



Swimming Drills for Freestyle & Backstroke

recommended by **Naperville Waves Coaches**

Press your buoy, head lead: Flutter kick face down arms at side, kicking gently and press your chin and chest towards bottom of pool.

Kick on Side Drill, hand Lead: Master balancing on your side with the bottom arm extended, the top arm at side, and head resting on arm. Face should be pressing down or at least the bottom goggle in water. Rotate face directly up to ceiling to breathe & return to nose down position. Hips rotate completely to side. Alternate right and left side kick. Fins are a great option for this drill.

Kick on Side with rotation: Same as above adding rotation from side to side every 6 to 10 kicks. Rotate from your hips and kick, shoulders should be the last part of body to rotate. Power is generated from hips.

Stop, Stop, Switch: Find balance in side kick position, Stop (kick & glide) face up, Stop face down, roll hips and stroke (switch) to other side. Generate power from core (hips).

3 Strokes & Glide: Swim breathing every 3 strokes and then find balance and glide for 6 seconds. This drill is done as a free or back drill.

Catch Up: Front quadrant swimming. Front hand stays in place until other hand touches. "Swim LONG" Stroke count per length should drop as you glide more with each stroke.

Almost Catch Up: Same as above, but front hand only stays in place until other hand recovers past ear.

Fist Drill / Fist gloves: Swim with fists tightly closed. Best done with fist gloves for a few hundred yards. Increases awareness of importance of high elbow, using the whole arm to pull & body alignment in water. Please place a dab of conditioner on hands to slide gloves on! You can substitute with golf balls!

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Bilateral Breathing: One of the best drills you can practice to even out your stroke and to better prepare you for open water swimming. Breathe every 3rd, 5th, or 7th strokes.

Finger Tip Drag Drill: Drag finger tips along surface of water on recovery phase of stroke. Keep elbow high, close to body, and keep good hip roll.

Long Axis Combo (L/A): Combining 3 strokes of freestyle then roll to back and 4 strokes of backstroke. Can also do 4:5. Try to maintain comfortable body position and balance during roll.

Stroke Eliminator: Count strokes per length during warm up and average. That is the number to beat! Do a set of 25 to 50 yard intervals holding your strokes per length below that number. Work on technique and not speed! 20 strokes per length or less should be your goal.

Swimming Golf: For 25 or 50 yards, count your strokes and add it to your time. Example: a good swimmer takes 40 strokes in 50 yards in 40 seconds for a score of 80. That number is your

par. Try to continue the set staying as close to par as possible. Always lower score by reducing strokes before swimming faster.

Tennis Ball Drill: Combination of fist and catch up drills. Pass tennis ball from one hand to other when hands meet in front catch up position.

Sighting Drill: Swim 25 yards with head lifted every few strokes focusing on end of pool. This will prepare you for open water swims while looking for buoys. Not a great thing to do to improve technique, but gives you an idea of how your body alignment changes while open water swimming.

Sculling: drills to increase power in 3 different areas of your stroke. High, mid or low sculling.

Reminders:

- *Keep head and chest down with nose pointed towards bottom of pool.
- *Swim downhill
- *Roll & generate POWER from the hips.
- *Swim in front quadrant, allow time for front hand to glide & catch the water in front as you swim.
- *Don't forget technique is more important than speed!
- *Have fun and find a buddy to train with!!

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