traditional Special Olympics or Unified Sports team is the proper selection of team members. Following are some primary considerations.

Ability Grouping

Unified sports teams work best when all team members have similar sports skills. Partners with abilities that are far superior to other teammates will either control competition or accommodate others by not competing to their potential. In both situations, the goals of interaction and teamwork are diminished and a true competitive experience is not achieved. For example, an 8 year old should not be competing against or with a 30-year-old athlete.

Age Grouping

All team members should be closely matched in age.

- Within 3-5 years for athletes 21 years old and under
- Within 10-15 years for athletes 22 years old and over

Creating Meaningful Involvement in Special Olympics Unified Sports

Unified Sports embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your Unified Sports team, you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and end of your sport season. Unified Sports teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all athletes and partners. Every teammate should play a role and have the opportunity to contribute to the team. Meaningful involvement also refers to the quality of interaction and competition within the team. Achieving meaningful involvement by all teammates ensures a positive and rewarding experience for everyone.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

- Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- Teammates compete according to the rules of competition.
- Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- Teammates understand how to blend their skills with those of other athletes, resulting in improved performance by athletes with lesser ability.

Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members

- Have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow teammates.
- Act as on-field coaches rather than teammates.
- Control most aspects of the competition during critical periods of the game.
- Do not train or practice regularly and only show up on the day of competition.
- Lower their level of ability dramatically, so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.



Daily Performance Record

The Daily Performance Record is designed to keep an accurate record of the athletes' daily performances as they learn a sports skill. There are several reasons why the coach can benefit from using the Daily Performance Record.

1. The record becomes a permanent documentation of the athlete's progress.
2. The record helps the coach establish measurable consistency in the athlete's training program.
3. The record allows the coach to be flexible during the actual teaching and coaching session, because he can break down the skills into specific, smaller tasks that meet the individual needs of each athlete.
4. The record helps the coach choose proper skill-teaching methods, correct conditions and criteria for evaluating the athlete's performance of the skills.

Using the Daily Performance Record

At the top of the record, the coach enters his/her name and the athlete's name and aquatics event. If more than one coach works with an athlete, they should enter the dates that they work with the athlete next to their names.

Before the training session begins, the coach decides what skills will be covered. The coach makes this decision based on the athlete's age, interests and his/her mental and physical abilities. The skill needs to be a statement or a description of the specific exercise that the athlete must perform. The coach enters the skill on the top line of the left-hand column. Each subsequent skill is entered after the athlete masters the previous skill. Of course, more than one sheet may be used to record all of the skills involved. Also, if the athlete cannot perform a prescribed skill, the coach may break down the skill into smaller tasks that will allow for the athlete's success at the new skill.

Conditions and Criteria for Mastering

After the coach enters the skill, they must then decide on the conditions and criteria by which the athlete must master the skill. Conditions are special circumstances that define the manner in which the athlete must perform a skill. For example, "given a demonstration, and with assistance." The coach needs to always operate under the assumption that the ultimate conditions in which the athlete masters a skill are, "upon command and without assistance," and, therefore, does not have to enter these conditions in the record next to the skill entry. Ideally, the coach needs to arrange the skills and conditions such that the athlete gradually learns to perform the skill while upon command and without assistance.

Criteria are the standards that determine how well the skill must be performed. The coach needs to determine a standard that realistically suits the athlete's mental and physical abilities. For example, "perform a distance of 30cms, 60 percent of the time". Given the varied nature of skills, the criteria might involve many different types of standards, such as amount of time, number of repetitions, accuracy, distance or speed.

Dates of Sessions and Levels of Instruction Used

The coach may work on one task for a couple of days and may use several methods of instruction during that time to progress to the point where the athlete performs the task upon command and without assistance. To establish a consistent curriculum for the athlete, the coach must record the dates he/she works on particular tasks and must enter the methods of instruction that were used on those dates.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season Daily Performance Record

Event: Insert Event Name

Athlete's Name Insert Name

Skill: Insert Skill

Coach's Name Insert Name

Skill Analysis	Conditions & Criteria	Dates & Instruction Methods	Date Mastered



Aquatics Attire

Appropriate aquatics attire is required for all competitors. As coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of wearing certain types of clothing during training and competitions. For example, long-pant jeans to blue-jean shorts are not proper aquatics attire for any event. Explain that they cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement.

Take athletes to high school or collegiate meets and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes that come improperly dressed to train and/or compete.

Clothing must be suited to the activities involved. Few sports require less equipment than swimming. Although equipment such as goggles and caps are recommended, a Special Olympics athlete only needs a swimsuit to participate.

Swimsuits

The swimsuit can be anything that closely resembles skin in fit and feel. For males, any brief swim suit made of smooth, quick-drying fabric, such as nylon or lycra, is fine. Gym shorts with waistbands that fit snugly around the waist can be substituted.

A one-piece suit is recommended for females. The suit needs to be close-fitting, and cut so as not to hinder movements. The swimsuit needs to be substantial enough to stay on the athlete's body while they train.

Racing suits, whether for men or women, will provide less drag and provide more efficiency in the water.

Cap

A tight-fitting, stretch swimmer's cap is recommended. Swim caps will prevent the hair from falling in the swimmer's face and thus provide less of a distraction. Besides keeping the swimmer's hair dry, the cap also reduces water drag and resistance.

Goggles

Swim goggles are encouraged. Goggles allow the swimmers to comfortably put their faces in the water, thus allowing for better body position and more efficiency. There must be careful adherence safety with the use of this equipment. There are several varieties of goggles that allow for choices, depending on each swimmer's face.

Nose Clips

Nose clips are helpful for athletes who have difficulty controlling their breathing or who have sinus problems. Such clips should be used only when necessary.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Discuss the types of clothes to worn when swimming.
- ☐ Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing.
- ☐ Point out the advantages and disadvantages of various types of clothes which can be worn.
- ☐ Show pictures of clothes which are appropriate for swimming.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Aquatics Equipment

Aquatics Equipment

Aquatics requires the use of particular sports equipment and devices that are used in both training and competition. It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment works and makes an impact on their performance for the specific events. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it, and give the use for each. To reinforce this, have athletes select the equipment used for their events as well.

Touch Pads

Touch pads are used as part of the automatic timing device system, which is located at either end of the pool during competition swimming. When a swimmer touches the pad during the turn or finish of an event, the time will be recorded and displayed on a digital timing board located within the pool area.

Pace Clock

A pace clock is used within a swimmer's training program, and swimmers should be taught how to read and use the clock. Pace clocks are generally mounted on a wall within view of the swimmer. Electric pace clocks should not be placed on the pool deck but preferably mounted on a wall. Battery pace clocks may also be used.

Timing Devices

A fully automatic timing (F.A.T.) system or electric or digital stopwatches are recommended. When F.A.T. is used, times will be recorded in hundredths of a second. Most manual timing devices are equipped with buttons for start, stop and reset. All manual times will be recorded in tenths of a second.

Starting Devices

A starter's button or electronic tone starter unit with a strobe light is recommended for hearing impaired athletes. If possible, these devices can be used occasionally during training sessions to expose the athletes to the sound prior to participation in a competitive event.

During training sessions, swimmers can practice starts both in and out of the water by using the correct cues as used in formal competitive swimming but without the use of a professional starter's button.

Coaches can signal a swimmer to start the event by stepping onto the blocks or into the water by a verbal cue or blowing a whistle, verbally cueing the swimmer to take his/her mark and either verbally cue or blow a whistle to have the swimmer leave the blocks. Check with the lifeguard whether using a whistle while on the pool deck is appropriate.





Backstroke Flags

Backstroke flags are used in training as well as competition. The flags hang five meters from each end of the pool and 1.18 meters above the water surface. As part of the swimmers' training session, they need to practice counting the number of arm strokes it takes them from the flags to the wall.



Swimming Aids

The use of swimming aids such as kickboards, pull buoys and fins can be effective in greatly improving an athlete's progress. Such aids can be used in drill work programmed into the session and can help develop and maintain good stroke technique.

Kickboard



Pull Buoys



Fins





Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Aquatics Equipment

Pool Preparation

Before swimming, it is critical to make sure the area is safe and clear of objects. Swimming aids and all other pool equipment should be in a designated place. No equipment or articles should be left lying on the deck area.

Many Special Olympics athletes train in a public pool, so it is important that swimmers are aware of the designated areas /lanes allocated to them for training purposes.

Although most Special Olympics athletes do not require special facilities for swimming, some modifications and adaptations may be necessary for safety reasons. Following are necessary factors to consider when planning a swimming training session.

- Architectural barriers within and around the pool
- Entrances
- Doorways
- Restrooms and showers
- Locker or change rooms
- Pool decks and bottom
- Water depth and condition
- Water and air temperature
- Ladder, steps, stairs and ramps
- Lighting
- Review emergency plan, and determine the specific signals that are used in identifying an emergency within the facility
- Check for slippery deck conditions and remove standing water
- Ensure there are certified lifeguards with no other duty but to guard
- Check wheelchair access
- If in a public pool, designate an adult/volunteer to act as a spotter for the group. Life guards may not be specifically watching your group/squad all the time
- Check location of safety equipment for emergency use around the pool area
- Be aware of other users within the complex

Always be ready to make adaptations and modifications in both your program and facility if necessary. Remember, it is always better to adapt the program to the facility than not to offer any swimming instruction and training at all.

Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Aquatics Equipment



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Always check with the lifeguard on duty.
- ☐ Take a head count of your swimmers and record their attendance. Give numbers to the lifeguard.
- ☐ Make lifeguard aware of any potential emergencies which may arise due to medical or behavioral conditions of swimmers.
- ☐ Designate a “spotter” for the group, could be a parent/volunteer.
- ☐ Show swimmers the area in which they have been allocated.
- ☐ Set rules before any session commences. Ensure swimmers know their boundaries.
- ☐ If in an outdoor pool, check air and wind conditions as well as water temperature.
- ☐ Ensure that swimmers have been made aware of specific signals or cues used in an emergency.
- ☐ Show swimmers correct point of entry and type of entry required into the water.
- ☐ Prepare your session 15 minutes before start time. Have all necessary equipment placed in an appropriate and safe position on pool deck.



Planning an Aquatics Training and Competition Season

Aquatics Equipment

General Swimming Equipment List At-A-Glance

Chamois	Can be used in conjunction with a towel.
Fins	Used primarily in helping to develop and maintain good stroke technique, especially in drill work. Can be used in a fun activity within your training session.
Flags	Located 5 meters from end of pool. Used especially when swimming backstroke; indicates to swimmer in backstroke the distance from end of pool for turn or finish. Can be used in training sessions in pool.
Goggles	Encourage swimmers to wear goggles at all times while participating in training and competition. Goggles help beginners to put face in water and encourage confidence. Be aware that some swimmers may have prescription goggles, and swimmers should learn how to maintain and care for them.
Kickboards	Used within training sessions.
Nose Clips	Used by some swimmers who take in water through their nostrils, especially when performing turns.
Pace Clock	Used by swimmers to check their rest and go times during training. Can be used by coach when no stop watch is available. Swimmers need to be taught the use of a pace clock.
Pull Buoys	Can be used within a training session to help maintain buoyancy and in specific drills to develop upper body movement and strength.
Stop Watches	Used by the coach to check swimmers times during time trials. They can also be used if no pace clock is available.
Swim Caps	Encourage swimmers to wear caps. However, they are not always necessary. Swimmers at competition level may be required to wear a cap; therefore, it is a good idea to have the swimmer adjust to wearing one. Also helps keep hair out of face and decreases drag.
Towels	Swimmers are encouraged to have a clean towel with them at training sessions.



***Special
Olympics***

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Teaching Aquatics Skills



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General Coaching Points

There are differences of opinion on the use of floatation devices. Coaches must make their own decisions. However, if floatation devices are used, consider not using them for an equal amount of time as a means of developing a swimmer's own buoyancy and orientation in water. Eventually the swimmer may not require a floatation device.

Aids and equipment may need to be modified in order to adapt to physical differences. However, the individual should not become reliant on them.

Coaches need to be conversant with the rules of competition for the particular disability group of each swimmer in their care. For example, FINA has particular rules for specific disability classifications that may meet the needs of a particular swimmer or swimmers at a multidisability event. After classification, a card is provided that lists any exceptions for that swimmer. This must be produced prior to the commencement of any applicable event. Further details should be sought from your own national swimming body.

Modifications & Adaptations

Orthopedic Impairments

- Use a pool lift or a ramp to help athletes.
- Have athletes wear a flotation waist belt.
- Use the shallow end of the pool.
- Use properly trained lifeguards or assistant coaches.
- Shorten length of practice time.
- Do warm-up exercises in very shallow water.
- Ask a physical therapist to act as an advisor.

Special Olympics Athletes with Physical Disabilities

Amputees/Absent Limbs

- Some amputees may have lost a significant amount of surface area that could also impair their ability to lose heat. It is therefore necessary that the athlete consume extra fluids to help regulate their body temperature.
- Care needs to be taken with a leg amputee in getting to and from poolside. Do not encourage athletes to hop, due to the possibility of a slippery poolside. The athletes can be assisted with crutches or a chair. Frequently, the prosthesis is removed poolside (keep it dry) so that the athlete can easily enter pool and can replace the prosthesis on exit; a poolside chair may be required. This allows for greater independence for the swimmer.
- Care is required, when a double-arm amputee is diving, as there are no arms to protect the head.
- In the early stages, it is advisable to train an arm amputee to breathe to the side of the amputation. When they are able, help them progress to bilateral breathing.
- The stump must be used and moved in the same direction as if it existed. This will assist with balance.



Spinal Cord Damage

Quadriplegia (quad; loss of control of all four limbs) and paraplegia (para; loss of control of two limbs)

Damage to the spinal cord can result from an accident or birth defect (e.g., spina bifida) or from a disease such as polio. Spinal cord damage can result in either complete or partial loss of movement and sensation below the affected area.

- Spinal cord damage can result in a loss of bowel and bladder control.
- Sometimes, poor circulation can also be evident. When a limb is paralyzed, the skin loses its sensitivity and circulation is poor. Therefore, it is necessary to try to avoid bumping or scraping the legs, as abrasions will not be felt and take a long time to heal. If working in shallow water or where there is a chance of abrasion, it is advisable that the swimmer wear socks to protect their feet.
- People with spinal cord injury may not reach the same exercise heart-rate level as other swimmers.
- Body temperature, either too low or too high is a concern for the athlete with spinal cord injury. Extra fluids need to be consumed to help regulate their body temperature. The out-of-water as well as in-water environment needs to be considered.
- People with spinal cord damage tend to work better in warmer water. Colder water may lead to an increase in muscle spasms.
- Swimmers may require regular medication to prevent urinary tract infections.
- A pull buoy is effective in coaching freestyle, as it enables those who have a tendency to have leg drag feel streamlined. A rubber band may be necessary when using a pull buoy to keep the legs together; ensure that it is not too tight, as the swimmer will be unaware.
- Quadriplegics may need to increase body roll to facilitate breathing.
- Breaststroke must not include a dolphin kick. Encourage swimmers to frog kick for balance or they may leave the legs to drag. They may take more than one stroke per breath; however, they must break the water on each stroke.
- In butterfly, when there is no leg movement, the head control is critical. The chin must be tucked onto the chest on the re-entry of the hands into the water. It may be in the best interest of the swimmer to breathe to the side. Butterfly may not be possible for some injured athletes.
- Most paraplegics and quadriplegics can learn to dive, either standing on or beside the blocks, with or without assistance.
- Back care is essential if assisting a swimmer into or out of the water who uses a wheelchair. Training is required.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a congenital neuromuscular condition caused by injury to the brain before, during or immediately after birth. A person with cerebral palsy can have physical and/or intellectual disabilities in varying degrees.

- Coaches must be aware of the swimmer's medical history, their abilities and their restrictions.
- Constant and continual repetition and reinforcement can reduce coordination problems.
- Swimmers may have a slower reaction time when initiating movement to commands (e.g., diving).
- May have limb movement restrictions. Therefore, the swimmer must work at their maximum capacity to enable optimum performance. The CP swimmer must be taught to move any affected limb to the best of his/her ability.
- When there is no movement of a limb, the coach must analyze where best to position the affected limb to cause the least drag for the swimmer.

Teaching Aquatics Skills

Coaching Swimming to an Athlete with a Disability



- May have short-term memory loss, requiring constant and continual reinforcement of instructions, sometimes as many as two to three times per 50-meter lap.
- Circulatory problems may result; therefore, time in the pool may need to be reduced, depending on the environment. Additional stretching and flexibility exercises, weight training and land drills can all also be utilized.
- Balance problems may be experienced when diving, particularly off the blocks.
- Many CP swimmers can be very rigid. This results in problems when teaching them how to float.

Hearing Disability

- Swimmers cannot wear hearing aids in the water.
- Get the athlete's attention before you begin to speak.
- Face the athlete when you speak. Do not obscure your mouth.
- You do not have to talk loudly.
- Do not over-pronounce words.
- Speak slowly and precisely - come to the point.
- Use demonstrations.
- Teach appropriate aquatic sign language.
- Face athlete when giving directions.
- Use small enclosure or smaller pool area to hear better.
- Remain in one place for visual and auditory reference.
- Use extra lifeguards.

Visual Disability

Vision impairment can range from partial vision to total blindness.

- Orient blind athletes to the new environment - changing rooms, starting blocks, finish area, pool depth and other relevant details.
- The pool environment can impact vision either positively or negatively, depending on lighting, glare or refraction of water.
- It may be useful to have an assistant in the water to manually guide the blind swimmer through the desired movements.
- Have athletes use swim goggles. Swimmers who have partial sight and wear glasses should wear prescription goggles.
- Allow the athlete to feel the movement of the demonstrator and guide the arms and legs through the desired movements.
- Coaches need to use concise verbal instructions and descriptions. Use body patterning and physical assistance when teaching strokes.
- Blind swimmers experience problems in maintaining direction and orientation in the water.
- Teach breaststroke as early as possible, as this stroke best accommodates the blind swimmer with hands reaching in front of body. It is a useful skill for recreational swimming.



Teaching Aquatics Skills Coaching Swimming to an Athlete with a Disability

- Sometimes, blind swimmers have a “tapper” assistant who uses a long stick with a soft ball attached to the end. They tap the shoulder of the swimmer just before the swimmer turns and/or finishes. The decision to use a tapper is between the coach and swimmer. The tapper needs to work with the swimmer on a regular basis. When the race is more than one pool length, two tappers are required. Some blind swimmers are extremely hesitant to finish a race without this assistance.
- Keep athletes aware of their progress and motor patterns.
- A lot of vision impaired swimmers are frightened when learning to dive. Simple stages and understanding are necessary. Most will learn with patience.
- Some vision-impaired swimmers are not permitted to dive due to their eye condition. These swimmers are permitted to start in the water.

Health & Medical Implications for Swimmers

Asthma

Swimming is an excellent exercise for people with asthma. If exercise induces asthma, the swimmer needs to consult his/her medical practitioner for advice on prevention pre-exercise strategies. The swimmer needs to warm up immediately after leaving the pool in cooler weather and should not go out into the cold with wet hair (wear a warm cap).

Heart Conditions

- Swimmers with heart conditions may exhibit shortness of breath, an irregular pulse, swelling of the ankles and distention of the veins of the neck with exercise. The lips and extremities may appear to be tinged with blue.
- Activity needs to begin easy to build up tolerance level.
- The athlete must have medical clearance to swim.

Pressure Sores

Redness of the skin is evident. The swimmer needs to be encouraged to dry off properly.

Shunt

Some people (e.g., people with spina bifida), due to excess fluid around the brain tissue, have a valve, commonly known as a shunt, inserted to control the condition. This shunt is inserted at the base of the skull. When handling these swimmers, extra care is needed in the head and neck region.

Epilepsy

With a few sensible precautions, people with epilepsy can safely enjoy all the benefits of sport. They should wear something that makes them easily identifiable, such as a colored wrist band to alert the lifeguard in the case of a seizure. This can be any type of indicator highlighting the reason for wearing it only to those who need to know.

Considerations for safe swimming

1. Never swim alone.
2. Only swim where the athlete feels safe and confident.
3. Do not swim if your athlete feels sick or has missed medications.
4. Make sure that your athletes are accompanied and/or observed by a strong swimmer who can assist them.
5. Swimmers do not need to swim deeper than their partner's shoulder height, unless they have lifesaver qualifications and experience.
6. Always tell the person you are with that you have epilepsy.
7. Make sure that the person knows what to do in the event of a seizure.



What to Do in the Event of a Seizure in the Water

Some people experience seizures that are characterized by a strange sensation while remaining fully conscious. If this type of seizure occurs in the water, it does not require emergency action. However, the person may feel tired afterward or have a headache, so help him/her get out of the water.

Other seizures may involve an alteration in the person's level of consciousness. The person experiencing the seizure may seem to be in a trance and make repeated aimless movements for a minute or two. Alternatively, he/she may lose consciousness and stare or convulse.

If someone has a seizure in the water and their level of consciousness has altered in any way, follow the recommended procedure outlined below.

1. Stay with the athlete.
2. Try to stay calm. You can offer valuable assistance.
3. You may need extra assistance, so call out for help.
4. Ensure that the athlete's head and face stay above the water.
5. Do not place anything in his/her mouth or restrict movement.
6. Guide him/her away from the sides of the pool to avoid injury.
7. Once abnormal movement has stopped, move the athlete out of the water and lay the athlete on his/her side to recover.
8. Check the athlete's airway and pulse and commence resuscitation if needed.
9. Stay with the athlete until athlete has fully recovered.
10. Please note that even if the breathing seems to have returned to normal and the athlete appears to have recovered, water may still have entered the lungs.
11. It is recommended that anyone who has experienced a seizure and an alteration of consciousness while in the water needs to receive a medical checkup immediately.



The Warm-Up

A warm-up period is the first part of every training session or preparation for competition. The warm-up starts slowly and systematically and gradually involves all muscles and body parts that prepare the athlete for training and competition. In addition to preparing the athlete mentally, warming up also has several physiological benefits.

- Raises body temperature
- Increases metabolic rate
- Increases heart and respiratory rate
- Prepares the muscles and nervous system for exercise

The warm-up is tailored for the activity to follow. Warm-ups consist of active motion leading up to more vigorous motion to elevate heart, respiratory and metabolic rates. The total warm-up period takes at least 25 minutes and immediately precedes the training or competition. A warm-up period will include the following basic sequence and components.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic movement	Heat muscles	5 minutes
Stretching	Increase range of movement	5-10 minutes
Event-Specific Drills	Coordination preparation for training/competition	10 minutes

Slow Aerobic Movement

Jogging, non-specific movements (such as “shaking all over”) or other slow aerobic movements may be used that are specific to the ability levels of the swimmers. It is the first exercise of an athlete’s routine. Athletes begin warming the muscles by moving around for three to five minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The movement should start out slowly and then gradually increase in speed to its completion; however, the athlete should never reach even 50 percent of his maximum effort by the end of the activity. Remember, the primary objective of this phase of the warm-up is circulating the blood. The example programs for each group—beginner, stroke correction and squad—identify specific activities that may be suitable for this section of the warm-up.

Stretching

Stretching is one of the most critical parts of the warm-up and an athlete’s performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities and helps prevent athlete injury. Please refer to Stretching within this section for more in-depth information.

Flexibility is a major element to an athlete’s optimal performance in both training and competing. Flexibility is achieved through stretching, a critical component in warming up. Stretching follows an easy aerobic job at the start of a training session or competition.

Begin with an easy stretch to the point of tension, and hold this position for 15-30 seconds until the pull lessens. When the tension eases, slowly move further into the stretch (developmental stretching), until tension is again felt. Hold this new position for an additional 15 seconds. Each stretch should be repeated four to five times on each side of the body.



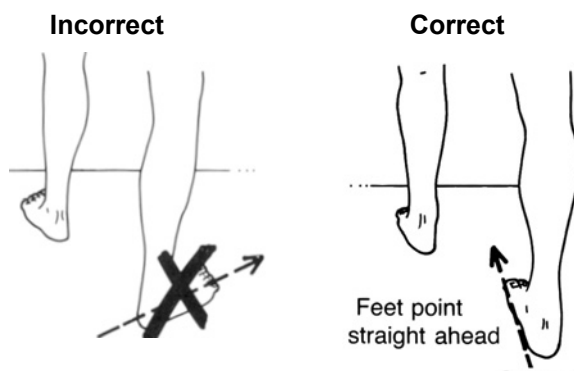
It is also important to continue to breathe while stretching. As you lean into the stretch, exhale. Once the stretching point is reached, keep inhaling and exhaling while holding the stretch. Stretching should be a part of everyone's daily life. Regular, consistent, daily stretching has been demonstrated to have the following effects.

1. Increases the length of the muscle-tendon unit
2. Increases joint range of motion
3. Reduces muscle tension
4. Develops body awareness
5. Promotes increased circulation
6. Makes you feel good

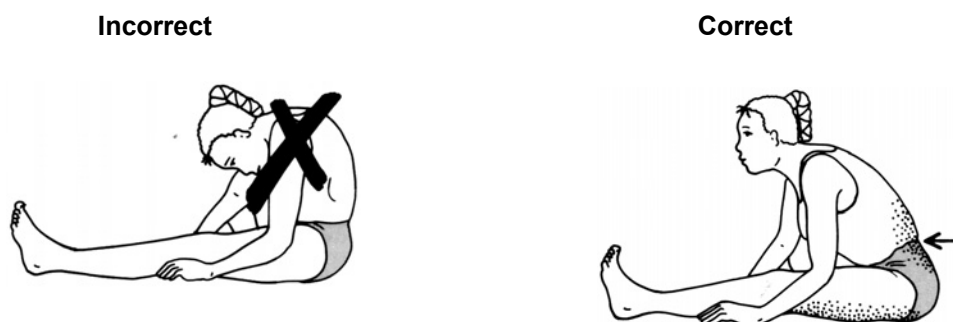
Some athletes, like those with Down syndrome, may have low muscle tone that makes them appear more flexible. Be careful to not allow these athletes to stretch beyond a normal, safe range. Several stretches are dangerous to perform for all athletes and should never be part of a safe stretching program. These unsafe stretches include the following

- Neck Backward Bending
- Trunk Backward Bending
- Spinal Roll

Stretching is effective only if the stretch is performed accurately. Athletes need to focus on correct body positioning and alignment. Take the calf stretch for example. Many athletes do not keep the feet forward in the direction that they are running.



Another common fault in stretching that athletes make is bending the back in an attempt to get a better stretch from the hips. An example is a simple sitting forward leg stretch.



As you can imagine there are a host of stretches and variations to them to achieve your goals. However, we will focus on some basic stretches, highlighting major muscle groups. Along the way, we will also point out some common



faults, illustrate corrections and identify stretches that are more event specific. In addition, we will also have some reminders to keep breathing while stretching. We will start at the top of the body and work our way down to the legs and feet.

Event-Specific Drills

Drills are progressions of learning that start at a low ability level, advance to an intermediate level and, finally, reach a high ability level. Encourage each athlete to advance to his/her highest possible level.

Kinesthetic movements are reinforced through repetitions of a small segment of the skill to be performed. Many times, the actions are exaggerated in order to strengthen the muscles that perform the skill. Each coaching session takes the athlete through the entire progression so that the athlete is exposed to the total of all of the skills that make up an event.



Competition Warm-Up Guidelines

Warm-Up Routine

1. General movement to warm body – usually confined to on-the-spot movement
2. Stretch routine – at least 10 minutes
3. Swim warm-ups
4. Gentle stretching post warm-up swim – three to five minutes
5. Pre-event – mini-routine, as above, if full warm-up was more than 30 minutes prior
6. A cool-down swim is necessary after each event; or, if facility unavailable, a gentle massage or a light stretch may be alternatives

Pre-Meet Warm-Up Swim

1. “Control” and “supervision” are key words for safe warm-ups.
2. Meet Marshals should be actively supervising the warm-up to ensure that proper procedures are followed.

General Warm-Up Period

1. Allocate the first 30-45 minutes to general warm-up in all lanes.
2. There should be no racing starts or diving off the blocks or off the edge of the pool at this time. Feet-first entry only.
3. Outside lanes are kicking only.
4. Inside lanes are swimming and pulling only; no paddles.
5. No sprinting or pace work.

Specific Warm-Up Period

Final 30-45 minutes of pre-meet warm-up period.

Suggestions for eight-lane pool; each lane scheduled as follows:

- ♦ Lane 1. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at starting end of the pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 2. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at the starting end of the pool.
- ♦ Lane 3. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 4. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 5. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 6. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 7. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at the starting end of the pool.
- ♦ Lane 8. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at the starting end of the pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.



Suggestions for six-lane pool; each lane scheduled as follows:

- ♦ Lane 1. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at the starting end of the pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 2. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at the starting end of the pool.
- ♦ Lane 3. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 4. General warm-up only (as above). No racing starts or diving.
- ♦ Lane 5. Racing start only. Swim one length only. All swimmers begin at the starting end of the pool.
- ♦ Lane 6. Push off one or two lengths and back, beginning at the starting end of the pool. Circle swimming only. No racing starts or diving.

Please Note: No racing starts or diving are allowed in lanes one and eight or one and six, so that those who are supervising the warm-up do not have to move away from the pool to avoid getting wet.

Important Points for Specific Warm-Up Swim Period

1. No racing starts or diving in lanes other than those designated for diving. The blocks can be marked to remind swimmers that they should not dive.
2. Start all swimmers in all lanes at the starting end of the pool.
3. Coaches must stand at the starting end of the pool when verbally starting swimmers on sprint or pace work.
4. Swimmers can be reminded by coaches that breaststroke swimmers need more space than freestyle or butterfly swimmers.

Additional Considerations

1. The announcer calls lane changes and/or warm-up changes when switching from general to specific warm-ups. The announcer can also remind swimmers of proper procedure.
2. Coaches must maintain as much visual and verbal contact with their swimmers as possible throughout the warm-up period.
3. Coaches are reminded that the responsibility for supervision of their swimmers is the same at the meet as on the deck during practice sessions.
4. The Meet Director delegates authority for all aspects of the warm-up to the marshals. A swimmer and/or coach may be removed from the deck for interfering with this authority.



The Cool-Down

The cool-down is as important as the warm-up. It is especially important for the higher-level stroke correction group and all squad groups. Games and activities may replace the more traditional cool-down routines, so long as they achieve the required effect. Abruptly stopping an activity may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the athlete's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness and other problems for athletes. The cool-down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience. The cool-down is also a good time for the coach and athlete to talk about the session or competition.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic swim or activity	Lowers body temperature Gradually reduces heart rate	5 minutes
Light stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 minutes



Mental Preparation and Training

Mental training is important for athletes, whether striving to do their personal best or competing against others. Mental imagery, what Bruce D. Hale of Penn State calls "No Sweat Practice," is very effective. The mind cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined. Practice is practice, regardless of whether it is mental or physical.

Ask the athlete to sit in a relaxed position in a quiet place with few distractions. Tell the athlete to close his/her eyes and picture performing a particular skill. Each is seeing him/herself in a swimming pool on a large movie screen. Walk them through the skill step by step. Provide as much detail as possible, using words to elicit all the senses - sight, hearing, touch and smell. Ask athletes to repeat the image, rehearsing the skill successfully, even to the point of seeing themselves touch the wall at finish.

Some athletes need help to start the process. Others will learn to practice this way on their own. The link between performing the skills in the mind and performing the skills in the pool may be hard to explain. However, the athlete who repeatedly imagines him/herself correctly completing a skill and believing it to be true is more likely to make it happen. Whatever goes into one's mind and one's heart comes out in their actions.



An Aquatics Competition

The competition you and your athletes experience will depend on many different factors. The meet may be a small, three to four team event for a practice, a regional event or a state games. The more swimmers involved, the more time the meet will take.

Communicate with your teams' volunteers and parents on what to expect.

- How long the event will be.
- What to expect from the athletes.

There may be only certain events offered. Some meets may have electric timing, others may use watches. This information is usually included in the meet information from the hosting team.

The team must arrive at least one hour before the event. The athletes need time to warm up and learn the flow of the meet (i.e., staging for competition and awards). The athletes must be aware of when their events will occur in the schedule.

Teaching the Components of an Aquatics Competition

1. Have a practice meet.
2. Use the whistle and commands.
3. Practice warm-ups.

Coaches Tips for Aquatics Competition – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Prior to the event, advise each athlete on what events he/she will compete in.
2. Show a video of a previous meet.
3. Have athletes practice with the people on their relay.
4. Videotape athletes at practice; have them watch themselves.
5. Obtain swimming instructional videos of strokes, starts and turns.
6. Teach athletes to rehearse each race in their heads, "imagine the event."



Home Training Program

1. If athletes only train once a week with their coaches and do no training on their own, progress will be very limited. Training kits can be purchased for most sports that include most of the equipment you would need to practice at home.
2. The aquatics athlete can practice certain aquatic skills and be encouraged to do land-based exercises while out of the pool.
3. Use of Resistance Stretch Cords. Resistance Stretch Cords are used to simulate certain swimming actions while out of the pool. This training tool is inexpensive and easy to learn to use. Under supervision, the athlete will be able to simulate strokes and build strength at the same time.
4. Land-Based Exercises/Stretching. Land-based exercises may involve running, gym work, light weight work and certain isometric exercises.



***Special
Olympics***

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Teaching Aquatics Skills

Learn to Swim Program



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Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Skill Progression



Skill Progression – Learn to Swim

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Sit on pool edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sit on pool edge and kick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enter water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enter water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blow into water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate continuous breathing and exhalation pattern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand in water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand in water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Put face in the water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk across pool in shallow water (waist deep) with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk across pool independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jump in shallow water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supported, feet off bottom, move forward and backward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submerge in chest-deep water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submerge in chest-deep water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open eyes under water with or without goggles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Touch pool bottom in chest-deep water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sit on pool bottom in chest-deep water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Float on stomach with assistance (prone float)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Float on stomach independently (prone float)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform prone float and recover to standing position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform prone float with a flutter kick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float to back float with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float to back float independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move from back float to front and return with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Skill Progression

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Move from back float to front and return independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Push and glide on front/back with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Push and glide on front/back independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scull using small or full arm movements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kick while holding onto pool side/gutter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move forward using kickboard and flutter kick on back with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move forward using back flutter kick independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mushroom float	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From back float, mushroom float and recover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Water Familiarization and Adjustment to the Pool Environment

Just as motor skills development is the first vital step for beginner land-sports athletes, water familiarization and adjustment is the first critical stage for beginner aquatics athletes. This Learn to Swim Program will prepare athletes for progression through all stages of aquatics training and competition. Missed or omitted components will hinder swimmers at some stage of their swimming and will need to be taught.

Goals

These skills are subtly taught through activities, actions and games. Following are descriptions of the stages.

Security	Mental Adjustment to Water - Water Confidence
Control of Body	Resistance to and the Control of Rotation – Water Orientation
Swimming	The Final Stage

Mental Adjustment – Water Confidence

Mental adjustment is a continuous factor throughout the program and is of prime importance in the early stages of taking an athlete into the water. After a full familiarization with the pool environment, including toilets, change rooms, and start preparation for entry to the pool, talk with your athletes about what to expect regarding water temperature, depth, how buoyancy affects the body, resistance (weight of water) and head control (blow water away when it comes near face).

Breathing in the Water

Getting athletes to feel safe and have trust in the water is key to their success. Teach your athletes to breathe in their hands regularly to help develop water confidence. In addition, having athletes blow bubbles while in the water is a good technique to develop water confidence.



The athlete who is “swimming” with a crawl stroke with his/her face well clear of the water, because he/she is worried about splashes and water near the face, has failed to be properly adjusted to the water environment. Familiarization of the swimmer with this new environment and water medium is best achieved through play for both young and adult swimmers. Such play is directed toward developing an understanding of the properties of water.

Disengagement

This is a gradual progress from the earliest stage, when the athlete’s reliance on someone else is complete, to the time when the athlete performs all tasks independently. When skills have been learned thoroughly, and the athlete is progressing to new skills, he/she may have to re-engage and gradually disengage again as proficiency increases – part of mental adjustment.



Vertical Rotation

Vertical rotation is one of the two planes of rotation in the water. Vertical is rotation forward around one's center of buoyancy.

Lateral Rotation

Lateral rotation is the other plane of rotation and can be performed either in the vertical or horizontal positions – that is standing or lying. These skills are required to return to a safe breathing position and require many separate skills to achieve.

Combined Rotation

Combined rotation is a combination of the two rotations and is the ability to rotate in two directions, ensuring that a swimmer can recover to a safe breathing position under any circumstances. This ability is required for safe pool entry for many athletes with disabilities affecting their spine or legs.

The swimmer can create or control movements occurring in both the vertical and horizontal planes. The athlete can fall forward into the water, rotate onto their back and, if desired, recover to the upright (standing) position.

Up Thrust

Up thrust or buoyancy is a property of water and allows the athlete to work against the bottom of the pool.

Balance or Stillness

This is the ability to stand, sit, kneel or lie in water and balance, not allowing the body to be disturbed by the movement of water.

Turbulent Gliding

Turbulent gliding is a means of progression through water. With the athlete in the back float position, the coach creates turbulence by standing at the swimmer's head and moving backward. The swimmer is drafted along by the "tow" of the water. The swimmer must control his/her body to keep it in balance.

Simple Progression

Simple progression is the development from turbulent gliding to a point where swimmers use their hands to make small scuttling movement at their sides. This ability to balance while creating movement is confined to the hands and kept close to the body around the center of buoyancy to start. Gradually, body movement can be broadened to include the legs.

Basic Backstroke

The basic backstroke can now be developed from the simple progression. In the back position, the arms are lifted high out of the water or the body will sink. The arms are taken low and fast over the water at about 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock positions. The arms are then brought to the sides and the swimmer glides before taking another stroke. A kicking action can be used.



Coaches Tips for Water Familiarization – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. If a new swimmer is anxious, sit quietly beside the pool and distract him/her, talking about or looking at other things.
2. Make the pool environment look interesting – add floating and sinking objects.
3. Use a small blocked-off area rather than a large, open pool space.
4. Activities initially include feeling the water, walking or crawling down swim ramp, moving in shallow water, walking in water and progress through all of the initial stages until buoyancy and submersion have been conquered.
5. Practice walking in water, blowing “eggs” or ping-pong balls across surface of water – progress to races against other swimmers.
6. Train in thigh- to waist-deep water, with a peer group of competitors.

Tips for Competition

1. Assisted walk can be a successful activity for the swimmer who has just reached this stage.
2. Teach to hold wall at start and start on signal.
3. Train in completing distance and reaching for the finish point.
4. Reward all swimmers as soon as they reach the finish point to develop a sense of accomplishment.



Learn to Swim Program

The following skills are utilized to take the athlete through the stages to swimming readiness. Once these goals are achieved, the swimmer is now safe in the water and has developed all the basic skills from which to develop his/her swimming – skills, competition, recreation and fun.

Goals

- ♦ To achieve mental adjustment to water.
- ♦ To develop a physically balanced person in water.
- ♦ To demonstrate the abilities of the athlete.
- ♦ To properly prepare the athlete for swimming skills.
- ♦ To make the athlete feel safe in water.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Spend as much time as necessary at each stage. Work through other steps at the athlete's pace. That is, if an athlete is unable to blow (inhibits breathing ability), continue with activities to teach this, but also introduce other skills – perhaps once submersion is achieved, breathing will come!
- ☐ Scatter a large quantity of swimming equipment (e.g., plastic bottles, spongers, pool toys, etc.) in pool to make it more inviting.
- ☐ You may have to section off a small area in a large pool to keep it from seeming overwhelming.

Pool/Water Acclimation

Sit on edge of pool without hesitation

Teaching Points

1. Walk around and familiarize oneself with pool area.
2. Stand near pool.
3. Sit near pool with coach.
4. Sit on edge of pool.
5. Progress to sitting on edge of pool without hesitation four out of five times.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Spend as much time at this stage as necessary. Almost none to several sessions may be required. Time spent at this stage will develop athlete confidence, and this confidence will generally stay with the swimmer for the rest of his/her swimming career.

Sit on edge of pool and kick with feet in water

Teaching Points

1. Sit on pool edge.
2. Wash hands, arms, feet, face, shoulders and neck.
3. Move one foot up and down, then the other foot.
4. Continue to alternate feet.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Water Familiarization



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Splash! Athlete splashes or kicks water while sitting on the side of the pool. The object of this game is to overcome the fear of the water by trying to get the coach wet. In doing so, the athlete gets him/herself wet.

Skill: Walk across pool, holding onto side with one hand, four out of five times

Teaching Points

1. Enter pool into chest-deep water.
2. Stand next to and face pool wall.
3. Place both hands on wall.
4. Side step width of the pool.
5. Release one hand and side step the width of the pool with support of one hand.
6. Stand with back to pool wall.
7. Hold onto pool wall with one hand (outside hand) and walk from corner to corner in the shallow end.

Walk across the pool unassisted

Teaching Points

1. Enter pool.
2. Stand with back to pool wall.
3. Walk from corner in shallow end.
4. Walk across pool in shoulder-deep water.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Scatter a large quantity of swimming equipment (e.g., plastic bottles, sponges, etc.) in pool, requiring the athlete to move the toys out of their way in order to move about the pool with or without assistance.

Face in the Water

Teaching Points

1. The athlete holds onto side of pool with straight arms.
2. Lowering head between arms, the athlete takes a breath and puts face under the water.
3. Perform step one, making sure the athlete's eyes are open.
4. Perform steps one and two, and have the athlete exhale through the nose under water (bubbling).

Coaching Tips

- ☐ If the athlete will not place his/her face directly into the water, have the athlete start with his/her head on its side in the water and slowly turn head until the face enters the water.
- ☐ Athletes who are unsure of the water will tend to keep their eyes closed until they gain confidence.
- ☐ When working on step two, place your hands or an object under the water in front of the athlete's face; then have the athlete describe the object or tell you the number of fingers.
- ☐ When performing step three, make sure the athlete exhales through the nose. This will help when learning breathing for the six strokes.



Water Entry

Water Entry from Sitting Position - Assisted (Shoulder Method)

Teaching Points



1. Athlete sits on edge of pool with feet in water. Coach stands in front of athlete in the water.
2. Athlete places hands on coach's shoulders, keeping eye contact with coach.



3. Athlete leans forward. Coach places hands on athlete's upper arms and slowly walks backward. The coach should take care to ensure that the athlete's and coach's heads do not come in contact during this action.



4. Athlete slides into the water to a standing position.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Have swimmers wear swim goggles to become aware of the new sensation.
- ☐ Reinforce that you have hold of the swimmer, and that he/she is safe.
- ☐ As the swimmer becomes more relaxed and comfortable, offer less assistance as swimmer is lowered into the water.
- ☐ Take care that the athlete does not jump forward and crash into you. Move back carefully and guide the swimmer to your side.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Water Entry



Water Entry from a Sitting Position - Assisted (Hand-To-Hand Method)

Teaching Points

1. Sit on edge of pool facing the coach in the water.
2. Place athlete's hands (palms down) on the coach's hands (palms up).
3. Athlete leans forward and slides into the water, putting weight on hands for balance.
4. Athlete assumes a standing position.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Make sure the athlete keeps eye contact with the coach.
- ☐ Give verbal reassurance to the athlete.
- ☐ Make sure the athlete's feet are on the bottom before letting athlete's hands go.

Water Entry – Twist Method

Teaching Points



1. Sit on the edge of the pool with legs in the water.



2. Place palms down on the deck and rotate body 180 degrees.



3. Athlete will end up facing the pool wall, arms and chest supporting the body.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Model the action of sitting on pool deck, placing feet in water, palms down on deck.
- ☐ Stand in front of athlete in the water or, behind, on the deck. Assist athlete as needed.
- ☐ Place two tape marks, shoulder distance apart, on the deck edge. Sit the athlete to the side of tape markings (opposite athlete's dominant side). Once seated, have athlete reach with dominant hand across body and onto far tape mark. Head and shoulders will turn with arm placement.
- ☐ When body is firmly placed on the deck edge and upper body rotated, athlete will turn (roll) hips, legs, and feet so that the entire body position depends on strength.
- ☐ Stand behind the athlete and gently assist him/her into the water. If possible, a second coach can assist in the water. Use of a kickboard by the athlete is recommended when a second coach is not available. The purpose of the kickboard is to balance and/or support the individual and to prevent the body from totally immersing.

Water Entry – Using a Ladder

Teaching Points

1. Athlete faces toward pool wall.
2. Grip top of the ladder with thumbs on the inside and fingers on the outside of ladder railing.
3. Place feet on first step of ladder.
4. Continue down ladder one step at a time until both feet are on the bottom.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Place tape on ladder to indicate proper place for each hand: red for one hand, green for the other.
- ☐ Stand in front of the athlete, giving verbal cues to ensure proper hand position. The second coach ensures proper foot position while standing behind the athlete in the water, giving support as needed.

Water Entry – the Waist Hold Method (Use for maximum assistance)

Teaching Points

1. Athlete places hands around coach's neck.
2. Coach supports athlete by holding athlete's waist.
3. Athlete maintains eye contact with coach.

Water Entry – Hand-to-Hand Method (Use for maximum assistance)

Teaching Points

1. Athlete places his/her hands (palms down) on the coach's hands (palms up).
2. Both coach and athlete keep arms straight.

Water Entry – Front Pull

Teaching Points

1. Athlete places hands (palms down) on top of coach's hands (palms up).
2. Both athlete and coach keep arms straight.
3. Using this method, the coach is free to walk backward pulling the athlete around pool.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Water Entry



Water Entry – Back Float Shoulder Support (Use for maximum assistance)

Teaching Points

1. Support the athlete while he/she leans back into the back floating position.
2. Coach pulls the athlete in close, resting the athlete's head on his/her shoulder.
3. Coach supports the athlete by holding the athlete's waist.

Water Entry – Back Float Back Support

Teaching Points

1. Support the athlete while he/she leans into back floating position.
2. Support the athlete just below the shoulder blades.
3. Head can be supported on the coach's arms if necessary.

Water Entry – Side Method

Teaching Points

1. Athlete leans back into the back floating position while the coach supports.
2. Athlete is held by the hips or in the middle of the back.
3. This method allows good eye contact between coach and athlete.



Water Exit

Water Exit from Pool Edge – Independent

This water exit can also be accomplished with coach assistance. As the athlete pushes, using good leg strength, the coach boosts athlete up onto the edge of the pool deck. The coach continues to hold swimmer's hips and helps the athlete up on pool edge.

Teaching Points

1. Face the edge of the pool and put hands on pool deck (palms down).



2. With feet pushing off the pool bottom, using good leg strength, the athlete lifts up while rotating his/her buttocks onto the pool edge.



3. From this position, the athlete rolls over to finish in a sitting position on edge of pool.





Coaching Tips

- ☐ Holding the athlete by the hips, help by lifting and guiding the athlete onto the pool edge.
- ☐ Make sure the athlete gives a good strong leg push.

Water Exit – Ladder Method

Teaching Points

1. Face ladder.
2. Grip sides of the ladder with thumbs on inside and fingers on the outside of ladder rail.
3. Place foot on bottom step.
4. Continue up ladder, one step at a time, until top step is reached.
5. Step onto pool deck.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Stand in water behind athlete, giving verbal cues to ensure proper hand and foot placement.
- ☐ Second coach on the pool deck ensures safe exit from ladder to pool deck.

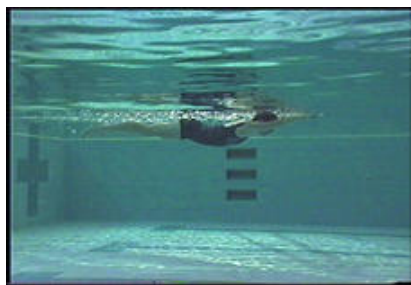


Push and Glide

Perform the Prone Float

Teaching Points

1. Standing in waist-deep water and bending forward at the waist, place arms straight in front of body, no wider than shoulder width.
2. Lower head until face is well into the water.
3. Leaning forward, give a very slight push on toes until the feet leave the bottom and float to the surface.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Make sure the athlete gives a push with toes to bring legs to the surface.
- ☐ If the head is up, the legs and feet will not float.
- ☐ In the beginning, some athletes may need support from the coach.
- ☐ Have the athlete hold onto the edge of the pool, arms straight. Holding him/her at the waist, lift legs up from the bottom until the athlete is level with the water. Gradually reduce assistance.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Push and Glide



Prone Float Recovery

Teaching Points – Push and Glide with Recovery – Independent



1. Keeping the arms straight, push them down toward the bottom of the pool.



2. Draw knees up and under the body while lifting the head.



3. Straighten legs and stand on the bottom of the pool.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Push and Glide

Teaching Points – Push and Glide with Recovery – Using One Kickboard

The steps in achieving the push and glide with recovery, using one kickboard, is the same as with any type of assistance or without assistance.



1. Push from the side of the pool using one kickboard.
2. Maintain a streamline position.



3. From the streamline position, keep the arms straight, push the hands down toward the bottom of the pool.
4. Draw knees up and under the body while lifting the head.
5. Straighten legs and stand on the bottom of the pool.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Push and Glide



Teaching Points – Push and Glide with Recovery – Using Two Kickboards

Using two kickboards, the athlete uses the same technique as with one kickboard.



1. Keeping the arms straight, push them down toward the bottom of the pool.



2. Draw knees up and under the body while lifting the head.
3. Straighten legs and stand on the bottom of the pool.



Teaching Points – Push and Glide with Recovery – Assisted

Athletes who are not yet able to accomplish the push and glide independently can use the same technique as the kickboard methods. However, the coach will provide upper body support to the athletes, as they reach their feet towards the pool bottom.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ The arms must be straight, with the palms of the hands facing the pool bottom.
- ☐ As soon as the arm push is started, the head starts to lift.
- ☐ Athletes should not try to stand too soon. Wait until the body has moved completely to the vertical position.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Water Entry Mental Adjustment Water Confidence	Entry Songs	Sing song or rhyme as athlete enters water from sitting on the side of the pool, with assistance.
Water Confidence	Splash	Athlete sits on side of pool and splashes or kicks water to try to wet the coach. In doing so, the athlete gets wet also.
Water Confidence	Sit Near Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around pool and get familiar with the pool area. • Stand near pool. • Sit near pool with coach.
Water Confidence	Sit on Pool Edge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit on edge of pool. 2. Wash hands, feet, face, shoulders and neck. 3. Move one foot up and down in water. 4. Move other foot up and down as well.
Water Entry - Independent	Train	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Athletes hold hips or shoulders of athlete in front, forming a line/chain or train. 2. Walk down ramp, or walk around in shallow water, pretending to be a train. 3. Go under two assistant's arms which form a tunnel. 4. As athletes develop greater water confidence, they may not need to hold onto their teammate's hips or shoulders as they walk down the ramp.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Breathing	Egg Blow	Athlete blows a plastic egg or ping pong ball along the surface of the water. Athlete can try to flip egg over. (Blow onto Water)



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Breathing	Magic Mirror	Pretend a dive ring is a magic mirror – ring on water and athlete blows in mirror to make a wish. (Blow onto Water)
Breathing	Cupped Hands	Athlete blows water away from cupped hands full of water. (Blow onto Water)





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Breathing	Shower Time	Use a plastic container with holes in the bottom. Fill container with water and hold over athlete's head to create a shower. Call this time of the lesson "shower time." (Blow onto Water)



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Walking	Assisted Walking	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enter pool into chest-deep water.2. Standing, facing pool wall, place both hands on wall.3. Side step the width of the pool.4. Release one hand and side step the width of the pool with support of one hand.5. Stand with back to pool wall.6. Hold onto pool wall with one hand (outside hand) and walk from corner to corner in the shallow end.
Walking	Independent Walking	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enter pool.2. Stand with back to pool wall.3. Walk from corner in the shallow end.4. Walk across the pool in shoulder-deep water.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Walking	Walking Races	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Line up athletes against wall in shallow water. 2. On a “start” signal, they walk across the pool to the other side. 3. The first to arrive is the winner. 4. The game may be varied by floating hula hoops midway, with each athlete required to go through them, or by varying the manner in which athletes are told to move (walk, hop, skip, jump, etc.). 5. It may also be varied by giving each athlete a plastic spoon and a ping pong ball and letting the athlete push the ball with the spoon as he/she walks.



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Walking Control of Rotation	Red Light	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An “It” (athlete) is chosen and goes to side of pool nearest the coach, opposite the rest of the group. 2. Group stands side by side on the other side of the pool. 3. “It” turns back on group and watches the coach who is standing on the edge in front of him. 4. As soon as “It’s” back is turned, the athletes begin to advance toward “It” in any manner and at any speed they choose. 5. Coach turns on the red torch, “It” shouts “red light” as he/she turns to look at the others. 6. Any athlete still observed moving by “It” must return to the starting point. 7. Play continues until one athlete reaches “It” without having been detected moving. That athlete becomes the new “It.”



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Walking	Snakes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Athlete in line/chain formed by athlete putting hands on hips or shoulders of athlete in front. 2. Walk around in water with leader or head trying to catch last athlete in line or tail. 3. When tail is caught, tail becomes the head. Coaches can be with swimmers in the line if required.
Walking	Stepping Stones	Walk through the water as if stepping along large stepping stones. Lift feet off the pool bottom.
Walking	How Few Steps?	Travel a given distance in as few steps as possible.
Walking - Control of Rotation	Follow the Leader	In waist-deep water, athletes line up behind the “leader” who takes them through a number of movements that the coach asks them; e.g., walking, running, forward and backward, zig-zagging, hopping, pick up a ring, through a hoop, etc. Change leaders to give all a chance. Swimmers and coaches can be in line if required for swimmers assistance.
Walking - Control of Vertical Rotation	Hoops	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In waist-deep water, athletes join hands in a circle. Between every fourth athlete and hanging from grasped hands is a hoop. 2. On “go,” the athletes attempt to move the hoops around the circle without letting go of their hands. 3. This will require wriggling and ducking actions. When the coach calls “stop,” any athlete in contact with a hoop gets a point against him/her. Repeat. Winners are those with the fewest points at the end of play.
Jumping	Kangaroo Jumps	Pretend you are a kangaroo and do bouncing movements in the water. Swimmer faces the coach who will travel backward. Support as appropriate.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Head Control	Unders and Overs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimmers in a line formation standing in the water. 2. Swimmers pass a ball over head and under legs as the ball moves from the front of the line to the end. 3. When the swimmer at the end of the line receives the ball, he/she moves to the front of the line.



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Head Control	Water Bicycles	Form a line abreast, coaches behind swimmers. Coaches' arms are inside swimmers arms - flat handlebars. Move as a group or scattered group. Steering and racing bike activities.
Breathing – Blows Bubbles	Magic Mirror	Blow bubbles in a dive ring to make a wish. (Blow Into Water)



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Forward Recovery (Vertical Rotation)	Sun, Wind and Rain	<p>Circle formation, alternate instructor and swimmer. Support as appropriate.</p> <p>On the call “The sun is shining,” all swimmers lie back to sunbathe.</p> <p>On the call “The wind is blowing,” all swimmers rotate body to blow to the center of the circle.</p> <p>Repeat.</p> <p>To end game, all sunbathers are told “April showers” and feet create splash in the center.</p>
Forward Recovery (Vertical Rotation)	Catch Toes	<p>Circle facing inward with swimmers in front of coaches.</p> <p>Swimmers start in chair position, and then put heads back to float, all feet pointing to the center.</p> <p>On “catch toes,” a forward rotation to chairs, attempting to catch the foot of another swimmer.</p> <p>Remind swimmers to blow.</p>



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Forward Recovery (Vertical Rotation)	Rag Dolls	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Athletes line up abreast, alternate coach and swimmer, plus one extra coach as side support at one end if joined in line. 2. Coach walks backward, swimmer in a relaxed back float. 3. Coach changes direction to walking forward, and swimmer, using head movement only, makes a vertical rotation to prone floating position. Breathing control in prone floating position.
Forward Recovery (Vertical Rotation)	Merry-Go-Round/Water Wheel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimmers and coaches in circle. 2. Swimmers back float with support of coaches. 3. Move circle around. 4. Swimmers move from back float to front float position and return to back float.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Submerges into Water	Hoop on Top of Water - Go Under	Use a large hoop and place it on top of the water. Swimmer has to start from outside the hoop, submerge and move to surface within the hoop.



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Submerges into Water	London Bridge	Two swimmers make a bridge, arch with arms. Other swimmers go under the bridge and submerge. Raise or lower bridge to challenge swimmers.
Submerges into Water	Here, There, Where	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coach says "Here," "There" or "Where." 2. When coach says "Here," swimmers move as quickly as possible to where coach is. 3. When coach says "There," swimmers move to where coach is pointing. 4. When coach says "Where," swimmers submerge (hide under water).





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Submerges into Water	Sunken Treasure	Instructor places objects (flutter discs, dive rings etc.) on bottom of the pool. Swimmers go under water to collect treasure.
Submerges into Water	Underwater Catch	One swimmer must tag one of the other swimmers. If a swimmer goes under water he/she cannot be tagged.
Submerges into Water	Hear Your Number	Circle formation, alternate instructor and swimmer, with hand support. Coaches count slowly, “one, two, three, four,” etc. On “one”, swimmers submerge, breathing out slowly. Their number is that which they hear upon surfacing. The highest number is the winner.
Eyes Open Under water	Flutter Discs	Place several numbered discs on the bottom of the pool. Instructor calls out a number which swimmer must retrieve. Swimmer must open eyes under the water to identify and recover the correct disc.
Eyes Open Under Water	Count Fingers Under water	Swimmer submerges and instructor holds a number of fingers up under water which the swimmer must look at while submerged. Swimmer surfaces and tells the instructor how many fingers were held up.
Eyes Open Under Water	Coins in a Fountain	A number of colored discs are thrown into the water. On the signal “go,” swimmers take one breath, submerge and try to pick up as many as possible.
Breathing - Controlled	Talk Under water to Partner	Two swimmers or swimmer and coach hold hands facing each other. Both submerge together and talk to each other by blowing bubbles under water – swimmers see if they can hear what each other said. (Exhale While Submerged)
Breathing - Controlled	Partner See-Saw	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Two swimmers or swimmer and coach hold hands facing each other.2. One goes under and then surfaces.3. The other goes under and then surfaces.4. Repeat a number of times like a see-saw, going up and down.5. When under water, swimmer must blow bubbles.6. (Exhale While Submerged)

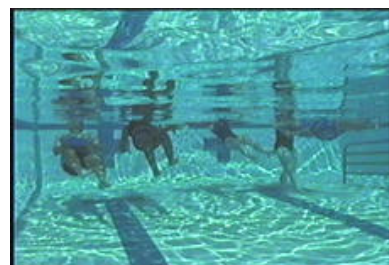
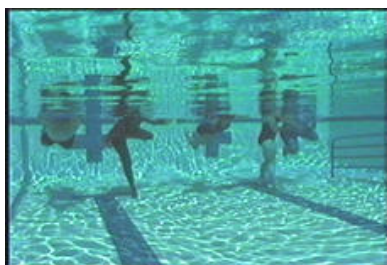


Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Rolling Recovery	Hello/Look At Me	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimmer is in back float position. 2. Coach's head is beside swimmers left ear, and support is at swimmer's center of balance. 3. Coach quarter rotates swimmer to the right, then says, "look at me" or "hello." 4. Swimmer turns head strongly to coach. Further rolling is restricted and swimmer will regain balance. 5. Repeat on other side with coach's head by swimmer's right ear and quarter rotate to the left. 6. (Resist & Control Lateral Rotation – Rolling)

Basic Rolling Recovery Technique – As a Group

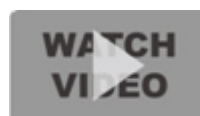


Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Rolling Recovery	Ring Pass	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Athletes are in a circle formation, swimmers on their back with feet to center and instructor behind head. 2. The upper back of swimmer is supported by coach's hands. 3. One or a number of rings (dive rings) are passed from swimmer to swimmer. 4. All swimmers pass and receive ring with the same hand (i.e., all use left hand or all use right hand). 5. (Resist & Control Lateral Rotation)



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Rolling Recovery	360-Degree Lateral Roll	Lateral rotation from back float position for 360 degrees to return to the back float position. (Resist & Control Lateral Rotation – Rolling)
Rolling Recovery	Fishes in the Net	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circle formation with alternate swimmer and instructor, using long-arm support. 2. Swimmers take turns at being 'fish' in the circular net. 3. Escape from the net is under the arms of the circle, re-entry is over the arms with a combined rotation. 4. Can also be played with the circle moving. 5. (Resist & Control Lateral Rotation – Rolling)
Turbulent Gliding	Come to Me	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimmer is on back floating. 2. Coach is behind swimmer's head and walking backward, creating turbulence with hands to move the swimmer along in a glide on the back.
Sit on the Bottom	Partner Sitting	Two swimmers hold each other's hands and sit on the bottom of the pool together. Can also be a swimmer and a coach.
Breathing – Controlled	Hum Under water	Blowing out through the nose.
Mushroom Float	Mushroom Float	Float in a mushroom shape with hands holding ankles and the arched back facing the water surface.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Mushroom Float	Stars and Mushrooms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If in shallow water, start in chair position; if in deep water, start by treading water. 2. Group leader calls shape, e.g., “Star,” and counts down “five, four, three, two, one,” giving swimmers time to balance motionless in the shape called. 3. Return to start position. 4. Repeat with other position.



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Push and Glide	Rocket ships	Swimmers perform a push and glide, and instructor calls this a rocket ship. Can use a large hoop which swimmers must glide through. How far can you glide?



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Sculling	Row Boats	Swimmers perform a double arm backstroke—like the oars of a row boat.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Games and Activities to Teach Basic Skills

Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Sculling	How Few Strokes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Swimmers move over a given distance doing a propulsive action on their back (e.g., back sculling, double-arm backstroke). Count arm actions/strokes and try to keep number to a minimum by emphasizing the glide in the stroke.



Teaching Point/Skill	Name	Description
Kicking	Torpedoes	Push, glide and kick in the front or back float position. This action is called torpedoes.
Kicking	Motor Boats	Tell swimmers they are to pretend to be motor boats by kicking their legs while holding one or two kickboards.
All	Simon Says	Play the game “Simon Says” with activities designed to give confidence in the water and teach basic swimming skills. Coach selects task to meet required teaching points.
Water Familiarization	Splash-Splash	Swimmers are organized in two teams. In waist-deep water, each team forms a circle. A plastic jug or bucket is placed in the center on a kickboard. On the signal “go,” all athletes begin splashing water into their team’s jug or bucket. No athlete may touch his/her jug or bucket. The team to first fill the jug or bucket is the winner.
Water Familiarization & Confidence	Interception in Three	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Organized in threes, with the outside swimmers facing each other. Another swimmer stands between them. The two outside swimmers try to make as many passes as possible to each other without the center swimmer intercepting the ball.
Water Familiarization & Confidence	Spaceships and Space Station	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Coach (space capsule) envelops swimmer (astronaut) within circled arms and locked hands. Swimmer presses coach’s ear to unlock door of capsule. Then, using hands only (no leg movement), swimmer moves out of doorway, circles capsule, enters door again and presses other ear to lock it. A variation is for the whole group to link into a large space station. Two astronauts have to open the door and circle the station, traveling in the same or opposite directions.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Training Session Plan Form



Sample Training Session Plan Form

Group: Learn to Swim Group	
Date: 2/2/2004	Session Number: 3 of Week of 12
Number of Athletes: 20	Number of Coaches: 4
Number of In-Water Assistants/Coaches: 4	Number of Out-of-Water Assistants/Coaches: 2 + 3 parents
Session Goals: Final Assessments & Goal Setting for Season + Group Goals	

Group	1	2	3	4
Ability	Beginner	Water Confident	Float and Glide	Adult Group – mixed ability
Number	3	5	8	6
Ages	8 years	8-12 years	12-18 years	20 years+
Class Time	40-60 minutes	40-60 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes
Staff	1 coach - 1 assistant	1 coach - 1 assistant	1 coach - 1 assistant	1 coach - 1 assistant
Other support	1 session manager	1 parent out-of-water supervisor	1 parent out-of-water supervisor	1 lane supervisor out of water
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce last session Build team confidence Humming 	Work on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobility Breathing Social skills 	Develop skills needed to move to next level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretching Breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify individual needs. Breathing work to each athlete's individual plan.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kickboards – 2 each Dive Rings Hoop Flutter Disks Goggles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kickboards – 2 each Hoop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kickboards – 2 each Stretch Chart with pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kickboards – 2 each Dive Rings Goggles Flutter Disks Hoop Stretch Chart
Space Needs	Shallow pool space – secure area	Shallow and chest – deep water.	Chest-deep water – lane edge, some deep water work; 1-1 ratio	Chest-deep water – lane edge – space to kick out from, back to wall along same water depth



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Training Session Plan Form

Sample Training Session Plan Form, page 2

Group	1	2	3	4
Warm-Ups (10–15 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jog on the spot 2. Shake about 3. Sits on pool edge 4. Assisted entry 5. “Hello” game in circle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run on the spot 2. Shake about 3. Sits on pool edge 4. Slide entry 5. Kangaroo hops across own area 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jog on the spot 2. Shake about 3. Simple stretches as per prepared chart 4. Sits on pool edge 5. Slide entry 6. Run around designated area, return backwards 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group gather, move bodies around – arm circles, jogs, shake legs 2. Land stretches 3. Enter pool 4. Water aerobics to music: walk, slide, jog, jump, across lane space; stand and jog in spot using arm movements & high knees.
Assess & Review (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive Car Game – bubble into dive ring • Bubble into dive ring on surface of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make walrus noises into pool • Say hello under water to buddy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push and glide with kickboard – blow bubbles into pool – stand to breathe • Add relays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing work to suit - as across other three groups • Speak to partner under water – tell partner what they said
Teaching Point of the Day (10–15 minutes)	Begin Hum “This is the Way We ...” game – add hum	Practice Hum Add hum and float – like hovering bees, use kickboards if necessary.	Practice mushroom float – hum Try to tumble, use coaches, hoop and lane rope to assist	Hum activities at athlete’s own level, see groups 1, 2, 3.
Secondary Teaching Point (10–15 minutes)	All Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Check all Assessment Evaluations are current – try unmarked skills that you feel may be attainable. <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-water assistant marks accomplished tasks – Remainder of group also tries skill.			
Cool-Down (10–15 minutes)	All Groups <input type="checkbox"/> In place of usual games, have swimmers help plan goals for the season. <input type="checkbox"/> Write them down, or draw a sketch (e.g. bubbles) for the athlete to keep.			

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim

Training Session Plan Form



Training Session Plan Form

Group: Learn to Swim Group	
Date:	Session Number:
Number of Athletes:	Number of Coaches:
Number of In-Water Assistants/Coaches:	Number of Out-of-Water Assistants/Coaches:
Session Goals:	

Group	1	2	3	4
Ability				
Number				
Ages				
Class Time				
Staff				
Other support				
Lesson Goals				
Equipment				
Space Needs				



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Training Session Plan Form

Training Session Plan Form, page 2

Group	1	2	3	4
Warm-Ups (10–15 minutes)				
Assess & Review (10–15 minutes)				
Teaching Point of the Day (10–15 minutes)				
Secondary Teaching Point (10–15 minutes)				
Cool-Down (10–15 minutes)				

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Training Session Plan Form



12-Week Beginners Program – Sample

Week 1	Get to know pool, staff, athletes, family and caregivers Water familiarization, entries, exits, pool rules, etiquette
Week 2	Reinforce week 1 Begin skills assessments Introduce breathing
Week 3	Finalize skills assessments - goal setting for each individual for the season Hum, mobility, control of rotation, floats and tumbles
Week 4	Review previous session's skills Begin to identify and develop individual programs Introduce arm actions, continue with breathing and floats
Week 5	Review previous sessions Work on weak points – reinforcements through games and activities Introduce team and group activities – relays
Week 6	Work on identified issues from previous week – work on weak spots Review individual goals – adjust as required
Week 7	Conduct skills assessments Work on skills identified Review and progress on previous session's work.
Week 8	Introduce new skills – back float, push and glide, kick as ready Continue team work and relays
Week 9	Introduce competition events as identified for each group Practice in a noncompetitive games environment
Week 10	Introduce race aspect of events Practice good sportsmanship – use relays and cheer on buddies
Week 11	Conduct final skills assessment for season Practice full skills progression – end with events, fun games
Week 12	Fun competition gala with awards Certificates of Achievement for the season



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Aquatics Athlete Skills Learn to Swim Assessment

Aquatics Athlete Skills – Learn to Swim Assessment

Athlete Name _____

Start Date _____

Coach Name _____

Instructions

1. Use tool at the beginning of the training/competition season to establish a basis of the athlete's starting skill level.
2. Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
3. If the athlete performs the skill correctly three out of five times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.
4. Program assessment sessions into your program.
5. Swimmers may accomplish skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished this list when all possible items have been achieved.

Water Adjustment

- ☐ Sits on pool edge
- ☐ Sits on pool edge and kicks

Water Entry – Assisted

- ☐ Sits on pool edge
- ☐ Walks down ramp
- ☐ Enters pool using stairs
- ☐ Climbs down ladder
- ☐ Slides into pool from edge

Water Entry – Independent

- ☐ Walks down ramp
- ☐ Enters pool using stairs
- ☐ Climbs down ladder
- ☐ Slides into pool from edge
- ☐ Jumps into shallow end

Breathing – Blows Air Out

- ☐ Blows air out
- ☐ Blows object across water
- ☐ Exhales while submerged



Breathing – Blows Bubbles

- ☐ Blows into water
- ☐ Blows water away
- ☐ Makes noises in the water
- ☐ Hums underwater through nose

Breathing – Controlled

- ☐ Continuous breathing and exhalation pattern
- ☐ Exhales through nose and mouth in a relaxed and rhythmical manner

Static Positions

- ☐ Stands in water – assisted
- ☐ Stands in water – independent
- ☐ Stands in water against turbulence – assisted
- ☐ Stands in water against turbulence – independent
- ☐ Lies on back in still position – assisted
- ☐ Lies on back in still position against turbulence – assisted
- ☐ Stands or sit in chair position – assisted
- ☐ Stand in chair position – independent
- ☐ Stands or sit in chair position against turbulence – assisted
- ☐ Stand in chair position against turbulence – independent

Develops Water Confidence

- ☐ Puts face in the water
- ☐ Confident enough not to grip coach

Walking in Water – Head Control

- ☐ Walks across pool in shallow water (waist deep) – assisted
- ☐ Walks across pool holding onto the side with one hand
- ☐ Walks across pool – independent
- ☐ Walks across pool independent – shallow water
- ☐ Walks across pool assisted – chest deep
- ☐ Walks across pool independent – chest deep
- ☐ Slides sideways/change directions – assisted
- ☐ Slides sideways/change directions – independent
- ☐ Walks forward and backward – assisted
- ☐ Walks forward and backward – independent



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Learn to Swim Aquatics Athlete Skills Learn to Swim Assessment

Jumping

- ☐ Jumps in shallow water – assisted
- ☐ Jumps in shallow water – independent

Water Exit – Assisted

- ☐ Walks up ramp
- ☐ Climbs up ladder
- ☐ Maintains a safe position at side of pool
- ☐ Climbs out over side of pool

Water Exit – Independent

- ☐ Walks up ramp
- ☐ Climbs up ladder
- ☐ Maintains a safe position at side of pool
- ☐ Climbs out over side of pool – independent

Forward Recovery

- ☐ Supported, feet off bottom, moves forward and backward
- ☐ Using two kickboards, moves forward and backward

Submerges in Water

- ☐ Submerges in shallow water – assisted
- ☐ Submerges in shallow water – independent
- ☐ Submerges in chest-deep water – assisted
- ☐ Submerges in chest-deep water – independent

Eyes Open Under Water

- ☐ Able to open eyes – with goggles
- ☐ Able to open eyes under water – without goggles

Sit on the Bottom

- ☐ Can touch pool bottom in shallow water
- ☐ Can touch pool bottom in chest-deep water
- ☐ Sits on pool bottom in shallow water
- ☐ Sits on pool bottom in chest-deep water



Prone Float

- ☐ Attempts to float on stomach
- ☐ Floats on stomach with assistance (buoyancy belt)
- ☐ Performs prone float for five seconds - independent
- ☐ Recover from front float – assisted
- ☐ Recover from front float using two kickboards – assisted
- ☐ Recover from front float using two kickboards – independent
- ☐ Recover from front float – independent
- ☐ Performs prone float and recovers to standing position
- ☐ Performs prone float with a flutter kick

Back Float

- ☐ Attempts to float on back
- ☐ Floats on back with assistance (buoyancy belt)
- ☐ Performs a back float for five seconds – independent
- ☐ Recover from back float – assisted
- ☐ Recover from back float using two kickboards – assisted
- ☐ Recover from back float using two kickboards – independent
- ☐ Recover from back float to stand – independent
- ☐ Performs a back float and recovers to a standing position
- ☐ Performs a back float with a flutter kick

Rolling Recovery

- ☐ Recovers from front float to back float – assisted
- ☐ Recovers from front float to back float using floatation device – assisted
- ☐ Recovers from front float to back float using floatation device – independent
- ☐ Recovers from front float to back float – independent
- ☐ Moves from back float to front and return – assisted
- ☐ Moves from back float to front and return – independent

Turbulent Gliding

- ☐ Floats on back while being propelled along



Push and Glide – Streamlined Position

- ☐ Pushes and glides on front – assisted
- ☐ Pushes and glides on front – using floatation device, two kickboards, noodle
- ☐ Pushes and glides on front – using one kickboard
- ☐ Pushes and glides on front – independent
- ☐ Pushes and glides on back – assisted
- ☐ Pushes and glides on back – using two kickboards
- ☐ Pushes and glides on back – using one kickboard
- ☐ Pushes and glides on back – independent

Sculling

- ☐ Sculls using small arm movements
- ☐ Sculls using full arm movements

Kicking

- ☐ Kicks while holding onto pool side/gutter
- ☐ Kicks legs with coach's assistance
- ☐ Moves forward using kickboard and back flutter kick – assisted
- ☐ Kicks on front – assisted
- ☐ Kicks on front in glide position – assisted
- ☐ Kicks on front in glide position – independent
- ☐ Moves forward using flutter kick – independent
- ☐ Moves forwards using back flutter kick – independent

Mushroom Float

- ☐ Supported, roll forward, blow and roll back
- ☐ Mushroom floats
- ☐ From back float, can mushroom float and recover

Water Safety

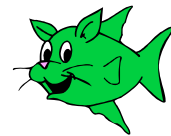
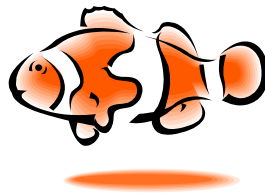
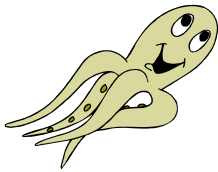
- ☐ Identifies swimming boundaries
- ☐ Understands and identifies pool safety rules
- ☐ Floats in neck-deep water
- ☐ Demonstrates a vertical float in deep water for two minutes
- ☐ Demonstrates sculling arm action, five strokes in neck-deep water



***Special
Olympics***

Congratulations

You have learned the Basic Skills needed to be a
Great Swimmer



You Are Now Ready to Advance to the
Stroke Development Level

Coach

Date



***Special
Olympics***

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Teaching Aquatics Skills

Stroke Development



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Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

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The Strokes

One of the fundamental goals of any swimming program is to provide an opportunity for all swimmers to develop good swimming technique in all four strokes. Special Olympics aquatics coaches need to have a good knowledge of the basic principles required to master these strokes. These principles are developed through a variety of progressive practices within this coaching guide.

Throughout this section we will look at the body position, leg action, arm action and breathing aspects of the four strokes. We will also look at teaching the stroke and give teaching points and practices. This exercise is not exhaustive. Experienced coaches may have further teaching points and practices that can be incorporated in the development of the athlete's swimming program.

In addition, we will generally move the teaching progression from land drills to pool drills and activities in shallow to chest-deep water. A distance is sometimes added to the activity which oftentimes includes the complete stroke – arm stroke with the respective kick.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development Freestyle/Front Crawl

Skill Progression – Freestyle

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Make an attempt to swim on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform freestyle using flutter kick for 15 meters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform freestyle with rhythmic breathing for one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make an attempt to start, from in the pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform proper start, standing on the pool edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform proper start, using a starting block	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make an attempt to turn around without stopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform an open turn after swimming freestyle without stopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform a flip turn in waist-deep water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform flip turns after swimming one to two pool lengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Freestyle/Front Crawl

Freestyle is regarded as the fastest of all competitive swim strokes and one of the first taught to the beginning swimmer. The stroke action involves the arms moving forward alternately with the legs kicking continuously throughout the stroke. The swimmer's body remains horizontal and streamlined in the water with the swimmer's head turned to one side to breathe after each full arm cycle. The teaching and development of the stroke can be achieved by breaking down the skill into its various components.

Body Position

The body position is almost flat. The constant propulsion from the alternating arm and leg actions make it a very effective and efficient stroke.

Key Points

- Flat with a slight slope down to hips. The waterline is between the eyebrows and hairline.
- Eyes look forward and slightly downward.
- The slight slope down to the hips enables the kick to stay in the water.
- Shoulders roll into the stroke, utilizing the strong chest muscles and generating a strong propulsive force.
- Slight head adjustments change the position of the legs. If the head is held high out of the water, the legs will drop and if submerged, the legs will rise out of the water.
- The legs work almost within the body depth. This creates the least resistance to forward motion.

Leg Action

The freestyle/front crawl leg action helps the body stay in the horizontal position and balances the arm action. It may also contribute to the propulsion within the stroke.

Key Points

- Leg action starts at the hips.
- Alternating action is required.
- There is a slight bend in the knees.
- Feet kick up to the surface and churn the water without splashing.
- Ankles are relaxed to allow toes to point and give a natural in-toeing effect.
- The number of leg kicks may vary for each arm cycle.

Arm Action

The continuous, alternating arm action is the strength within the stroke and enables constant propulsion. Throughout the full stroke there are five main areas that require attention - entry, down sweep, in sweep, up sweep and recovery.

Key Points – Entry

- Hand is turned with the palm facing half outward for a thumb-first entry.
- Hand enters between the head and shoulder line with a slight bend in the arm.
- Hand then reaches forward under the surface. Note: this is a natural stretch, not overreaching.



Key Points – Down Sweep

- Hand sweeps downward and slightly outward to the catch position.
- Hand continues this sweep downward and outward.
- Elbow starts to bend. It is important that the elbow is kept high.

Key Points – In Sweep

- Hand pitch changes and curves inward toward the body's center line. This is similar to a sculling action.
- Elbow has a 90-degree bend.
- Hand accelerates.

Key Points – Up Sweep

- When the hand has reached the body's center line, the hand changes pitch to upward, outward and backward.
- This enables acceleration through to the hips.
- Hand then exits the water little-finger first.

Key Points – Recovery

- This movement is relaxed and uses the momentum from the up sweep.
- Elbow will exit first and is kept higher than the hand.
- Hand passes as close to body as possible. This is dependent on the swimmers flexibility.
- Once the hand passes shoulder level, the arm will reach forwards to the entry position.

Key Points – Breathing

- Head is turned smoothly in time with the natural roll of the body.
- Head is turned, not lifted.
- The in breath is taken when the breathing arm is completing the up sweep.
- The non-breathing arm enters the water when the breath is taken.
- Head is turned back to the center in a smooth action as soon as the breath is taken.
- The breath is released gradually or held until just before the next in breath.
- Breathing occurs every two arm pulls (one stroke cycle). This is unilateral breathing. It may also be taken after every three arm pulls (1.5 stroke cycles). This is bilateral breathing.

Key Points – Timing

Usually there are six leg kicks in one arm cycle. This may vary between swimmers. Swimmers who prefer middle- and long-distance swims tend to kick less frequently.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl



Teaching the Freestyle/Front Crawl

In order for the athlete to achieve an almost horizontal and streamlined body position, the athlete should be confident enough to have his/her face in the water. Breathing is best left until the stroke basics are mastered.

Practice full stroke without breathing

Teaching Points

1. Hold head so that the athlete can see forward and slightly downward.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Stabilize kickboard or pull swimmer through the water as they kick, if necessary.
- ☐ Demonstrate to the swimmer a streamlined body position.
- ☐ Swimmer stands out of water in a streamlined position.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to be as streamlined as possible with hips high in water.

Teaching Body Position

Practice push and glide

Teaching Points

1. Push from the wall with strong legs.
2. Stretch long and thin.
3. Ears between the arms.

Teaching Leg Action

Practice legs only at side of pool

Teaching Points

1. Up and down movements of the legs.
2. Kick from the hips.
3. Long straight legs.

Practice legs only with a flotation device under each arm

Teaching Points

1. Keep legs close together.
2. Fingers grip end of the floats and knuckles touching.
3. Up and down action.



Practice legs only, holding one float, arms fully extended

Teaching Points

1. Long straight legs.
2. Feet turned slightly inward.

Practice push and glide without float; add leg action at end of glide

Teaching Points

1. Long straight body.
2. Kick when reaching the surface.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ In the pool, assist the swimmer's legs in a kicking motion. Repeat often, gradually removing assistance.
- ☐ Stabilize kickboard as necessary for one pool length.
- ☐ Swimmer kicks alone, keeping legs straight, kicking from the hips with toes pointed slightly inward (pigeon-toed).
- ☐ Keep toes under the water during kick.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to kick with face in the water.

Practice freestyle kick in the water

Teaching Points

1. Hold onto wall or similar stationary support in prone position.
2. Bend knees slightly, keeping feet together with toes pointed slightly inward (pigeon-toed).
3. Repeat kicking action, and encourage swimmer to put face in water to help raise hips.
4. Hold onto kickboard or similar flotation device with arms extended in front of the body and repeat kicking action.
5. Extend arms out in front of the body without the kickboard, assuming streamlined body position for balance, and repeat kicking action.
6. Encourage swimmer to put face in water and keep hips high.

Practice freestyle flutter kick, kicking in prone position one full pool length

Teaching Points

1. Flutter kick for one length of the pool without stopping, with or without a kickboard, maintaining a good streamlined body position.
2. Keep legs relaxed, toes pointed slightly inward (pigeon-toed).
3. Kick more from the hips than the knee.
4. Encourage swimmer to put face in water and keep hips high.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl



Practice freestyle kick with assistance

Teaching Points

1. Sit on edge of pool with legs in the water.
2. Keep legs together, toes slightly pigeon-toed.
3. Kick so that the feet are just below the surface of the water.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer sits on edge of pool with the coach standing in the water facing athlete.
- ☐ Hold the swimmer's feet, toes pointed slightly inward (pigeon-toed).
- ☐ Swimmer kicks from hips with toes under water. Assist swimmer in keeping legs straight.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to make a little splash with the feet.
- ☐ Good for warm-ups.

Practice deck drills for flutter kick

Teaching Points

1. Athlete stands on a step or side of the pool, if possible, so one leg can swing back and forth without hitting the ground. Swing the leg from the hip with the knee and foot relaxed. Notice when the knee bends naturally.
2. Athlete stands on the deck with one foot slightly forward and the other back. Feet are no more than one foot apart. Athlete jumps slightly and switches feet – forward to back – back to forward. Repeat this movement. In water aerobics, it is called a cross-country leg action.
3. Sit on the edge of the pool with the legs overhanging the water. This works best when the water level is lower than the deck. Lean back and with legs straight, imitate the flutter kick from the hips.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl

Practice water drills for flutter kick

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Once this is learned in slow motion, the athlete can increase the speed until they feel like they are "whipping" their lower leg back and forth.

Teaching Points

1. Flutter kick while holding onto the pool side. Works best if one hand is on the top of the wall and the other is directly below it approximately one-half-meter deep for support.
2. Kick while gliding away from the wall. These drills can be done with or without kickboards.

Exploration Drills

These drills are meant to help athletes feel their kick better and to help them to correct their own mistakes. You can ask the athlete to do it incorrectly so that they can feel the correct form better.

- ♦ Kick as fast as you can.
- ♦ Kick as slow as you can.
- ♦ Kick with lots of splash.
- ♦ Kick with no splash.
- ♦ Kick with no leg bend at all.
- ♦ Kick as if riding a bicycle.
- ♦ Flutter kick on your side. Use a kickboard or some other flotation device. This assists the athlete to feel the kick both forward and backward.
- ♦ Kick with fins.
- ♦ Kick across pool with head up. If swimmer can do this and keep their mouth above water for breathing, they know they have a very strong kick.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Do not point toes. This will cause a cramp in the arch of the foot. Relax the ankle and let the force of the water move the ankle joint for maximum force from the foot.
- ☐ Pull the knee back. Do not pull the foot backward. Pulling the foot back often causes a cramp in the calf.



Teaching Breathing

All of the preceding practices can be achieved with the head above water. This enables the swimmer to breathe without any head movements. Once the preceding skills have been mastered, it is now possible to introduce breathing and the movement of the head. All of the following practices can be done with the face in the water. The athlete is looking forward and slightly down.

Practice leg action with one arm bent, the other arm fully extended with the thumb on top of the nearest corner of the float.

Teaching Points

1. One arm is fully extended and holding the leading edge of the float.
2. Look toward bent arm and breathe.
3. Breathe out under water.
4. Smooth head movements.
5. Change sides.

Practice leg action with a floatation device held by one hand; the other hand is out in front

Teaching Points

1. Head in water, breathe and pull arm through to thighs.
2. Turn head to side when hand passes thighs.
3. Long straight legs, up and down movements.

Practice the push and glide, add leg kick. Breathe as required and pull through to hips

Teaching Points

1. Turn head to side for breath.
2. Turn head as hand is near to the hip.
3. Continuous leg kick.

Freestyle Breathing Rules

Do not hold breath

If athletes are not inhaling, they are constantly exhaling slowly through both their noses and mouths. Holding one's breath can cause water to go up the nose.

Exhale into the water

If the athletes do not exhale, they cannot inhale. They do not have time to both exhale and inhale above water, so it is better to exhale when their faces are in the water and inhale when their faces are above water.

Do not lift the head when breathing

This is one of the major mistakes, as it causes the feet to sink and water to go up the nose. Keep the forehead down, and the chin slightly tucked while turning both the head and the body to get a breath.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl

Open mouth to inhale

Do not attempt to breathe in through a small opening. This increases pressure and the chance that athletes will swallow water. If their mouths are open wide and some water gets in, have them spit it back out after getting air. This is normal. Try not to panic.

Inhale quickly and exhale slower. Inhale quickly when the head is turned and the arm is in the correct position. Exhale much slower so that it continues until the next inhalation.

Open mouth when exhaling

Do not attempt to exhale through the nose. Some air will come out of the nose anyway. Forcing all of the air out of the nose can disturb sensitive membranes and create pain. If an athlete's nose drains or he/she gets headaches after swimming, check the way the athlete exhales.

Turn head to breathe with the arm pull

Timing the head turn to the arm pull is crucial to breathing correctly. Athletes cannot wait until their arms gets back before turning their heads. Swimmers must perform these motions at the same time. Attempt to get the athlete's head turned just prior to the hand coming out of the water.





Teaching Arm Action

Practice arm action in shallow water

Teaching Points

1. Athlete leans forward with one foot in front of the other.
2. Shoulders are on the water surface.
3. Hands enter between the head and shoulders.
4. Thumb enters the water first.
5. Elbow high.

Practice freestyle stroke on land

Teaching Points

1. Standing on pool deck, bend over at waist, keeping back straight.
2. Extend both arms fully in front of head, hands in line with shoulders.
3. Move one hand under the body with elbow at a 45-degree angle at midstroke.
4. Push hand past hips toward feet, finishing at thigh.
5. Pull arm back, relax forearm below elbow on recovery.
6. Recover hand to starting position in line with shoulders.
7. Repeat with other hand.



Practice arm action while walking forward in shallow water

Teaching Points

1. Sweep outward, downward and inward toward the body's center line.
2. Sweep past hips.
3. Smooth action.
4. Alternate arm action.

Practice the push and glide and add arm action

Teaching Points

1. Strong kick.
2. Smooth arm action.
3. High elbow.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl

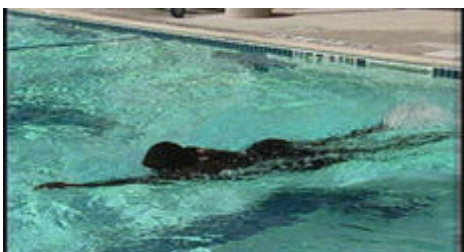
Coaching Tips

- ☐ On land/pool deck, stand behind the swimmer and hold his/her arms. Move one arm up and forward through the stroke motion. Alternate arms.
- ☐ On pool deck, have the swimmer practice arm action.
- ☐ In the water, using kickboard and fins, have the swimmer hold the kickboard outstretched and thumbs up. Practice arm action for a short distance, using fins to keep body high in water.
- ☐ Provide assistance if necessary, with hand moving through the water under the body.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to place face in water.

Practice freestyle stroke without assistance

Teaching Points

1. Stand in chest-deep water, assume the prone float position.
2. Place a flotation device between the legs; encourage kicking or use fins to help with movement of upper body/arm action.
3. Have swimmer take a breath. Swimmer is encouraged to breathe to one side.
4. Demonstrate the correct arm stroke for two complete arm strokes.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Assist swimmer into prone float.
- ☐ Move with swimmer through two arm strokes, keeping hand just under body for reassurance.
- ☐ Have swimmer take a breath and put face in the water.
- ☐ Have swimmer take two complete arm strokes without breathing.
- ☐ Practice freestyle arm-pull drills.

Teaching Points

1. Practice pulling while standing in the water.
2. Practice the pull, one arm at a time while the other holds onto a kickboard. This is a good drill to practice breathing.
3. Practice the pull, one arm at a time without a flotation device.
4. Swim with a closed fist for a distance and then with hands open. This can increase the "feel" for the water.
5. Swim with hand paddles. Again, this increases the feel for the pull.
6. Swim with pull buoys between the legs. This reduces the effect of the kick on the body.
7. At the end of each pull, touch the thumb to the leg. This makes sure the swimmer is pulling all the way back.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl



Practice complete freestyle stroke, using the arm stroke and kick, for a distance of 15 meters

Teaching Points

1. Have the swimmer stand in chest-deep water.
2. Assume the prone float position.
3. Combine the freestyle kick with freestyle pull.
4. Keep face in the water.
5. Turn head to breathe every other arm stroke for recovery.
6. Turn head to side after two strokes or one full cycle.
7. Breathe on the side opposite the stroking arm. Turn head to preferred side, keeping ear in water, after two arm strokes or one full cycle.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Have athlete swim three to five arm pulls while kicking legs and moving arms opposite each other.
- ☐ Head follows hand on the finish.
- ☐ Maintain smooth, steady kicking action.
- ☐ Shoulders and hips turn slightly when taking a breath. Swimmer is in lateral position.
- ☐ Inhale gently; the swimmer's head will turn to the side as the hand recovers past the head.
- ☐ Allow swimmer to use buoyancy belt or fins to maintain a streamlined, balanced body position.
- ☐ Allow the swimmer to use fins to help maintain a good arm action.

Practice freestyle arm recovery drills

Teaching Points

1. Practice shoulder shrugs forward while standing on deck or in the water and arms hanging relaxed at sides. Start with both shoulders moving forward at the same time and then alternate the shrugs. Add a high elbow move and then add the rest of the arm recovery motion.
2. Stand on deck or in the water. Elevate the shoulders and raise elbows high. If possible, the elbows are as close to shoulder high as possible. Move the hands forward and back as if swinging the arms like a huge crane. This helps the athlete feel the arm movement at the shoulder joint.
3. Stand in the water and have the swimmers imitate the arm recovery movement while dragging their fingertips across the surface. This helps them build kinesthetic awareness of what they are doing.
4. Swim with one hand holding onto a floatation device such as a kickboard. Pull with the other arm and recover with the fingertips dragging across the surface.
5. Swim with one hand holding onto a floatation device and focus on high elbows with hands below the elbow. Do not let swimmers bring the hand inside like a chicken wing.
6. Swim catch-up style (hands touch between pulls), and concentrate on both the pull and the recovery.
7. Swim with a kickboard in one hand. Pull, and, when you enter, aim the hand for the corner of the board and reach out under the side of the board instead of for the center. This can correct some of the common mistakes of moving the hands across the body on the reach after entry.
8. Watch the hand enter the water and make sure the elbow is high and the palm is facing away.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Freestyle/Front Crawl

Teaching Timing

Practice freestyle stroke with rhythmic breathing for one full pool length, 25 meters

Teaching Points

1. Push off from the side of the pool in a streamlined, balanced position.
2. Swim a coordinated freestyle for one pool length.
3. Demonstrate correct rhythmic breathing while swimming.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Have the swimmer swim a coordinated freestyle stroke as far as possible. When the swimmer becomes tired or the stroke becomes uncoordinated, stop and support the swimmer under the trunk. Encourage the swimmer to swim at least four more strokes while being supported.
- ☐ Record the swimmer's daily progress. Place a cone on the deck to indicate the distance swum during the last practice.
- ☐ Have the swimmer swim between lane lines. If the swimmer is swimming into one rope, he/she is probably pulling too hard with the opposite arm. Have the swimmer swim on top of the black line. If the line appears to be moving, then there is a possible over-rotation of the body caused by the swimmer's arms crossing over his/her center line, or the swimmer's legs are not kicking evenly.

Freestyle – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction – Drill/Test Reference
Lack of squeeze on the recovery phase of the pull.	Tell the swimmer to clap hands together as he/she squeezes the arms together.
Kicking too wide.	Have the swimmer kick with a pull buoy on. If it falls, the knees are too wide.
Knees coming under the stomach.	Have the swimmer kick on his/her back and keep the knees at or below the water surface.
Swimmer does not get hands under the body on the pull.	Have the hands scull outward and then inward until they almost touch under the stomach. The hands now form a triangle.
Swimmer is not pushing hands past hips.	Put adhesive tape on the legs below the suit line, and tell the swimmer to touch the tape.
Swimmer cannot feel the stroke pattern in the water.	Have the swimmer swim only two or three strokes at a time. Review the proper pattern.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl



Skill Progression – Backstroke

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Swim on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke correctly for a distance of one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke start while facing the starting end; both hands on a starting block	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform the correct backstroke start and swims one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turn on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke turn - assisted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke turn in chest-deep water – independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Backstroke/Back Crawl

Backstroke, also known as back crawl, is probably the easiest of all competitive strokes to teach and learn, as the swimmer has his/her head out of the water, unlike freestyle where the face is in the water and breathing and arm coordination must be mastered.

Some learners prefer backstroke because their faces are out of the water and breathing is not an issue. Backstroke and front crawl have similarities. These similarities are useful when beginning swimmers are reminded of a skill or part of a skill which may be familiar to them.

Body Position

Key Points

- Supine, horizontal and streamlined.
- Ears are submerged just below the water surface.
- Head remains still, eyes look upward or slightly down toward toes.
- Chin is tucked in to ensure that the legs are kept in the water.
- Hips are kept close to the surface.
- Shoulders roll along with the stroke.
- To keep the legs in the water, there is a slight slope down from the head to the hips.

Kick

The leg action assists in maintaining a horizontal body position and balancing the arm action. This will minimize the legs swaying from side to side. It may also contribute to some propulsion.

Key Points

- The continuous up and down alternating action is started from the hips.
- Legs are close together.
- Legs are kept almost straight with the knees remaining below the surface.
- Relaxed ankles allow the toes to point.
- Feet break the surface at the end of the upbeat, trying not to splash.

Arm Action

The arm action is continuous and alternating. The arm action provides constant propulsion. Bent-arm action is more efficient than straight-arm action. The straight-arm action may be preferred in the early stages of development.

Key Points – Entry

- The little finger enters the water first, straight arm and close to the shoulder line.

Key Points – Initial Down Sweep

- The arm sweeps downward and outward to the catch. This is assisted by a natural shoulder roll.
- The hand is pitched downward and outward by the palm.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl



Key Points – Up Sweep

- The hand pitch is changed to sweep inward and upward.
- The arms are bent at a 90-degree angle at the elbow.

Key Points – Final Down Sweep

- The arm pushes through to the thigh.
- Fingers are pointing sideways and palms are downward.

Key Points – Recovery

- The hand comes out thumb first.
- The arm turns gradually to ensure that the little finger is ready for entry.
- Arm remains straight and relaxed throughout.

Key Points – Breathing

- Breathing is natural. As a rule, breathe every stroke cycle.

Key Points – Timing

- Six leg kicks to one stroke cycle.

Teaching the Backstroke/Back Crawl

If athletes are confident on their backs, then backstroke can be an easy stroke to learn. It is also advisable to teach the athletes to stand from lying on their backs prior to teaching the full stroke. This will increase confidence in athletes.

Back float (supine) and push and glide practices are used to help maintain a good body position in preparation for teaching the stroke. Safety is very important, and all athletes must ensure that the area directly behind them is clear before they launch themselves into any practice on their backs.

The swimmers move through the water on their backs (supine) and their leg action is continuous—like in freestyle. The propulsive phase of the kick takes place with the swimmer's upbeat action.

The swimmer's arm is straight and extended behind the shoulder as the hand enters the water. Swimmers are taught to enter the water with the little finger first and with as little splash as possible. Athletes are encouraged to practice drills to achieve good stroke technique. The shape of the whole arm action/pull is in the form of an "S" shape.

Swimmers who have difficulty maintaining relaxed leg and ankle movement may find it difficult to achieve correct backstroke skills.



Teaching Body Position

Practice

Coach assists athlete in maintaining contact with wall, holding legs or rail, if available. Hook toes under rail. Lie out on back; arms at sides.

Teaching Points

1. Stomach up.
2. Breathe normally.
3. Practice push and glide on back.
4. Head in water; ears submerged.

Practice floating on back

Teaching Points

1. Lie flat
2. Relax

Teaching the Leg Action

Practice with a float under each arm, push and glide, add leg action

Teaching Points

1. Kick from hips.
2. Long straight legs, pointed toes.

Practice holding one float on stomach or chest, add leg action

Teaching Points

1. Relaxed, floppy ankles.

Practice holding one float over hips, add leg action.

Teaching Points

1. Push hips up to meet the float.
2. Long straight legs, close together.

Practice push and glide, arms by sides, add leg action.

Teaching Points

1. Kick up to the water surface.
2. Break the water surface with your toes.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl



Practice leg action with sculling

Teaching Points

1. Keep knees under the surface.
2. Long straight legs.

Practice push and glide with arms extended over the head

Teaching Points

1. Long straight body.
2. Long legs.

Practice backstroke kick on land

Teaching Points

1. Lay on mat or bench. Have the swimmer lay on pool deck with legs in water.
2. Keep legs together, toes slightly pigeon-toed.
3. Kick so that the toes are just below the water surface.

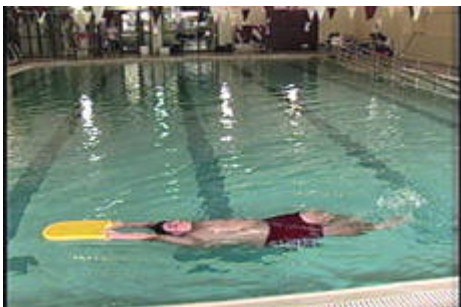
Coaching Tips

- ☐ Hold the swimmer's feet, toes pointed slightly inward.
- ☐ Have the swimmer kick from the hips.
- ☐ Have the swimmer kick and feel the water with the feet.

Practice backstroke kick in the water

Teaching Points

1. Using a small kickboard, assume the back float position in waist deep water.
2. Extend the arms/board over the head or knees, as this will help stop the swimmer from kicking with an exaggerated bent knee action.
3. Kick mostly from the hips. Bend the knees slightly, keeping the action relaxed.
4. Keep the legs together with toes pointed slightly inward.
5. Kick so the toes are just below the water surface.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Holding a kickboard over the head or knees, have the swimmer keep the knees below the water. Have the swimmer hold the kickboard with straight arms over the knees to reduce too much bent knee action.
- ☐ If necessary, assist the swimmer in keeping his/her hips up. Remind the swimmer to push hips up high in the water.
- ☐ With head at about a 45-degree angle from the water, have the swimmer look at his/her feet while kicking. Remember, too much head lift will change the buoyancy of the swimmer.
- ☐ Keep kick steady/continuous.
- ☐ Have swimmer kick so that toes barely break the water surface, in a motorboat style. Remind swimmers to kick in a fast, relaxed way.

Practice backstroke flutter kick for one pool length

Teaching Points

1. Assume the back float position in waist deep water by grasping the pool edge (if at water level), a flotation device or free float.
2. Place the head at a 45-degree angle, eyes looking toward the feet.
3. Keep body and legs in alignment in the water.
4. Keep knees together, toes pigeon-toed.
5. Keep feet under water.
6. Perform the backstroke kick, arms extended over the head with or without a kickboard.
7. Perform the backstroke kick with arms extended over the knees, and, when confident, have the swimmer kick with arms extended behind body (i.e., in a streamline position).
8. Kick one length of the pool without stopping. Kick a short distance and gradually increase with development of this skill.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Have the swimmer assume the back float.
- ☐ If necessary, stand beside the swimmer to provide support under the shoulders and hips.
- ☐ Assist the swimmer by providing support if necessary. Gradually eliminate assistance.
- ☐ Place a flotation device around swimmer's waist, if necessary, for reassurance.
- ☐ Have the swimmer kick while keeping head from turning side to side.
- ☐ Keep up a steady kick with toes just below the water surface.
- ☐ Kick from the hips. Knees may be bent slightly, legs and ankles relaxed.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl



Teaching the Backstroke – Arm Stroke

Practice the push and glide, add arm action

This exercise can also be done with coach assistance until the athlete can accomplish the skill independently.

Teaching Points

1. Arm straight over shoulder.
2. Brush ear with top of arm.
3. Thumb out first.



Practice pull along lane rope with one arm action. This encourages a bent arm action.

Teaching Points

1. Reach back and pull through to the thigh.
2. Straight - Bend – Straight.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl

Practice backstroke arm stroke on land

Teaching Points

1. The athlete stands on pool deck.
2. Extend both arms straight over the head.
3. Head is tilted forward at a 45-degree angle.
4. With either hand, begin in a straight line as close to the body as possible toward the feet.
5. Keep the fingertips pointed up toward the water surface.
6. Wrist is slightly bent.
7. Press the hand past the hips to the upper thigh.
8. Recover the arm and hand to the starting position with arm straight.
9. Repeat same movement with the other arm.
10. Keep the back, hips, and legs straight.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to enter the water little-finger first to ensure that the catch is correct.
- ☐ In the water, the swimmer is encouraged to push the hips up.
- ☐ The first arm/hand enters the “water,” same plane as the head, with the elbow straight.
- ☐ Ensure that the side of the hand and little finger are pointed downward.
- ☐ A straight line is drawn with the hand as close to the body as possible, fingertips pointing up.
- ☐ Swimmer’s hand will enter the water in line with the shoulder width.
- ☐ Backstroke swimmers are aware not to cross over their center line, as this will cause rolling of the body.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl



Practice backstroke arm stroke in shallow water

Teaching Points

1. The arms are fully extended beside swimmer to maintain a better balance in the water.
2. With either hand, begin by lifting the hand from the water, thumb first with the side of the hand, wrist slightly bent.
3. Shoulder rotates slightly as the hand presses toward the bottom of the pool.
4. Draw a straight line with the hand as close to the body as possible, fingertips pointing toward the water surface.
5. Press the hand toward the feet, finishing past the hips.
6. Recover to the starting position, keeping the arm straight.
7. Repeat the same motion with the other hand.



Exit water with thumb first.



Lift extended arm straight up and begin shoulder rotation.



Continue shoulder rotation and enter water, little-finger first.



Draw straight line, pressing hand to feet.



Finish with hand past hips.

WATCH
VIDEO





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Have the swimmer use a pull buoy, if necessary, to keep feet and legs elevated.
- ☐ Support the swimmer in the back float. Have the swimmer practice with one arm until the stroke is correct. Switch and practice with the other arm.
- ☐ Guide the swimmer's hand along the body, past the hips, finishing with the arm fully extended. The hand will be alongside the thigh.
- ☐ Have the swimmer keep his/her shoulders back, head tilted forward at a 45-degree angle, eyes looking toward the feet.
- ☐ Body rotates slightly to the side of the arm stroke.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to push hips up.

Practice complete backstroke using both the arm stroke and kick, and progress to swimming backstroke for 15 meters

Teaching Points

1. Assume the back float in waist-deep water.
2. Arms are extended over the head.
3. Head is kept still, with eyes looking toward the feet.
4. Begin and maintain kicking with the backstroke kick.
5. Perform the arm stroke while kicking.
6. The arms rotate in opposition to each other.
7. Lift the shoulder to assist in leading the recovery hand.
8. Roll the shoulders, keeping head still, which will assist in leading the recovery.
9. Have the swimmer perform the backstroke for three to five full strokes.
10. Use fins with the swimmer's kick to help maintain a high body position and aid in working on the arm action.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Hips and shoulder roll slightly with each stroke.
- ☐ Breathing pattern: Inhale on right arm recovery. Exhale on left arm recovery.
- ☐ Coach may assist by holding hips up as the swimmer performs the stroke, or have the swimmer perform the skill using fins.
- ☐ Swimmer may hold a small kickboard on their stomach with one hand, and practice with one arm at a time while kicking.

Practice push and glide, start leg action, add arm action

Teaching Points

1. Continuous kick.
2. Breathe normally.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Backstroke/Back Crawl



Practice complete stroke, increasing distance as stroke develops

Teaching Points

1. Continuous arm action.
2. Lead with the hand.
3. Hand draws an “S” on its side under the water.
4. Eyes open - look toward the ceiling (roof/sky).

Backstroke – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Knees bending too much during kick.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage swimmer to relax legs and ankles. • Kick from the hips. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice kick by using board and extending board and arms over knees. 2. Kick short distances. Board will help stop too much knee bend.
Feet and hips are too low in water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check swimmers body position. • Encourage swimmer to push hips up to top of water. • Encourage a continuous kick with the feet making a little splash. • Check swimmers head position. If head is too high hips will drop. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of fins will encourage the swimmer to push hips up. 2. Practice kick with and without kickboard. 3. Encourage the swimmer to practice a streamlined kick. 4. Practice kick with head tilted back, eyes to roof.
Swimmer’s body rolls in the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimmer is over-rotating. • Check for correct hand entry. • Check that swimmer’s hands are not crossing over center line of body. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice specific drills and encourage swimmer to enter water with arms straight. 2. Overexaggerate hand entry. 3. Ask swimmer to enter shoulder-width or wider.
Too much splash when hands enter the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for correct hand entry. • Encourage swimmer to enter water with little finger first. 	Practice specific hand entry drill, thumb up/rotation of hand/little finger in.



Coaches Tips for Backstroke – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Break down the teaching of the whole stroke.
2. Make use of fins to help develop upper body movement/arm action.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development Breaststroke



Skill Progression – Breaststroke

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Swim breaststroke on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform breaststroke with rhythmic breathing for one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform two breaststroke turns in a row after swimming one to two pool lengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Breaststroke

Breaststroke is one of the four competitive strokes. It is also a valuable survival stroke. When swimming the breaststroke the swimmer is prone in the water, and the arm and leg actions are symmetric. The swimmer breathes in at the beginning of each arm stroke.

Breaststroke is the only competitive stroke where the arm recovery is carried out under water and where a greater amount of frontal resistance is experienced. The arm action is an out sweep, down sweep, in sweep and up sweep with recovery in a streamline position.

The leg kick in breaststroke is probably the most difficult of all kicks for swimmers to master and may take some time. The leg action is simultaneous and is sometimes described as a “whip kick.” In addition to the breathing, the correct timing of the arms and legs is very important.

Swimmers are encouraged to develop good streamlining skills when performing the breaststroke, and correct turns and finishes need to be reinforced. The teaching of a “split stroke” at the start and turn phase of the swim is very important.

Teaching the Breaststroke Kick

Practice the breaststroke kick on pool deck

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer lies face down on the pool deck.
2. Legs are fully extended, knees and ankles together, toes pointed.
3. Pull the heels straight up toward the buttocks.
4. Turn the toes out.
5. Keep heels about same width as hips.
6. Kick straight back.
7. Finish with toes pointed.

Practice the breaststroke kick on pool edge

Teaching Points

1. Have the swimmer sit on the pool edge with legs together, heels to wall.
2. Swimmer turns the feet out, making a “V” shape – dorsi-flexed.
3. Keeping the knees together, move the heels along wall.
4. Have the swimmer kick around—“whip”—till both feet are outstretched in front, toes pointed up.
5. Return heels to wall.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ When the swimmer lies on his/her stomach on the pool deck, it will keep the knees from coming up under the stomach.
- ☐ Initially, you may have to hold the feet so that the toes are flexed out; bring the heels up to the buttocks.
- ☐ Help the swimmer maintain a 90-degree angle at the knees.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke



Practice the breaststroke kick while in the water

Teaching Points

1. Standing in chest-deep water, grasp side of pool at water level if possible.
2. Holding on to side of the pool, extend body to prone position.
3. The legs are extended, knees and feet together.



4. Draw heels up to the buttocks.
5. Turn feet out, with heels about the same width as the hips.



6. Kick backward, keeping the heels close to the water surface.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer stands in waist-deep water, grabs the side of the pool, holding onto the gutter.
- ☐ Assist the swimmer, if necessary, to keep hips up while practicing the kick.
- ☐ Make sure the knees are not coming up under the stomach by bringing the heels up to the buttocks.
- ☐ Turn the toes out. Hold the feet if needed, assisting the swimmer to feel the toes pointing out.
- ☐ With the heels at the buttocks, separated approximately the width of the hips, kick backward until the feet are together with legs fully extended.
- ☐ Ensure that you do not over-rotate the knees when helping the swimmer to turn the feet out.

Practice the breaststroke kick for 15 meters

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer stands in chest-deep water.
2. Swimmer holds a kickboard with one hand on each side, arms fully extended.



3. Swimmer performs the breaststroke kick for 15 meters.



4. Swimmer executes two to three kicks in a row with his/her face in the water.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer stands in chest-deep water.
- ☐ Swimmer holds a kick board with hands on both sides, keeping the arms straight.
- ☐ Swimmer practices the breaststroke kick for 15 meters.
- ☐ Follow behind the swimmer, holding his/her feet and guiding them through the proper movement if needed.
- ☐ Two kickboards may be used, one under each arm for better balance.
- ☐ Swimmer may hold a board to his/her chest. This will help with buoyancy, keeping legs together.
- ☐ In a streamlined position, have swimmer push off wall, do two to three breaststroke kicks, then recover to a standing position.
- ☐ With the swimmer's hands at his/her side, have swimmer push off wall on his/her back and perform breaststroke kick on back. This is also known as survival backstroke kick.

OR

- ☐ Have the swimmer bend knees bringing heels back toward buttocks.
- ☐ Turn feet out.
- ☐ Keeping knees together, perform a “whip” kick, bringing feet back together and finishing with the body in a streamlined position.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke

Practice the breaststroke arm stroke on dry land

Teaching Points



1. Standing on the pool deck, bend at the waist and extend the arms in front of the head. Keep palms of the hands facing downward.
2. Flex wrists slightly, fingers pointing slightly down.



3. Begin stroke with the arms pressing outward and downward.
4. As the press continues, the elbows bend to establish a high elbow position.



5. Push the arms and hands as far the shoulders. The hands are pitched inward and pressed together.
6. With the arms and hands squeezed together, the arms are stretched forward, as far as possible, into a streamlined position.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer extends arms all the way forward in a streamline position.
- ☐ Stand on the deck behind the swimmer. Move his/her arms through the proper arm stroke pattern several times.
- ☐ Emphasis is placed on keeping the elbows high and close to the body during the backward press.
- ☐ The hands shoot forward to the recovery position, ready for the next pull.
- ☐ Swimmer stands in chest-deep water and practices the above technique. Encourage swimmer to “feel the water” with each arm pull.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke



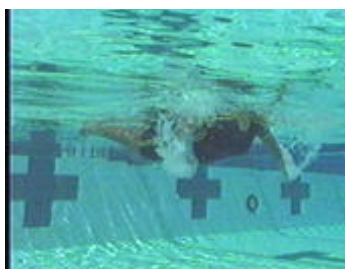
Practice the breaststroke pull in chest-deep water without the kick

Teaching Points

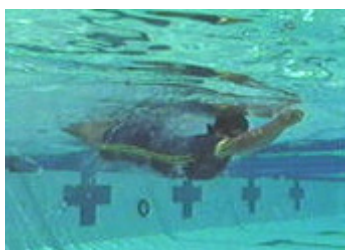
1. Swimmer stands in chest-deep water and places a kickboard or pull buoy between legs.
2. Assume prone float position.
3. Swimmer performs the breaststroke pull.
4. Press the body forward with the hands.
5. When the hands are at the shoulders, “let go” of the water and “shoot” the hands forward to the starting position.
6. As the body slides up and forward, eye contact is made with the end of the pool.
7. At the completion of the stroke, the eyes look back at the pool bottom.
8. Chin is pushed forward to breathe.



Push hands out, slightly wider than shoulders.



Drive hands down, propelling body forward and out.



Hands come together, facing each other, completing the propulsive phase of stroke.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke

Coaching Tips

- ☐ To aid in developing correct arm action, have the swimmer wear fins and use a very gentle fly kick instead of a breaststroke kick. Fins can be used in breaststroke drills where the emphasis is placed on developing and maintaining good arm-stroke technique.
- ☐ Swimmer assumes the prone float position with a flotation device between the legs.
- ☐ Arms are fully extended, pressing against the ears with the back of the hands together; body is streamlined.
- ☐ Eyes are focused on the bottom of the pool.
- ☐ Swimmer presses the hands out, down and in, bringing the elbows to the side of the body, then pushes the arms forward, aligned with the shoulders, to a streamlined position.
- ☐ Swimmer can use a small dolphin kick, using fins, if available, to maintain balance.
- ☐ The coach can also hold the swimmer up at the waist, or have the swimmer use a flotation device.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to make three to five pulls to help develop rhythm and “feel for the water.”
- ☐ Elbows touch the sides of the body when pulling forward.
- ☐ Encourage concentration on pressing with the hands, not leading with the elbows.
- ☐ Try to have the swimmer “feel the water.”



Teaching Breaststroke Breathing – Timing

Practice breaststroke with regular breathing for 15 meters

Teaching Points



1. Stand in chest-deep water, bending at the waist.
2. Take a breath.
3. Put face in the water and take a streamline position.



4. As the arm stroke starts, push the chin forward just enough for the mouth to clear the surface, and take a breath as the hands come under the shoulders.



5. “Jump” the hands forward to recovery.



6. Perform the breaststroke, taking a breath every stroke, as described above, for 15 meters.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Breaststroke

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Have the swimmer assume the prone float position.
- ☐ Begin with the arms extended fully over the head – streamlined.
- ☐ Eyes are looking slightly forward at the bottom of the pool.
- ☐ Begin stroke with the back of the hands together and the palms of the hands facing down.
- ☐ Palms are pressed out and up to start, along with the elbows bending.
- ☐ Heels begin their kick at the point where the hands begin their press.
- ☐ As the hands “jump” forward, the feet are thrust (“whipped”) backward.
- ☐ The timing rhythm is – pull – kick – hands forward glide.

Breaststroke – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Timing of breathing/arm stroke incorrect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the position of the swimmer’s arms in the pull.• Generally, breathing timing will be incorrect because the hands/arms are being pulled to hips and not under chest.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Using fins, practice correct arm action.2. Use gentle fly kick when performing this drill.
Timing of breathing incorrect.	Check position of head during recovery.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emphasize importance of placing face in water only to hair line.2. Do not to get top of head wet.
Body position angled or pulling to one side.	Check that both leg and arm kicks are simultaneous and same amount of pull/kick is being carried out on each side.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice leg kick with/without board; introduce specific kick drills.2. Practice correct arm pull with/without fins.
Body not moving quickly or far enough under water on start/turn. Arms will be apart.	Ensure that swimmer is in a streamlined position.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice lots of push offs from wall in a streamlined position.2. Try to get swimmer to see how far he/she can go under water.
Uneven leg kick/or hips higher on one side during swim.	Ensure that both feet are turned out correctly and that leg kick is even and simultaneous.	Practice specific drills to encourage correct leg kick and body position.



Coaches Tips for Breaststroke – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Ensure swimmer can maintain a good streamlined body position.
2. Check that the swimmer is able to turn feet out without hurting.
3. Check that the swimmer has good knee rotation.
4. Use fins to help develop and maintain good arm action.
5. Introduce specific drills to help with leg kick, arm action and whole stroke.
6. Break the skill down.
7. Check correct timing of leg kick/arm action and breathing.
8. Encourage swimmer to always finish off on the wall, touching with two hands.

Tips for Competition

1. Practice lots of starts and finishes.
2. Ensure that swimmer can perform a split stroke; if not, encourage good streamlining.
3. Always practice finishing on a full stroke and touching wall with two hands.
4. Remind swimmer not to look around while competing. Doing so may cause a disqualification and may cause hips to drop to one side.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Butterfly

Skill Progression – Butterfly

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Swim butterfly on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform butterfly using dolphin kick for 15 meters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform butterfly with rhythmic breathing for one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform a butterfly turn after swimming butterfly without stopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform two butterfly turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Butterfly

The butterfly stroke is generally taught after the swimmer has established basic skills in the other three competitive strokes. The butterfly stroke relies on good timing and simultaneous arm and leg actions. The stroke is best taught by breaking it down into three phases: kick, arm action and breathing.

1. A propulsive kick, called a “dolphin” kick, is used to help move the swimmer through the water. The swimmer’s legs stay together and move simultaneously. The kick consists of a downbeat and an upbeat action.



2. The arm action is simultaneous with both arms recovering over the waterline. The swimmer’s hands enter the water in line with shoulder width. The arm pull/action consists of the entry and catch, out sweep, in sweep, up sweep, and arm recovery.
3. The breathing phase of the stroke starts when the arms begin to sweep outward during the catch, and the swimmer will have taken a breath during the start of the arm recovery. The swimmer’s head will be facing forward, and it is good to encourage the swimmer to breath after every second arm cycle (i.e., every second stroke).



Teaching the Butterfly – Arm Stroke

Practice the butterfly arm stroke on dry land

Teaching Points



1. Stand on pool deck, bend at waist and extend the arms straight over the head with the arms pressed against ears.
2. Keep the hands pressed together with palms facing down, fingers pointing slightly down and ready for the catch position.



3. Press hands outside the shoulders, outward and downward.



4. Finish the pull with the hands pressing under and past hips.



5. Recover hands with elbows high.
6. Sweep the hands forward over head with the hands relaxed.



7. Return to start position.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Butterfly



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Arms begin the stroke with the hands shoulder-width apart.
- ☐ The thumb and forefinger lead hands.
- ☐ Elbows and shoulders follow through the same hole in the water created by the hands.
- ☐ As the hands move through the stroke, they move in an hourglass (or keyhole) pattern.
- ☐ The arms' speed increases as the stroke progresses.
- ☐ The hands explode past the hips to the recovery phase.
- ☐ As the hands recover, arms will be barely over the water surface with elbows slightly bent.
- ☐ Stand behind swimmer, holding each arm, guiding them through correct arm pattern.

Practice the butterfly stroke in chest-deep water

Teaching Points



1. Pushing from pool side, take a prone float position, arms extended straight over the head.



2. Begin the stroke with the arms fully extended over the head and the back of the hands together, pressing outward and downward, fingers pointing slightly downward.



3. Move both arms at the same time in an hourglass motion.



4. Hands exit the water with straight elbows at the completion of the stroke.
5. Kick again, and push the chin forward to breathe when the hands exit the water.
6. Sweep the arms over the water with the arms relaxed.
7. Complete three to five arm strokes without pull buoy.





Coaching Tips

- ☐ Avoid placing a flotation device around the waist, if possible. This will create more drag.
- ☐ It may be helpful to practice with one arm at a time, holding a small kickboard with the other.
- ☐ Have the swimmer take at least two strokes before breathing.

Teaching the Butterfly Kick

Practice the butterfly kick in shallow water.

Teaching Points

1. Stand in chest-deep water, assume prone float position.
2. Kick the same as the freestyle flutter kick, moving both legs together.
3. Bend knees on the whip-like downbeat.
4. Keep legs straight on the upbeat.
5. Point toes slightly inward.
6. Keep the heels under the water.
7. Repeat three to five times.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ It may be easier to teach the kick first as this will help when teaching the whole body movement.
- ☐ Swimmer stands in chest-deep water and pretends to be a dolphin by pushing off pool bottom.
- ☐ The dolphin kick may also be practiced on the back.
- ☐ Have the swimmer keep the hips fairly flat.
- ☐ It may be easier for the swimmer to learn the kick while holding a kickboard.
- ☐ To get the feel, the swimmer may want to practice leapfrogging – pushing off the bottom, leaping up, out and over the water head first.
- ☐ Be careful that the swimmer does not go too deep and hit his/her head on pool bottom.
- ☐ If available, use fins to help develop the kick action and whole body movement created through the kick.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development Butterfly



Practice the butterfly kick for a distance of 15 meters

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer stands in waist-deep water and holds a kickboard with arms extended or kicks without a board with arms extended, whichever is preferred.
2. Assume the prone float position.
3. Kick butterfly kick for one meter.
4. Use fins if available.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Make sure the toes are pointed slightly inward (pigeon-toed).
- ☐ Make sure the feet stay under the water with the heels just barely breaking the surface.
- ☐ Swimmer can also practice this kick on the back holding a kickboard on the stomach.
- ☐ Add use of fins, if available, encouraging fast, “little” kicks.

Teaching Butterfly Arm Stroke with Kick

Practice the butterfly stroke with periodic breathing, arm stroke and kick for 15 meters

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer stands in chest-deep water and assumes prone float position, arm extended straight over the head.
2. Begin stroke with two butterfly kicks.
3. Start first stroke with the hands pressing outward and downward.



4. Move the arms in an hourglass motion—“S” shape.
5. Push the chin forward to breathe as the hands exit the water.
6. Kick again when the hands exit the water.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Butterfly

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer is encouraged to start breathing on the start of the stroke to ensure that correct timing is developed.
- ☐ The coach may support the swimmer under the waist, if necessary.
- ☐ The swimmer kicks twice for each full stroke.
- ☐ The first kick happens as the hands enter the water. The second kick is made as the hands exit past the hips.
- ☐ Swimmer pushes chin forward and up to breathe on the start of the initial arm stroke.
- ☐ Swimmer tucks the chin back down just as the hands enter the water.
- ☐ Swimmer says out loud: “Kick in (hands in)” as the hands enter the water and “Kick out (hands out)” as the hands leave the water.
- ☐ Two kicks per full arm cycle. Practice the stroke on the pool deck, concentrating on pushing the hands outward and then inward until the hands are almost touching under the stomach. The swimmer should practice “exploding” the hands past the hips to assist the recovery.

Butterfly – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Uneven stroke.	Ensure swimmer’s legs and arms are moving simultaneously.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice fly kick with/without fins and kickboard; streamlined on surface and below surface.2. Practice arm action with fins.3. Practice arm rotations on pool deck.
Breathing too late.	Have swimmer start breathing earlier.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use specific drills.2. Swimmer breathes every third or fourth stroke.
Kick is low, body not streamlined and weak kick action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage swimmer to make a strong second kick.• Encourage swimmer to move whole body, not just the legs.	Swimmer practices whole body movement with fins.
Swimmer doing short, fast strokes with body upright, (i.e., feet and hips too low).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swimmer may not be pulling through past legs before recovery phase.• Check for two kicks per arm cycle.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice kicking fast over short distances with/without fins.2. Encourage high body position and feet breaking waterline.3. Practice pulling arms through to side of legs; emphasize touching thumbs to side of legs before arm comes out of water.4. Practice without breathing for short distances so that breathing is not part of the stroke.



Coaches Tips for Butterfly – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Practice butterfly kicking with/without fins.
2. Encourage fast, little kicks.
3. Encourage whole body movement.
4. Encourage swimmer to have legs together, ankles relaxed and a slight knee bend during kick.
5. Practice kicking with both arms outstretched, face the bottom, complete four kicks, then lift chin to waterline to breathe.
6. Encourage movement from hips.
7. Check arm pull through water, thumbs pushing through at side of legs before recovery.
8. Practice arm recovery in line with shoulder width.
9. Check for correct hand placement ready for catch.
10. Check timing of breathing/arm action.

Tips for Competition

1. Check any medical conditions that may restrict swimmer from performing butterfly.
2. Encourage good streamlining on entry and turn.
3. Encourage streamlining off blocks/wall using strong butterfly kick.
4. Encourage swimmer to breathe every second stroke.
5. Check for two-handed touch on finish and at turns.
6. Encourage swimmer not to look around when competing as this may cause hips to drop, causing uneven leg kick.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Individual Medley

Individual Medley

The individual medley is one of the most challenging of all swimming events. However, it can also be one of the most fun for the swimmer. The swimmer must change strokes throughout the race using the correct turns and tempo for each of the strokes.

Regardless of the distance of the individual medley event, the swimmer must swim the race using the four competitive strokes in the correct order. The athlete swims each stroke for one-fourth of the race. The swimmer begins the race from a standing or in-water start in the order of:

- Butterfly
- Backstroke
- Breaststroke
- Freestyle (any other stroke, generally freestyle).

To train for individual medley events, the coach must teach all four strokes and appropriate turns. To better prepare for a race, focus more attention on the athlete's weakest stroke. During the race, the coach will want to make sure the swimmer concentrates on the weakest stroke, not expending all their energy in one particular phase of the race.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Break down the event by practicing each stroke individually.
- ☐ Practice turns from one stroke to another.
- ☐ Practice two strokes at a time. For example, butterfly to backstroke, backstroke to breaststroke or breaststroke to freestyle.
- ☐ Place more emphasis on practicing the medley swimmer's weakest stroke.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to perform turns quickly and correctly.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer not to look around while performing turns.
- ☐ Practice talking through the event with the athlete, checking to be sure he/she remembers the correct stroke order.

Individual Medley – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Swimmer begins to swim incorrect stroke after turn.	Practice event during training sessions.	Ask athlete to name the correct order of the strokes.
Swimmer rolls onto stomach (prone) at turn from butterfly to backstroke.	Emphasize that swimmer must be on back after touching wall in butterfly leg of event.	Have swimmer swim into wall, butterfly from flags, touch wall with both hands, bring both knees up and feet to wall pushing off wall on back in streamlined position and into backstroke leg of the event.
Swimmer does not touch wall with both hands in butterfly and breaststroke turns.	Emphasize that swimmer must touch wall with both hands on butterfly and breaststroke turn.	Practice swimming into wall, butterfly and breaststroke from the flags and touching with both hands.



Coaches Tips for Individual Medley – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Break down event by practicing each stroke individually.
2. Break down event by practicing each swim-leg turn individually.
3. Practice both in-water start and block start in butterfly leg.
4. Practice correct changeover from one stroke to the other on turn.
5. Practice counting strokes from flags to wall in backstroke.

Tips for Competition

1. Encourage swimmer not to look around when performing turn.
2. Encourage swimmer to finish on wall, correctly, with a two-hand touch in butterfly and breaststroke.
3. Encourage swimmer to finish each stroke on a full stroke onto wall.
4. Encourage swimmer not to turn onto front prone position when turning from butterfly to backstroke.
5. Encourage swimmer to make turns fast and as streamlined as possible.



Swimming Starts

There are basically three different ways in which a swimmer may perform a start.

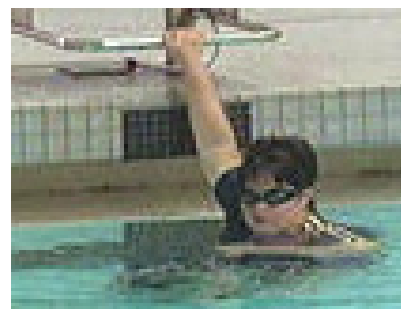
Grab Start



Track Start



In Water Start



Standing starts such as a grab or track start may be performed on the blocks or from the edge of the pool. A swimmer who is unable to do a standing start or is competing in backstroke events will perform a water start.

All starts are signaled by the starter who will whistle the swimmers onto the blocks or into the water. The starter will then command the swimmers to “Take your marks.” The swimmers leave the block or end of the pool when the starter signals with a gun or whistle.

Starting is a very important aspect of competitive swimming, and, in major competitions, a one start rule may be enforced; therefore, it is important that the swimmer is given regular instruction in this skill. Be aware of certain medical conditions which may restrict swimmers from practicing out of water starts. Remember, when teaching starting, to break down the skill and make it fun.

In-Water Starts – Freestyle, Breaststroke and Butterfly

The freestyle, breaststroke and butterfly in-water starts are similar. The teaching points below can be applied to each of these strokes.

Teaching Points

1. Hold onto side of pool while in the water with either hand.
2. Place both feet on the wall, toes pointing toward side wall.
3. Bend both knees slightly.
4. Extend the other hand in the water toward the other end of the pool.
5. Ensure the swimmer is looking forward to the other end of the pool.
6. Push off the side into the prone position in a streamlined body position, kicking, where appropriate.
7. Begin the appropriate stroke as soon as the body is fully extended.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts



Freestyle In-Water Start



Breaststroke In-Water Start



Starting position – hold onto starting block



Achieve a streamline position



Begin stroke





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts

Butterfly In-Water Start



Starting position – hold onto starting block



Push off into prone, streamline position



Begin kick



Begin full butterfly stroke



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Place the swimmer's feet under the body against the wall.
- ☐ Point the hand not holding the wall toward the other end of the pool.
- ☐ Provide a starting signal.
- ☐ Have the swimmer push hard off the wall into the prone position.
- ☐ For freestyle and butterfly, begin the kick as soon as the body is fully extended - streamlined.
- ☐ For breaststroke, the swimmer may take one underwater pull and one kick before coming to the surface. This is also known as a split stroke.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts



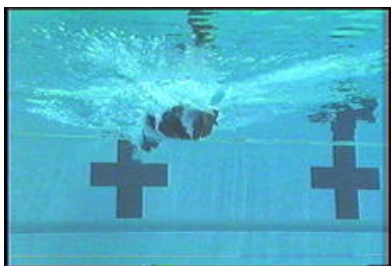
Safety Notes

According to the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules Book, prior to beginning instruction in butterfly, the coach reviews each athlete's medical information form and determines whether the athlete has been screened for Atlantoaxial Subluxation. Restrictions from participating in the above events apply until the athlete has been examined, including x-rays of full extension and flexion of the neck, by a physician who has been briefed on the Atlantoaxial Subluxation. Water depth must be a minimum of six-feet deep before teaching the dive start from the deck.

In-Water Starts – Backstroke

Practice the backstroke while in the water.

Teaching Points



1. Stand in the water, facing the starting end of the pool.
2. Hold onto the pool edge or end of starting block with both hands.
3. Bend knees.
4. Bring both feet up on the wall.
5. Point the toes straight up to the surface, ensuring that the toes remain under the waterline.
6. Throw both hands out and back toward the opposite end of the pool after the starting signal.
7. Push off with the legs.
8. Extend the arms over the head and kick, using a flutter kick or butterfly kick until the body is flat - streamlined.
9. Swimmer kicks hard until the body is fully extended. The swimmer maintains a constant kick throughout the start and swim. The body is in a streamlined position to reduce as much friction as possible.
10. Begin the backstroke once the hands have broken the water surface.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Provide a starting signal for the swimmer.
- ☐ Help the swimmer arch his/her back as he/she throws his/her hands out and back.
- ☐ Tell the swimmer to push off hard with his/her legs. Describe the leg action as “being like a spring.”



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts

Pool-Edge Starts – Freestyle, Breaststroke and Butterfly

Practice the freestyle, butterfly and breaststroke start while standing on the edge of the pool.

Teaching Points

Breaststroke Pool-Edge Start



1. Stand on pool, curling toes over edge.
2. Bend slightly at waist.



3. Extend both arms behind the body.
4. Look toward the opposite end of the pool.



5. Throw both arms forward at the same time.
6. Push off of the pool edge as the arms are extended.
7. Drop the head just before entering the water, squeezing the arms close to the swimmer's head achieving a streamlined body position.



8. Begin the kick immediately for freestyle or butterfly.
9. Perform a split stroke, then pull down and kick under water for breaststroke.
10. Start swimming once the hands/body have broken the water.





Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer continues to look at the far end of the pool. If the swimmer is visually impaired, he/she needs to look toward the starter.
- ☐ Assist the swimmer to feel balanced as he/she leans forward, so there is no false start.
- ☐ Provide a starting signal.
- ☐ Tell the swimmer to throw his/her arms forward and push off the edge.
- ☐ Have the swimmer reach out as far as possible.
- ☐ Have the swimmer drop his/her head before entering the water—helps the athlete bend slightly at the waist, so the swimmer does not do a belly-flop.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to start kicking immediately after streamlining the body.

Starting-Block Starts – Freestyle, Breaststroke and Butterfly

Practice the freestyle, butterfly and breaststroke start while standing on a starting block. We will illustrate the following starts below. Each of the starting methods uses the basic start techniques described below.

- ♦ Freestyle Grab Start
- ♦ Freestyle Track Start
- ♦ Breaststroke Dive Start
- ♦ Butterfly Grab Start

Teaching Points

1. Stand on starting block, and curl the toes over the front edge of the starting block. For the track start, the swimmer places one foot forward with toes over block edge while the other leg/foot is behind.
2. For the grab start, swimmer's feet may be together or slightly apart, but not wider than the swimmer's shoulders.
3. Grab the front of the starting block upon command.
4. Put head down.
5. Flex knees slightly.
6. Keep hips above feet.
7. Lift the head, throw the arms forward and push off the block upon command.
8. Swimmer drives from the block with the legs.
9. Swimmer drops head just before entering water.
10. Start the correct stroke and kick after entering water and reaching water surface.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Physically assist the swimmer in balancing.
- ☐ Swimmer may grab either the front or sides of block, with either a grab or track start.
- ☐ Stabilize swimmer as he adjusts balance as far forward as possible without falling in the pool.
- ☐ Provide a starting command for the swimmer.
- ☐ Work with the swimmer to have his/her whole body enter through the same hole in the water.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to enter the water in a streamlined position.
- ☐ By grabbing the block, the forward start enables athlete to lean forward a little more. Hopefully, this will provide a quicker reaction to the starting signal.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts

Freestyle Grab Start

Teaching Points

1. Curl toes over starting block. Feet are together or slightly apart.
2. Head is down.
3. Knees are slightly flexed.



4. Lift head, throwing the arms forward, while pushing off the block
5. Drive from the block with the legs.
6. Drop head just before entering water.



7. Assume streamline position.



8. Start correct stroke and kick after entering water and reaching water surface.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts



Freestyle Track Start

Teaching Points

1. Curl toes over starting block. One foot is forward with toes over block edge while the other foot is behind.
2. Head is down.
3. Knees are slightly flexed.



4. Lift head, throwing the arms forward, while pushing off the block
5. Drive from the block with the legs.
6. Drop head just before entering water.



7. Assume streamline position.



8. Start correct stroke and kick after entering water and reaching water surface.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts

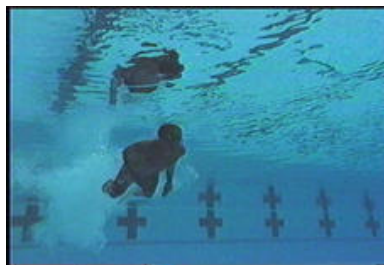
Breaststroke Dive Start

Teaching Points

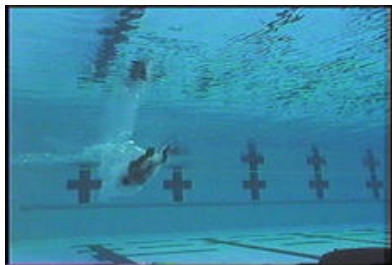
Push off starting blocks.



Begin first stroke, bring feet together.



Assume streamline position.



Extend legs.



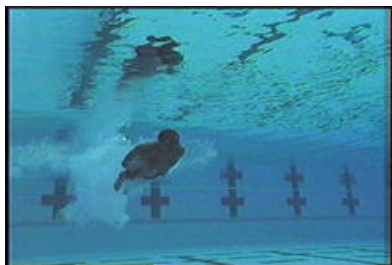
Bring arms out to sides.



Begin second stroke, head breaks water surface.



Propel body forward, pushing arms to legs.



Continue stroke.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts



Butterfly Grab Start

Teaching Points

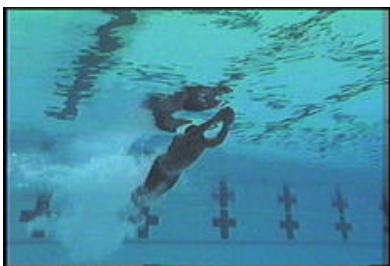
Curl toes over starting block. Feet are together or slightly apart, not greater than shoulder width apart.



Begin first stroke, propelling body forward.



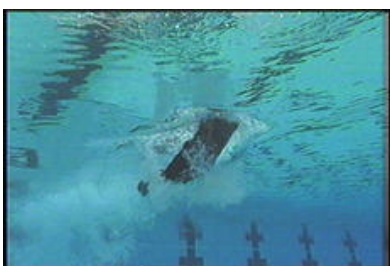
Assume streamline position.



Bring arms forward.



Head and shoulders break water surface.



Continue stroke pattern.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Starts

Swimming Starts – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Swimmer slips off block or edge of pool.	Ensure that swimmer's toes are curled over block or edge.	Practice standing on block with toes over block.
Swimmer enters the water on an angle.	Ensure that the swimmer is well balanced and that movement off edge/block is even.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice jumping forward off the block.2. Encourage the swimmer to look forward, jumping in feet first.
Swimmer's arms are apart during entry into water.	Ensure a streamlined body position - hands together on entry, arms squeezing against ears/head.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice entry into water with one hand on top of the other.2. Preferably the stronger hand underneath as this will be the hand/arm which will pull first.

Coaches Tips for Swimming Starts – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Practice both grab and track start to find which one suits.
2. Practice a streamlined body position in and out of water.
3. Practice dive, using correct start commands.
4. In backstroke, practice streamlining off wall, using either a flutter kick or butterfly kick.
5. Practice pushing off wall, using a split stroke, under water, for breaststroke.
6. Practice starting off edge/block, using a split stroke under water for breaststroke.



Swimming Turns

Teaching Freestyle Turns

Freestyle Pivot Turn

Teaching Points



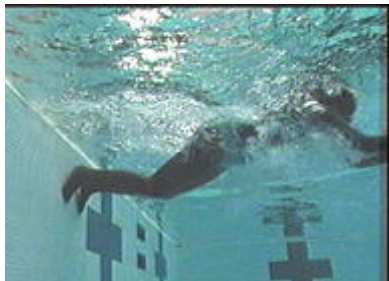
1. Stand in chest-deep water approximately 10 meters from pool edge.
2. Swim freestyle to the wall.
3. Extend arm on the last stroke before wall to grab edge of pool gutter.
4. Pull body to the side of pool.



5. Pull legs under body and begin to turn.



6. Take a breath and complete turn.



7. Extend both hands over head, pressing arms against the ears.
8. Kick three to five kicks before beginning freestyle stroke.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Help the swimmer find a place to grab wall.
- ☐ Help the swimmer bring feet up under body by guiding feet so they are parallel to the wall.
- ☐ Swimmer pushes off, beginning kick immediately after feet leave the wall.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Turns

Freestyle Flip/Tumble Turn

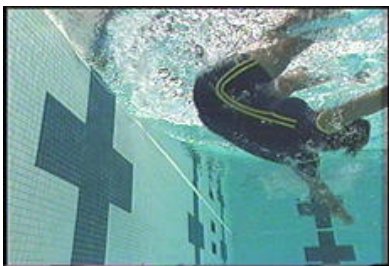
Hands do not touch wall.

Teaching Points

1. Stand in chest-deep water approximately 10 meters from the wall.
2. Swim freestyle to within 3 meters of the wall.
3. Breathe before taking the last stroke.
4. Finish last stroke before the wall with both hands next to the hips.
5. Place the feet about 6-8 inches below the water surface, parallel with the bottom.
6. Extend arms over the head, pressing the upper arms against the ears.
7. Push off the wall, kicking four times or as many as necessary before taking a stroke.
8. Take at least one full stroke before breathing, for better body position.
9. Swimmer kicks legs hard and lifts the hips as the head drops.
10. Swimmer bends knees slightly.



Complete last stroke before wall with hands close to sides.



Tuck chin, begin rotating body forward and extend arms over head.



Push forcefully off wall with both feet.



Assume streamline position, breathe, then begin stroke.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Turns



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer kicks to wall if he is too far away, following the last stroke.
- ☐ Assist swimmer with proper foot placement so he/she is not too shallow or too deep.
- ☐ Swimmer practices a mid-turn drill. Swimmer swims about eight strokes, and then does a somersault in the water. This drill can be done over 25 meters.

Freestyle Turns – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Turning too early into the wall.	Swimmer touches wall with one hand before executing a somersault.	Hands on wall, kick hard, then somersault, pushing off wall in a streamlined position.
Pushing off wall with one foot.	Encourage swimmer to push off with both feet.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Swimmer conducts a vertical somersault, feeling feet pushing off bottom of pool.2. Swimmer feels feet pushing off edge of pool then moves into a streamlined position.



Teaching Backstroke Turns

Practice correct backstroke turn, three out of five times.

Teaching Points

1. Stand in chest-deep water and assume back-float position. Athlete may also swim to the wall.
2. Float on back.
3. Extend one hand toward wall with elbow slightly bent.
4. Swim backstroke to the wall.
5. Use either hand to touch wall and begin the turn.
6. Touch wall with either hand approximately six to eight inches below water surface.
7. Bring knees up almost to the chest.
8. Keep head and shoulders flat.
9. Perform spin by pushing in either direction after the hand touches the wall.
10. Extend both arms over the head into a streamlined position.
11. Push off wall with feet.
12. Finish turn by kicking off wall in a streamlined position; kick using a flutter or butterfly kick.
13. Begin kick immediately after feet leave wall, using either a flutter or butterfly kick.

Coaching Tips

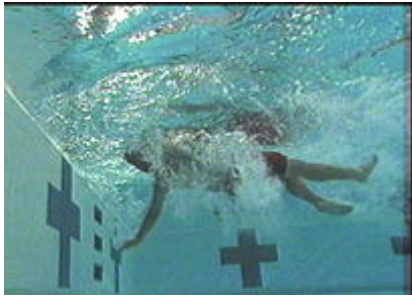
- ☐ Hold swimmer under the hips, if necessary.
- ☐ Assist the swimmer to bring knees up.
- ☐ Help swimmer create a 90-degree angle with the upper legs and hips.
- ☐ Assist swimmer to spin on his/her back while pushing off the wall with his/her hand.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Turns



Backstroke Pivot Turn



Reach toward pool wall with one hand.



Grasp pool wall, bring knees to chest and begin rotating body.



Bring feet to pool wall.



Push off wall with both feet and extend arms over head.



Assume streamline position and begin stroke.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Turns

Backstroke Tumble Turn

Hands do not touch wall.



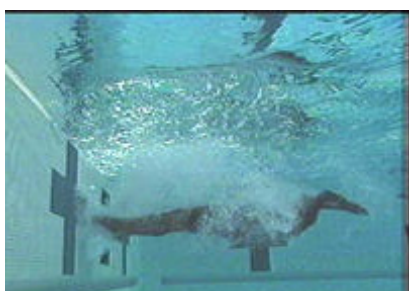
Extend one arm toward pool wall. Reach toward wall, do not touch wall.



After beginning turn, bring both arms to sides and tuck head to chin.



Bring knees to chest, swinging arms out to sides.



Touch pool wall with both feet and push off. Extend arms over head.



Assume a streamline position and begin kick.





Teaching Butterfly and Breaststroke Turns

The butterfly and breaststroke turns are very similar. The only difference is that with a breaststroke turn a split stroke is performed under water directly after the turn. A split stroke is 1.5 strokes under water. When reaching the wall at the turn and finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands. The hands may touch above, below or at the waterline. The hands do not have to be at the same height. However, it is vital that the shoulders remain horizontal.

The swimmer will use a leading arm which will move along the body line, and a rotation of the swimmer's body will occur. It is important that the swimmer maintains a streamlined body position. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water before the arm stroke is performed.



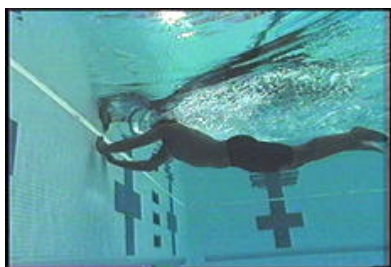
Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Turns

Butterfly and Breaststroke Pivot Turns

Teaching Points

1. Stand in chest-deep water, one arm's length from wall. Your swimmer may also swim toward the wall.
2. Bend at waist. Reach toward wall if swimming.
3. Grab pool gutter or the edge of pool with both hands.
4. Keep shoulders level.
5. Tuck legs underneath the body on the wall. Feet are parallel with the pool bottom.
6. Let go of pool edge with the bottom hand.
7. Throw other hand over head toward far end of pool.
8. Extend both arms over head.
9. Push off wall.



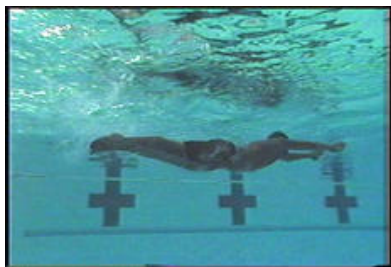
Reach toward pool wall with both hands.



Bring knees to chest and begin turn.



Bring both feet to pool wall and push off with both feet.



Assume a streamline position.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Swimming Turns



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Tell the swimmer to swim either breaststroke turn or butterfly to the wall.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to keep his/her face in the water after the last stroke until both hands have left the wall.
- ☐ Remind swimmer that the push off is on the side, with the body rotating into a prone position.

Practice Butterfly and Breaststroke Turns after Swimming 15 Meters

Teaching Points

1. Stand in chest-deep water 15 meters from wall.
2. Swim either stroke to edge of the water.
3. Touch the edge of the pool with both hands, keeping shoulders level.
4. Keep the face in the water.
5. Bend knees slightly and rotate body in either direction.
6. Tuck legs underneath hips.
7. Take one hand off the wall.
8. Bring the other hand over the head.
9. Extend both arms over the head.
10. Push off wall.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage swimmer to keep his/her face in the water after the last stroke until both hands have left the water.
- ☐ Remind swimmer that the push off is on the side, with the body rotating into a prone position.
- ☐ For breaststroke, the swimmer is allowed one pull down and one kick under the water, the split stroke or 1.5 strokes under water. Swimmer needs to make their body as streamlined as possible when performing a split stroke.
- ☐ For butterfly, the swimmer begins the kick as soon as the feet leave the wall.



Stroke-Development Level Training Plan – Example

Feel free to use any section, skill or drill from this program to teach any particular point. It is also important to regularly assess and revise your athletes' program to meet their needs until the skills are learned. Remember to break down the stroke into smaller skills. This will ensure that each part of the stroke is taught correctly.

Suggested Entry Level

Freestyle

1. Swim 25 meters.
2. Demonstrate relaxed recovery of arms over the water.
3. Long underwater pull.
4. Continuously kick with relaxed legs, feet just below water surface.
5. Coordinated breathing with arm recovery.

Backstroke

1. Kick 25 meters with relaxed legs, feet just below water surface and toes creating bubbles at water surface.
2. Extend one arm forward above head to touch wall when nearing end of a lap.

Water Safety

Have some knowledge of water safety skills, especially in deep water.

Program Length

The 16 training sessions are developed for a once weekly, 16-week season, or a twice weekly, eight-week series.

Length of Training Sessions

10 minutes land and 45 minutes in-water time per session.

Ability Grouping

Use lane ropes whenever they are available. Divide athletes into lanes, according to their swimming ability. Explain the formation for practice. For example, follow one another up the center of the lane, starting from one wall and finishing each lap by touching the wall at the other end of the pool, when possible.

- ☐ Be prepared to modify the program to suit your environment and the interests, needs and skills of your athletes.
- ☐ Be flexible and responsive.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Stroke Development Program Plan

<u>Training Session 1</u>	Introduce: Freestyle kick, arms, breathing, streamlining, backstroke kick
<u>Training Session 2</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 1 Introduce: Freestyle starts and finishes, backstroke arms
<u>Training Session 3</u>	Assess and Revise Training Sessions 1 and 2 Introduce: Backstroke, starts and finishes
<u>Training Session 4</u>	Time Trials 15 meter/25 meter Freestyle and Backstroke
<u>Training Session 5</u>	Assess and Revise Training Sessions 1-3 Introduce: Freestyle catch up without kickboard, tumbles, freestyle turns, backstroke turns
<u>Training Session 6</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 5 Introduce: Freestyle length of stroke training, tumble turn off wall to streamlining
<u>Training Session 7</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 6
<u>Training Session 8</u>	Time Trials 15 meter/25 meter/50 meter Freestyle and Backstroke
<u>Training Session 9</u>	Introduce: Breaststroke kick
<u>Training Session 10</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 9 Introduce: Breaststroke pull and finishes
<u>Training Session 11</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 10 Introduce: Breaststroke starts and turns
<u>Training Session 12</u>	Introduce: Butterfly kick
<u>Training Session 13</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 12 Introduce: Butterfly arms and finishes
<u>Training Session 14</u>	Assess and Revise Training Session 13 Introduce: Butterfly turns and starts
<u>Training Session 15</u>	Assess and Revise all strokes, starts, turns and finishes
<u>Training Session 16</u>	Practice Competition 15-meter/25-meter/50-meter Freestyle and Backstroke 15-meter/25-meter Breaststroke and Butterfly



Training Session 1

Goal To introduce freestyle and backstroke skills.
Freestyle <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kick with board.2. Single arm catch up with a kickboard, practicing bubbles and turning the head to the same side as the arm being used.3. Alternate arm catch up with a kickboard, practicing bubbles and turning the head to breathe on both sides.4. Push and glide drill - streamlining from the wall – moving smoothly into the correct swimming position.
Backstroke <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kick with a kickboard.2. Kick without a kickboard.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teach freestyle kicking drills.2. Teach backstroke arm stroke drills.

Freestyle Kicking Drill

Kick for 15-25 meters, depending on ability, with a kickboard held in front with hands over the far end of board.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Toes just break water surface to make “white water.” Legs are relaxed, knees slightly bent, ankles loose.
- ☐ Hips are high in water.
- ☐ When the swimmer becomes more proficient, have him/her hold board at closest end with arms straight, thumbs up and fingers under. This ensures that the arms are in correct line with the shoulders. It also helps maintain a more streamlined body position and helps keep hips high.



Arm Stroke Drills

Single Arm Catch Up with Kickboard

Emphasis: Practice making bubbles and turning head to the same side as the arm being used

Teaching Points

1. Holding the kickboard in both hands, with arms fully extended in front, swimmers complete six beats of the legs (i.e., counting, 1-2-3, 1-2-3) while exhaling in the water to make bubbles.
2. Next, pull left arm and turn head to left side to breathe, completing the stroke back to the hold position.
3. Repeat on right side.

Coaching Tip

- ☐ Swimmer practices with and without fins to develop proper arm/breathing action.

Alternate Arm Action Catch Up with Kickboard

Emphasis: Practice making bubbles and turning the head to breathe on both sides - bilateral breathing.

Teaching Points

1. Same as Single Arm Catch Up with a Kickboard
2. Use arms alternately, and turn to breathe on alternate sides.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Learning to breathe to both sides will help develop an even, fluid stroke and will ensure even development of the upper body.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to start learning terms like “bilateral.”
- ☐ Swimmer practices with and without fins to develop proper arm/breathing action.

Push and Glide Drill – Streamlining

As skills develop, the swimmers will be able to develop their streamlining to go past the backstroke flags before resurfacing, in readiness for competitive swimming.

Teaching Points

1. One hand is placed on top of the other.
2. Arms are held straight, with elbows behind the ears (can be referred to as an ear sandwich).
3. A breath is taken.
4. An underwater push off wall is encouraged at the beginning of all drills. This drill is known as torpedoes.

Coaching Tip

- ☐ Swimmers are taught streamlining to get them in the habit of always protecting their heads on entry into the water from all heights and takeoffs, as well as the wall, for efficient swimming.



Backstroke Kicking Drills

Kick on Back with a Kickboard

Teaching Points

1. Hold kickboard. One hand is on each side of the board. Demonstrate thumbs up and fingers under board.
2. Arms are stretched over knees; legs are kicking continuously.
3. Shoulders and head are back and relaxed.
4. Chest and hips are pushing up.
5. Knees bend slightly on the downbeat and straighten on the up beat, with toes turned in naturally.
6. Keep the feet just below water surface, creating bubbles/splashes at the surface.



Kick on Back without the Kickboard

Teaching Points

1. As above, except the arms are kept by the side.
2. Hands gently scull up and down to help keep balance and help movement along pool.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Training Session 2

Goal <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assess and revise freestyle and backstroke skills introduced in Training Session 1.2. To introduce the following backstroke skills.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Both arms being used alternately with a continuous kick.<input type="checkbox"/> Practice skill, using fins.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Revise freestyle and backstroke drills.2. Introduce backstroke arm stroke.

Backstroke – Both Arms Used Alternately with a Continuous Kick

Teaching Points

1. Each arm is lifted first and enters the water with the arm beside the ear.
2. Little finger enters first; the thumb leaves the water first.
3. The arm then pulls straight to the leg, about 15-20 centimeters under the water surface.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Ensure that the little finger enters the water first, so that the palm is turned out and the arm pulls against the water. The stroke is completed when the arm/hand is against the swimmers leg.
- ☐ The arm then returns to the surface, thumb first.
- ☐ The kick must be continuous throughout the arm stroke.
- ☐ Practice skill using fins, as they will help with the development of the arm stroke.



Training Session 3

Training Session 3 is the same as Training Session 2, except a diving section has been added. Be sure to confirm any diving restrictions prior to training. Teach anyone with diving restrictions on water-start techniques.

Goal

1. To assess and revise freestyle and backstroke skills practiced in Training Session 2.
2. To introduce the following freestyle skills.
 - ☐ Dive starts and streamlining (using grab start where possible) – only if suitable pool space is available.
 - ☐ In-water starts for athletes with diving restrictions.
 - ☐ The importance of finishing into the wall on every occasion.
3. To introduce the following backstroke skills.
 - ☐ Backstroke start.
 - ☐ Backstroke finishes – the correct ruling on finishing a backstroke race.

Warm-Ups

Stretches

Dry Land Drills

Water Warm-Ups

Use Training Session 2 water practice plans and add the following dive start practice. It is imperative that you ensure that your athletes have clearance to dive before starting this phase of the program. An in-water start drill is described below.

Dive Start Practice

Introduce diving in its elementary forms of kneeling or sitting during the Learn to Swim or Stroke Development Level. The emphasis is placed on keeping the chin tucked into the chest. Throughout the dive, the arms must be extended behind the ears. The swimmer is encouraged to enter the water fingers first.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Always ensure the swimmer is in a streamline position when executing dive starts.
- ☐ Have swimmers stand at the edge of the pool, feet no wider than hips or shoulders, with toes curled over the edge for a safe grip.
- ☐ Bend the knees slightly, the streamlined arms pointed to a spot in the pool approximately three meters from the swimmer, and tuck ears under the elbows.
- ☐ The swimmer tips forward and straightens the knees without moving the head or arms until after entry has been executed.
- ☐ As proficiency increases, a grab start is encouraged.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Grab Start for Freestyle Starts

Swimmers are encouraged to stand with heels at the back of the starting blocks before each dive. On “Take your marks,” a step forward is taken to allow the feet to be placed at the front edge of the block. The knees are bent and the body relaxed. The swimmer will grab or hold onto the front of the block with two hands. Hands are placed between legs.

On the “Go” command, the swimmer executes the following sequence to enter the water.

Teaching Points

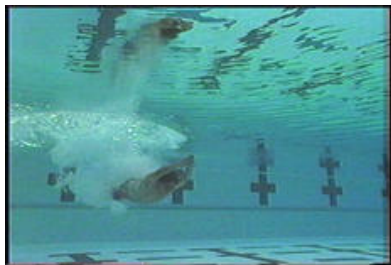
1. Upper body overbalances towards the water.
2. Arms are pushed forward.
3. Legs are straightened and push the body forward. The arms and head are streamlined.
4. Swimmers fingers break the water first, followed by body and feet last.
5. Body follows into the water through the same hole made by the hands; the body is kept straight and streamlined.
6. Six flutter kicks under water; the first stroke starts as the body rises to the surface, one arm recovers over the water.



Grab starting block and lean balanced body toward water.



Extend legs and arms – streamline and push off starting block.



Body follows hands into water, maintaining streamline position.



Body rises to water surface and stroke begins.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Coaching Tips

- ☐ If a swimmer is having trouble entering fingers first, hold a hoop approximately one meter from the pool edge. Encourage swimmers to dive through the hoop, then streamlining - kick - pull one arm first as above.
- ☐ This is the only scheduled practice for dives for this program; however, dives can be practiced whenever time and pool space allow and will be used for time trial and Training Session 16 - Competition Practice.
- ☐ Minimum pool depth is 1.2 meters

In-Water Starts - Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly

An in-water start is permissible at any level of competition. The swimmer must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting block at the starting signal.

Dive Sequence

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer holds rail on starting block or pool edge.
- ☐ Swimmer faces the direction he/she intends to swim, with other hand pointing straight ahead in that direction.
- ☐ Feet are curled, pressed up onto pool wall and must be kept below waterline.
- ☐ On the “Go” command, the swimmer pushes strongly off wall, tucking head down and driving the holding hand to meet up with the other, to get body in a streamlined position.
- ☐ Swimmer maintains a streamlined position with the body gliding just below or on the pool surface.
- ☐ Swimmer commences stroke as from the dive.



Freestyle Finish

A freestyle swimmer finishes the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completing the designated distance.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Train swimmers to reach forward and drive decisively into the wall without slowing down kick.
- ☐ Practice swimming into the wall from five meters out without a breath, driving into the wall with a fully outstretched hand.
- ☐ Practice swimming into the wall from five meters out without a breath, driving into the wall, arm fully outstretched with body on slight lateral position.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Backstroke Starts

Backstroke and medley relay starts are the only mandatory in-water starts in swimming. The swimmer faces the wall, grasps the backstroke handgrip and places feet on the wall with both feet below the surface of the water. It is not permissible to place the feet in the pool gutter or on any other support.

Teaching Points

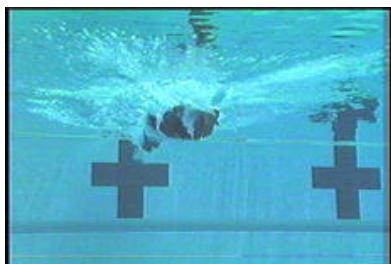
1. On the command “Take your marks,” the swimmer draws themselves up into a crouch position.
2. On the “Go” command, swimmer throws their head and arms back over the head as the legs drive off the wall.
3. Once in the water, in the streamline position, the legs begin to kick, and then one arm commences its pull to the leg.
4. The continuous arm action of backstroke follows.



Assume a crouch position, holding onto starting block.



Drive arms and head backward, pushing strongly off pool wall.



Assume streamline position and begin stroke.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Backstroke Finishes

Backstroke swimmers must learn to touch the wall for safety reasons when finishing a drill, a race or approaching a turn. For this reason, backstroke flags are placed a regulation five meters from the end of the pool, and, where available, are in place for all practices involving backstroke.

Teaching Points

1. Kicking Approach. With one arm by the side and one arm extended above the head, kick toward the wall with the fingers pointing toward the bottom of the pool and with the palm facing towards the wall. As the hand touches the wall, lean on it, allowing the elbow to bend. Do not push off.
2. Practice counting the number of strokes from the backstroke flags to the wall until it is possible to arrive at the wall without looking.
3. Practice counting the number of strokes from the backstroke flags to the wall when swimming slowly and at a fast pace.





Training Session 4

Goal
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The fun of the time-trial races, where swimmers only compete against themselves and the clock. Emphasis is on self-improvement of both time and stroke techniques.2. The stroke, start, turn and finish techniques take on a new meaning when placed in this context and learning should be invigorated and athletes motivated by the experience.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice Time-Trial Skills Training

Time Trials

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Introduce swimmers to the starting mechanism prior to the commencement of the time trials.
- ☐ Place swimmers in events that suit their ability.
- ☐ Strict supervision of swimmers needs to be maintained when an event finishes, not just until swimmers are at the end of the pool.
- ☐ The most important consideration is that the time-trial sessions are run with fun and enthusiasm as their central ingredients and kept as nontechnical and noncompetitive as possible.
- ☐ Emphasis is placed on self-improvement in both times and technique.
- ☐ Records need to be kept, and a chart for each swimmer is encouraged, with a record of their times given to each swimmer to take home.
- ☐ The recorded times become your first record for competition.



Training Session 5

<p>Goal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assess and revise freestyle and backstroke skills practiced in training sessions 1-3.2. To introduce the following freestyle skills.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Alternate arm catch up without a kickboard – breathing to both sides (bilateral).<input type="checkbox"/> Full freestyle stroke – breathing to both sides (bilateral).<input type="checkbox"/> Tumble turn – somersault on spot (away from wall).3. To introduce the following backstroke skills.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Backstroke turn – including underwater push off and streamlining.
<p>Warm-Ups</p>
<p>Stretches</p>
<p>Dry Land Drills</p>
<p>Water Warm-Ups</p>
<p>Water Practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assess and revise the freestyle kicking drill from training session 1.2. Introduce the following freestyle drills.3. Assess and revise the backstroke drills from training sessions 1-3.4. Introduce the following backstroke drills.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Alternate Arm Catch Up without a Kickboard

Teaching Points

1. Alternate arm catch up without a board is done with one arm extended in front, while the other arm completes a stroke accompanied by continuous kicking of the legs.
2. The arm catches up to the front arm and holds position while the legs do six kicks and the swimmer exhales all of their bubbles
3. The other arm completes a stroke.
4. Repeat cycle.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Use the torpedoes skill from training session 1 when pushing off the wall at the beginning of each drill. This ensures that streamlining becomes second nature to all swimmers.
- ☐ Suggest that the swimmer wears fins to maintain a balanced body position.

Freestyle – Full Stroke

Teaching Points

1. Using underwater push off and streamlining, kick about six times as the body rises to the surface.
2. One arm then begins its pull while the other remains extended out in front.
3. Once the first stroke has been completed (i.e., the first hand begins to recover above the water), begin the second stroke with alternate arm.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmers are encouraged to become proficient in breathing on both sides—bilateral breathing—during freestyle. This can help in developing an even, fluid stroke and ensure even development of the upper body.
- ☐ Develop this skill with the use of fins.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Tumble Turn – Somersault Only

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer tucks chin into chest throughout the movement.
2. Knees are tucked up onto chest, with a steady stream of bubbles released from the nose until the body rights itself after rotation. Coach assistance may be necessary.

Forward Somersault



Bend knees slightly and push off with both feet, driving both arms up toward water surface.



Tuck chin, rotate head toward pool bottom, bringing legs parallel to pool bottom. The athlete will be upside down.



Rotate head toward water surface, keeping legs straight and arms out to the sides.



Athlete is now upright as if he/she is sitting on the pool bottom. Legs are extended and parallel to pool bottom with the chin tucked to the chest and arms out and slightly behind.



Bring feet under body and land on pool bottom with both feet.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Forward somersaults are introduced as soon as possible to encourage and familiarize swimmers with the basic movement of the tumble turn. Introduction to somersaults for younger swimmers is usually easier if they can stand on the pool bottom in waist- or chest-deep water.
- ☐ Two or three five-minute sessions on standing somersaults should develop this skill, if the swimmer has come through the beginner's program.
- ☐ Swimmers can be encouraged to dive into the tucked up position from the standing start to see how fast they can somersault.

Four Freestyle Strokes – Tuck and Tumble

Teaching Points

1. Swimmers do four freestyle arm strokes.
2. Tuck and tumble into a forward somersault.
3. Come back up, facing the way they are going.
4. Continue on, and do four more strokes.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Be careful, as too many of these may make the swimmer dizzy.



Backstroke Drills

Backstroke Turn

The tumble turn is taught based upon the athlete's ability level. The pivot turn is acceptable for athletes who are unable to tumble. Both turns are legal; however, the tumble turn is faster.

Pivot Turn

Teaching Points for the Approach

1. The body is on the back at the touch and push off in this turn.
2. Swimmer approaches the wall at full speed.
3. Leading arm is stretched back and palm of the hand touches the wall with fingertips just under the water's surface.
4. Other arm continues the underwater arm pull as in a normal stroke. This helps the body balance and to get closer to the wall.
5. The head is slightly back in the water.



Teaching Points for the Turn

1. The second arm is still aiding balance.
2. The knees tuck. Say to swimmers, "knees to chin"; never, "chin to knees," a common mistake, causing the fault of turning onto the front.
3. Swimmer is in a tucked position slightly on their back.
4. Tucked legs swing near the water surface to the side of the leading arm as if swimmer is sitting on a plate and spinning around to one side.
5. The hands are gathered near the head, palms up.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Teaching Points for the Push Off

1. The body is still tucked with the feet planted slightly apart on the wall and ready to drive.
2. Arms are extended backward, uppermost palms of the hands.
3. Legs and body stretch at the same time as the arms extend.
4. Body is now streamlined and gliding away from the wall.



Teaching Points for the Follow up

The follow up after the glide is identical to the follow up after the start.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Teach swimmers to count their strokes from backstroke flags so that they know when to prepare for their turn.
- ☐ Get athletes to keep arms in the water at drive-off stage. This is a stage where it is common for many athletes to swing their arms out of the water.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Tumble Turn – Roll Over Tumble Turn

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer approaches the wall doing backstroke.
2. Once swimmer is one stroke from the wall, he/she rolls onto stomach and executes a forward roll, bringing both feet over and placing them firmly on the wall, facing up toward the surface of the water and ready to push off.
3. Push off on back in a streamline position with six, strong leg kicks.
4. Begin stroking with one arm and resurface within 10 meters of the wall.



Extend one arm toward pool wall. Reach toward wall, do not touch wall.



Begin turn by bringing both arms to sides and tuck head to chin.



Bring knees to chest, swinging arms out to sides.



Touch pool wall with both feet and push off. Extend arms over head.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ The swimmer must not roll onto stomach until he/she is ready to execute the forward roll. Per the rules, athletes can only leave their backs when executing a turn in a continuous turning action (i.e., no pauses and no glide into the wall).
- ☐ Once the swimmer has left his/her back, swimmer must not make any kick or arm pull to assist him/her in any way.
- ☐ Strokes are counted from the flags, a regulation five meters from wall.
- ☐ Teach swimmers not to look for the wall on their approach.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Backward Somersault

Bend knees slightly, bringing arms behind body.



Push off with both feet, and drive arms up while arching back.



Drive arms up over head, and bring knees to chest.



Let body continue to rotate.



Tuck body tight, and hold legs to chest.



Land on pool bottom with bent knees on both feet.



Stand up.





Training Session 6

<p>Goal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assess and revise freestyle practiced in training sessions 1-3 and 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Kick with board, single and alternate arm catch up, full freestyle stroke and tumble turns.2. To assess and revise backstroke skills practiced in training sessions 1-3 and 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Kick with/without board and with/without fins, backstroke arms and turns.3. To introduce the following freestyle skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Length of the freestyle stroke – using alternate arm drill <input type="checkbox"/> Teach tumble turn onto the wall with a streamline push off. <input type="checkbox"/> Teach pivot turn to swimmers not ready for tumble turn skills.
<p>Warm-Ups</p>
<p>Stretches</p>
<p>Dry Land Drills</p>
<p>Water Warm-Ups</p>
<p>Water Practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice as revised freestyle skills practiced in training sessions 1-3 and 5.2. Introduce the following freestyle skills.3. Assess and revise backstroke skills practiced in training sessions 1-3.

Alternate Arm Catch Up without a Kickboard

Emphasis: stroke length

Teaching Points

1. Using the alternate arm catch up in training session 3, swimmer begins freestyle arm stroke with the arm extended out in front of his/her head.
2. Pull arm under the body in a type of “S” pattern.
3. Hand leaves water once it has brushed past the leg at the thigh.
4. Encourage swimmer to not cross over body’s center line.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Freestyle Pivot Turn

The freestyle swimmer is allowed to touch the end of the pool with any part of his/her body. A pivot turner will usually use his/her hands at the touch.

Teaching Points for the Approach

1. Swimmer approaches the wall at full speed.
2. When the swimmer's head is approximately an arm's length away from the wall, leading arm stretches out ready to touch the wall.
3. Palm of hand touches with the fingertips pointing sideways (i.e., pointing in direction of turn).
4. Other arm pushes back as in the normal stroke.
5. Body moves closer to the wall and the leading arm bends.
6. Swimmer's head is now close to the wall, face in the water, eyes looking slightly forward.



Teaching Points for the Turn

1. Body is tucked tightly, knees to chest.
2. Other arm acts as a paddle and is essential to aid the pivot.
3. Palm of that hand sweeps across the waist to the opposite side of the body, making the body pivot.
4. Leading hand presses hard into wall and pushes out behind the shoulder which completes the spin.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Teaching Points for the Drive Off

1. Body is a little lower in the water at this point and tucked up.
2. Arms are squeezed to the sides of body, palms downward, and hands are to the side of the ears.
3. Feet are placed on the wall hip-width apart. Balls of the feet prepare for the drive.
4. Arms stretch forward at the same time as the legs drive backward. The body is now in a streamlined glide position.
5. Position is held with the head tucked between the arms until glide speed drops to swimming speed.



Teaching Points for the Follow Up

The follow up is identical to the follow up for the start, with a glide in a stretched-out position. As soon as speed decreases, the stroke begins.



Coaching Tip

- ❑ Teach swimmers not to overkick before the arm action is underway as it can inhibit forward movement.

Tumble Turn onto the Wall – No Push Off

Once a forward somersault has been mastered, an approach to the wall is made, where the swimmer comes to within one-half meter of the wall. It is easy for the coach to kneel at the end of the pool where the swimmer is approaching, and reach out and touch the head of the swimmer, indicating that it is time to turn.

Teaching Points

1. A forward roll is executed, bringing the feet over and placing them firmly on the wall, while facing up toward the water surface.
2. This is as far as the swimmers go. Once they are proficient at getting their feet onto the wall, a push off can be introduced.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Tumble Turn onto Wall – with Push Off – No Roll Over

Teaching Points

From exercise above, swimmers push off the wall in streamline position while actually on their back and still in the streamline position.

Tumble Turn onto Wall – with Push Off and Roll Over

Once the routine above has been accomplished, the swimmer moves on to the final stage of the tumble.

Teaching Points

1. From the push off on back into streamlined position, continue to roll over onto stomach.
2. Athlete is now in the correct position to begin the freestyle stroke.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ This push off is sometimes easier taught first, before the roll onto the wall, so that the swimmers know where they are going in the push off.
- ☐ Bubbles are exhaled from the nose during an underwater push off on the back to ensure water does not get up the swimmer's nose.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Training Session 7

<p>Goal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assess and revise freestyle practiced in training sessions 1-3, 5 and 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate arm catch up, full stroke and length of freestyle stroke, pivot and tumble turns.2. To assess and revise backstroke skills practiced in training sessions 1-3 and 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Kick without board, with/without fins, backstroke arms and turns.3. To introduce the following freestyle skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Length of the freestyle stroke – using alternate arm drill. <input type="checkbox"/> Teach tumble turn onto the wall with a streamline push off.4. Teach pivot turn to swimmers not ready for tumble turn skills.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
<p>Water Practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice as revised freestyle and backstroke skills practiced in training sessions 3, 5 and 6 in above goal.2. Introduce the following freestyle skills.3. Assess and revise backstroke skills practiced in training sessions 1-3.



Training Session 8

<p>Goal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue the fun of time-trial races where the swimmer only competes against him/herself and the clock. Emphasis is on self-improvement of both time and technique. 2. To teach the swimmers the etiquette and protocols of a swimming competition and pre-race procedures.
<p>Warm-Ups</p>
<p>Stretches</p>
<p>Dry Land Drills</p>
<p>Water Warm-Ups</p>
<p>Water Practice</p> <p>Time-Trial 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 15-meter Freestyle <input type="checkbox"/> 15-meter Backstroke <input type="checkbox"/> 25-meter Freestyle <input type="checkbox"/> 25-meter Backstroke <input type="checkbox"/> 50-meter Freestyle* <input type="checkbox"/> 50-meter Backstroke* <p>* If swimmers are at this standard, this event would replace the 15-meter swim for them.</p>

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmers are only placed in events that meet their ability. Strict supervision of swimmers needs to be maintained when an event finishes, not just until swimmers are at the end of the pool.
- ☐ The most important aspects for time-trial sessions are that they be fun and promote enthusiasm. They should be as nontechnical and noncompetitive as possible.
- ☐ Use times from Time Trial 1 to seed events.
- ☐ Emphasis should be placed on self-improvement in both times and technique. Records need to be kept and a chart for each swimmer is encouraged, with a record given to each swimmer to take home.



Training Session 9

Goal To introduce breaststroke skills.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills Beginners are given a brief introduction to the correct kicking technique. A video or demonstration may aid this. They can firstly experience the kick out of water by either lying on a bench/seat or on the side of the pool.
Water Warm-Ups

Breaststroke Dry Land Drills

Heel Touch Drill

Some athletes may be able to grasp both feet simultaneously. Others may have to grab one foot at a time.

Teaching Points

1. Athlete lies on stomach on a bench or side of pool.
2. Bend knees, bringing heels up to buttocks, with toes turned out.
3. Swimmer reaches backward and grasps heels on each side.

Feet Rotation Drill

If the swimmer has trouble with this drill, the coach may help by holding his/her feet and moving them around in the desired pattern. Further assistance may also be given by providing resistance with the palm of the hand on the sole of their foot for the swimmer to feel the path of the feet against the resistance of the water.

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer lies on bench or side of pool.
2. Bring heels up toward buttocks, with toes turned out.
3. Once knees are fully flexed, rotate feet into the practiced position above; kick around and backward to come together and fully extend with toes pointed.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Wall Drill

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer stands with one side to wall, using the leg closest to the wall.
2. Bends knee and lifts the heel to buttocks.
3. Turn toes out and run the toes backward and down the wall.
4. Finish with the feet together.
5. Practice several times on each side.

Breaststroke Water Drills

Breaststroke Kicking Drill

Teaching Points

1. Keeping knees together, have swimmer move feet outward with heels still on wall with toes pointed upward.
2. On command, swimmer kicks – whip kicks outward to forward position.
3. Legs are together and toes remain pointed upward.
4. Swimmer brings heels back to wall.
5. Repeat drill.





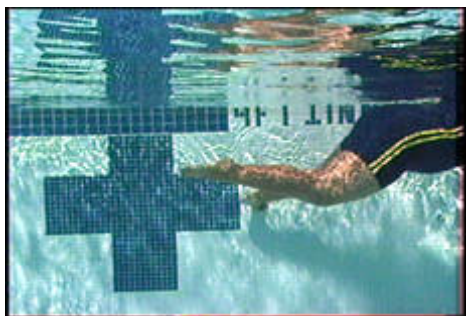
Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Teaching Points

Once skilled at this, swimmers can push off the bottom and kick along the wall, using their toes on the wall for every kick. Both legs are kicking together, one on wall side. Emphasize staying beside the wall and making sure that they use the wall on every kick. Do several kicks and then turn around with other leg against wall.

1. Swimmers stand in the pool holding a kickboard out in front with the hands over the front – with one side to wall.
2. Using leg closest to the wall, bend knee and lift heel to buttocks.
3. Turn toes out and run toes backward and down the wall.
4. Finish with the feet together on the bottom of the pool.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ It is also important to emphasize the timing of the kick at this stage. Ensure that swimmers “kick and glide” during every kick.
- ☐ Refer to teaching drills in breaststroke for other drill options.
- ☐ Practice in water in supine position (on back), board over knees, bringing heels back to buttocks.
- ☐ Practice in supine position without board with hands by sides or in streamline position.
- ☐ Practice in prone position with board.



Training Session 10

Goal 1. To assess and revise breaststroke skills from Training Session 9. 2. To introduce the breaststroke skills below.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice See below

Kick without a Kickboard

Continue to use the wall if both feet are not turned out. The purpose of this drill is to develop a feeling of driving the body forward over the hands.

Teaching Points

1. Hold the arms in the streamline position.
2. Hands are held one on top of the other and do not move.
3. The timing of the drill is as follows:
 - ♦ Take a breath
 - ♦ Face back in the water
 - ♦ Kick and glide
 - ♦ Count “one, two”
4. Exhale before lifting head.

Arm Stroke Out of Water

The initial understanding of the arm action can be described as drawing a circular pattern with the hands and arms.

Teaching Points

1. Athletes undertake an initial try of the arm action out of water. Assist the arms, if required, to pattern the movement.
2. Have the athletes watch the movement of their hands and arms while practicing the stroke.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Breaststroke Arm Stroke

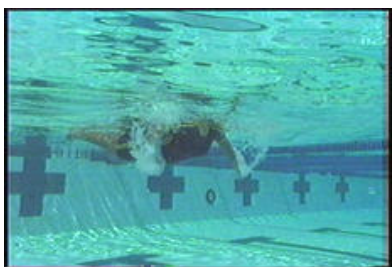
The major considerations in teaching the arm action of breaststroke is that the arms must move simultaneously, and they must not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and at each turn.

Teaching Points

1. The arm action begins with the arms fully extended and the hands close together, palms turned out, and about 15 centimeters under the water surface.
2. The initial movement of the arms is a push outward until the hands are wider than the shoulders.
3. Lower arms and rotate wrists inward to initially face the feet.
4. The wrists continue to come together into a position facing each other, completing the propulsive phase of the stroke.
5. Once the pressure of the water has been released from the palm of the hands, the elbows squeeze toward each other before extending to a fully outstretched position with the palms down, back to their start position.



Assume streamline position with pull buoy between legs.



Drive arms out and down.



Pull arms through, bringing hands together.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Arm Stroke – Standing in Water

Teaching Points

1. The arm stroke can also be practiced standing in the water.
2. Swimmer stands with one foot forward and one back for stability. The arms are below the water surface.
3. Athlete watches his/her hands while practicing the stroke to prevent the arms from pushing back past the shoulders.

Complete Breaststroke – Combine Kick and Arm Stroke

Beginners feel comfortable with this sequence once it has been developed. Usually, only refinement is required for competition experiences.

Teaching Points

1. The ultimate sequence is – Pull – Breathe – Kick – Glide. The glide is extended for one to three seconds.
2. Following the push from the wall, complete an arm stroke. During the stroke, lift the head for a breath.
3. Kick, and then a glide with the arms extended.
4. Follow whole sequence by another Pull – Breathe – Kick – Glide.



Pull.



Breathe.



Kick – Glide.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Breaststroke Race Finish

At the finish of a race, a touch must be made with both hands simultaneously. The shoulders must be at the same level.

Teaching Points

1. Practice swimming the last five meters into the wall, finishing on a full stroke, with hands touching wall simultaneously.
2. Get athletes to monitor each other during this drill.





Training Session 11

Goal
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assess and revise breaststroke skills from training sessions 9, 10.2. To introduce the breaststroke starts and turns skills below.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice See below

Breaststroke Start – Pull-Out Stroke

For breaststroke, the dive start is deeper than the freestyle. This enables the swimmer to complete one powerful stroke with the arms, followed by a strong leg kick, while the body is fully submerged. The timing of these actions is important since the rule requires some part of the head to be above the water surface before the second arm stroke begins.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

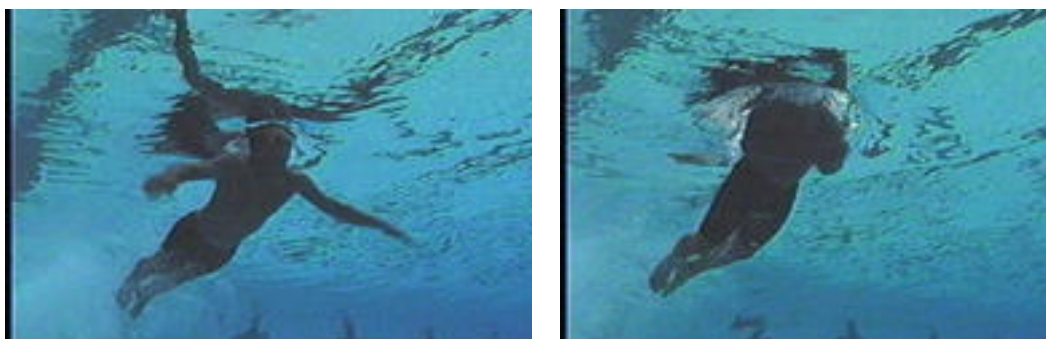
Following the dive, as forward momentum from the glide decreases, the arms start the pull in a flatter and wider pathway than normal, continuing with a backward push until they reach the thighs as shown below.



This pull-push action is made as parallel as possible to the water surface to avoid a rolling dolphin type reaction from the legs, which could be mistaken for an illegal kick. The momentum from this powerful arm action will extend the glide phase.

Teaching Points

1. As the speed of the forward movement begins to decrease, the arms are recovered close to the body and then pushed forward to an outstretched position.
2. At this stage, the legs have recovered with the heels close to the buttocks.
3. The swimmer then kicks, and, with a fine adjustment of the position of the head and hands, the body drives strongly to the surface.
4. When the body breaks the surface, only then is the second arm pull started.



Coaching Tips

The following three points are important in the underwater pull and kick and require emphasis during practice in order to attain maximum benefits from the underwater phase, following the drive.

- ☐ Fully exploit the momentum gained from the dive before starting to pull.
- ☐ Make full use of the momentum gained from the powerful arm stroke before kicking.
- ☐ Time the kick and adjustment of the head and hand positions so that the body drives powerfully to arrive at the surface to begin the first arm pull as the glide slows down to swimming speed.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

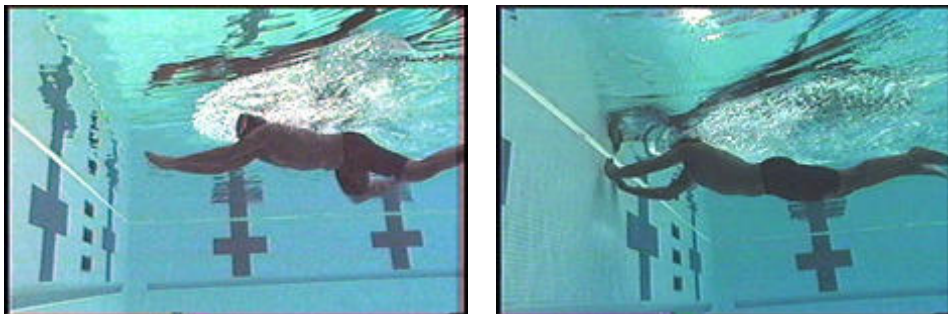


In-Water Start – Breaststroke

If a swimmer is unable to dive due to dive restrictions, he/she begins from the in-water push off in the streamlined position at a depth as close to replicating the dive position as possible. Follow through with the dive start from this position. See Freestyle, In-Water Start Lesson.

Breaststroke Turn

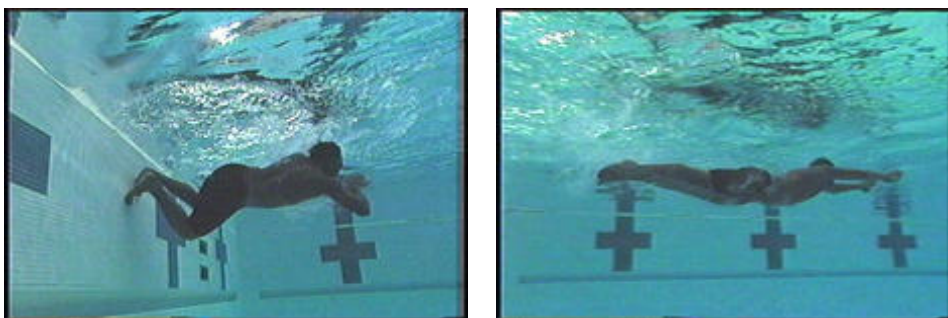
On turning and at the finish, the touch is made with hands simultaneously with the shoulders level.



Once the arms have touched the wall, the swimmer allows the elbows to bend slightly, giving the swimmer leverage to push into the turn. As the elbows bend, the legs are drawn up underneath the body to the wall and the upper body drops backwards in to the water.



The upper arm is brought over and meets with the lower arm and extends into the streamline position as the legs drive off the wall.



The pull-out stroke, as described above in breaststroke start, is then executed before resuming the breaststroke stroke.



Training Session 12

Goal To introduce butterfly skills.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups

Water Practice

The butterfly is sometimes perceived as a difficult stroke to master. This is not necessarily the case, and some athletes readily take to it. The butterfly stroke provides an achievable challenge for most swimmers. The sequence for introducing butterfly is similar to breaststroke to the extent that the kick is developed first.

The butterfly kick is usually referred to as a dolphin kick and is a powerful action. During the kicking action, the legs move up and down together simultaneously. The kick consists of an up beat and a down beat performed in a continuous manner.

Beginners learning the butterfly kick for the first time are helped by an out-of-water demonstration first, emphasizing that the kick comes from the hips.

Teaching Points

Out of the water – demonstration of butterfly kick movement from the hips

1. Allow the swimmer to lie on a bench or the side of the pool and try the wave movement of hips—forward, backward, forward, backward—until the swimmer loosens up and is able to do it.

In Water – Man from Atlantis drill

2. Swimmers push off under water in the streamline position, bringing their arms to their sides, and dolphin kick along the shallow end of the pool for a short distance.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



In Water – dolphin kick on the back

3. Swimmers lie on their backs in the back float position, with the hands trailing in the water, and practice the dolphin kick, feeling the hips bend and straighten and the water push up from the feet.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Practice drills No. 2 and No. 3, with and without fins.
- ☐ In Water – dolphin torpedo drill.
- ☐ This is executed in the same way as the “Man from Atlantis” drill, with the arms extended out in front in the streamline position. A minimum of four kicks should be done under the surface of the water before breathing.
- ☐ Emphasize that the dolphin kick comes from the hips, and the feet are kept close together and move simultaneously.



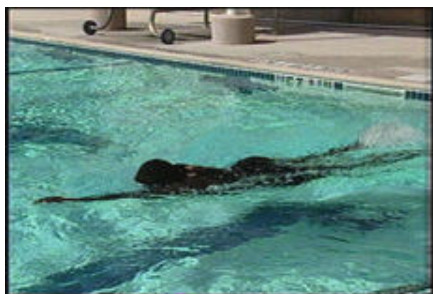
Training Session 13

Goal
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assess and revise butterfly skills from training session 12.2. To introduce the butterfly arm stroke, kick and correct finish skills below.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice See below

Arm Stroke – Standing in Water

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer stands in shoulder-deep water, starts a push and glide.
2. Hands enter the water at shoulder width, the palms outward, allowing hands to slide smoothly into the water.
3. Hands sweep outward and downward until the hands are wider than the shoulders.
4. Hands continue downward, inward and upward in a keyhole type movement until they are under the chest near the midline of the body.
5. Hands move into a backward, outward and up sweep movement until the hands come close to the surface beside the thighs ready for the release and recovery over the surface of the water.
6. The release occurs just prior to the arms fully extending and before the hands reach the surface. The arms must be extended during the exit from the water to allow a circling up, outward and forward movement to occur.
7. Hands and arms move above the water surface until the entry is made.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ The underwater pull is often described as a keyhole or hourglass shape.
- ☐ Ensure that the arm/hand finishes with the thumbs even with the leg line of the swimsuit.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Breathing

During the butterfly stroke, swimmer looks to the front to inhale through the mouth as the arms pull.

Teaching Points

1. The head begins to be raised as the arms sweep outward and downward during the catch phase.
2. The face breaks the surface on the upsweep of the arms, and a breath is taken and completed during the first half of the recovery phase.
3. As the arms complete the recovery, the head drops back into the water and exhalation occurs.

Coaching Points

- ☐ In order to get the correct timing for butterfly, teaching beginners to breathe every second stroke is very important.
- ☐ Using the phrase “head up on one, down on one” makes it easy for the swimmer to understand.

Whole Stroke

Practice four dolphin kicks, pull and breathe.

Teaching Points

1. Swimmers streamline off wall with the arms covering the ears and one hand on top of the other.
2. The arms stay in this position while four dolphin kicks are made with the legs. It is then time for the arms to commence a pull. At the same time, a breath is taken and finished and the head rolls back into the water before the arms finish the recovery. Remain in the streamline position for another four dolphin kicks.
3. A breath can be taken initially every stroke. However, teach every two strokes. As soon as proficiency is developed the swimmer can begin “head up on one, down on one.”

Butterfly – Correct Finish

Teaching Points

1. At the finish of a race, the touch must be made simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.
2. As in breaststroke, the hands are at the same level.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

Training Session 14

Goal 1. To assess and revise skills from training sessions 12 and 13. 2. To introduce the butterfly starts and turns skills below.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups
Water Practice See below

One arm stroke, a breath and two kicks constitute one stroke for beginner butterfly. Following is the correct butterfly technique. Although the timing is not 100 percent accurate, it is technically correct and the form is good enough for swimmers to correctly be able to participate in butterfly swimming.

Teaching Points

1. Begin in the streamline position with the arms covering the ears and one hand on top of the other. Remain there for two kicks.
2. Pull and breathe for two kicks.
3. Pull and keep the head down for two kicks.
4. Pull and breathe.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan

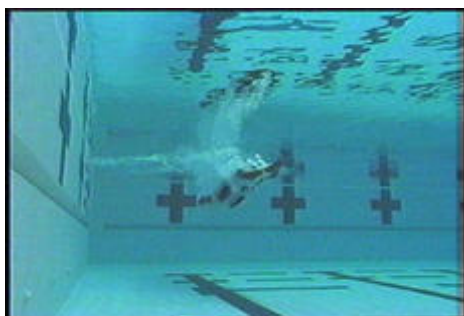


Butterfly Dive Start

Swimmers who may not dive start, use the same in-water start as freestyle. The start for butterfly is very similar to that of freestyle.

Teaching Points

1. The swimmers enter the water in the streamline position, both arms extended in front, covering the ears.
2. Once the glide is beginning to decrease, the legs give two to four strong dolphin kicks to bring the body to the surface, maintaining streamline position with the arms extended.
3. Once at the surface, both arms begin the first pull backward under water.
4. The butterfly begins.





Butterfly Turn

The butterfly turn is done in a similar way to the breaststroke turn.

Teaching Points

1. When touching the wall at a turn, as well as the finish, the touch is made with both hands simultaneously.
2. The legs are drawn up as in the breaststroke turn, and, upon leaving the wall, the legs give two to four strong dolphin kicks to bring the body to the surface.
3. The arms start the underwater pull, and the regular stroke pattern begins.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Stroke Development Training Plan



Training Session 15

Goal 1. To revise the following skills as necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly 2. To undertake a full assessment of each swimmer.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills Utilize land drills from program.
Water Warm-Ups Utilize drills from program, across all strokes.
Water Practice Revise the following skills. Go through each step in a sequential manner, spending time on those phases that require it.

Freestyle	Backstroke	Breaststroke	Butterfly
Kick	Kick	Kick	Kick
Arms	Arms	Arms	Arms
Breathing		Breathing	Breathing
Whole Stroke	Whole Stroke	Whole Stroke	Whole Stroke
Starts	Starts	Starts	Starts
Turns	Turns	Turns	Turns
Finishes	Finishes		Finishes

To undertake a full assessment of each swimmer, use the assessment form to review outcomes of the programs for each swimmer. Use next training session's time trials for distance swim checks. Use this assessment to set goals for the next term for each individual.



Training Session 16

Goal <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To provide a fun opportunity for the swimmers to celebrate their achievements over the 16-session program.2. To provide an opportunity for swimmers to put their training into practice.3. To provide an opportunity to test swimmers' distance ability.4. To gain times for future swim events.5. To test swimmers' readiness for progression to squads.
Warm-Ups
Stretches
Dry Land Drills
Water Warm-Ups

Practice Competition

Swimmers entered in 50-meter events would not be competing in 15-meter events. Use previous time trial to seed freestyle and backstroke events.

- ♦ 15-meter/25-meter/50-meter Freestyle
- ♦ 15-meter/25-meter/50-meter Backstroke
- ♦ 15-meter/25-meter Breaststroke
- ♦ 15-meter/25-meter Butterfly

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Aquatics Athlete Skills Stroke Development Assessment



Aquatics Athlete Skills Stroke Development Assessment

Athlete Name _____ Start Date _____
Coach Name _____

Instructions

1. Use tool at the beginning of the training/competition season to establish a basis of the athlete's starting skill level.
2. Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
3. If the athlete performs the skill correctly three out of five times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.
4. Intersperse assessment sessions into your program.
5. Swimmers may accomplish skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished this list when all possible items have been achieved.

Freestyle

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim on front
- ☐ Performs freestyle in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs freestyle using flutter kick for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs freestyle with periodic breathing for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs freestyle with rhythmic breathing for one pool length

Freestyle Start

- ☐ Makes an attempt to start from in the pool
- ☐ Performs a proper start in the pool
- ☐ Performs proper start standing on the pool edge
- ☐ Performs proper start using a starting block
- ☐ Continues to swim a proper freestyle after starting from the block

Freestyle Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to turn around without stopping
- ☐ Performs an open turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs an open turn, after swimming freestyle, without stopping
- ☐ Performs a flip turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs a flip turn, swimming freestyle for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs two flip turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Aquatics Athlete Skills Stroke Development Assessment

Backstroke

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim on back
- ☐ Performs backstroke in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs backstroke for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs backstroke correctly for a distance of one pool length

Backstroke Start

- ☐ Makes an attempt to start on back
- ☐ Performs backstroke start, holding the side of pool with one hand
- ☐ Performs backstroke start while facing the starting end, both hands on a starting block
- ☐ Performs the correct backstroke start and swims one pool length

Backstroke Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to turn on back
- ☐ Performs backstroke turn – assisted
- ☐ Performs backstroke turn in chest-deep water – independent
- ☐ Performs backstroke turn and continues to swim for one pool length

Breaststroke

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim breaststroke on front
- ☐ Performs breaststroke in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs breaststroke using correct breaststroke kick for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs breaststroke with rhythmic breathing for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs breaststroke with rhythmic breathing for one pool length

Breaststroke Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to do a breaststroke turn without stopping
- ☐ Performs breaststroke turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs breaststroke turn after swimming for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs two breaststroke turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths

Butterfly

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim butterfly on front
- ☐ Performs butterfly in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs butterfly using dolphin kick for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs butterfly with rhythmic breathing for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs butterfly with rhythmic breathing for one pool length

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Stroke Development

Aquatics Athlete Skills Stroke Development Assessment



Butterfly Turn

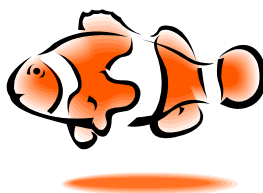
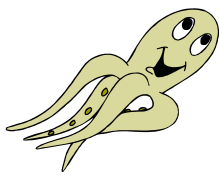
- ☐ Makes an attempt to do a butterfly turn without stopping
- ☐ Performs butterfly turn in waist-deep water.
- ☐ Performs a butterfly turn after swimming butterfly without stopping
- ☐ Performs a butterfly after swimming for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs two butterfly turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths



***Special
Olympics***

Congratulations

You have learned ALL the skills needed to be a
Great Swimmer.



You are now ready to join
Squad Training Level.
Well Done

Coach

Date



***Special
Olympics***

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Teaching Aquatics Skills

Squad Training Level



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

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Sample Squad Training Program

The following training program provides an example plan for Special Olympics aquatics athletes. The program provides coaches with a basic concept of progression of swimming skills. Of course, each coach will want to conduct his/her training program according to his/her athletes' specific needs and ability levels, factoring in the facilities available and time constraints.

The program takes swimmers from an introduction to the water through awareness of the four competitive strokes and individual medley. In many cases, it will take more than eight weeks to achieve this level. If possible, athletes should attempt to participate in a year-round aquatics program to attain higher levels of technical competency and fitness. The following conditions are assumed prior to starting this training program.

1. The plan is based on 60-minute training sessions in the water.
2. The plan is based on the facility being available three or more times per week.
3. The plan assumes that all swimmers can swim 25 meters of freestyle and backstroke without assistance and would have learned all the skills from the Stroke Development Section.
4. The pool size used in this training example is 25 meters. However, a 50-meter pool can be used.

Adjustments to the entire program may be necessary, depending on the specific team/squad situation. As a coach, if you do not have the pool time available, or your athletes are not at the level of the plan, use this as an example and a goal to work toward. Feel free to take parts of the training plan and use appropriately for your own team/squad, remembering to build up gradually and maintain a high level of responsibility and care for your athletes.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Work within the athlete's ability.
- ☐ Set goals, these can be individual to the athlete or for the group.
- ☐ Ensure that your goals are achievable for you and realistic for the athletes.
- ☐ Repetition of praise is important in working with the swimmer, especially in the learning phase.
- ☐ As coach, you may have to adapt the stroke to the athlete, not the athlete to the stroke, realizing that there are specific rules for each stroke.
- ☐ Some athletes have a short attention span. Keep instructions short and simple. Make all instructions clear, concise and consistent.
- ☐ When teaching a new stroke, break down the stroke into various skill components.
- ☐ Correct a small part of the stroke at a time.
- ☐ Reassess each training session and change programs if required.
- ☐ End each training session on a positive note.
- ☐ Fatigue factors to look for: kick factor (no white water), cramps, flush color in the face, shortness of breath, chilling, shivering and yawning.
- ☐ If possible, use a pace clock and have swimmers leave when the second hand is at the top or bottom.
- ☐ Encourage swimmers to bring their own water bottle and equipment to every training session.
- ☐ Have training aids available to your swimmers, such as fins, paddles, pull buoys. Each swimmer needs to have a spare pair of goggles and cap.

Please Note

There must be a certified lifeguard on the pool deck at all times while athletes are in the pool area. Ensure that all safety precautions are taken and that a high level of duty of care be given to all athletes under your instruction.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Squad Training Program

Prior to any program being conducted, it would be advisable that you have a very good idea of the levels and ability of the swimmers who are going to be part of your groups. A suggestion would be to conduct some “tryout” or “assessment” sessions to determine which levels are best suited for your swimmers. By doing this you will be well prepared to start preparing your weekly programs.

- ♦ Be aware of your swimmers’ ages. Remember that you may have a variety of ages in your groups, so it is important that activities be programmed that are age appropriate.
- ♦ If you have more than one group or squad of varying skill levels, it is suggested that you name each group/squad; for example, Level 1 or Level 2, or Squad 1 or Squad 2, or give them a name relating to a well-known swimmer, etc., to distinguish groups.

The sample workouts below refer to three different group/squad levels and will give workouts for each over an eight-week period. These workouts are only an example of the type of programs that can be developed and will vary according to the number and skill level of your swimmers. Whether or not you use the following training program, be consistent in several areas.

Duty of Care

The safety and well-being of each athlete needs to be your first priority when developing any Special Olympics aquatics training program. Any potential dangers need to be identified and action taken as soon as possible.

Warm-Up

Warm-up time needs to be programmed into the training session prior to entering the water. Emphasis is on raising the swimmer’s heart rate, warming up muscle groups and building basic muscle strength. It is also important that swimmers are taught the correct warm-up drills. Warm-up sessions need to be supervised.

Training Equipment

Swimmers are encouraged to have all required training equipment with them at each training session, e.g., water bottle, fins, paddles, spare pair of goggles and cap.

Session Programming

Training programs developed for different levels and ability groups need to be regularly assessed. Ensure that program goals are achievable. Do not set unrealistic goals.

All relevant information about the training program should be made available to the athlete, family member or care giver. Information, such as the number of training sessions, dates and times, needs to be included.

Stroke Technique

When programming training sessions, strong emphasis should be given to the development of good stroke technique. This can be achieved through setting stroke-specific drills which are practiced at each training session.

Learning through Fun

Athletes learn through fun activities, so include fun activities in your training program that have relevance to the skills you are trying to develop.

Positive Reinforcement

As a coach, it is important that you give positive reinforcement to your athlete. Always try to speak to each athlete individually and be aware of individual personalities and group dynamics.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Squad Training Program



Goal Setting

Ensure that all goals set are achievable and realistic. Put in place some form of recognition such as “Skill Achievement Awards” or “Skill Progression Awards.”

Setting of Boundaries

Athletes need to know what their boundaries are to help ensure your training program runs smoothly and that each athlete is given 100 percent opportunity to learn. It is important that clear, concise and consistent instruction is given.

Be Prepared – Be Flexible

Once you have set your training program and are confident that it will run smoothly, be prepared to make changes. As a coach, you must be flexible and able to put into place alternative programs for your athletes.



Stroke-Specific Drills

The drills described below are only examples of stroke-specific drills that can be practiced during a program. Drills are very important when developing and maintaining correct stroke technique. Specific drills are practiced at each session. Although it may take a few swimmers more time than others to master some drills correctly, please be patient. Results will appear over time.

It is important that coaches research and seek information from other coaches on different drills that can be used. Remember, drills are also fun and add variety to an athlete's swimming program.

Freestyle

1. Thumb slide fingertip drag
2. Catch up
3. Chicken wing

Backstroke

1. Kicking with arms at 45 degrees out of water
2. Alternate arm action with no pull in water

Breaststroke

1. Variation of kick/pull drill
2. Breaststroke kick on back

Butterfly

1. One-arm pull drill
2. Butterfly kick on back
3. Butterfly kick using bands, on front, on back



Freestyle Drills

Freestyle Streamline

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop a horizontal body position in the water.
- ♦ Make swimmer's body as smooth as possible in the water.
- ♦ Reduce the amount of frictional resistance.

Teaching Points

This drill can also be achieved initially with the use of fins. Fins will help swimmers concentrate on maintaining a streamline body position. Encourage swimmers to practice this drill using a fly kick.

Out of Water

1. Practice standing on pool deck, hands one on top of the other, arms stretched behind head as much as possible.
2. Cue the swimmer to squeeze ears with arms, keeping legs together.

In Water

1. In water, swimmer pushes off wall with both feet, staying on top of surface, holding streamline position, no kicking.
2. As above, with swimmer using a flutter kick, kicking as far as possible on one breath.
3. As above, with swimmer pushing off wall.
4. Submerges half pool depth.
5. Surfaces and recovers to a standing position.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Keep one hand on top of the other; do not spread hands apart.
- ☐ Squeeze arms to ears and stretch as far as possible. Say, "Make your body into a spear shape or rocket ship." This may help them understand the shape is meant to be a fast, smooth shape.
- ☐ Keep head down, eyes to bottom of pool.
- ☐ Maintain a fast freestyle flutter or butterfly kick.
- ☐ As soon as hands break surface, swimmer stops and recovers to a standing position.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Freestyle Drills

Freestyle Lateral Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Show swimmer correct body position in the water during breathing phase of the stroke.
- ♦ Develop good body positioning in the water.
- ♦ Develop good breathing skills.

Teaching Points

1. Wearing fins, swimmer lies on his/her side on pool deck.
2. Place bottom arm stretched out in line with the body, palm flat on floor, top arm tight to thigh.
3. Head rests on lower shoulder, face looking to side.
4. Upper shoulder is pointing upward.
5. Practice lying on opposite side.
6. Swimmer uses a scissor kick action with legs in the water.
7. With fins on and using kickboard, swimmer lies on right side (lateral) holding the kickboard with outstretched right hand.
8. Right ear is comfortable on right shoulder. Left arm is outstretched over left thigh. Legs are straight.
9. Instruct swimmer to start kicking, using a scissor kick action.
10. Ensure that the swimmer maintains a lateral body position with top shoulder pointing to roof.
11. Practice for short distances.
12. Introduce breathing: swimmer performs six kicks, takes a breath, places face in water looking at bottom of pool, exhales, then turns face out, ear on shoulder. Make sure that swimmer's body does not roll and their shoulder is kept pointing up to roof.
13. Repeat for short distances.
14. Repeat without the kickboard.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Freestyle Drills



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Swimmer must lie on side at all times, lower arm outstretched, palm down, upper arm stretched over upper thigh, ear/head relaxed on lower arm.
- ☐ Upper shoulder must stay pointing to roof and must not roll over when executing breathing.
- ☐ Scissor-kick action with fins.
- ☐ Practice with and without kickboard.
- ☐ Use this drill regularly, as it simulates the swimmer's body position in the breathing phase of the stroke.

Freestyle Lateral Drill Extension

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop correct body position in the water.
- ♦ Develop correct breathing pattern.
- ♦ Develop bilateral breathing.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Freestyle Drills

Teaching Points

1. Wearing fins, swimmer starts on his/her right side (lateral).
2. Do six kicks, put face in water while slowly rotating to front (prone position), start pushing top arm forward in line with shoulders.
3. At this stage, both arms are forward, and legs are outstretched behind. Body is in prone position.



4. Do three strokes, starting with left arm, then roll to the left side lateral position as the right arm is pulled through water and finishing up on top of thigh.



5. Swimmer is facing sideways, right shoulder is pointing up to roof.
6. Left leg will be to bottom of pool and head relaxed on left shoulder.
7. Repeat sequence for 25 meters.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Freestyle Drills



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Demonstrate the preceding sequence.
- ☐ Take time to practice and develop drill.
- ☐ Remind swimmer to stay on side (lateral) keeping shoulder toward top of roof.
- ☐ Remind swimmer to feel relaxed and do an even scissor kick.
- ☐ Check that swimmer inhales before putting face in water to begin rotating and doing three strokes.
- ☐ Use fins with this drill.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to try to recover each time with hands in line with shoulder width.
- ☐ The swimmer's head moves only from the side, facing down to pool bottom. Do not lift head.
- ☐ Be patient. Swimmer will master this drill. It may take some swimmers more time than others to develop. When swimmer has, it is a fun and interesting drill to do.
- ☐ Emphasize shoulder to roof for out of water while in lateral position.
- ☐ Ensure head is relaxed on shoulder and lower arm outstretched, palm flat and legs doing scissor action.

Freestyle Kick Test Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Encourage development of a fast flutter kick.
- ♦ Encourage high hips.
- ♦ Have fun.
- ♦ Maintain a record of swimmers kick progress.

Teaching Points

1. Starting in shallow end of pool.
2. Encourage swimmer to hold onto board with thumbs up on top, fingers under board.
3. Encourage swimmer to stretch out arms, without bending elbows.
4. Direct swimmer to kick as fast as possible for 25 meters when cued to “go.”
5. Start stopwatch on “go,” and time swimmer's kick over 25 meters.
6. Record swimmer's kick time.
7. Repeat this drill each week.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Freestyle Drills

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Keep arms straight, no bent elbows.
- ☐ Maintain a fast, continuous flutter kick.
- ☐ Make sure swimmer does not kick air.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to push hips up high to make body more streamlined and go faster.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to put face in water to help raise hips.
- ☐ Let swimmer know what time he/she has achieved. Give swimmer a goal to strive to achieve.
- ☐ Chart your swimmers' progressive times, as they like to see their own results.



Backstroke Drills

Backstroke Streamline Kick Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop a good streamlined body position.
- ♦ Raise hips and chest position in water.
- ♦ Develop good kick skills.

Teaching Points

1. Practice standing on pool deck, hands one on top of the other, arms stretched behind head as much as possible.
2. Cue swimmer to squeeze ears with arms, legs together.
3. In shallow end of pool, swimmer lies on back in streamlined position.
4. Encourage swimmer to kick and push hips and chest high.
5. Swimmer may wear fins to help develop this drill.
6. Kick a short distance.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Keep one hand on top of the other; do not spread hands apart.
- ☐ Squeeze arms to ears and stretch as far as possible. Say, “Make your body into a spear shape or rocket ship.” This may help them understand the shape is meant to be a fast, smooth shape.
- ☐ Check swimmer’s head position. Encourage head back and eyes to roof.
- ☐ Lifting head will cause hips to sink.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to push hips and chest up high.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to maintain a continuous, fast flutter kick with little knee bend.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to use fins to help maintain high hips/chest and good streamline body position.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Backstroke Drills

Backstroke Shoulder Rotation Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop and maintain good shoulder rotation in backstroke.
- ♦ Maintain head position.

Teaching Points

Swimmers can do this drill out of pool in front of a full-length mirror. By using the mirror, they are able to look at themselves and maintain a straight head while rotating shoulders.

Out of Water

1. Swimmer stands on pool deck, legs together and arms at each side.
2. Swimmer's head is to remain still, eyes focusing on one spot.
3. Swimmer rotates one shoulder back while the other rotates forward.
4. Head must remain straight.

In Water

1. In shallow water, swimmer lies on back with arms at each side of body.
2. Swimmer starts to slowly kick, using fins.
3. After six kicks, swimmer slowly rotates one shoulder up while the other rotates downward.
4. Hold this position for about three to five kicks, then return to level.
5. Kick six times, then rotate to the opposite side.
6. Repeat as above for 25 meters.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage swimmer to maintain a straight head and not to move it along with the shoulders.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to do this drill slowly.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to have shoulder pointing up to roof.
- ☐ Maintain a slow, even kick.
- ☐ If swimming to a wall, have swimmer stroke into wall from flags, or have one arm behind head while coming into wall.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Backstroke Drills



Backstroke Shoulder Rotation with Cup Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Maintain a straight head while shoulders rotate.

Teaching Points

1. Follow the backstroke shoulder rotation drill.
2. Place a plastic cup filled with water on the swimmer's forehead.
3. Have the swimmer practice shoulder rotation drill without having the cup fall into water.
4. See how far the swimmer can go without the cup falling.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage swimmer to maintain a balanced body position.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to kick slowly and rotate to each side slowly.
- ☐ Have fun with this drill.

Backstroke One Arm Pull Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop shoulder rotation.
- ♦ Develop “feel the water” with each arm separately.
- ♦ Develop “feel the pull” being exerted by each arm separately.
- ♦ Develop recovery and entry of the arm/hand.

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer on back, either arm beside.
2. Swimmer strokes, using right arm only for 25 meters.
3. Swimmer strokes, using left arm only for 25 meters.
4. Swimmer makes five strokes on right arm, and then five strokes on left arm.
5. Repeat for 25 meters/50 meters.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Backstroke Drills

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Check that head position is straight and not moving on each arm pull.
- ☐ Check shoulder rotation.
- ☐ Encourage continuous, even kicks.
- ☐ Encourage the swimmer to “feel the water” and amount of pull being exerted on each arm.
- ☐ Fins are used initially. When the swimmer’s kick and arm stroke becomes stronger, practice without fins.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Backstroke Drills



Backstroke Thumb-Up Hand Rotation Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop straight arm recovery action.
- ♦ Develop correct hand entry into water.

Teaching Points

1. With fins, swimmer is on back in a balanced position with arms at each side of body, head back, legs kicking slowly and evenly.
2. Have swimmer raise right arm up out of the water, straight, with thumb up, palm in, fingers together and relaxed.



3. When the swimmer's arm is at approximately 90 degrees, rotate hand so palm is facing out.
4. Slowly keep moving arm through stroke, and have hand enter the water with little finger first.
5. As hand enters water, the swimmer wants to "feel" the catch.



6. Pull stroke through to side.
7. When body is again balanced, repeat the above for the left arm.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Backstroke Drills

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Check that the swimmer rotates hand so that little finger enters the water first.
- ☐ Encourage swimmers to perform this drill very slowly.
- ☐ Check that the hand is entering the water in line with shoulder.
- ☐ Practice this drill standing on pool deck before entering the water.
- ☐ Use fins in this drill; it helps swimmers buoyancy.



Breaststroke Drills

Breaststroke Leg Kick on Pool Edge Drill

Swimmers can also practice this drill while lying on their backs and repeating the same sequence as below. You can add one more element, and have swimmers close their eyes while practicing this drill.

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop basic leg kick prior to entering water.
- ♦ Practice leg kick on back before attempting on front.

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer sits on edge of pool with legs/feet in water.
2. Swimmer's legs/knees are together, and heels are pressing against pool wall.
3. Toes are pointing upward.
4. Keeping knees together, slide heels outward along wall to a comfortable position.
5. Keeping knees together, move legs/feet outward and forward, keeping toes pointing upward, creating a whip kick.
6. Legs and feet are brought together straight, toes still facing upward.
7. Swimmer bends knees and brings feet/heels back to wall.
8. Swimmer repeats these actions on cue.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Check that the swimmer keeps knees together at all times during the outward and kick phase.
- ☐ Check that heels are sliding along pool and knee rotation occurs at a comfortable point.
- ☐ Check that the swimmer's toes are pointing up throughout the drill.
- ☐ Ask the swimmer how it felt to do this drill with his/her eyes closed.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Breaststroke Drills

Breaststroke Leg-Kick Drill on Back in Water

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Practice breaststroke leg kick in water.
- ♦ Practice leg kick on back, using kickboard for better buoyancy.

Teaching Points

1. Swimmer holds board stretched out over knees, legs are straight and toes pointing upward.
2. Swimmer bends knees, keeping them together, bringing heels back toward buttocks as far as comfortable, toes pointing upward.
3. Keeping knees together, feet move outward and quickly upward, creating a whip-kick action.



4. Legs are together with toes pointing upward and slightly out of the water.
5. Swimmer glides for only a short time before repeating the above sequence.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Remind swimmer to keep arms straight while holding board over knees.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to push hips up.
- ☐ Check that swimmer's toes are pointing upward throughout the drill.
- ☐ Check that both legs are moving simultaneously at even heights.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to be relaxed with head back and eyes to roof.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Breaststroke Drills



Breaststroke Kick with Hands on Buttocks

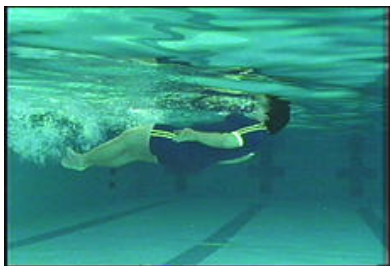
Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Feel the heels/feet coming back as far as possible to the buttocks.
- ♦ Develop a strong kick action.

Teaching Points

This drill can be done either in prone (on front) or supine (on back) position. Generally, it is much easier to do this drill while on the back, especially for the beginner. The more advanced swimmer may be able to successfully do this drill while on his/her front.

1. Have swimmer lie on his/her back.
2. Arms and hands are on each side of buttocks.
3. Swimmer performs breaststroke kick while on back and attempts to touch heels to hands.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage swimmers to push their hips and chest up high in the water.
- ☐ Encourage swimmers to keep head back, eyes to roof.
- ☐ Encourage swimmers to keep knees together during whole phase of kick.
- ☐ Check that the swimmers have toes pointing up during whole phase of kick.
- ☐ Ask swimmers if they were successful in touching heels to hands.

Breaststroke Pull – Kick Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Encourage correct breathing timing.
- ♦ Encourage correct arm action.
- ♦ Encourage swimmers to recover in streamline position.
- ♦ Encourage swimmers to perform correct kick action.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Breaststroke Drills

Teaching Points

1. Demonstrate and describe the drill sequence.
2. Have the swimmers simulate the sequence on pool deck. Can also use verbal cues.
3. In water, swimmers will push off wall and complete one full stroke.
4. Have swimmers return to wall and, this time, complete one full stroke, leaving arms extended.
5. Have swimmers return to wall and repeat above; introduce leg kick only.
6. When swimmers understand sequence, have them swim a short distance doing one full stroke then one kick only.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Check swimmer's breathing/timing.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to pull, using correct arm action.
- ☐ Check that swimmer does one kick only while arms are outstretched.
- ☐ Encourage swimmer to kick hard.
- ☐ On any finish to wall in breaststroke, encourage swimmer to touch wall with both hands.
- ☐ Practice this drill using one arm pull for every two kicks.



Butterfly Drills

Butterfly Kick with Fins and Kickboard Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Encourage and develop butterfly kick skills.
- ♦ Encourage hip movement.
- ♦ Feel the movement through the water.
- ♦ Practice breathing forward action.

Teaching Points

1. On pool deck, demonstrate leg movement from hips.
2. Have swimmers lie on pool edge face down and legs in water.
3. Practice leg kick, encouraging a simultaneous kick action.
4. In water, with fins and board outstretched, have swimmer practice butterfly kick.
5. Encourage swimmer to put face in water to help raise hips and use whole body movement.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage leg kick from hips and use whole body movement.
- ☐ Use descriptive words/actions to show swimmers the movement they are trying to achieve.
- ☐ Encourage arms to remain outstretched with face in water.
- ☐ Encourage swimmers to breathe forward with chin on water.

Butterfly Kick Underwater Drill

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Feel movement through water.
- ♦ Encourage a simultaneous, fast flutter kick.
- ♦ Practice with/without the use of fins.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Butterfly Drills

Teaching Points

1. This drill is also good to repeat on top of the water with the swimmer's arms in a streamlined position. Encourage breathing forward with chin on the water. Do for short distances. Check medical conditions of swimmers before practicing any butterfly drills.
2. Have swimmers place their arms by their sides.
3. Push off wall, maintaining depth, and move in a rotating motion.
4. Encourage whole body movement through the water.
5. Swimmer goes as far as possible on one breath.
6. Recover to a standing position.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage swimmers to use whole body.
- ☐ Encourage simultaneous leg kick action.
- ☐ Encourage a fast fly kick.
- ☐ Initially, use fins to help development of kick and feel through the water.
- ☐ Practice with/without the use of fins.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Butterfly Drills



Butterfly Arm-Pull Drill without Breathing

Purpose of the Drill

- ♦ Develop correct arm action.

Teaching Points

1. On pool deck, swimmer bends forward and practices arm action.
2. In water with fins, swimmer practices arm action without breathing.
3. Repeat for short distances.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Encourage swimmers to use gentle, simultaneous kicks with fins.
- ☐ Encourage swimmers to press down and inward toward their chest and pull thumbs past thighs.
- ☐ Arms enter in line with swimmers' shoulder width and thumbs are directed downward.

Butterfly Arm Pull Drill Breathing

Purpose of this Drill

- ♦ Encourage swimmer to lift head during the press phase of the arm action.
- ♦ Encourage swimmer to have face looking forward while breathing.
- ♦ Encourage correct timing of breathing/arm action.

Teaching Points

1. On pool deck, demonstrate correct timing of breathing/arm action.
2. Swimmer practices the drill as demonstrated.
3. In water, with use of fins, practice correct arm pull and breathing.

Standing on pool deck, swimmer bends at waist, extends arms over head, pressing arms against the ears. The hands are pressed together with palms facing down, fingers pointing slightly downward, ready for the catch position.

Hands are pressed outside the shoulders, outward and downward.





Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Butterfly Drills

Pull is finished with the hands pressing under and past hips.



Hands recover with high elbows.



Hands are relaxed and sweep forward over head.



Return to start position.



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Head must lift during the pull phase of the stroke.
- ☐ Swimmer's face must be facing forward during breath.
- ☐ Check for correct hand entry into water.
- ☐ Check that swimmer is pressing under chest, then backward and outward into recovery.



Sample Workouts

The following sample workouts are based on the following assumptions:

1. Pool length of 25 meters.
2. Land warm-up time of 15 minutes
3. In-pool session time of 60 minutes



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Three-Week, Nine Session Workout

Week 1 – Session 1

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Jogging Stretches	Jogging Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
50-meter freestyle—slow	100-meter freestyle—slow	200-meter freestyle—slow
50-meter freestyle kick—slow	100-meter freestyle kick—slow	100-meter freestyle kick—slow
50-meter backstroke—slow	100-meter backstroke—slow	100-meter backstroke—slow
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Introduce freestyle streamline kick ♦ 25-meter freestyle—slow ♦ 25-meter backstroke swims ♦ Stroke correction ♦ Dive starts—deep end 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter freestyle drill ♦ 4x50-meter freestyle sprints @ 30-second returns ♦ 100-meter—slow, choose stroke ♦ 4x50-meter backstroke sprints @ 30-second returns ♦ 100-meter backstroke—slow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 200-meter freestyle drill ♦ 4x100-meter freestyle sprints @ 30-second returns ♦ 200-meter backstroke—slow ♦ 6x50-meter backstroke hard @ 15-second returns
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
50meter freestyle, backstroke—slow	100-meter freestyle, backstroke	200-meter freestyle, backstroke
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
800 meters approximately	1.1 kilometers approximately	1.5 kilometers approximately
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Introduce new drill ♦ Stroke correction ♦ Practice dives at end of section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Stroke correction ♦ Check use of pace clock ♦ Talk to swimmers after practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check use of pace clock ♦ Stroke correction ♦ Check turns



Week 1 – Session 2

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Jogging Stretches	Jogging Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
100-meter freestyle, backstroke	200-meter freestyle, backstroke	200-meter freestyle—emphasize turns
100-meter freestyle, backstroke kick—easy	200-meter freestyle, backstroke—easy	100-meter freestyle kick—easy
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Freestyle lateral, check body position ♦ 25-meter freestyle kick test ♦ Introduce backstroke streamline drill ♦ Practice new drill ♦ Freestyle, backstroke starts, 15-meter walk back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter backstroke kick—streamline ♦ 50-meter freestyle kick test ♦ 100-meter breaststroke drill ♦ 100-meter breaststroke—easy ♦ Starts, all strokes, 15-meter walk back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 200-meter backstroke drill ♦ 4x50-meter backstroke sprints @ 30-second returns ♦ 50-meter freestyle kick test ♦ 200-meter freestyle, breaststroke—easy ♦ 200-meter breaststroke drill ♦ Starts, all strokes, 15-meter walk back
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
100-meter freestyle, backstroke	200-meter, choose stroke	200-meter, choose stroke
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
800 meters approximately	1 kilometer approximately	1.5 kilometers approximately
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Body position of new drill ♦ Record kick test ♦ Check starts ♦ Use fins where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check stroke, breaststroke, backstroke ♦ Record kick test ♦ Check starts ♦ Use fins where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check turns in breaststroke ♦ Record kick test ♦ Check breaststroke drill ♦ Check starts



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Week 1 – Session 3

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Stretches	Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
100-meter freestyle—easy	200-meter backstroke—easy	400-meter freestyle, backstroke—easy
100-meter backstroke—easy	100-meter butterfly kick—easy, fins	200-meter backstroke, butterfly kick, fins
100-meter freestyle kick—easy		
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Revise backstroke streamline kick ♦ 100-meter backstroke Shoulder Rotation Drill, fins ♦ Starts backstroke, 15-meters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 2x100-meter breaststroke @ 25-meter—hard, 25-meter—easy ♦ 4x50-meter breaststroke swims hard @ 15-second returns ♦ 100-meter backstroke drill, fins ♦ 6x50-meter backstroke sprints, walk back ♦ Starts 2x each stroke swim, 15-meter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 2x100-meter butterfly drill, swim ♦ 2x200-meter freestyle—easy, emphasize turns, streamline ♦ 4x100-meter breaststroke swims @ 30-second returns ♦ Starts 2x each stroke swim, 15-meter
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
100-meter freestyle—slow	100-meter breaststroke—slow	200-meter freestyle, breaststroke—slow
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
800 meters approximately	1.2 kilometers approximately	1.6 kilometers approximately
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check shoulder rotation drill ♦ Check backstroke streamline position ♦ Stroke correction ♦ Emphasize good streamlining in starts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check backstroke drill, swimmer swims into wall from flags ♦ Check in all strokes ♦ Reduce program if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check butterfly leg action ♦ Check drill and hand entry ♦ Check butterfly two hand touch ♦ Reduce program if necessary



Week 2 – Session 4

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Stretches	Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
100-meter freestyle kick—easy	200-meter breaststroke kick—easy	200-meter freestyle—easy
100-meter backstroke kick—easy	100-meter breaststroke kick—easy	100-meter breaststroke drill
100-meter freestyle, backstroke—easy	100-meter butterfly kick—easy	100-meter breaststroke—easy
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter freestyle lateral drill ♦ Introduce new drill ♦ Freestyle lateral extension ♦ Practice new drill ♦ 4x25-meter freestyle sprints, starts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter butterfly drill ♦ 4x25-meter butterfly drill @ 30-second rotations ♦ 100-meter breaststroke drill ♦ Practice breaststroke turns, split stroke ♦ 4x25-meter individual medley order sprints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 200-meter backstroke drill ♦ 4x100-meter backstroke sprints @ 30-second rotations ♦ 100-meter freestyle kick slow ♦ 4x100-meter individual medley @ 3.3 seconds ♦ Practice turns
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
100-meter athlete choice	200-meter freestyle—easy	200-meter freestyle—easy
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
800 meters approximately	1.2 kilometers approximately	1.7 kilometers approximately
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Introduce new drill, fins ♦ Practice new drill, take time ♦ Stroke correction ♦ Check streamlining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check butterfly stroke, kick ♦ Correct finishes in individual medley ♦ Check breaststroke drill ♦ Check streamlining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Correct turns in individual medley ♦ Check use of pace clock ♦ Practice turns in shallow end ♦ Check streamlining



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Week 2 – Session 5

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Stretches	Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
100-meter backstroke kick, streamline	200-meter breaststroke kick drill on back	200-meter freestyle, butterfly kick
100-meter backstroke—easy	100-meter breaststroke kick, board	Streamline, fins, no board
100-meter freestyle—easy	100-meter breaststroke—easy	Swim into wall from flags
Emphasize streamlining	Emphasize turns, streamlining	100-meter breaststroke—easy
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100-meter freestyle lateral extension drill 100-meter freestyle kick, 25-meter—hard, 25-meter—easy 4x25-meter freestyle sprints, check streamlining Freestyle finishes into wall, 5 meters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100-meter freestyle lateral extension drill 100-meter freestyle—easy, check stroke 100-meter butterfly drill, 25-meter right arm pull, 25-meter left arm pull, fins 8x25-meter butterfly swims, hard on 1.00 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100-meter freestyle lateral extension drill 100-meter freestyle swim—hard 4x100-meter freestyle sprints, 3.30 100-meter backstroke—slow 8x25-meter individual medley order
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
200-meter freestyle, backstroke—easy	200-meter freestyle, breaststroke—easy	200-meter freestyle—easy
Check turns, arm action	Check breaststroke kick, turns	Check turns, streamlining
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
900 meters approximately	1 kilometer	1.6 kilometers
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check lateral extension drill Work on finishes into wall Check hips in freestyle Check kick, emphasize high hips Check streamlining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check lateral extension drill Check hand entries in butterfly drill Check use of pace clock Check breaststroke two-hand touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check use of pace clock Check lateral extension drill Check turns, streamlining Emphasize correct finish on all strokes



Week 2 – Session 6

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up Stretches Arm Rotations	Land Warm-Up Stretches Arm Rotations	Land Warm-Up Stretches Arm Rotations
Pool Warm-Up 100-meter backstroke—easy 100-meter backstroke drill, 25-meter right arm pull, 25-meter left arm pull 100-meter freestyle—easy	Pool Warm-Up 200-meter freestyle—easy 100-meter breaststroke kick, streamline 100-meter breaststroke—easy	Pool Warm-Up 200-meter backstroke—easy 100-meter butterfly kick easy, fins 100-meter freestyle—easy
Main Set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 25-meter freestyle kick test ♦ Introduce breaststroke kick ♦ Practice breaststroke kick drill on pool edge ♦ Practice breaststroke kick in water on back with kickboard ♦ Practice breaststroke kick in streamline position short distance, rest ♦ Starts, swim 15-meters, walk back 	Main Set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 50-meter freestyle kick test ♦ 2x100-meter breaststroke kick drill ♦ 1x100-meter kick on back with board ♦ 1x100-meter kick on front with board ♦ Check feet, turned out and glide ♦ 4x50-meter breaststroke sprints @ 30 seconds ♦ 4x50-meter backstroke sprints from block, check start position on and off block 	Main Set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 50-meter freestyle kick test ♦ 100-meter breaststroke—easy ♦ 2x100-meter breaststroke kick/pull drill, 1x pull, 1x kick, streamline ♦ 4x100-meter breaststroke sprints @ 6 seconds ♦ 200-meter freestyle fast, into wall
Cool-Down 200-meter freestyle easy, emphasize streamlining off wall	Cool-Down 200-meter choose stroke, emphasize turns, streamlining	Cool-Down 200-meter backstroke or breaststroke easy, emphasize turns, streamlining
Total Distance 800 meters approximately	Total Distance 1.3 kilometers	Total Distance 1.5 kilometers
Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Kick test, time and record ♦ Introduce breaststroke kick ♦ Practice breaststroke kick ♦ Starts, check feet position on blocks or wall 	Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Kick test, time and record ♦ Check breaststroke kick ♦ Check breaststroke turns, touches ♦ Backstroke starts, check feet position off blocks 	Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Kick test, time and record ♦ Check all turns ♦ Breaststroke drill, emphasize strong whip kick ♦ Check swimmer as enter into streamline



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Week 3 – Session 7

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up Stretches	Land Warm-Up Stretches	Land Warm-Up Stretches
Pool Warm-Up Kick test discussion results 100-meter backstroke easy, check arm action, continuous kick	Pool Warm-Up Kick test discussion results 200-meter breaststroke swim—easy 100-meter freestyle kick, streamline, fins	Pool Warm-Up Kick test discussion results 400-meter, 50-meter freestyle, 25-meter backstroke 100-meter freestyle kick—easy, fins
Main Set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Revise breaststroke kick drill ♦ Practice breaststroke kick drill ♦ 4x15-meter breaststroke kicks ♦ Practice streamlining off wall, with/without fins ♦ Practice relay changeovers 	Main Set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter freestyle lateral drill, fins ♦ 100-meter freestyle lateral extension drill, fins ♦ 100-meter freestyle bilateral, fins ♦ 100-meter breaststroke kick—easy ♦ Practice relay changeovers 	Main Set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter backstroke shoulder rotation drill, swim into flags, fins ♦ 200-meter backstroke drill, 25-meter right arm, 25-meter left arm ♦ 200-meter Backstroke swim, check turns ♦ 4x25-meter butterfly hard @ 30-seconds rest ♦ Practice relay changeovers
Cool-Down 100 meters, choose stroke	Cool-Down 200 meters, choose stroke	Cool-Down 200 meters, choose stroke
Total Distance 600 meters approximately	Total Distance 1 kilometer	Total Distance 1.4 kilometers
Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Revise breaststroke kick ♦ Streamline off wall ♦ Relay changeovers 	Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check lateral drill ♦ Bilateral breathing ♦ Relay changeovers 	Checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Backstroke shoulder rotation ♦ Backstroke turns ♦ Relay changeovers



Week 3 – Session 8

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Stretches	Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
100-meter freestyle kick	100-meter freestyle kick	100-meter freestyle kick
50-meter freestyle	150-meter freestyle	200-meter freestyle
100-meter backstroke kick	100-meter backstroke kick	100-meter backstroke kick
50-meter backstroke	150-meter backstroke	100-meter backstroke
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 50-meter freestyle lateral extension drill ♦ 2x25-meter freestyle, good technique ♦ Revise breaststroke kick drill on pool edge ♦ Practice breaststroke kick, prone, supine ♦ 25-meter freestyle, time trial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100-meter freestyle lateral drill, fins ♦ 50-meter freestyle, good technique, turns ♦ 100-meter backstroke shoulder rotation drill ♦ 100-meter backstroke, 25-meter right arm pull, 25-meter left arm pull, swim into flags, turns ♦ 4x50-meter backstroke hard @ 30-seconds rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 100M Freestyle bilateral, turns ♦ 4x100M Freestyle hard three minutes @ 30 seconds rest ♦ 100-meter butterfly kick, prone, board ♦ 100-meter butterfly kick, supine streamline, swim into wall ♦ 4x25-meter backstroke hard @ 30-seconds rest
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
150-meter freestyle, backstroke—easy	200-meter freestyle, backstroke—easy	200-meter freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke—easy
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
800 meters approximately	1.3 kilometers approximately	1.4 kilometers approximately
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check breaststroke kick ♦ Check freestyle technique ♦ 25-meter freestyle time trial, time, record, increase swim distances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check lateral drills ♦ Check freestyle technique ♦ Check backstroke shoulder rotation and arm pull drill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check use of pace clock ♦ Check leg action in butterfly kick ♦ Check finish, butterfly sprints



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Week 3 – Session 9

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up	Land Warm-Up
Stretches	Stretches	Stretches
Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up	Pool Warm-Up
50-meter breaststroke kick, board, prone	100-meter breaststroke kick—easy	100-meter freestyle kick—easy
50-meter breaststroke kick, board, supine	100-meter breaststroke—easy	100-meter butterfly kick—easy
100-meter backstroke—easy	100-meter backstroke shoulder rotation drill	100-meter freestyle, butterfly kick—easy
Main Set	Main Set	Main Set
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Introduce breaststroke arm action, breathing on pool deck ♦ Practice breaststroke arm action, breathing in shallow water ♦ Practice breaststroke arm action, with pull buoy or fins ♦ 25-meter freestyle kick test ♦ 100-meter freestyle lateral drill ♦ 100meter freestyle—easy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 4x50-meter breaststroke kicks hard @ 30-seconds rest ♦ 4x50-meter breaststroke hard @ 30-seconds rest, check finish ♦ 100-meter butterfly kick—easy ♦ 2x50-meter butterfly swims—easy ♦ 2x100-meter individual medley—one easy, one hard ♦ 100-meter backstroke—easy, check turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 4x50-meter breaststroke kicks hard @ 30-seconds rest ♦ 4x50-meter breaststroke hard @ 30-seconds rest, check finish ♦ 100-meter butterfly kick, fins ♦ Backstroke, swim into wall from flags ♦ 4x100-meter individual medley swims—two hard, two easy, @ 60-seconds rest between 100 meters, check turns, finish
Cool-Down	Cool-Down	Cool-Down
100 meters—slow, choose stroke	100 meters—slow, choose stroke	200 meters—slow, choose stroke
Total Distance	Total Distance	Total Distance
800 meters approximately	1.3 kilometers approximately	1.4 kilometers approximately
Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Introduce breaststroke arm and breathing action, take time ♦ Demonstrate 100 percent correct ♦ 25-meter freestyle kick/test record ♦ Check freestyle technique ♦ Note choice in cool-down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check individual medley swims, technique ♦ Check individual medley swims, turns ♦ Check breaststroke kick in kick set ♦ Note choice in cool-down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check IM swims, turns ♦ Check butterfly kick action ♦ Check breaststroke kick action ♦ Note choice in cool-down



Sample 2: 8 Week Training Program

Week 1	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups (10 minutes)</p> <p>Arm Swings Jumping Jacks Sit-Ups (five times) Toe Touches Running in place Arm Circles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Before session commences, speak with swimmers/family members/caregivers about safety and the importance of always bringing a drink bottle. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice getting in the pool in the shallow end where everyone can stand. Play here briefly to adapt to the water. Splash and have fun for five to 10 minutes. <p>Water Warm-Ups (Check athlete ability level)</p> <p>Group athletes—by ability—in the appropriate lanes.</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Four laps of freestyle with face in water (rest) 2. Four laps of freestyle kick with kickboard (rest) 3. Four laps of freestyle with face in water (rest) 4. Four laps of freestyle kick with kickboard <p>Cool-Down</p>
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups (10 minutes)</p> <p>Arm Swings Jumping Jacks Sit-Ups (five times) Toe Touches Running in place Arm Circles</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6x25-meter freestyle—easy <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage swimmer to put face in water and breathe to the side every two or three strokes, whichever is more comfortable for the swimmer. <input type="checkbox"/> Freestyle practice drills – face in water, breathing to the side and keeping legs straight <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6x25-meter freestyle with kickboard 2. 4x25-meter backstroke 3. 4x25-meter freestyle <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Practice running in place in the water, driving feet to the bottom of the pool. <input type="checkbox"/> Always speak with swimmers at the end of the session, and praise them for their efforts in the session.



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts

Week 1	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups (10 minutes)</p> <p>Arm Swings Jumping Jacks Sit-Ups (five times) Toe Touches Running in place Arm Circles</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups (same as Day 1 and 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 6x25-meter freestyle<input type="checkbox"/> 6x25-meter freestyle with kickboard, concentrating on keeping legs straight <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 6x25-meter backstroke2. 6x25-meter freestyle <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>Relays with swimmers to finish off session</p>

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 2	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Stretching on the Deck Push-Ups Jumping Jacks Running in place Arm Circles</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>Running in the water</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work off pace clock 2. 4x25-meter freestyle with 50 seconds rest 3. 4x25-meter backstroke with 50 seconds rest 4. 4x25-meter freestyle kicking on board 5. 4x25-meter backstroke with kickboard on swimmers chest 6. 4x25-meter freestyle with 50 seconds rest <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>Complete snakes in freestyle, up one lane, down the next, up the next, down the next.</p>
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Stretching Running with a small ball Running between cones</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 4x25-meter freestyle with 60 seconds rest <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrate on breathing with face in water and breathing to the side. <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x25-meter breaststroke up/freestyle back 2. Breaststroke swimmers must concentrate on their legs. 3. 4x25-meter streamlining, floating in prone position with arms out in front, head in water and breathing to the side 4. 4x25-meter breaststroke up/freestyle back <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>4 x 25-meter freestyle—easy</p>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts

Week 2	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>6 x 25-meter swimmer's favorite stroke</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Breaststroke of Day 12. Concentrate on face in water, kick – glide – pull3. Practice kick, holding side of pool4. 4x50-meter freestyle—medium effort with 45 seconds rest5. 4x25-meter breaststroke—easy with 45 seconds rest6. Concentrate on feet.7. 4x25-meter backstroke up/freestyle back <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>100-meter freestyle—easy, high arms and straight legs</p>

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 3	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Arm Swings Toe Touches Jumping Jacks Running in place Sit-Ups (10 times) Push-Ups (no more than 5 times)</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 200-meter freestyle—easy <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrate on face in water and breathing to the side. <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6x25-meter freestyle kicking on board, keeping legs straight 2. 6x25-meter freestyle 3. 4x25-meter breaststroke kicking on board 4. Concentrate on frog kick with legs 5. 6x50-meter freestyle at 40 seconds rest 6. 4x25-meter freestyle sprint (fast) at 60 seconds rest 7. 4x25-meter breaststroke at 60 seconds rest 8. 2x50-meter breaststroke at 60 seconds rest <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 200-meter freestyle—easy <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrate on face in water and breathing to the side.
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups (10 minutes)</p> <p>Water Warm-Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2x100-meter freestyle—easy <input type="checkbox"/> 2x100-meter freestyle kicking on board <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x25-meter freestyle flip turns 2. Concentrate on breathing to the side, swim with face in the water 3. 4x50-meter freestyle with flip turns <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>Team relays to finish the session</p>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts

Week 3	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>6 x 50-meter freestyle—easy</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4x25-meter freestyle at 15 seconds rest2. 4x50-meter breaststroke at 30 seconds rest3. 4x50-meter freestyle at 15 seconds rest using flip turns4. 4x50-meter backstroke at 30 seconds rest5. 4x50-meter freestyle at 15 seconds rest using flip turns <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 6x50-meter freestyle—easy<input type="checkbox"/> Sit swimmers down and speak with them about swimming carnivals, officials at the competition.

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 4	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Concentrating on stretching</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>150-meter—easy—choice of stroke</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x50-meter freestyle kicking on board 2. 4x50-meter freestyle at 60 seconds rest, 50 percent effort 3. 4x50-meter breaststroke, kicking on board 4. 4x50-meter breaststroke at 60 seconds rest, 50 percent effort 5. 4x50-meter backstroke at 60 seconds rest, 50 percent effort 6. 4x50-meter backstroke drill, streamlining with both arms stretched 7. 4x100-meter freestyle, using flip turns and pushing off from the wall <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>4 x 50-meter—easy—choice of stroke</p>
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6x50-meter backstroke <input type="checkbox"/> 6x50-meter freestyle <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrate on face in water and straight legs <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breaststroke drills 2. Backstroke drills 3. 10x50-meter freestyle non stop 4. Flip turns at each end of the pool <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>Team relays</p>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts

Week 4	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>6x50-meter freestyle—easy</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4x50-meter backstroke2. 4x25-meter backstroke drill, keeping head back and kicking3. Place a coin on forehead of swimmer4. Where backstroke flags are in place, teach athletes to count their strokes to the end of the wall5. 4x50-meter freestyle <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>Team relays</p>

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 5	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>8x25-meter breaststroke up/freestyle back</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x100-meter freestyle, concentrate on face in water and legs straight 2. 4x50-meter backstroke, concentrating on head back, kicking with knees slightly bent 3. 2x50-meter backstroke 4. 2x100-meter freestyle, breathing correctly 5. 2x50-meter freestyle, working on speed 6. 2x100-meter freestyle, breathing correctly 7. 2x50-meter freestyle, working on speed <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Team relays <input type="checkbox"/> Breaststroke and freestyle relays
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>4x100-meter freestyle—easy</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3x25-meter butterfly 2. Teach swimmers to swim like a dolphin 3. If swimmer in squad is good at butterfly, ask the swimmer to show the squad 4. Two kicks for each arm stroke, no flutter kicking allowed 5. 1x200-meter freestyle with flip turns <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 200-meter – swimmer’s choice of stroke <input type="checkbox"/> Noodle relay



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts

Week 5	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Insure that swimmers are increasing their number of sit-ups/push-ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>200-meter freestyle</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4x50-meter breaststroke up/backstroke back2. 4x25-meter butterfly kick with kickboard3. 4x25-meter butterfly drill (Arms at side with dolphin kick)4. 2x25-meter butterfly5. 2x50-meter backstroke6. 2x50-meter breaststroke7. 2x50-meter freestyle <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>200-meter freestyle</p>

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 6	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>200-meter – Swimmer’s choice of stroke</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x50-meter breaststroke up/backstroke back 2. 200-meter freestyle kick on board 3. 200-meter backstroke 4. 200-meter freestyle with flip turns 5. 200-meter freestyle kick on board <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 150-meter backstroke/breaststroke/freestyle <input type="checkbox"/> Team relays
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>200-meter freestyle with flip turns</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100-meter freestyle kick on board 2. 100-meter freestyle drill 3. 100-meter freestyle 4. 4x50-meter butterfly—easy, backstroke—fast, breaststroke—easy, freestyle—fast 5. 100-meter backstroke pull, board between knees 6. 4x50-meter butterfly—fast, backstroke—easy, breaststroke—fast, freestyle—easy <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>200-meter freestyle</p>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Week 6	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>200-meter freestyle with flip turns and push off the wall on each turn</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4x50-meter backstroke drill2. 2x50-meter freestyle—easy3. 4x50-meter freestyle streamline drill4. 2x50-meter freestyle—easy5. 4x50-meter breaststroke drill6. 2x50-meter freestyle—easy7. 2x50-meter butterfly drill <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>200-meter freestyle</p>

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 7	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2x75-meter backstroke <input type="checkbox"/> 2x50-meter breaststroke <input type="checkbox"/> 2x25-meter butterfly <input type="checkbox"/> 100-meter freestyle <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x50-meter freestyle, concentrating on breathing 2. 4x50-meter backstroke, keep head back, breath every other arm stroke 3. 4x50-meter breaststroke, glide after each kick, glide after each arm stroke, keep face in water during the pull 4. 4x25-meter butterfly, two beat kick for each arm stroke, breath after each stroke, no flutter kick <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 200-meter freestyle <input type="checkbox"/> Team relays
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 200-meter – Swimmer’s choice of stroke <input type="checkbox"/> 4x50-meter butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4x50-meter freestyle at 30 second rest 2. 2x25-meter butterfly at 45 seconds rest 3. 2x50-meter backstroke at 50 seconds rest 4. 2x50-meter breaststroke at 50 seconds rest 5. 2x50-meter freestyle at 30 seconds rest <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>400-meter freestyle with correct breathing and flip turns</p>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training Sample Workouts

Week 7	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>2x100-meter freestyle, concentrate on flip turns and push off from the wall</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4x25-meter individual medley2. 2x100-meter backstroke3. 2x100-meter breaststroke4. 2x50-meter butterfly5. 2x100-meter freestyle6. Starts and turns for 10 minutes <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>150-meter freestyle</p>

Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts



Week 8	
Day 1	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 400-meter freestyle 2. 100-meter backstroke 3. 200-meter freestyle, concentrate on flip turns and pushing off the wall 4. 100-meter breaststroke 5. 2x25-meter individual medley 6. 200-meter freestyle 7. Starts and turns <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>200-meter freestyle</p>
Day 2	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>100-meter freestyle—easy</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 200-meter freestyle swim/50-meter freestyle kick 2. 150-meter freestyle swim/50-meter freestyle kick 3. 50-meter freestyle swim/50-meter freestyle kick 4. 50-meter freestyle swim/50-meter kick 5. 200-meter freestyle kick/50-meter freestyle swim 6. 150-meter freestyle kick/50-meter freestyle swim 7. 100-meter freestyle kick/50-meter swim 8. 50-meter freestyle kick/50-meter swim <p>Cool-Down</p> <p>100 meter freestyle—easy</p>



Teaching Aquatics Skills – Squad Level Training

Sample Workouts

Week 8	
Day 3	<p>Land Warm-Ups</p> <p>Water Warm-Ups</p> <p>400-meter freestyle</p> <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4x25-meter freestyle at 25 second rest2. 8x50-meter freestyle at 60 second rest3. 4x50-meter breaststroke at 30 second rest4. 4x50-meter backstroke at 45 second rest5. 200-meter freestyle kick on board <p>Cool-Down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 200 meter freestyle—easy<input type="checkbox"/> Team relays in medley order



Assessment and Evaluation Guidelines for Squad Level

Squad-level swimmers' progress is evaluated by their times and distances. Personal best times are the most important in determining progress.

A small certificate of recognition for each new skill achieved during training sessions and for each personal best achieved provide a catalyst for swimmers to strive to improve. Rewarding swimmers with certificates also acts a record of the swimmers' progress throughout the season.

Throughout the season, remember to award certificates to swimmers for achieving specific goals that were set for them. Below are some ideas for certificates that can be created when the swimmer has successfully and correctly completed the following.

- Streamline Kicking
- Butterfly Kick – Simultaneous Kick Action
- Breaststroke Kicking
- Freestyle Lateral Extension Drill
- Starts
- Finishes
- Turns
- Good Listening
- Excellent Attendance
- Kick Test Results Improvements Over Eight Weeks
- Individual Medley Skills
- Backstroke Streamlining
- Backstroke Drills
- Butterfly Arm Action – Correct Technique
- Breaststroke and Butterfly Correct Timing



***Special
Olympics***

[Insert Program Name]

Freestyle Lateral Drill Certificate

Awarded To

[Insert Swimmer's Name]

Coach

Date

Great Job!



***Special
Olympics***

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Aquatics Rules, Protocol & Etiquette



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Teaching the Rules of Aquatics

Divisioning Examples for Aquatics

There are many factors involved in the divisioning process in aquatics to ensure fairness and success. One limiting factor is the size of the event. If it is a local meet where many of the athletes are about the same age and ability, the divisions will fall into place. If, however, there are many athletes of various ages and abilities, there will need to be more divisions, resulting in smaller events or heats in particular races. The ultimate goal is to have a competition with six to eight athletes in one race all competing within the same time frame. This is only likely to happen at extremely large or age-limited meets, such as school meets.

It is important that coaches enter the current best time (PB – personal best) for each of their swimmers to ensure correct divisioning and limit the chance of a disqualification for breaking the 10 percent rule. Where time trials are run, there will be an opportunity to re-squad swimmers based on their adjusted time.

In aquatics, if there are many different divisions to swim and time is a factor, races may be run that include swimmers from more than one division. The division will be swum together and awarded separately.

Unified Sports Rules

There are few differences in the rules for Special Olympics Unified Sports competition as stipulated in the official Special Olympics Sports Rules and modifications outlined in the rules book. The additions are highlighted below.

1. A roster consists of a proportionate numbers of athletes and partners. Although the exact distribution of roster spots is not specified, a basketball roster containing eight athletes and two partners does not meet the goals of Special Olympics Unified Sports Program.
2. For aquatics, a Unified Sports team consists of two athletes and two partners of equal ability, competing in the 25-meter and 50-meter freestyle relay or medley relay events.
3. Team sports must have an adult, non-playing coach. Player-coaches are not allowed in team sports.

Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events while your athlete is competing that you think violate Official Aquatics Rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Making protests are serious matters that impact a competition's schedule.

Check with the competition management team prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.



Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athletes' commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes. Lead by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
- Always finish a race or event – Never quit.

Fair Play at All Times

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
2. Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics the top priorities.
3. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
4. Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect.
5. Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public.
6. Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of Athletes and Partners in Unified Sports

1. Treat teammates with respect.
2. Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
3. Treat opponents with respect; shake hands prior to and after contests.
4. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
5. Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
6. Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
7. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
8. Define winning as doing your personal best.
9. Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Discuss swimming competition, such as congratulating opponent after all events, win or lose, and controlling temper and behavior at all times.
- ☐ Discuss correct competition rules, such as not leaving the water until whistled by referee.
- ☐ Give sportsmanship awards or recognition after each meet or practice.
- ☐ Always commend the athletes when they demonstrate sportsmanship.



Remember

- ♦ Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown by how you and your athletes behave at the pool.
- ♦ Be positive about competing.
- ♦ Respect your opponents and yourself.
- ♦ Always stay under control, even if you are feeling mad or angry.



Aquatics Glossary

Term	Definition
Aerobic	Pertaining to or presence of oxygen.
Anaerobic	Pertaining to or lack of oxygen
Backstroke	Where the swimmer remains on his/her back from the start or push off from the wall to the turn through to the completion of the race.
Backstroke Start	Swimmer starts in water, both hands hold onto block, both feet under waterline.
Bilateral Breathing	Breathing both sides. In freestyle breathing every third stroke.
Body	The torso, including shoulders and hips.
Breaststroke	Stroke done completely on the horizontal plane with the swimmer's chest horizontal to the bottom of the pool. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. The arm and leg action is simultaneous. The kick takes place below the waterline.
Buoyancy	This is the upward supportive force of water, counteracting the downward force of gravity. The force of buoyancy is determined by the density of the water; the greater the density the greater the buoyancy. Factors which affect a swimmer's buoyancy and floating position are: age, body build and bone size, muscular development and weight distribution, amount of fatty tissue, lung capacity and water density.
Butterfly	Stroke performed completely on the horizontal plane. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer must remain on the breast and is permitted no more than two leg kicks per stroke cycle. Arm action is forward and simultaneous. Leg kick is simultaneous.
Catch	Occurs with hand entry into water. The hand "catches" or "grabs" water.
Center line of body	Imaginary line drawn down the long axis of the body.
Check List	List of skills coach should be looking at within program.
Cool-Down	Performed at end of training session. Helps remove waste products from body.
Coordination	Consistent movement in water. Example: even leg kick in butterfly.
Course	Designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Long Course: 50 meters (55 yards to be recorded as 50 meters) Short Course: 25 meters or 25 yards
Divisions/Divisioning	Where athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Variance between fastest and slowest time is no more than 10 percent.
Drill	Skill used to develop and maintain stroke technique.
Dual Competition	Competition between two clubs.
Efficient Stroke Technique	Where the best results are obtained, using the least amount of effort.



Term	Definition
Event	Any race or series of races in a given stroke or distance. For competition limits, one event equals one preliminary or one preliminary plus its related final or one timed final.
Fatigue	Short term sensation of tiredness and reduced performance.
Final	Any single race which determines the final places and times in an event.
Finalist	Athletes who swim in a final race.
Finals	Where the final race of each event is competed.
Flutter Kick	Fast freestyle or backstroke kicks.
Freestyle	Stroke other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly.
Freestyle Relay	All swimmers swim freestyle stroke.
Frontal Resistance	This is the resistance to forward progress made by the water immediately in front of the swimmer or any part of the body. This resistance is caused by the swimmer's shape in the water.
Grab Start	The swimmer stands on the block/edge, toes curled over edge, hands holding onto block.
Heats	Division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.
Horizontal	Parallel with the surface of the water.
Hypothermia	Occurs when the body's core temperature drops too low.
In-Water Start	Swimmer starts in water, holds onto block with one hand, points the other in the direction of swim and pushes off wall with two feet.
Individual Medley	Event where the swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance and strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.
Invitational Competition	Competition in which all competitions and/or teams are invited by the host.
Lane Markings	Guidelines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes, running from the starting end to the finishing/turning end of the pool.
Lateral	Swimmer is on his/her side.
Length	Extent of the course from one end to the other.
Log Book	Record of swimmer's progress and activity.
Main Set	Main training part of a program. New skills may be introduced, skills revised along with timed set work.
Medley Relay	Four swimmers swim an equal distance in order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle
Meet	Series of events held in one program.
Pace Clock	Used by swimmers to check the time taken for each set distance. Counts off rest time before starting again.
Pool	Physical facility in which the competition is conducted.



Aquatics Rules, Protocol & Etiquette

Aquatics Glossary

Term	Definition
Pool Deck	Area immediately around pool.
Preliminary	Session of the meet in which heats are held; also called divisioning.
Prone Position	Swimmer lies on front.
Propulsion	This is the force that drives the swimmer forward and is created by the swimmer's arms and legs.
Qualifying Heats	Competition in which a number of heats are swum to qualify the fastest swimmers for the finals where final placing for the event will be determined. Can also be called divisioning.
Race	Any single swimming competition; i.e., preliminary, final, timed final.
Relay Leg	Order/position of a swimmer in a relay team event.
Relays	Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke.
Rotate/Rotation	Moving in one line of the body's axis.
Scissor Kick	Kick performed while on the side.
Seconds Rest	Rest time given between sets.
Simultaneous	Moving at the same time.
Streamline – Streamlining	Body shape in the water which offers the least possible resistance.
Supine	Swimmer lies on back.
Total Distance	Total amount of meters covered in program.
Track Start	Swimmer stands on block/edge, one foot in front with toes over edge, other foot behind, hands holding onto block.
Unified Sports Team	Refers to a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
Warm-Up	Series of exercises/drills used to prepare the body. On-land warm-up can consist of jogging and stretching. In-water warm-ups include slow, easy swims.
Whip Kick	Description of leg action in breaststroke.



Special Olympics Coaching Quick Start Guide

AQUATICS



Special Olympics

September 2004



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Training Session Safety Guidelines

Coaches are a major part of aquatics programs. They need to be well-informed and trained in all facility procedures, such as following emergency action plans, completing and filing accident reports and complying with follow-up procedures to an incident that may have occurred while they were in charge.

Electrical Safety

Electrical shock is a very real hazard in the operation of swimming pools. Permanent or temporary electrical connections and wires used with the following equipment may come in contact with water, including:

1. Underwater lights
2. Tape recorders
3. Record players
4. Automatic timing devices
5. Place clocks
6. Electronic loud speakers
7. Start systems
8. Pool vacuum cleaners
9. Many other types of electrical devices operating on line voltages in the vicinity of the racing course involve wires stretched across the pool deck. These devices are connected to the power supply.

In case of electrical shock or electrocution, call emergency personnel, and follow the facility's emergency action plan. Shut off the power source and immediately check the swimmer's airway, breathing and circulation. Use nonconductive equipment to remove the swimmer from the source of electricity if the power cannot be turned off.

Assists and Rescues

Swimmers may be in danger of drowning from a head injury, heart attack, stroke, fainting, overexertion, seizure or incapacitating cramps as well as other causes.

How the Coach Can Assist

Teach swimmers that if they feel panicky, they should try to reach the lane lines and use the lines for support. You can use the reaching, throwing or wading methods described below to assist a swimmer in a water emergency. In most cases, at least one of these measures will be successful. While you attempt to make an assist, someone in your group must be prepared to call emergency personnel immediately, if necessary, to attend to the rescued swimmer.

Drowning Situations

In this situation, a swimmer is unable to call for help or to wave his/her arms. A distress situation may become a drowning situation when the swimmer, for whatever reason, is no longer able to keep afloat. Drowning situations may be classified as passive or active.

Passive

In a passive drowning situation, the athlete may be conscious or unconscious. The swimmer might suddenly slip under water, making no attempt to call for help, and may float facedown near the surface of the water. A passive drowning situation can result from any of the following causes:

- A heart attack or stroke
- An accidental blow to the head from another swimmer or an object, such as a kickboard
- Hyperventilation and blackout
- Cold water shock after sudden submersion in cold water. The athlete may feel a strong urge to gasp. Gasping could cause the swimmer to take in water which, in turn, might cause panic and eventual suffocation.



Active

In contrast to a passive drowning situation, the athlete in an active drowning situation is conscious. Actions may be violent or weak, depending on the amount of energy the athlete possesses. An active drowning athlete's buoyancy will alternate between neutral and negative. The athlete's arms may be extended outward from his/her sides, thrashing up and down in the water, not allowing forward progress. Instead, the athlete will alternately raise and lower him/herself in the water.

Buoyancy may be lost each time the athlete goes beneath the surface. The athlete becomes less able to take in air and has to work harder to stay on the surface. Panic will begin to set in during the process, and the athlete will be unable to call for help because of concentrating all his/her efforts on breathing. Swimmers must be supported so they can breathe freely after initial contact and during the carry to safety. In distress or drowning situations, the coach must use safe and effective forms of rescue.

Do Not Endanger Yourself

Remember, the only way you can help a swimmer in trouble is when you are in a safe position yourself and you can maintain control of the situation. The reaching, throwing and wading methods presented in this section will help keep you safe and in control. Swimming out to bring a distressed swimmer to safety requires special training. If a coach who has not had safety training approaches a distressed swimmer, he/she will be risking two lives. Leaping into the water to help someone may seem courageous, but choosing one of the following methods described here—reach assist, throwing assist, ring buoy, free floating support and wading assist- is much more likely to result in a successful assist.

Reach Assists

Reach with a pole, a kickboard or other object. Firmly brace yourself on the pool deck and reach out to the athlete with any object that will lengthen your reach, such as a pole, kickboard, rescue tube, shirt, belt or towel. When the athlete is able to grasp the extended object, slowly and carefully pull the athlete to safety.

Reach with your arm or leg. In the water, use one hand to get a firm grasp on the pool ladder, overflow trough or other secure object; then extend your free hand or one of your legs to the athlete. Maintain your grasp at the water's edge. Do not swim out into the water.

Throwing Assists

You can throw a ring buoy, throw bag, rescue tube or other device for the athlete to grab and be pulled to safety. Follow these steps:

1. Get into a position that is safe and allows you to maintain your balance. Bend your knees. Step on the non-throwing end of the rope.
2. Aim your throw so that the device will fall just beyond the athlete and within reach.
3. When the athlete has grasped the device, talk reassuringly while slowly pulling the athlete to safety, leaning your body weight away from the athlete as you pull.

Ring Buoy

The ring buoy is made of buoyant cork, kapok or foam rubber. The buoy should have 20-25 meters of lightweight line with a lemon or other object at the end. This will float the line if it falls in the water and prevent the line from slipping out from under your foot when you throw the ring buoy. The buoy and coiled line is hung in an easily accessible location so that anyone can quickly grasp it.

Free Floating Support

A rescue buoy, kickboard, rescue tube and ring buoy are examples of equipment that can be used as free-floating supports. To use a free-floating support, push it to the athlete and encourage him/her to grasp the support and kick toward safety.

Wading Assists

If the water is shallow (not above waist deep), you can wade in with an emergency device or buoyant object and extend it to the athlete. For this kind of assist, use a rescue tube, ring buoy, kickboard or pull buoy.



You can use the equipment for support in the water, and the athlete can grasp the other side of it. You can then pull the athlete to safety, or you can let go of the piece of equipment and tell the athlete to start kicking toward safety.

Always keep the piece of equipment between you and the athlete. If the athlete should panic and grab you, you could be in danger too.

Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

1. If at an outdoor pool, have a plan to evacuate athletes if there is danger of lightening.
2. Always rope off the swimming areas so that athletes do not obstruct other swimmers.
3. Make sure athletes bring water to every practice, especially in hotter climates.
4. Check your first-aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
5. Identify the nearest phone that is accessible during practice.
6. Ensure that the locker rooms and/or restrooms are available and clean during practice.
7. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
8. Do not allow athletes to swim while wearing watches, bracelets or jewelry, including earrings.
9. At the beginning of each practice, provide proper stretching exercises after warming up.
10. Provide activities that also improve general fitness levels. Fit athletes are less likely to get injured.

Pool Preparation

Before swimming, it is critical to make sure the area is safe and clear of objects. Swimming aids and all other pool equipment should be in a designated place. No equipment or articles should be left lying on the deck area.

Many Special Olympics athletes train in a public pool, so it is important that swimmers are aware of the designated areas /lanes allocated to them for training purposes.

Although most Special Olympics athletes do not require special facilities for swimming, some modifications and adaptations may be necessary for safety reasons. Following are necessary factors to consider when planning a swimming training session.

- Architectural barriers within and around the pool
- Entrances
- Doorways
- Restrooms and showers
- Locker or change rooms
- Pool decks and bottom
- Water depth and condition
- Water and air temperature
- Ladder, steps, stairs and ramps
- Lighting
- Review emergency plan, and determine the specific signals that are used in identifying an emergency within the facility
- Check for slippery deck conditions and remove standing water
- Ensure there are certified lifeguards with no other duty but to guard
- Check wheelchair access



- If in a public pool, designate an adult/volunteer to act as a spotter for the group. Life guards may not be specifically watching your group/squad all the time
- Check location of safety equipment for emergency use around the pool area
- Be aware of other users within the complex

Always be ready to make adaptations and modifications in both your program and facility if necessary. Remember, it is always better to adapt the program to the facility than not to offer any swimming instruction and training at all.



Daily Performance Record

The Daily Performance Record is designed to keep an accurate record of the athletes' daily performances as they learn a sports skill. There are several reasons why the coach can benefit from using the Daily Performance Record.

1. The record becomes a permanent documentation of the athlete's progress.
2. The record helps the coach establish measurable consistency in the athlete's training program.
3. The record allows the coach to be flexible during the actual teaching and coaching session, because he can break down the skills into specific, smaller tasks that meet the individual needs of each athlete.
4. The record helps the coach choose proper skill teaching methods, correct conditions and criteria for evaluating the athlete's performance of the skills.

Using the Daily Performance Record

At the top of the record, the coach enters his/her name, the athlete's name and aquatics event. If more than one coach works with an athlete, they should enter the dates that they work with the athlete next to their names.

Before the training session begins, the coach decides what skills will be covered. The coach makes this decision based on the athlete's age, interests and his/her mental and physical abilities. The skill needs to be a statement or a description of the specific exercise that the athlete must perform. The coach enters the skill on the top line of the left-hand column. Each subsequent skill is entered after the athlete masters the previous skill. Of course, more than one sheet may be used to record all of the skills involved. Also, if the athlete cannot perform a prescribed skill, the coach may break down the skill into smaller tasks that will allow for the athlete's success at the new skill.

Conditions and Criteria for Mastering Skills

After the coach enters the skill, he/she must then decide on the conditions and criteria by which the athlete must master the skill. Conditions are special circumstances that define the manner in which the athlete must perform a skill. For example, "given a demonstration, and with assistance." The coach needs to always operate under the assumption that the ultimate conditions in which the athlete masters a skill are, "upon command and without assistance," and, therefore, does not have to enter these conditions in the record next to the skill entry. Ideally, the coach needs to arrange the skills and conditions such that the athlete gradually learns to perform the skill while upon command and without assistance.

Criteria are the standards that determine how well the skill must be performed. The coach needs to determine a standard that realistically suits the athlete's mental and physical abilities. For example, "perform a distance of 30 centimeters, 60 percent of the time." Given the varied nature of skills, the criteria might involve many different types of standards, such as amount of time, number of repetitions, accuracy, distance or speed.

Dates of Sessions and Levels of Instruction Used

The coach may work on one task for a couple of days and may use several methods of instruction during that time to progress to the point where the athlete performs the task upon command and without assistance. To establish a consistent curriculum for the athlete, the coach must record the dates he/she works on particular tasks and must enter the methods of instruction that were used on those dates.



Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Quick Start Guide

Event: _____ Athlete's Name: _____

Skill: _____ Coach's Name: _____

Skill Analysis	Conditions & Criteria	Dates & Instruction Methods	Date Mastered



Aquatics Attire

Appropriate aquatics attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of wearing certain types of clothing during training and competitions. For example, long pants and shirts are not proper aquatics attire for any event. Explain that swimmers cannot perform their best while wearing long pants or shirts that restrict their movement.

Take athletes to high school or collegiate meets and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes that come improperly dressed to train and/or compete.

Clothing must be suited to the activities involved. Few sports require less equipment than swimming. Although equipment such as goggles and caps are recommended, a Special Olympics athlete only needs a swimsuit to participate.

Swimsuits

The swimsuit can be anything that closely resembles skin in fit and feel. For males, any brief swim suit made of smooth, quick-drying fabric, such as nylon or lycra, is fine. Gym shorts with waistbands that fit snugly around the waist can be substituted.

A one-piece suit is recommended for females. The suit needs to be close-fitting, and cut so as not to hinder movements. The swimsuit needs to be substantial enough to stay on the athlete's body while they train.

Racing suits, whether for men or women, will provide less drag and provide more efficiency in the water.

Cap

A tight-fitting, stretch swimmer's cap is recommended. Swim caps will prevent the hair from falling in the swimmer's face and thus provide less of a distraction. Besides keeping the swimmer's hair dry, the cap also reduces water drag and resistance.

Goggles

Swim goggles are encouraged. Goggles allow the swimmers to comfortably put their faces in the water, thus allowing for better body position and more efficiency. There must be careful adherence to safety with the use of this equipment. There are several varieties of goggles that allow for choices, depending on each swimmer's face.

Nose Clips

Nose clips are helpful for athletes who have difficulty controlling their breathing or who have sinus problems. Such clips should be used only when necessary.

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Always check with the lifeguard on duty.
- ☐ Take a head count of your swimmers and record their attendance. Give numbers to the lifeguard.
- ☐ Make lifeguard aware of any potential emergencies which may arise due to medical or behavioral conditions of swimmers.
- ☐ Designate a "spotter" for the group; this could be a parent/volunteer.
- ☐ Show swimmers the area in which they have been allocated.
- ☐ Set rules before any session commences. Ensure swimmers know their boundaries.
- ☐ If in an outdoor pool, check air and wind conditions as well as water temperature.
- ☐ Ensure that swimmers have been made aware of specific signals or cues to be used in an emergency.
- ☐ Show swimmers correct point of entry and type of entry required into the water.
- ☐ Prepare your session 15 minutes before start time. Have all necessary equipment placed in an appropriate and safe position on pool deck.



General Swimming Equipment List At-A-Glance

Chamois	Can be used in conjunction with a towel.
Fins	Used primarily in helping to develop and maintain good stroke technique, especially in drill work. Can be used in a fun activity within your training session.
Flags	Located five meters from end of pool. Used especially when swimming backstroke; indicates to swimmer in backstroke the distance from end of pool for turn or finish. Can be used during training sessions in pool.
Goggles	Encourage swimmers to wear goggles at all times while participating in training and competition. Goggles help beginners to put face in water and encourage confidence. Be aware that some swimmers may have prescription goggles, and swimmers should learn how to maintain and care for them.
Kickboards	Used during training sessions.
Nose Clips	Used by some swimmers who take in water through their nostrils, especially when performing turns.
Pace Clock	Used by swimmers to check their rest and go times during training. Can be used by coach when no stop watch is available. Swimmers need to be taught the use of a pace clock.
Pull Buoys	Can be used during a training session to help maintain buoyancy and in specific drills to develop upper body movement and strength.
Stop Watches	Used by the coach to check swimmers' times during time trials. They can also be used if no pace clock is available.
Swim Caps	Encourage swimmers to wear caps. However, they are not always necessary. Swimmers at competition level may be required to wear a cap; therefore, it is a good idea to have the swimmer adjust to wearing one. Also helps keep hair out of face and decreases drag.
Towels	Swimmers are encouraged to have a clean towel with them at training sessions.

General Coaching Points

There are differences of opinion on the use of floatation devices. Coaches must make their own decisions. However, if floatation devices are used, consider not using them for an equal amount of time as a means of developing a swimmer's own buoyancy and orientation in water. Eventually the swimmer may not require a floatation device.

Aids and equipment may need to be modified in order to adapt to physical differences. However, the individual should not become reliant on them.

Coaches need to be conversant with the rules of competition for the particular disability group of each swimmer in their care. For example, FINA (La Fédération Internationale de Natation) has particular rules for specific disability classifications that may meet the needs of a particular swimmer or swimmers at a multi-disability event. After classification, a card is provided that lists any exceptions for that swimmer. This must be produced prior to the commencement of any applicable event. Further details should be sought from your own national swimming body.



Modifications & Adaptations

Orthopedic Impairments

- Use a pool lift or a ramp to help athletes.
- Have athletes wear a flotation waist belt.
- Use the shallow end of the pool.
- Use properly trained lifeguards or assistant coaches.
- Shorten length of practice time.
- Do warm-up exercises in very shallow water.
- Ask a physical therapist to act as an advisor.



Essential Components of Planning an Aquatics Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. For more in-depth information and guidance on these elements, refer to their specific sections in this guide.

The Warm-Up	25-30 minutes
Specific Event Workout	15-20 minutes
Conditioning or Fitness Workout	15-20 minutes
The Cool-Down	15-20 minutes

The final step in planning a training session is choosing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember, when creating a training session that includes the essential components, the progression allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

- ♦ Easy to difficult
- ♦ Slow to fast
- ♦ Known to unknown
- ♦ General to specific
- ♦ Start to finish

In organizing the team for effective teaching and learning experiences, the coach should always arrange the session so that:

- ♦ The safety of the athlete is ensured.
- ♦ Everyone can hear the instructions.
- ♦ Everyone can see the demonstration.
- ♦ Everyone will have an opportunity for maximum practice.
- ♦ Everyone will have an opportunity to be checked regularly for skill improvement.

The most important factor is to provide for the safety of the athlete. Every effort must be made to prevent an accident from occurring. A certified lifeguard must be on duty during all aquatics activities. Rules, such as no running, no dunking, no horseplay and no diving into shallow water, must be explained and enforced. Potential hazards should be pointed out. All athletes must be accounted for at the start of a period, at regular intervals during the period and at the close of the training. Coaches should remain in the pool area until the end of training and all swimmers are accounted for and have left the area. A lifeguard must be in a position to observe the safety of the swimmers at all times. The coach needs to be aware of any special medical conditions, such as seizures.



The procedures used for learning and practicing skills in the water are determined by the skill to be learned, the skill level of the swimmers, the size and shape of the facility, the extent of shallow and deep water areas available for practice, and the number, sizes and ages of the athletes. Following are factors to ensure successful learning, regardless of the type of teaching approach implemented.

1. Athletes, if at all possible, need to face away from the sun, bright light from windows or distracting influences during demonstrations.
2. Athletes must be able to see and hear the instructions during demonstrations and practice sessions.
3. Athletes must have the opportunity to:
 - ♦ make the physical and mental adjustment to the water in relation to the skill to be learned;
 - ♦ find and maintain a good working position in the water as determined by the skill to be learned; and,
 - ♦ have maximum practice for accuracy, coordination, speed and expenditure of energy. This practice must include an analysis of each athlete's movements and appropriate and timely suggestions for improvement by the coach, an assistant coach or a buddy.
4. Swimmers must have ample space to practice without interference by other athletes.

Hints for Organizing a Good Training Session

1. Use the pool to your best advantage.
2. Organize stations by ability. Color code ability groups (i.e. Green-Beginner; Blue-Rookie, etc.). No one should be standing around while you arrange things. Keep everyone busy.
3. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
4. Introduce athletes to one another, and orient them to the instructional setting.
5. Demonstrate the sports skill as frequently as possible.
6. Keep the "fun" in fundamentals. Use a game approach.
7. Devote a part of each training session to group activity.
8. If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
9. If a swimmer joins the team after training has begun, skill assessment should be done in shallow water.



Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep athlete's attention	Athlete needs to be an active listener.
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them.
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction.
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together.
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well.
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom.
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun; help keep it this way for you and your athletes.
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully• Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it• General to specific – this is why “I” am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have, and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively.
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities.



The Warm-Up

A warm-up period is the first part of every training session or preparation for competition. The warm-up starts slowly and systematically and gradually involves all muscles and body parts that prepare the athlete for training and competition. In addition to preparing the athlete mentally, warming up also has several physiological benefits.

- Raises body temperature
- Increases metabolic rate
- Increases heart and respiratory rate
- Prepares the muscles and nervous system for exercise

The warm-up is tailored for the activity to follow. Warm-ups consist of active motion leading up to more vigorous motion to elevate heart, respiratory and metabolic rates. The total warm-up period takes at least 25 minutes and immediately precedes the training or competition. A warm-up period will include the following basic sequence and components.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic movement	Heat muscles	5 minutes
Stretching	Increase range of movement	5-10 minutes
Event-Specific Drills	Coordination preparation for training/competition	10 minutes

Slow Aerobic Movement

Jogging, non-specific movements (such as “shaking all over”) or other slow aerobic movements may be used that are specific to the ability levels of the swimmers. It is the first exercise of an athlete’s routine. Athletes begin warming the muscles by moving around for three to five minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The movement should start out slowly and then gradually increase in speed to its completion; however, the athlete should never reach even 50 percent of his maximum effort by the end of the activity. Remember, the primary objective of this phase of the warm-up is circulating the blood. The example programs for each group: beginner, stroke correction and squad—identify specific activities that may be suitable for this section of the warm-up.

Stretching

Stretching is one of the most critical parts of the warm-up and an athlete’s performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities and helps prevent athlete injury. Please refer to “Stretching” within this section for more in-depth information.

Flexibility is a major element to an athlete’s optimal performance in both training and competing. Flexibility is achieved through stretching, a critical component in warming up. Stretching follows an easy aerobic jog at the start of a training session or competition.

Begin with an easy stretch to the point of tension, and hold this position for 15-30 seconds until the pull lessens. When the tension eases, slowly move further into the stretch (developmental stretching) until tension is again felt. Hold this new position for an additional 15 seconds. Each stretch should be repeated four to five times on each side of the body.



It is also important to continue to breathe while stretching. As you lean into the stretch, exhale. Once the stretching point is reached, keep inhaling and exhaling while holding the stretch. Stretching should be a part of everyone's daily life. Regular, consistent, daily stretching has been demonstrated to have the following effects.

1. Increases the length of the muscle-tendon unit
2. Increases joint range of motion
3. Reduces muscle tension
4. Develops body awareness
5. Promotes increased circulation
6. Makes you feel good

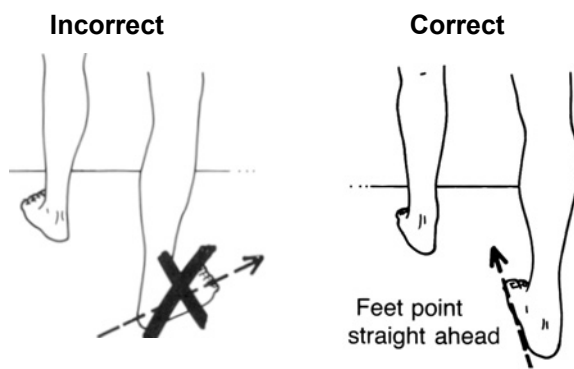
Some athletes, like those with Down syndrome, may have low muscle tone that makes them appear more flexible. Be careful to not allow these athletes to stretch beyond a normal, safe range. Several stretches are dangerous to perform for all athletes and should never be part of a safe stretching program. These unsafe stretches include the following

- Neck Backward Bending
- Trunk Backward Bending
- Spinal Roll

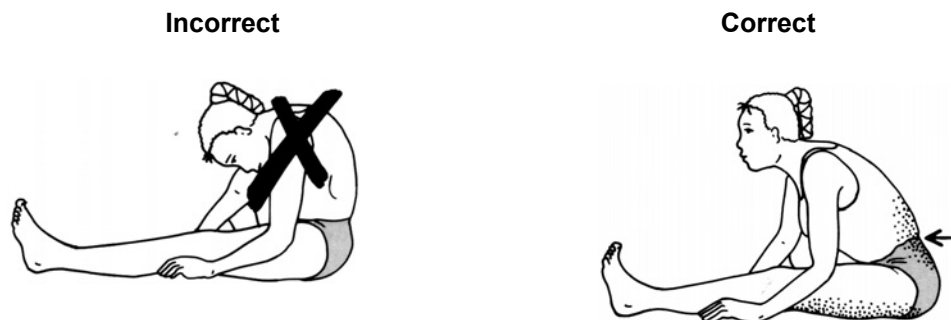


Stretching

Stretching is effective only if the stretch is performed accurately. Athletes need to focus on correct body positioning and alignment. Take the calf stretch for example. Many athletes do not keep their feet forward in the direction they are running.



Another common fault in stretching that athletes make is bending the back in an attempt to get a better stretch from the hips. An example is a simple sitting forward leg stretch.



The Cool-Down

The cool-down is as important as the warm-up. It is especially important for the higher-level stroke correction group and all squad groups. Games and activities may replace the more traditional cool-down routines, so long as they achieve the required effect. Abruptly stopping an activity may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the athlete's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness and other problems for athletes. The cool-down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience. The cool-down is also a good time for the coach and athlete to talk about the session or competition.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic swim or activity	Lowers body temperature Gradually reduces heart rate	5 minutes
Light stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 minutes



Home Training Program

1. If athletes only train once a week with their coaches and do no training on their own, progress will be very limited. Training kits can be purchased for most sports that include most of the equipment you would need to practice at home.
2. The aquatics athlete can practice certain aquatics skills and be encouraged to do land-based exercises while out of the pool.
3. Resistance Stretch Cords can be used to simulate certain swimming actions while out of the pool. This training tool is inexpensive and easy to learn to use. Under supervision, the athlete will be able to simulate strokes and build strength at the same time.
4. Land-based exercises and stretching may involve running, gym work, light weight work and certain isometric exercises.



Skill Progression – Learn to Swim

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Sit on pool edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sit on pool edge and kick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enter water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enter water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blow into water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate continuous breathing and exhalation pattern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand in water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand in water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Put face in the water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk across pool in shallow water (waist deep) with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk across pool independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jump in shallow water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supported, feet off bottom, move forward and backward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submerge in chest-deep water with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submerge in chest-deep water independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open eyes under water with or without goggles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Touch pool bottom in chest-deep water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sit on pool bottom in chest-deep water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Float on front with assistance (prone float)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Float on front independently (prone float)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform front float and recover to standing position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform front float with a flutter kick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float to back float with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recover from front float to back float independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move from back float to front and return with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Move from back float to front and return independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Push and glide on front/back with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Push and glide on front/back independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scull using small or full arm movements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kick while holding onto pool side/gutter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move forward using kickboard and flutter kick on back with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Move forward using back flutter kick independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mushroom float	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From back float, mushroom float and recover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Coaches Tips for Water Familiarization – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. If a new swimmer is anxious, sit quietly beside the pool and distract him/her, talking about or looking at other things.
2. Make the pool environment look interesting – add floating and sinking objects.
3. Use a small blocked-off area rather than a large, open pool space.
4. Activities initially include feeling the water, walking or crawling down swim ramp, moving in shallow water, walking in water and progressing through all of the initial stages until buoyancy and submersion have been conquered.
5. Practice walking in water, blowing “eggs” or ping-pong balls across surface of water – progress to races against other swimmers.
6. Train in thigh- to waist-deep water with a peer group of competitors.

Tips for Competition

1. Assisted walk can be a successful activity for the swimmer who has just reached this stage.
2. Teach to hold wall at start and start on signal.
3. Train in completing distance and reaching for the finish point.
4. Reward all swimmers as soon as they reach the finish point, to develop a sense of accomplishment.



12-Week Beginners Program – Sample

Week 1	Get to know pool, staff, athletes, family and caregivers Water familiarization, entries, exits, pool rules, etiquette
Week 2	Reinforce week 1 Begin skills assessments Introduce breathing
Week 3	Finalize skills assessments - goal setting for each individual for the season Hum, mobility, control of rotation, floats and tumbles
Week 4	Review previous sessions' skills Begin to identify and develop individual programs Introduce arm actions, continue with breathing and floats
Week 5	Review previous sessions Work on weak points – reinforcement through games and activities Introduce team and group activities – relays
Week 6	Work on identified issues from previous week – work on weak spots Review individual goals – adjust as required
Week 7	Conduct skills assessments Work on skills identified Review and progress on previous session's work.
Week 8	Introduce new skills – back float, push and glide, kick as ready Continue team work and relays
Week 9	Introduce competition events as identified for each group Practice in a noncompetitive games environment
Week 10	Introduce race aspect of events Practice good sportsmanship – use relays and cheer on buddies
Week 11	Conduct final skills assessment for season Practice full skills progression – end with events, fun games
Week 12	Fun competition gala with awards Certificates of Achievement for the season



The Strokes

One of the fundamental goals of any swimming program is to provide an opportunity for all swimmers to develop good swimming technique in all four strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Special Olympics aquatics coaches need to have a good knowledge of the basic principles required to master these strokes. These principles are developed through a variety of progressive practices within this coaching guide.

Throughout this section we will look at the body position, leg action, arm action and breathing aspects of the four strokes. We will also look at teaching the stroke and give teaching points and practices. This exercise is not exhaustive. Experienced coaches may have further teaching points and practices that can be incorporated in the development of the athlete's swimming program.

In addition, we will generally move the teaching progression from land drills to pool drills and activities in shallow to chest-deep water. A distance is sometimes added to the activity which often includes the complete stroke – arm stroke with the respective kick.





Skill Progression – Freestyle

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Make an attempt to swim on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform freestyle using flutter kick for 15 meters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform freestyle with rhythmic breathing for one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make an attempt to start, from in the pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform proper start, standing on the pool edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform proper start, using a starting block	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make an attempt to turn around without stopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform an open turn after swimming freestyle without stopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform a flip turn in waist-deep water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform flip turns after swimming one to two pool lengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Freestyle/Front Crawl

Freestyle is regarded as the fastest of all competitive swim strokes and one of the first taught to the beginning swimmer. The stroke action involves the arms moving forward alternately with the legs kicking continuously throughout the stroke. The swimmer's body remains horizontal and streamlined in the water with the swimmer's head turned to one side to breathe after each full arm cycle. The teaching and development of the stroke can be achieved by breaking down the skill into its various components.

Body Position

The body position is almost flat. The constant propulsion from the alternating arm and leg actions make it a very effective and efficient stroke.

Key Points

- Flat with a slight slope down to hips. The waterline is between the eyebrows and hairline.
- Eyes look forward and slightly downward.
- The slight slope down to the hips enables the kick to stay in the water.
- Shoulders roll into the stroke, utilizing the strong chest muscles and generating a strong propulsive force.
- Slight head adjustments change the position of the legs. If the head is held high out of the water, the legs will drop, and, if submerged, the legs will rise out of the water.
- The legs work almost within the body depth. This creates the least resistance to forward motion.



Leg Action

The freestyle/front-crawl leg action helps the body stay in the horizontal position and balances the arm action. It may also contribute to the propulsion within the stroke.

Key Points

- Leg action starts at the hips.
- Alternating action is required.
- There is a slight bend in the knees.
- Feet kick up to the surface and churn the water without splashing.
- Ankles are relaxed to allow toes to point and give a natural in-toeing effect.
- The number of leg kicks may vary for each arm cycle.

Arm Action

The continuous, alternating arm action is the strength within the stroke and enables constant propulsion. Throughout the full stroke there are five main areas that require attention: entry, down sweep, in sweep, up sweep and recovery.

Key Points – Entry

- Hand is turned with the palm facing half outward for a thumb-first entry.
- Hand enters between the head and shoulder line with a slight bend in the arm.
- Hand then reaches forward under the surface. Note: this is a natural stretch, not overreaching.

Key Points – Down Sweep

- Hand sweeps downward and slightly outward to the catch position.
- Hand continues this sweep downward and outward.
- Elbow starts to bend. It is important that the elbow is kept high.

Key Points – In Sweep

- Hand pitch changes and curves inward toward the body's center line. This is similar to a sculling action.
- Elbow has a 90-degree bend.
- Hand accelerates.

Key Points – Up Sweep

- When the hand has reached the body's center line, the hand changes pitch to upward, outward and backward.
- This enables acceleration through to the hips.
- Hand then exits the water little-finger first.

Key Points – Recovery

- This movement is relaxed and uses the momentum from the up sweep.
- Elbow will exit first and is kept higher than the hand.
- Hand passes as close to body as possible. This is dependent on the swimmer's flexibility.
- Once the hand passes shoulder level, the arm will reach forward to the entry position.



Key Points – Breathing

- Head is turned smoothly in time with the natural roll of the body.
- Head is turned, not lifted.
- The in-breath is taken when the breathing arm is completing the up sweep.
- The non-breathing arm enters the water when the breath is taken.
- Head is turned back to the center in a smooth action as soon as the breath is taken.
- The breath is released gradually or held until just before the next in-breath.
- Breathing occurs every two arm pulls (one stroke cycle). This is unilateral breathing. It may also be taken after every three arm pulls (1.5 stroke cycles). This is bilateral breathing.

Key Points – Timing

Usually there are six leg kicks in one arm cycle. This may vary between swimmers. Swimmers who prefer middle- and long-distance swims tend to kick less frequently.

Freestyle – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction – Drill/Test Reference
Lack of squeeze on the recovery phase of the pull.	Tell the swimmer to clap hands together as he/she squeezes the arms together.
Kicking too wide.	Have the swimmer kick with a pull buoy on. If it falls, the knees are too wide.
Knees coming under the stomach.	Have the swimmer kick on his/her back and keep the knees at or below the water surface.
Swimmer does not get hands under the body on the pull.	Have the hands scull outward and then inward until they almost touch under the stomach. The hands now form a triangle.
Swimmer is not pushing hands past hips.	Put adhesive tape on the legs below the suit line, and tell the swimmer to touch the tape.
Swimmer cannot feel the stroke pattern in the water.	Have the swimmer swim only two or three strokes at a time. Review the proper pattern.



Skill Progression – Backstroke

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Swim on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke correctly for a distance of one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke start while facing the starting end; both hands on a starting block	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform the correct backstroke start and swim one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turn on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke turn – assisted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform backstroke turn in chest-deep water – independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Backstroke/Back Crawl

The backstroke, also known as the back crawl, is probably the easiest of all competitive strokes to teach and learn, as the swimmer has his/her head out of the water, unlike freestyle, where the face is in the water and breathing and arm coordination must be mastered.

Some learners prefer backstroke because their faces are out of the water and breathing is not an issue. Backstroke and front crawl have similarities. These similarities are useful when beginning swimmers are reminded of a skill or part of a skill which may be familiar to them.

Body Position

Key Points

- Supine, horizontal and streamlined.
- Ears are submerged just below the water surface.
- Head remains still, eyes look upward or slightly down toward toes.
- Chin is tucked in to ensure that the legs are kept in the water.
- Hips are kept close to the surface.
- Shoulders roll along with the stroke.
- To keep the legs in the water, there is a slight slope down from the head to the hips.



Kick

The leg action assists in maintaining a horizontal body position and balancing the arm action. This will minimize the legs swaying from side to side. It may also contribute to some propulsion.

Key Points

- The continuous up and down alternating action is started from the hips.
- Legs are close together.
- Legs are kept almost straight with the knees remaining below the surface.
- Relaxed ankles allow the toes to point.
- Feet break the surface at the end of the upbeat, trying not to splash.

Arm Action

The arm action is continuous and alternating. The arm action provides constant propulsion. Bent-arm action is more efficient than straight-arm action. The straight-arm action may be preferred in the early stages of development.

Key Points – Entry

- The little finger enters the water first, straight arm and close to the shoulder line.

Key Points – Initial Down Sweep

- The arm sweeps downward and outward to the catch. This is assisted by a natural shoulder roll.
- The hand is pitched downward and outward by the palm.

Key Points – Up Sweep

- The hand pitch is changed to sweep inward and upward.
- The arms are bent at a 90-degree angle at the elbow.

Key Points – Final Down Sweep

- The arm pushes through to the thigh.
- Fingers are pointing sideways and palms are downward.

Key Points – Recovery

- The hand comes out thumb first.
- The arm turns gradually to ensure that the little finger is ready for entry.
- Arm remains straight and relaxed throughout.

Key Points – Breathing

- Breathing is natural. As a rule, breathe every stroke cycle.

Key Points – Timing

- Six leg kicks to one stroke cycle.



Backstroke – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Knees bending too much during kick.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage swimmer to relax legs and ankles.• Kick from the hips.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice kick by using board and extending board and arms over knees.2. Kick short distances. Board will help stop too much knee bend.
Feet and hips are too low in water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check swimmers body position.• Encourage swimmer to push hips up to top of water.• Encourage a continuous kick with the feet making a little splash.• Check swimmer's head position. If head is too high hips will drop.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use of fins will encourage the swimmer to push hips up.2. Practice kick with and without kickboard.3. Encourage the swimmer to practice a streamlined kick.4. Practice kick with head tilted back, eyes to roof.
Swimmer's body rolls in the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swimmer is over-rotating.• Check for correct hand entry.• Check that swimmer's hands are not crossing over center line of body.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice specific drills and encourage swimmer to enter water with arms straight.2. Over-exaggerate hand entry.3. Ask swimmer to enter shoulder-width or wider.
Too much splash when hands enter the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check for correct hand entry.• Encourage swimmer to enter water with little finger first.	Practice specific hand entry drill, thumb up/rotation of hand/little finger in.



Skill Progression – Breaststroke

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Swim breaststroke on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform breaststroke with rhythmic breathing for one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform two breaststroke turns in a row after swimming one to two pool lengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Breaststroke

The breaststroke is one of the four competitive strokes. It is also a valuable survival stroke. When swimming the breaststroke the swimmer is prone in the water, and the arm and leg actions are symmetrical. The swimmer breathes in at the beginning of each arm stroke.

Breaststroke is the only competitive stroke where the arm recovery is carried out under water and where a greater amount of frontal resistance is experienced. The arm action is an out sweep, down sweep, in sweep and up sweep with recovery in a streamline position.

The leg kick in breaststroke is probably the most difficult of all kicks for swimmers to master and may take some time. The leg action is simultaneous and is sometimes described as a “whip kick.” In addition to the breathing, the correct timing of the arms and legs is very important.

Swimmers are encouraged to develop good streamlining skills when performing the breaststroke, and correct turns and finishes need to be reinforced. The teaching of a “split stroke” at the start and turn phase of the swim is very important.



Breaststroke – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Timing of breathing/arm stroke incorrect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the position of the swimmer's arms in the pull.• Generally, breathing timing will be incorrect because the hands/arms are being pulled to hips and not under chest.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Using fins, practice correct arm action.2. Use gentle fly kick when performing this drill.
Timing of breathing incorrect.	Check position of head during recovery.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emphasize importance of placing face in water only to hairline.2. Do not to get top of head wet.
Body position angled or pulling to one side.	Check that both leg and arm kicks are simultaneous and same amount of pull/kick is being carried out on each side.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice leg kick with/without board; introduce specific kick drills.2. Practice correct arm pull with/without fins.
Body not moving quickly or far enough under water on start/turn. Arms will be apart.	Ensure that swimmer is in a streamlined position.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice lots of push offs from wall in a streamlined position.2. Try to get swimmer to see how far he/she can go under water.
Uneven leg kick/or hips higher on one side during swim.	Ensure that both feet are turned out correctly and that leg kick is even and simultaneous.	Practice specific drills to encourage correct leg kick and body position.



Skill Progression – Butterfly

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Swim butterfly on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform butterfly using dolphin kick for 15 meters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform butterfly with rhythmic breathing for one pool length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform a butterfly turn after swimming butterfly without stopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform two butterfly turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Butterfly

The butterfly stroke is generally taught after the swimmer has established basic skills in the other three competitive strokes. The butterfly stroke relies on good timing and simultaneous arm and leg actions. The stroke is best taught by breaking it down into three phases: kick, arm action and breathing.

Butterfly – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Uneven stroke.	Ensure swimmer's legs and arms are moving simultaneously.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice fly kick with/ without fins and kickboard; streamlined on surface and below surface. 2. Practice arm action with fins. 3. Practice arm rotations on pool deck.
Breathing too late.	Have swimmer start breathing earlier.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use specific drills. 2. Swimmer breathes every third or fourth stroke.
Kick is low, body not streamlined and weak kick action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage swimmer to make a strong second kick. • Encourage swimmer to move whole body, not just the legs. 	Swimmer practices whole body movement with fins.
Swimmer doing short, fast strokes with body upright, (i.e., feet and hips too low).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimmer may not be pulling through past legs before recovery phase. • Check for two kicks per arm cycle. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice kicking fast over short distances with/without fins. 2. Encourage high body position and feet breaking waterline. 3. Practice pulling arms through to side of legs; emphasize touching thumbs to side of legs before arm comes out of water. 4. Practice without breathing for short distances so that breathing is not part of the stroke.



Individual Medley

The individual medley is one of the most challenging of all swimming events. However, it can also be one of the most fun for the swimmer. The swimmer must change strokes throughout the race using the correct turns and tempo for each of the strokes.

Regardless of the distance of the individual medley event, the swimmer must swim the race using the four competitive strokes in the correct order. The athlete swims each stroke for one-fourth of the race. The swimmer begins the race from a standing or in-water start in the order of:

- Butterfly
- Backstroke
- Breaststroke
- Freestyle (any other stroke, generally freestyle).

To train for individual medley events, the coach must teach all four strokes and appropriate turns. To better prepare for a race, focus more attention on the athlete's weakest stroke. During the race, the coach will want to make sure the swimmer concentrates on the weakest stroke, not expending all his/her energy in one particular phase of the race.

Individual Medley – Faults & Fixes Chart

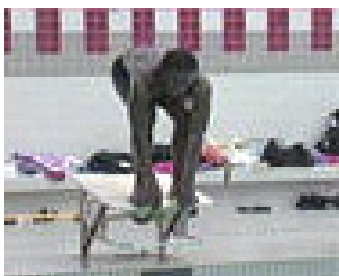
Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Swimmer begins to swim incorrect stroke after turn.	Practice event during training sessions.	Ask athlete to name the correct order of the strokes.
Swimmer rolls onto stomach (prone) at turn from butterfly to backstroke.	Emphasize that swimmer must be on back after touching wall in butterfly leg of event.	Have swimmer swim into wall, butterfly from flags, touch wall with both hands, and bring both knees up and feet to wall, pushing off wall on back in streamlined position and into backstroke leg of the event.
Swimmer does not touch wall with both hands in butterfly and breaststroke turns.	Emphasize that swimmer must touch wall with both hands on butterfly and breaststroke turn.	Practice swimming into wall, butterfly and breaststroke from the flags, and touch with both hands.



Swimming Starts

There are basically three different ways in which a swimmer may perform a start.

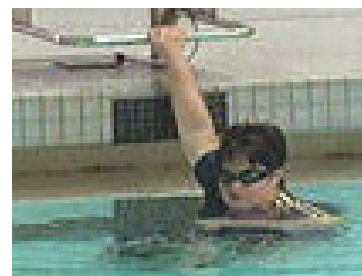
Grab Start



Track Start



In Water Start



Standing starts such as grab or track starts may be performed on the blocks or from the edge of the pool. A swimmer who is unable to do a standing start or is competing in backstroke events will perform a water start.

All starts are signaled by the starter who will whistle the swimmers onto the blocks or into the water. The starter will then command the swimmers to “Take your marks.” The swimmers leave the block or end of the pool when the starter signals with a gun or whistle.

Starting is a very important aspect of competitive swimming, and, in major competitions, a one-start rule may be enforced; therefore, it is important that the swimmer is given regular instruction in this skill. Be aware of certain medical conditions which may restrict swimmers from practicing out-of-water starts. Remember, when teaching starts, break down the skill and make it fun.

Safety Notes

According to the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules, prior to beginning instruction in butterfly, the coach reviews each athlete’s medical information form and determines whether the athlete has been screened for Atlantoaxial Subluxation. Restrictions from participating in the above events apply until the athlete has been examined, including x-rays of full extension and flexion of the neck, by a physician who has been briefed on the Atlantoaxial Subluxation. Water depth must be a minimum of six-feet deep before teaching the dive start from the deck.

Starting-Block Starts - Freestyle, Breaststroke and Butterfly

Practice the freestyle, butterfly and breaststroke starts while standing on a starting block. Each of the starting methods uses the basic start techniques described below.

- ♦ Freestyle Grab Start
- ♦ Freestyle Track Start
- ♦ Breaststroke Dive Start
- ♦ Butterfly Grab Start



Swimming Starts – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Swimmer slips off block or edge of pool.	Ensure that swimmer's toes are curled over block or edge.	Practice standing on block with toes over block.
Swimmer enters the water on an angle.	Ensure that the swimmer is well balanced and that movement off edge/block is even.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice jumping forward off the block.2. Encourage the swimmer to look forward, jumping in feet first.
Swimmer's arms are apart during entry into water.	Ensure a streamlined body position - hands together on entry, arms squeezing against ears/head.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Practice entry into water with one hand on top of the other.2. Preferably the stronger hand underneath as this will be the hand/arm which will pull first.

Swimming Turns

Freestyle Turns – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Turning too early into the wall.	Swimmer touches wall with one hand before executing a somersault.	Hands on wall, kick hard, then somersault, pushing off wall in a streamlined position.
Pushing off wall with one foot.	Encourage swimmer to push off with both feet.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Swimmer performs a vertical somersault, feeling feet pushing off bottom of pool.2. Swimmer feels feet pushing off edge of pool then moves into a streamlined position.

Teaching Butterfly and Breaststroke Turns

The butterfly and breaststroke turns are very similar. The only difference is that with a breaststroke turn a split stroke is performed under water directly after the turn. A split stroke is 1.5 strokes under water. When reaching the wall at the turn and finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands. The hands may touch above, below or at the waterline. The hands do not have to be at the same height. However, it is vital that the shoulders remain horizontal.

The swimmer will use a leading arm which will move along the body line, and a rotation of the swimmer's body will occur. It is important that the swimmer maintains a streamlined body position. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water before the arm stroke is performed.



Aquatics Athlete Skills Stroke Development Assessment

Athlete Name _____

Start Date _____

Coach Name _____

Instructions

1. Use tool at the beginning of the training/competition season to establish a basis of the athlete's starting skill level.
2. Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
3. If the athlete performs the skill correctly three out of five times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.
4. Intersperse assessment sessions into your program.
5. Swimmers may accomplish skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished this list when all possible items have been achieved.

Freestyle

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim on front
- ☐ Performs freestyle in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs freestyle using flutter kick for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs freestyle with periodic breathing for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs freestyle with rhythmic breathing for one pool length

Freestyle Start

- ☐ Makes an attempt to start from in the pool
- ☐ Performs a proper start in the pool
- ☐ Performs proper start standing on the pool edge
- ☐ Performs proper start using a starting block
- ☐ Continues to swim a proper freestyle stroke after starting from the block

Freestyle Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to turn around without stopping
- ☐ Performs an open turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs an open turn, after swimming freestyle, without stopping
- ☐ Performs a flip turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs a flip turn, swimming freestyle for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs two flip turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths



Backstroke

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim on back
- ☐ Performs backstroke in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs backstroke for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs backstroke correctly for a distance of one pool length

Backstroke Start

- ☐ Makes an attempt to start on back
- ☐ Performs backstroke start, holding the side of pool with one hand
- ☐ Performs backstroke start while facing the starting end, both hands on a starting block
- ☐ Performs the correct backstroke start and swims one pool length

Backstroke Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to turn on back
- ☐ Performs backstroke turn - assisted
- ☐ Performs backstroke turn in chest-deep water – independent
- ☐ Performs backstroke turn and continues to swim for one pool length

Breaststroke

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim breaststroke on front
- ☐ Performs breaststroke in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs breaststroke using correct breaststroke kick for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs breaststroke with rhythmic breathing for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs breaststroke with rhythmic breathing for one pool length

Breaststroke Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to do a breaststroke turn without stopping
- ☐ Performs breaststroke turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs breaststroke turn after swimming for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs two breaststroke turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths

Butterfly

- ☐ Makes an attempt to swim butterfly on front
- ☐ Performs butterfly in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs butterfly using dolphin kick for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs butterfly with rhythmic breathing for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs butterfly with rhythmic breathing for one pool length

Butterfly Turn

- ☐ Makes an attempt to do a butterfly turn without stopping
- ☐ Performs butterfly turn in waist-deep water
- ☐ Performs a butterfly turn after swimming butterfly without stopping
- ☐ Performs a butterfly after swimming for 15 meters
- ☐ Performs two butterfly turns in a row after swimming two pool lengths



Sample Squad Training Program

The following training program provides an example plan for Special Olympics aquatics athletes. The program provides coaches with a basic concept of progression of swimming skills. Of course, each coach will want to conduct his/her training program according to his/her athletes' specific needs and ability levels, factoring in the facilities available and time constraints.

The program takes swimmers from an introduction to the water through awareness of the four competitive strokes and individual medley. In many cases, it will take more than eight weeks to achieve this level. If possible, athletes should attempt to participate in a year-round aquatics program to attain higher levels of technical competency and fitness. The following conditions are assumed prior to starting this training program.

1. The plan is based on 60-minute training sessions in the water.
2. The plan is based on the facility being available three or more times per week.
3. The plan assumes that all swimmers can swim 25 meters of freestyle and backstroke without assistance and would have learned all the skills from the "Stroke Development" section.
4. The pool size used in this training example is 25 meters. However, a 50-meter pool can be used.

Adjustments to the entire program may be necessary, depending on the specific team/squad situation. As a coach, if you do not have the pool time available, or your athletes are not at the level of the plan, use this as an example and a goal to work toward. Feel free to take parts of the training plan and use appropriately for your own team/squad, remembering to build up gradually and maintain a high level of responsibility and care for your athletes.

Please Note: There must be a certified lifeguard on the pool deck at all times while athletes are in the pool area. Ensure that all safety precautions are taken and that a high level of duty of care be given to all athletes under your instruction.

Prior to any program being conducted, it would be advisable that you have a very good idea of the levels and ability of the swimmers who will be part of your groups. A suggestion would be to conduct some "tryout" or "assessment" sessions to determine which levels are best suited for your swimmers. By doing this, you will be well prepared to start planning your weekly programs.

- ♦ Be aware of your swimmers' ages. Remember that you may have a variety of ages in your groups, so it is important that activities be programmed that are age appropriate.
- ♦ If you have more than one group or squad of varying skill levels, it is suggested that you name each group/squad; for example, Level 1 or Level 2, or Squad 1 or Squad 2, or give them a name relating to a well-known swimmer, etc., to distinguish groups.

The sample workouts below refer to three different group/squad levels and will give workouts for each over an eight-week period. These workouts are only an example of the type of programs that can be developed and will vary according to the number and skill level of your swimmers. Whether or not you use the following training program, be consistent in several areas.

Duty of Care

The safety and well being of each athlete needs to be your first priority when developing any Special Olympics aquatics training program. Any potential dangers need to be identified and action taken as soon as possible.

Warm-Up

Warm-up time needs to be programmed into the training session prior to entering the water. Emphasis is on raising the swimmer's heart rate, warming up muscle groups and building basic muscle strength. It is also important that swimmers are taught the correct warm-up drills. Warm-up sessions need to be supervised.



Training Equipment

Swimmers are encouraged to have all required training equipment with them at each training session, e.g., water bottle, fins, paddles, spare pair of goggles and cap.

Session Programming

Training programs developed for different levels and ability groups need to be regularly assessed. Ensure that program goals are achievable. Do not set unrealistic goals.

All relevant information about the training program should be made available to the athlete, family member or care giver. Information, such as the number of training sessions, dates and times, needs to be included.

Stroke Technique

When programming training sessions, strong emphasis should be given to the development of good stroke technique. This can be achieved through setting stroke-specific drills which are practiced at each training session.

Learning through Fun

Athletes learn through fun activities, so include fun activities in your training program that have relevance to the skills you are trying to develop.

Positive Reinforcement

As a coach, it is important that you give positive reinforcement to your athletes. Always try to speak to each athlete individually and be aware of individual personalities and group dynamics.

Goal Setting

Ensure that all goals set are achievable and realistic. Put in place some form of recognition such as “Skill Achievement Awards” or “Skill Progression Awards.”

Setting of Boundaries

Athletes need to know what their boundaries are to help ensure your training program runs smoothly and that each athlete is given 100 percent opportunity to learn. It is important that clear, concise and consistent instruction is given.

Be Prepared – Be Flexible

Once you have set your training program and are confident that it will run smoothly, be prepared to make changes. As a coach, you must be flexible and able to put into place alternative programs for your athletes.



Nutrition

In this section, we will see how the food we eat impacts successful training and competition. Nutrition basically means all the food we eat and the beverages we consume. Food is our body's energy source which gives us our "get up and go." Without it, athletic performance goes down.

Hydration – Keeping Water in the Body

During exercise, the body loses water primarily through sweat, even in cold weather or in water. The body has several mechanisms to protect itself from the negative effects of dehydration, but thirst does not occur until the person is already dehydrated! As small a loss as 4 percent of body weight (4 pounds in a 100 pound person) can seriously affect performance.

The goal is to keep the athlete hydrated and not allow him/her to become dehydrated. The easiest way is to create a simple, routine system that all your athletes follow:

When to Drink Water	How Much Water to Drink
Night before practice or competition	Glass of water (8 ounces/250 milliliters)
Four hours before event	Glass of water (8 ounces/250 milliliters)
15 minutes before event	One-half glass of water (4 ounces/125 milliliters)
During event of less than one hour	One water break
During event of more than one hour	One-half glass every 20 minutes
After event	Glass of water every three hours until next day

Athletes need to be instructed to "drink as much water as they want." However, several serious medical conditions can occur from too much water. If you are practicing in warm environments, you may need to increase the frequency of water breaks. The athlete can hydrate with several types of liquids; however, the best replacement for most events is plain water.

- Water
- Carbohydrate drinks (PowerAde, Gatorade)
- Mixture of one-third fruit juice and two-thirds water is best used when the activity lasts longer than one hour

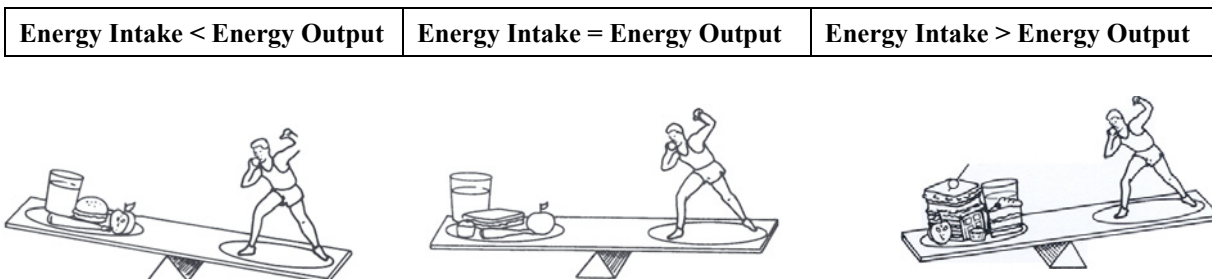
Calories

The energy the body gets is measured in calories. Different foods provide different amounts of energy, therefore varying amounts of calories. The amount of calories a person needs depends on many factors. Our metabolic rate is the speed at which we convert food to energy. This rate can be fast, slow or moderate, depending on the athlete. For example, younger athletes require about 3,000 calories per day. This may decrease for some older athletes that have less stringent training and competition programs. All these factors determine an athlete's diet. If insufficient calories are not consumed, an athlete's performance will be negatively impacted.



Energy Balance

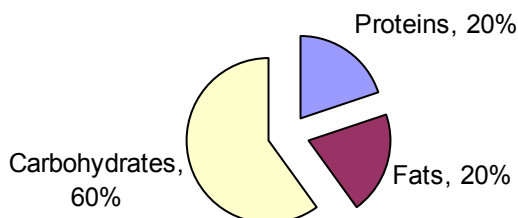
Energy balance is important for successful training and competition.



Nutrient Balance

Nutrients have different jobs, though they work together or need the presence of others to work properly. Nutrient balance is like the energy balance. Athletes must take in all the nutrients they require to be healthy and strong in training and competition. A typical high performance diet for an athlete will provide most energy from carbohydrates, with low and almost equal amounts of fat and protein.

Recommended High Performance Diet



Types of Nutrients

Protein—main body-building nutrient

- ♦ Constant need for regular intake
- ♦ High quality: eggs, milk, fish, meat
- ♦ Low quality: nuts, lentils, beans
- ♦ Too much protein converts into energy source or stored as body fat



Carbohydrates—our energy food

- ♦ Body's major energy source
- ♦ Breaks down quickly and easily in digestive system
- ♦ Good sources (complex): rice, corn, potatoes, beans, fruits
- ♦ Poor sources: white sugar, honey, soft drinks, chocolate bars
- ♦ Complex carbohydrates need to be main part of diet

Fats—slow energy food

- ♦ Concentrated energy source, twice as much as carbohydrates
- ♦ Breaks down very slowly and uses more oxygen to create energy
- ♦ Need small amounts for optimal health
- ♦ Visible fats: butter, margarine, plant and fish oils, fat on meat
- ♦ Invisible fats: milk, cheese, nuts, certain vegetables (vegetable fat is better for us)

Vitamins—most easily consumed through well-balanced diet

- ♦ Need small amounts daily
- ♦ Low levels can reduce performance
- ♦ Highest proportions in natural, fresh foods
- ♦ Fat soluble: stored in body and ready for use
- ♦ Water soluble: cannot be stored, must be in daily food intake
- ♦ Vitamin C cannot be used without iron

Minerals—most easily consumed through well-balanced diet

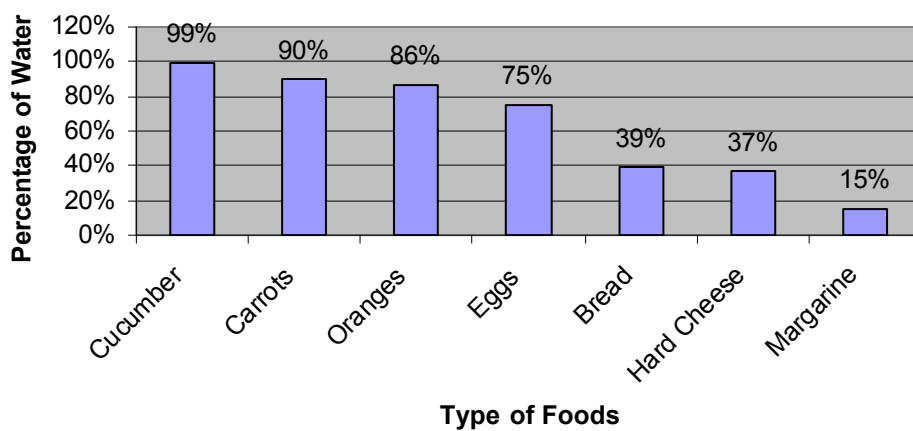
- ♦ Need small amounts daily
- ♦ Essentials: calcium, sodium, potassium, iron, iodine
- ♦ Iron is essential for oxygen transport throughout the body
- ♦ Iron cannot be used without Vitamin C
- ♦ Iodine controls rate that energy is released
- ♦ Calcium helps muscles react normally and recover from exercise

Water—required by the body for survival

- ♦ Performance is impacted immediately if water needs are not met, especially for aquatics athletes
- ♦ The harder you train and exercise, the more water you need
- ♦ Drink water often and in small amounts before, during and after competition
- ♦ Food contains more water than we think



Percentage of Water Found in Foods



Fiber—important though often ignored

- ♦ Not absorbed by body
- ♦ High fibers: natural plant foods
- ♦ Good fibers (bran): wheat, oats, brown rice
- ♦ Low fibers (processed foods): white flour, white sugar, white rice, white pastas
- ♦ Make you feel full without getting fat



An Aquatics Competition

The competition you and your athletes experience will depend on many different factors. The meet may be a small, three- to four-team event for a practice, a regional event or state Games. The more swimmers involved, the more time the meet will take.

Communicate with your teams' volunteers and parents on what to expect.

- How long the event will be.
- What to expect from the athletes.

There may be only certain events offered. Some meets may have electric timing, others may use watches. This information is usually included in the meet information from the hosting team.

The team must arrive at least one hour before the event. The athletes need time to warm up and learn the flow of the meet (i.e., staging for competition and awards). The athletes must be aware of when their events will occur in the schedule.

Teaching the Components of an Aquatics Competition

1. Have a practice meet.
2. Use the whistle and commands.
3. Practice warm-ups.

Coaches Tips for Aquatics Competition – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Prior to the event, advise each athlete on what events he/she will compete in.
2. Show a video of a previous meet.
3. Have athletes practice with the people on their relay team.
4. Videotape athletes at practice; have them watch themselves.
5. Obtain swimming instructional videos of strokes, starts and turns.
6. Teach athletes to rehearse each race in their heads, “imagine the event.”



Aquatics Glossary

Term	Definition
Aerobic	Pertaining to or presence of oxygen.
Anaerobic	Pertaining to or lack of oxygen
Backstroke	Where the swimmer remains on his/her back from the start or push off from the wall to the turn through to the completion of the race.
Backstroke Start	Swimmer starts in water, both hands hold onto block, both feet under waterline.
Bilateral Breathing	Alternate breathing from right to left sides. In freestyle, breathing every third stroke.
Body	The torso, including shoulders and hips.
Breaststroke	Stroke done completely on the horizontal plane with the swimmer's chest horizontal to the bottom of the pool. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. The arm and leg action is simultaneous. The kick takes place below the waterline.
Buoyancy	This is the upward supportive force of water, counteracting the downward force of gravity. The force of buoyancy is determined by the density of the water; the greater the density the greater the buoyancy. Factors which affect a swimmer's buoyancy and floating position are: age, body build and bone size, muscular development and weight distribution, amount of fatty tissue, lung capacity and water density.
Butterfly	Stroke performed completely on the horizontal plane. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer must remain on the breast and is permitted no more than two leg kicks per stroke cycle. Arm action is forward and simultaneous. Leg kick is simultaneous.
Catch	Occurs with hand entry into water. The hand "catches" or "grabs" water.
Center line of body	Imaginary line drawn down the long axis of the body.
Check List	List of skills coach should be looking at within program.
Cool-Down	Performed at end of training session. Helps remove waste products from body.
Coordination	Consistent movement in water. Example: even leg kick in butterfly.
Course	Designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Long Course: 50 meters (55 yards to be recorded as 50 meters) Short Course: 25 meters or 25 yards
Divisions/Divisioning	Where athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Variance between fastest and slowest time is no more than 10 percent.
Drill	Skill used to develop and maintain stroke technique.
Dual Competition	Competition between two clubs.
Efficient Stroke Technique	Where the best results are obtained, using the least amount of effort.



Term	Definition
Event	Any race or series of races in a given stroke or distance. For competition limits, one event equals one preliminary or one preliminary plus its related final or one timed final.
Fatigue	Short term sensation of tiredness and reduced performance.
Final	Any single race which determines the final places and times in an event.
Finalist	Athletes who swim in a final race.
Finals	Where the final race of each event is competed.
Flutter Kick	Fast freestyle or backstroke kicks.
Freestyle	Stroke other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly.
Freestyle Relay	All swimmers swim freestyle stroke.
Frontal Resistance	This is the resistance to forward progress made by the water immediately in front of the swimmer or any part of the body. This resistance is caused by the swimmer's shape in the water.
Grab Start	The swimmer stands on the block/edge, toes curled over edge, hands holding onto block.
Heats	Division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.
Horizontal	Parallel with the surface of the water.
Hypothermia	Occurs when the body's core temperature drops too low.
In-Water Start	Swimmer starts in water, holds onto block with one hand, points the other in the direction of swim and pushes off wall with two feet.
Individual Medley	Event where the athlete swims the prescribed distance and strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.
Invitational Competition	Competition in which all competitions and/or teams are invited by the host.
Lane Markings	Guidelines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes, running from the starting end to the finishing/turning end of the pool.
Lateral	Swimmer is on his/her side.
Length	Extent of the course from one end to the other.
Log Book	Record of swimmer's progress and activity.
Main Set	Main training part of a program. New skills may be introduced, skills revised along with timed set work.
Medley Relay	Four swimmers swim an equal distance in order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle
Meet	Series of events held in one program.
Pace Clock	Used by swimmers to check the time taken for each set distance. Counts off rest time before starting again.
Pool	Physical facility in which the competition is conducted.



Term	Definition
Pool Deck	Area immediately around pool.
Preliminary	Session of the meet in which heats are held; also called divisioning.
Prone Position	Swimmer lies on front.
Propulsion	This is the force that drives the swimmer forward and is created by the swimmer's arms and legs.
Qualifying Heats	Competition in which there are a number of heats to qualify the fastest swimmers for the finals where final placing for the event will be determined. Can also be called divisioning.
Race	Any single swimming competition; i.e., preliminary, final, timed final.
Relay Leg	Order/position of a swimmer in a relay team event.
Relays	Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke.
Rotate/Rotation	Moving in one line of the body's axis.
Scissor Kick	Kick performed while on the side.
Seconds Rest	Rest time given between sets.
Simultaneous	Moving at the same time.
Streamline – Streamlining	Body shape in the water which offers the least possible resistance.
Supine	Swimmer lies on back.
Total Distance	Total amount of meters covered in program.
Track Start	Swimmer stands on block/edge, one foot in front with toes over edge, other foot behind, hands holding onto block.
Unified Sports Team	Refers to a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
Warm-Up	Series of exercises/drills used to prepare the body. On-land warm-up can consist of jogging and stretching. In-water warm-ups include slow, easy swims.
Whip Kick	Description of leg action in breaststroke.



Incident Report Instructions

Whenever an Accident Occurs:

An incident report is available from your Program office and must be completed immediately and mailed to the address shown on the form. This holds true whether the person involved is a participant or a spectator, or whether or not you feel the incident will result in a claim.

Although you may not have sufficient information to answer all the questions, it is important that the form be completed as fully as possible. Do not delay sending in the report form; an incomplete form is better than none at all. Always include your name and daytime telephone number where indicated on the form.

The form contains sections to capture information regarding injury to persons and damage to property.

Emergency Response	
<p>First-Aid Equipment Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of athletes with special conditions (asthma, diabetes, allergies, etc.) • List of emergency phone numbers • Adhesive bandages with gauze pads – assorted sizes • Antiseptic • Arm sling (triangular bandage is fine) • Bandage scissors • Butterfly closures • Cotton swabs • Elastic tape • White tape • Elastic wraps • Emergency blanket • Latex gloves (multiple pairs) • Plastic bags and bags for ice packs • Sterile water • Resuscitation (CPR) masks/face shield <p>Corrective Action Needed:</p> <p>Corrective Action Taken:</p>	<p>Access to Emergency Service:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telephones and the appropriate emergency numbers are accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 2. There is adequate passage for emergency vehicles <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 3. Athletes' medical history forms are on-site <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 4. Athletes' emergency contact lists are on-site <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <p>Corrective Action Needed:</p> <p>Corrective Action Taken:</p>