



Distance Per Stroke (DPS)

The goal is to get maximum distance per stroke. Emphasize a keeping long body line, hip and shoulder rotation, and minimizing resistance. Keep the body line long in the front of your stroke. Steady the rhythm, and swim in the front quadrant of all strokes.

Fist Swimming

Swimming with hands completely in a fist. No "karate-chop" hands allowed! Concentrate on body position, using your forearm in the catch and optimum elbow bend through the stroke. When you return to swimming with an open palm, your hands will feel as large as kickboards! Have fun and think "Distance Per Stroke"!

Sculling

Sculling is performed by sweeping your hands through the water while holding your elbows still. Your hands are acting like propeller blades, and subtle changes in hand pitch and speed will change your body position and speed. There is no recovery motion. When you are treading water, you are sculling your hands through the water to hold yourself up and counteract gravity. To propel yourself down the pool, simply change your hand and forearm angle to be perpendicular to the pool bottom and parallel with the pool walls. Keep your elbows high at the surface of the water, and sweep your hands underneath (this is known as the "windshield wiper" drill). Note that your swimming strokes are a combination of sculling motions that allow you to hold the water as your large body core muscles act as the engine.

Kicking

Kicking without a kickboard will allow you to perform your kick in the same body position of the stroke. Kicking with a kickboard will allow you to get to know your lane mates.

For freestyle, kick on your side with your bottom arm (the one closer to the bottom of the pool) extended straight out of your shoulder line before your head. Keep your palm facing down with your extended hand about 8 inches under water. The top arm (the one on the surface of the water) should be relaxed at your side with your hand on your hip and out of the water. Maintain a head position as though you were swimming freestyle, with your head in line with your spine. Press your arm pit toward the pool bottom to get your hip at the surface of the water. Your extended arm should feel weightless.

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Golf

While swimming 50's repeats, calculate your "score" for each 50 by counting your strokes in both directions (one arm equals one stroke) and adding it to your time. For example: If you swim 50 freestyle with 20 strokes per 25 in a time of :40, you would have a score of 80 (20 + 20 + 40). Descend your score by taking less strokes and/or completing the 50 in less seconds with each successive 50.

Catch-Up Drill

When swimming *Full Catchup* freestyle, pull with one arm at a time and touch your hands in a streamlined position out front between each alternating arm stroke. Keep your extended hands about 8 inches under the surface of the water for improved body position.

Concentrate on swimming in the front quadrant and keep a long, streamlined body line.

You can progress to simply exchanging hands in the "passing zone" extended in front. We call this the "Ear Catch-Up" Drill, wherein you begin your pull as your opposite arm passes by your ear near the completion of the recovery.

Fingertip Drag Drill

This drill is swimming normal Freestyle while dragging your fingertips along the surface of the water on the recovery. Focus on a high elbow recovery, which ensures proper hand and elbow position at your hand entry. You should also check your body position during this drill, focusing on good side-to-side rotation.

An alternate version of this drill involves dragging the entire hand, wrist-deep, through the water. This helps build strength and speed of the arm recovery motion.

Single Arm (R, L) Drill

Single arm freestyle swimming can be done in one of two ways.

Preferred: With the opposite (nonworking arm) at your side. Breathe to the side of the nonworking arm. The secret to success with this drill is to complete your breath before stroking. Concentrate on the catch, initiating body rotation with the core body muscles. Take this drill slowly: technique is more important than speed.

Old-School: With the opposite (nonworking arm) extended in front. Breathe to the side of the working arm. Focus on high elbow recovery, hand entry, and hand acceleration.

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Rhythm Drill

Single Arm freestyle with opposite arm at your side (see description above), executing 2 right arms and then 2 left arms. This takes some practice, but may very well become your favorite freestyle drill once you master it. Focus on rhythm and timing from the hips. Remember to take your breath with an arm extended out front (on the opposite side of the extended arm). If you swim this drill easily and well, your technique is close to perfect.

Open Water Swimming Drills

Sighting Drill: Swim normal freestyle. On every 5th stroke, raise your head straight forward and "sight" on an object off in the distance. You can place a target object or sight something already in place, i.e.: a tree. After sighting the object, lower your head back into normal position. Practice maintaining a balanced stroke rhythm and rotation while clearly seeing the target object.

Blind Swimming: Swim normal freestyle with your eyes completely closed. On every 5th stroke, raise your head straight forward and "sight" on an object off in the distance (above). Make sure you are maintaining a straight path down the pool. You can do this drill swimming side-by-side with your lane mates to reinforce swimming in a straight path.