**Introduction**

We use 10 different swim drills in our training plans. In this article we show you how to do them. We have also created short videos demonstrating each one.

Read about and watch each drill below, and focus on the ones that seem most relevant to you. Or simply use all of the drills below - they are all extremely valuable in their own way.

**Quick Video Demo Links**

1. Pull: <https://youtu.be/B0XkaH6zJ_U>
2. Kick: <https://youtu.be/6D67mlvxNWs>
3. Fists: <https://youtu.be/j3T3Uc7OWI8>
4. Front Scull: <https://youtu.be/pG3DK7DObxI>
5. Mid Scull: <https://youtu.be/iQnNjLTXiyA>
6. Doggy Paddle: <https://youtu.be/rwN5FTwoG8w>
7. Single Arm: <https://youtu.be/VbMwU06X-zw>
8. Kick on Side: <https://youtu.be/btSgrXd2gKk>
9. Breathe every 3 or 5 strokes: <https://youtu.be/ximJOHCoJfk>
10. Open Water Sighting: <https://youtu.be/iuqMO8dQOjQ>

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Pull**

**What is it?** Swim freestyle with a pull buoy between your thighs.

**Is this drill for me?** We include PULL in your workouts, to improve your freestyle stroke by keeping your legs buoyant so you can focus on the front end of your stroke.

**Technique:** Hold a pull buoy between your upper thighs. Swim normal freestyle, but disengage your legs. Ideally your toes would be pointing, to help reduce drag. But not if it's too much effort to maintain that position.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Kick**

**What is it?** Kicking, while holding a float at arm’s length.

**Is this drill for me?** This drill isolates your legs, enabling you to practice your leg kick.

**Technique:** Hold your float (or a pull buoy) at arm’s length and do freestyle kick on your front. The best kicking technique is to kick from the hip joint, rather than the knees. Keep your knees and ankles loose. If you bend your knees too much, it just creates extra drag. The best swimmers and triathletes are also great kickers, so don’t ignore this drill.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Fists**

**What is it?** Swim freestyle, but with your fists clenched.

**Is this drill for me?** This drill teaches you to use the soft underside of your forearms for propulsion.

**Technique:** Swim freestyle, as normal, but with your fists clenched tightly. Making a fist means that you cannot use the fingers and palm of the hand as a paddle.

You may feel like you are going nowhere at first but persevere. As you pull your arm through the water, focus on a high elbow position, so that the underside of your forearm catches the water like an oar. When you pull your arm through the water, accelerate it from slow to fast, right through to the finish.

**Tip:** If you're a beginner, you can make this drill easier by using a pull buoy or fins at first.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Front Scull**

**What is it?** Sculling your hands in a small figure of eight, with your arms outstretched.

**Is this drill for me?** This drill teaches you how to angle your hands and arms, in order to effectively grab hold of the water at the beginning of the stroke.

**Technique:** Place your two hands as far out in front of you as you can. Bend your wrists, point your fingers and palms downwards and use your hands for forward propulsion by driving them back and forth with a small side-to-side motion. Kick gently, for further propulsion.

This drill isolates the early part of your stroke – just after your hand pierces the water. It teaches you about the angle and shape you need your hands to be in, to balance and propel yourself. It really helps give you a “feel” of what works and what doesn’t. You are essentially trying to hold the water rather than having your hand slice through it.

**Tip:** A swimmer’s snorkel helps, so you don’t need to worry about turning your head to breathe. You can also use a pull buoy or fins for balance. This drill is not a race - going slow is just fine.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Mid Scull**

**What is it?** Sculling your hands and forearms in a figure of eight, with your elbows bent.

**Is this drill for me?** This drill encourages you to adopt a high elbow position, as you pull your arm through the water. This increases propulsion (distance per stroke).

**Technique:** Bend your elbows and scull your whole forearm and hands in a gentle figure-of-eight sculling motion. Your arms should be angled down and slightly forwards, with your hands and forearms pointing towards the bottom of the pool. Kick your legs for propulsion.

The mid scull drill isolates the catch and pull-through phase of front crawl. During this phase of the stroke you're grabbing hold of the water before accelerating it backwards. The emphasis is on a high elbow position, with fingers, palms, wrists and forearms pointing down.

**Tip**: At first, use a pull buoy or fins to keep your legs from sinking too much. You can also use a swimmer’s snorkel to aid your breathing. This is a slow drill, so don’t rush it.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Doggy Paddle**

**What is it?** Swimming freestyle, but with your arms remaining underwater throughout.

**Is this drill for me?** This drill addresses various parts of your freestyle stroke including the catch, high elbow position and finish for the underwater part of stroke.

Technique: Essentially, this drill is just like doing your normal freestyle - but your arms remain underwater for the entire stroke. Kick enough to maintain your balance and extend your arm into the catch position. Pull through with a high elbow, accelerating to the finish, but do not recover like you normally would. Instead bring your arm back to the while under the water, while the other arm engages in the catch, pull and finish.

**Tip:** Fins can be worn or a pull buoy used– these are especially useful at first.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Single Arm**

**What is it?** Swim normal freestyle, but with one arm pressed tightly to the side of your body.

**Is this drill for me?** This challenging drill encourages you to concentrate on your rhythm, rotation and propulsion.

Technique: Swim normal freestyle, but with one arm pressed tightly to the side of your body. Breathe away from the stroking arm. And breathe on every single one-arm stroke - even if you don't feel you need to. This helps drive your body rotation.

The key to the drill is to make sure that you rotate your body fully to the dead side. You really have to emphasize dipping the dead shoulder into the water as there's no arm stroke on that side to help you. The mantra of the drill is 'stroke and dip... stroke and dip...'. Once you get the hang of “stroke and dip” you can then focus more on your propulsion.

**Tip:** Use a pair of fins to help you at first. This is not an easy drill but your perseverance will pay off.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Kick on Side**

**What is it?** A kicking drill. Rest your top arm by your side and point your lower arm out in front of you. Kick at a steady pace.

**Is this drill for me?** This drill teaches you to swim straight. It can help to cure a common swim problem called a "crossover", which is where your lead-arm crosses the center line of your body as it enters the water. Swimmers with a crossover often find themselves scissor kicking or snaking their hips, to compensate for this mistake.

**Technique:** Push off from the end of the pool and bring yourself into a 90-degree side-lying position. Kick at a steady pace and point your lower arm out in front of you. Rest your top arm by your side.

The aim is to keep your lower arm nice and straight, like an arrow. Your outstretched lower arm should extend forwards in line with your shoulder, with your fingers pointing towards the end-wall.

Face downwards and exhale underwater while you’re kicking - this feels like you’re looking past your armpit. To take a breath, simply turn your head, inhale and return it to the water. Focus on bringing your shoulder blades down and together, as this encourages you to point your lead-arm straight.

As you do this drill, you will know if you're getting it wrong because you may find yourself drifting diagonally into the lane-rope or side-wall. If you’re steering across the lane, try altering the angle of your lower arm.

**Tip:** If you’re new to this drill, wear a pair of fins to help with balance and propulsion.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Breathe Every 3 or 5 Strokes**

**What is it?** Normal freestyle swimming, but breathing every 3 or 5 strokes.

**Is this drill for me?** Bilateral breathing can help you develop a more balanced stroke.

**Technique:** Swim freestyle, taking a breath every 3 or 5 strokes. This drill forces you to alternate between breathing to your left and right sides. Practicing bilateral breathing helps you avoid becoming too dependent on breathing to just one side. It is also a useful skill for open water swimming, to avoid the sun in your eyes, other swimmers or choppy waves in your face.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Open Water Sighting**

**What is it?** A swim drill that teaches you to sight and breathe, all in one fluid motion.

Is this drill for me? This drill teaches you to sight and breathe in open water swimming, without losing your speed or causing your legs to sink. It improves your navigation, helping you take the most effective swim line.

**Technique:** Swim normally. Then, when you’re about to breathe, lift your eyes out of the water by pressing down lightly on the water with your lead arm. Lift your head up to see, just enough to get your eyes just out of the water.

Then turn your head to breathe, as you do so, letting it drop down into the water to a normal position. Keeping a low head position when sighting and breathing helps you maintain normal body rotation in your stroke. This helps keep your stroke going and your speed up.

This sight-turn-breathe technique needs to be done fluidly, and not in three separate movements. There's a good chance you won't see everything at once, but don't worry. Over several strokes you can build up a picture of what you are looking at and where you are going. Depending on water conditions and visibility, you should sight about every nine strokes.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Copyright MyProCoach Ltd © February 2019. All rights reserved.**