

Backstroke swimming

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Swimming backstroke the complete guide to getting your stroke perfect, along with faults their causes and how to Swimming backstroke/ introduction Swimming backstroke is the third fastest stroke competitively, originated from an old english style of swimming backstroke and has developed over the years and has evolved into an alternating and more effective action. This action gives the backstroke less resistance with a continuous propulsion.

The speed of the backstroke is limited by the restricted range of movement of the shoulders as well as the ability/inability to use the power in the chest muscles to the best desired effect by the roll of the body which will be discussed in more detail in the chapter about the upstroke of the arms. When swimming backstroke it is usually developed from a simple back paddle just kicking legs on the back, once this achieved then the backstroke swimmer can begin to develop the arms as long as the streamlined body position is maintained.

Swimming backstroke can be a first choice of stroke for the beginner because it is free from the water and does not really require a breathing pattern so there are little or no difficulties. The only problem that can occur is that some swimmers do not like lying on their back due to fear of the water. Swimming backstroke/ body position When swimming backstroke the body should be in a flat and horizontal position (supine). The body should also be in a streamlined position. The head should be relaxed, with the water should be crossing the ears keeping steady and in line with the body.

The eyes should be looking upwards and backwards keeping the chin close to the chest. Keep your shoulders just below the surface of the water but they will only become visible as your body rolls and your arms recover. Your <https://assignbuster.com/backstroke-swimming/>

hips are the lowest part of the body when swimming the backstroke. The practice of letting the less able swimmers hips sink should be discouraged if you are teaching your child or yourself to swim backstroke. Keep your legs and toes close to the surface with your toes breaking the surface of the water. Your body will roll on its longitudinal axis, you can roll up to about 60 degrees from the horizontal.

This roll helps to assist so that you can place your hand in the best catch position so that you can have an effective underwater arm action which assists the over water arm recovery. The only part of the body not involved in this body roll is the head this should be perfectly still when swimming backstroke. Swimming backstroke/ leg action When you swim backstroke you will need a good, strong and efficient leg kick. The leg kick in backstroke is mainly used for balance, it is not very likely that the leg kick will provide much propulsion.

If you were a good leg kicker then you may get a little propulsion maybe 1-5 percent which could be used when the arms are not in their propulsive phase. When one arm is above the head ready for entry and the other is by the side just finished its pull. You must remember that although the legs do not contribute to propulsion they are still important for a good body position as well as balance for your strong sweeping actions made by your arms which is made outside the line of the body which will in effect will cause lateral deviation. So a good leg action will minimize lateral deviation (moving from side to side).

Although the kicks are described as an upbeat and downbeat it is important that the kick does not necessarily take place in the vertical plane. Your hips

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move side to side along with the upper body as it rolls so the path of the kick is influenced at the time of the upbeat and downbeat. When swimming backstroke the legs action is alternating as well as continuous. Your legs will stay close together and the movement of each of your legs initiates from the hip and is observed as an upbeat and downbeat. Swimming backstroke/ Downbeat (recovery) Your leg will begin the downbeat close to the surface of the water and the leg is almost straight.

When you begin the downbeat your hip will press downwards and then will be followed by your upper leg your lower leg and your foot. The downbeat of each of your legs is called the recovery phase so this movement you will find should be relaxed and done without very much effort. When you get to the end of the downbeat that will be the lowest point and outside of your body range. The depth of this all depend on the size of your limbs. As a guide the leg will be at a point where the leg can be fully extended with your toes pointed. It will be apparent to the backstroke swimmer that the flexibility of the your ankles is of importance.

Swimming backstroke/ Upbeat (propulsion) The upbeat will begins as your hip begins to lift. Then your upper leg follows the hip and your knee will begin to bend your knee will bend will be about 90 to 120 degrees. Your lower leg will then press upwards with your shin and the top of your foot. The pressure at this stage is a combination of upwards and backwards. Now your leg will accelerate upwards and as you kick your leg to the surface this is when propulsion is achieved. When the toes break the surface the upbeat ends. Swimming backstroke/ arm action

When swimming backstroke you will find that the arms provide main propulsion. The arm action is continuous and alternating. There are four parts to the arms in backstroke which are the entry, catch, propulsive phase and recovery which I will discuss in more detail. Swimming backstroke/ Entry
When your hand enters the water your little finger enters first keeping it in line with your shoulder. Your palm facing outwards and then hand should sink to a depth of about 30 cms causing the minimum amount of drag. Make sure that your hand does sink a little because it helps with your body roll.

Your arm will also be fully extended as your hand will be placed in the water. Making sure it is done without any undue tension as well as making sure that you do not over reach. It is very important that the arm enters in line with the shoulder. An entry that is too close to the centre line or too wide will have a detrimental effect on your streamlining and propulsion. It is also very important that your little finger enters first by entering with the back of the hand will cause more resistance also you will not be able to sink your hand to the desired position as well as a tendency to pull with the little finger leading.

Your hand will start to feel the pressure of the water ready for the sweeping and propulsive movement which will follow. Shortly afterwards your hand will be in the catch position. You will then rotate your hand downwards, as you press on the water your elbow will bend and your upper arm will rotate, giving you a high elbow position that you need to enable the initial downward sweep to be performed effectively. When learning the backstroke you will find that the arms are the hardest part of the stroke and to develop the correct catch position and the downwards movement to the catch position.

But practice makes perfect! Swimming backstroke/ Catch Your hand will now begin to give a backwards pressure on the water. This is so that your hand can make a purchase on the water and move your body forwards over the hand. Swimming backstroke/ downsweep Your elbow will now begin to bend and your hand will continue to sweep downwards slightly. As your hand begins the downsweep the pitch of your hand will be downwards as well as backwards. When you have finished the downsweep your elbow will be flexed to 90 degrees your hand will be in line with your shoulder. your elbow at this point will be pointing to the pool bottom and your finger tips should be facing outwards. You will change your hand pitch into a backwards direction in the transition period, through to inwards and upwards, ready to begin your upsweep. Swimming backstroke/ Pitch of the hand It is important to realize that swimming backstroke you will continually alter the pitch of your hand throughout the sweeping actions. So that you get the best possible propulsion during the downsweep your hand should be pitched downwards, outwards, and slightly backwards.

Swimming backstroke/ Upsweep Your hand will now sweep upwards towards the surface of the water keeping the elbow bent. The upsweep progresses from your shoulder line through to just above the waist. It is of importance now that the roll is of great importance, to ensure that the sweeping propulsive can be effective. At the end of your upsweep your pitch is now altered to backwards then to downwards and then backwards. Swimming backstroke/ Final Downsweep When your hand sweeps downwards your elbow will straighten.

The propulsive phase of the arm stroke is now completed with your arm extended below your hip. When you swim with the arms they are likened to a long letter 's' shape alongside your body in the water. Swimming backstroke/ Recovery Your body will roll after the final downsweep of your hand the recovery action of your arm begins. Your hand on which you are to recover will be below the level of your hip so it needs to be lifted through the water in a way which will cause you the minimum amount of resistance.

You can achieve this by rotating your hand inwards so the palm faces your thigh, your hand will then be able to cut through the water on its side. When you bring it up it should leave the water by thumb first. Once your arms have left the water your arms should come directly over your shoulder being an elevated position due to the body roll. When your thumb is your arms is gradually from your shoulder joint to place your hand in a little finger entry position as it passes your head on its way down into the water.

Make sure your arm is straight as well as relaxed during the recovery giving your arms an opportunity to recover from the propulsive phase. Make sure you do not overreach at this time. Swimming backstroke/ arm opposition When swimming backstroke the timing of the recovery and propulsive arm position is very important if you want to swim backstroke with good technique. As your recovering arm enters the water the propulsive arm should be sweeping down at the end of its propulsive phase.

The opposition of your arms helps with your body roll and your streamlining and it provides the most continuous application of propulsive force on the water. Swimming backstroke/ breathing When swimming backstroke breathing is not usually any problem because the head is free of the water

and does not go into the water at any time. Breathing can take place at anytime during the stroke. Make sure that you take a regular pattern of breathing. The usual pattern of breathing is to take an in breath as one arm recovers and an out breath on the other arm recovery (in on one arm out on the other).

Swimming backstroke/ co-ordination When swimming the backstroke there are two parts to co-ordination the timing the leg action with your arms as well as the arms with each other. Swimming backstroke/ leg action timing The most common timing used is the six beat leg action this is complete by the time the cycle of the arms is complete. It is important that a strong balancing leg kick is used when swimming backstroke because as I mentioned before the arms are pitched outside the center line and the faster leg kick is used to maintain a streamline and horizontal position preventing lateral deviation (body moving side to side). The six beat action is the most commonly used a small minority of backstroke swimmers will use any other pattern. Swimming backstroke/ arm action timing When swimming backstroke your arms can be seen opposite each other but there is a period in this cycle when both arms are in the water at the same time. This is simply when one arm is moving towards the catch and the other is releasing the water and beginning the recovery.

This is a slight overlap which ensures that your stroke does keep a continuous propulsion from your arms. Swimming backstroke/ faults, causes and corrections When you swim backstroke you will find you may have one or more faults, in this part of my page we will look at the fault that you may come across the reasons why and how you can improve and correct the

fault. You may not realize you have any kind of fault but it may be worth having a read in case you recognize something in your stroke which you may not have realized is a fault.