

## **Swim Drills**

### **by Joylin Nodwell, Swim Coach**

Try these swim drills in the order listed as they are shown in order from least to most difficult to perform. Note: Freestyle is also called Frontcrawl.

Drill	Directions
<b>1. Streamlined kicking with flutter board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep your arms fully extended, hands firmly gripping near end of flutter board.</li><li>• Put face in water blowing bubbles in steady, relaxed manner.</li><li>• Lift head to breathe, chin stays in water.</li><li>• Maintain steady kicking pace with loose ankles and floppy feet (ideally, pigeon toed foot position will catch the water best). Minimal knee bend. Kicking from your hips rather than from your knees is more efficient.</li><li>• You can vary your speed to challenge yourself!</li><li>• If you feel your hips/legs/feet dropping, press your arm pits down towards the pool floor.</li><li>• Keep head down as much as possible. Every time you lift your head to breathe, your hips will drop. This is normal. Continue to kick to maintain momentum.</li></ul>
<b>2. Streamlined kicking, no flutter board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Push off pool wall with nice long underwater glide (arms fully extended over head), hand over hand, nice and tight! "Squeeze your head with arms".</li><li>• Make your body as straight as possible, eyes looking down at bottom of pool or slightly forward.</li><li>• Lift head quickly to breathe. If you are unable to keep your hands together, a slight sculling/breaststroke pull is ok.</li><li>• Resist yanking your arms down, rather use your core to maintain good high body position.</li><li>• If you feel your hips/legs/feet dropping, press your arm pits down towards the pool floor. You can use fins to help keep your body high in the water.</li><li>• Attempt continuous kicking the whole length.</li></ul>

Drill	Directions
<b>3. Lateral kicking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On your right or left side, the arm underneath is extended (palm down), the arm "on top" is relaxed down by your side, continuous flutter kicking.</li> <li>• Proper head position is critical! Head must be completely down/horizontal (your ear/cheek is resting on your deltoid/top of shoulder).</li> <li>• Remember to switch sides.</li> <li>• If done correctly, your body will be perpendicular to pool floor. If your hips feel low, press your head and armpits down towards the pool floor (your head may be submerged but that is ok!).</li> <li>• Try to keep your kick steady.</li> <li>• If you feel your body wobble, tighten your core!</li> <li>• Fins can help to maintain good body position.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Body roll drill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push off pool wall on your side with head down and one arm extended (try with a board at first and then no board, can use fins),</li> <li>• The other arm is down at your side</li> <li>• Do roughly 6 kicks on one side, roll onto your tummy to blow out your air for about 6 kicks, roll back onto your side (same side) for roughly 6 kicks</li> <li>• Focus on rolling the entire body as one unit...no twisting!!</li> <li>• Alternate sides.</li> <li>• A more advanced version is rolling with both arms down by your sides. You need to engage your core muscles to rotate to the side to breathe...this is a tough drill!</li> </ul>
<b>5. Catch up Freestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each arm takes turns independently completing one cycle of the frontcrawl arm motion.</li> <li>• The non stroking arm remains extended out front.</li> <li>• Practice breathing on your side with no forward head lift.</li> <li>• Be mindful of your hand entry point (11 and 1 o'clock).</li> <li>• Maintain a relaxed, high elbow recovery, high body position, and no dragging feet.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Streamlined kicking on back without flutter board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlined body, arms extended (straight) above head, do your best to squeeze both arms behind your head..you will feel a stretch!</li> <li>• Keep your hips and toes up to surface (squeeze your glutes/bum cheeks!), steady kicking. Minimal knee bend.</li> <li>• An easier version would be to hold a flutter board over the knees (this is a good way to discourage kicking with "big" knees and promote a straighter legged kick) or hugging the board while kicking on your back.</li> </ul>

Drill	Directions
<b>7. Fist swimming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretend you have a fist full of dollar bills. Push off into a streamline position off pool wall,</li> <li>• Begin your frontcrawl with your hands fisted. Often, we rely on our hands to move the water, however, this drill reminds us our forearms are also primary movers of water as well.</li> <li>• Remember to keep your elbows high to the surface of the water while you pull and push the water underneath your body.</li> <li>• Body roll is essential, as is steady kicking.</li> </ul>
<b>8. One arm freestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With non stroking arm down at your side (pretend you have lost an arm!), the other arm completes the freestyle stroke.</li> <li>• Breathe on the open side/non stroking side.</li> <li>• Focus on strong pull and good recovery.</li> <li>• Try not to let your stroking arm fall suddenly while breathing.</li> <li>• Usually do 3 strokes per side and then switch.</li> <li>• Challenge yourself by breathing towards the stroking side (it is much harder!).</li> </ul>
<b>9. Hesitation drill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a more advanced drill.</li> <li>• While performing freestyle, pause with your recovery hand by your ear before entering in the water.</li> <li>• This drill is excellent at strengthening core muscles as you need to hold your body in a lateral position for longer than usual while kicking hard to maintain a high body position.</li> <li>• Try to keep your "underneath arm" from falling while breathing.</li> <li>• Make sure to do this on both sides.</li> </ul>
<b>10. Finger tip drag</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This promotes proper recovery hand/arm position.</li> <li>• Drag your finger tips forward in water each time your recovery hand reaches forward and cycles through one stroke.</li> <li>• Remember to have your finger tips always down (below your wrist). Avoid entering with your thumb down.</li> <li>• Aim to get your knuckles wet as your hand drags forwards.</li> </ul>