

Freestyle Swim Drills

Single arm:

Keep one arm in front while you stroke with the other arm. This drill allows you to work on your “pull.” Be sure to breath toward your pulling arm. Think about reaching over a barrel—bent elbow in the beginning of the pull to initiate a powerful pull. After a length, switch arms.

This drill can also be completed with the stationary arm at your side. With one arm at your side, breath toward that side (the non-pulling side). After a length, switch arms. Think about that as your body rotates, you head follows to breath and then returns to its forward position.

Fist:

Swim with your fingers closed into a fist. (You can also swim with a tennis ball in each hand.) This drill helps promote elbow bending in the beginning of the pull and promotes “catching” water through the pull.

Catch up (also called touch and go):

This is an alternating single arm drill. Wait for your hand to meet the other in front before pulling (touch and go) with the other arm. This drill works on your pull and rotation.

Catch up with a stick:

This similar to regular catch, up except that you hold a wooden dowel or PVC pipe (4 to 5 inches long) in your hand and with each arm cycle grab the dowel with one hand and release with the other. This drill works on centerline entry of you hand, pull and rotation.

Finger-tip drag:

On your recovery, drag you finger tips lightly across the water before entering for the next pull. This will work on high elbow on the recovery.

Scull:

On stomach, arms stretched out, palms together, thumbs up. Rotate hands so that thumbs are down and “push” water out just past shoulder width. Rotate hands to thumbs up and “push” water back in. (similar to a figure 8). Feel the water with hands and arms and this movement should move you forward in the pool. Keep face in water and raise head to breathe while kicking. This drill promotes “feel” for the water. This drill is best done with a pull buoy.

Kick on side:

Kick on your side with both arms at your side. Play with head position and see how that affects how your hips ride in the water. (Think downhill—head pushing down and out and your hips will ride high). Be sure to kick from the hip, keeping your ankles extended, toes pointed. This drill works on proper body position and a strong fluid kick.

Kick on side with rotation:

Same as #7, except after a six beat kick roll to your other side, initiating the rotation with your hips and core (the shoulders and upper body will follow). This drill focuses on proper body position, balance and rotation.

Kick on side arm out:

Lie on your side and kick with your bottom arm extended, riding high in the water and your top arm at your side. Play with your head position, as with the 'kick on side' drill, and focus on getting your hips to ride high in the water. Concentrate on feeling long and kick from the hip, keeping your ankles extended, toes pointed. This drill focuses on proper body position and a strong fluid kick.

Kick on side arm out with rotation:

Same as #9 except after a six beat kick take a pull and recover (one stroke cycle) and roll over to your other side. Lead the rotation with your hips, not your shoulders. This drill focuses on proper balanced body position, a strong pull and correct rotation.

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