

## Freestyle drills

Drills remember, when done properly can be quite hard – they are not just easy swimming; and they do require concentration. Michael Phelps [and other champion swimmers] do something like 30% of their training as drills!!! [Note to people who want to just swim, swim]. We will not be doing 30%, but please concentrate on the drills to improve technique. Try to get a “FEEL” for the water. One day, with practice, it will “click”!! To begin with many of you should use fins for greater benefit, particularly if your kick is weak.

### 1. 6 Kicks and Rotate.

Do 6 kicks on your side – **chest should face the wall**, hips and shoulder vertical. Then take an arm stroke [3 usually, can be 1 or 5] and rotate to the opposite side for 6 more kicks. Again, **chest faces the wall**, hips and shoulder vertical. **Keep streamlined position!** Can be done Free or Back [note!] Note the similarity between the “Long Axis” strokes. Doing Backstroke also helps to strengthen the back muscles, and reduce “Freestyler’s Stoop”  
**Purpose:** - Helps with rotation, streamlining, and kicking. Also Great for Backstroke.

### 2. Single Arm Freestyle.

Done with arm at side. Breathe towards the **INactive** arm. Alternate distances with arms – could be 3 strokes, 25 m, 50 m etc. Make sure shoulders are rotating!!  
**Purpose:**- Allows for focus on arm stroke; feel the water; breathing, **rotation**

### 3. Catch-up Freestyle.

Push off the wall, keep hands extended. Take one complete arm stroke – leaving other hand extended in front. Wait until thumbs touch in front before taking next stroke with other arm. Continue alternating strokes; breathe when necessary – preferably every 3 strokes. Keep Kicking!!! Weak kickers should use fins.

**Purpose:**- Lengthen stroke, improve distance per stroke, use of kick through entire stroke.

### 4. Head-Up Freestyle / Water-Polo

Swim Freestyle with chin above surface of the water. Keep head still and eyes straight ahead. Move arms quickly, watch entry [shoulder width!] – keep kicking [fins?]

**Purpose:**- Improve overall strength, speed, and follow through, and kicking.

### 5. Stroke Count / Swim Golf

Usually over the 50m – count your single arm strokes. [Each hand entry counts as a stroke.] To begin with this can often be exaggerated, almost “Catch-Up”. Aim for as low as possible - <30 is excellent; <35 very good; <40 fair; <45 average; 50+ poor [needs work.]

**Swim Golf** is Stroke Count with the added component of adding your time to the number of strokes. So say 36 strokes in 36 seconds = 72 [Par]; 45 strokes in 55 seconds = 100. Aim to balance your Speed and Stroke Count to reduce your “Golf” Score.

<70 Excellent; <75 [Par]; 75 – 85 [Bogey]; 85-95 [Double Bogey]; 96+ Needs Work.

**Purpose:**- Improve overall stroke efficiency and “feel”.

### 6. Finger-Tip Drag

On Recovery, Lift elbow and drag the hand/finger-tips along the surface of the water. MUST rotate to perform correctly. Keep hand relatively close to body. Watch entry [shoulder width – do not cross over!] Use often in Warm-Up, Cool-Down to practice and loosen up.

**Purpose:**- Aims to teach relaxed recovery, and smooth entry.

## **7. Zipper Drill**

Much like Finger-Tip Drag (#6) but you maintain contact between your [extended] thumb and your body up to your armpit throughout the recovery. When your thumb reaches your armpit reach forward and put it in the water. Keep stroke extended; watch entry. MUST Rotate!!

**Purpose**:- Encourages forward momentum in entry that characterizes efficient arm recovery. Also relaxed recovery, and length of stroke.

## **8. Wheelbarrow / Partner Swimming**

We all love this one [not!!], except for pairs who can kick, which probably means we should do this more often!

Swimmers pair up. The swimmer in front swims, pulling the pair. The second swimmer holds the feet of the swimmer in front – and kicks!! Switch each 50. Fins ok!! Pull buoys NO!! Use your core, your stomach muscles to keep yourself flat and level and at the surface.

**Purpose**:- Improves Pulling / Kicking / and Core strength

## **9. Long-Armed Dog – UnderWater Recovery**

Swim Freestyle making your arm recovery completely under the water. Essentially combining a long-armed dog paddle with the head position and side breathing of Freestyle. Reach long on each side and focus on making a good catch; then rotate your body past the arm as you focus on lengthening your stroke. NOTE!! Should only be <= 4 strokes of your Stroke Count!

**Purpose**:- Lengthen stroke, focus on catch and pull through, rotation.

## **10. Fist Drill**

Swim Freestyle with a fist [sometimes holding a ball etc.] Forces concentration on entry, and the pull. Keep a high elbow – Use the forearms in the stroke

**Purpose**:- Focus on entry and pull through, use of forearms, high elbow, rotation.

All the Best – Happy Swimming in 2011

Cheers,  
Alan