

Freestyle – Front Crawl

The front crawl, sometimes called freestyle, is the stroke most people think of when they say swimming.

Body Position / Motion

Your body is flat and straight, with a rotating movement around the midline. The whole body rotates, not just the shoulders (Figure 1). Rotation results from three movements: (1) the high recovery of one arm, (2) the down-sweep of the other arm, and (3) the sideways force of the kicks as the legs roll with the rest of the body.

Your head position depends on your buoyancy. Most swimmers keep the water line between the eyebrows and hairline; however, someone with little buoyancy may have to lower the head a little to raise the hips to the best level.

TIP: *The midline is an imaginary line from head to feet that divides the body equally into left and right parts.*

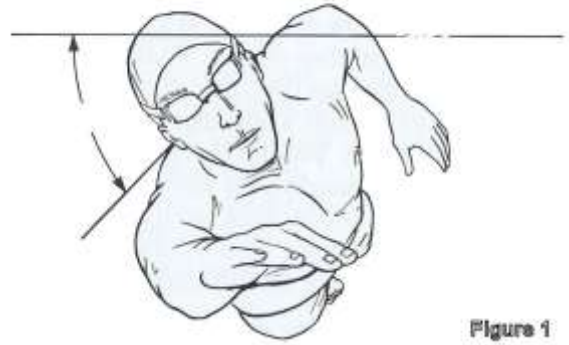


Figure 1

Arm Stroke

Power phase (figure 2):

- A. *Reach – keep elbow slightly bent as index finger enters water*
- B. *Catch - extend arm fully under water with wrist slightly flexed sweep hand down and slightly out toward shoulder*
- C. *Pull – as arm comes under body, elbow bends to 90°*
- D. *Push – straighten arm and press your hand straight back toward your feet*
- E. *Extend your reach until your thumb brushes your thigh*

Recovery phase:

Turn your palm toward your leg so that your hand exits the water little finger first. Your body roll is at maximum. Lift your elbow high and relax your arm with forearm hanging down. As your hand passes your shoulder, let it lead the rest of your arm until it enters the water. Your arms at this point are not completely opposite each other. Instead, the recovering arm starts to catch up with the stroking arm.

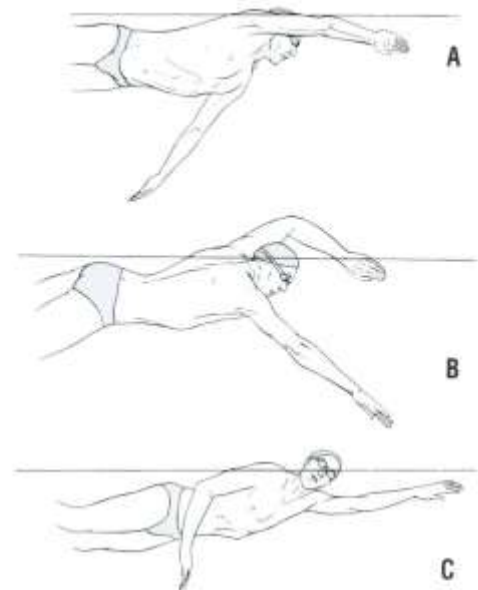


Figure 2

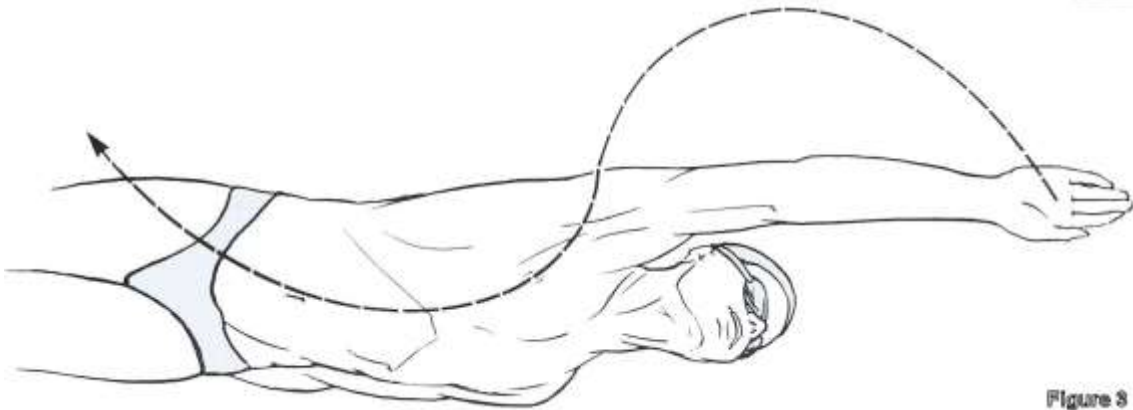
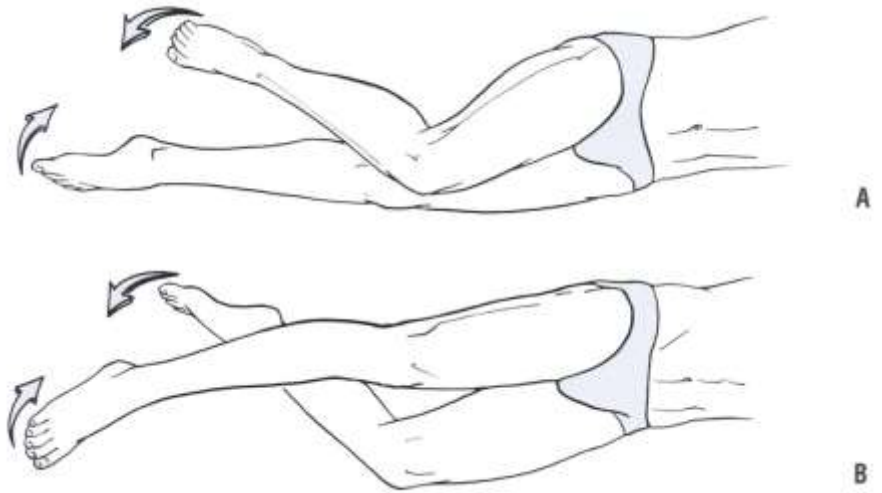


Figure 3

The arm stroke pull pattern looks like an S when viewed from the bottom (Figure 3).

Flutter Kick

- A. The kick starts at the hip, with your thigh starting downward while your calf and foot are still upward. For most of the downbeat keep the knee slightly flexed, ankle relaxed and floppy.
- B. Straighten your leg and allow the foot to snap downward like you are kicking a ball.
- C. To recover, raise your leg straight toward the surface with little or no flexion in your knee, until your heel just breaks the surface. The leg should stay straight in the recovery



Breathing and Timing



- Start with face in water, blow bubbles.
- As arm start to pull, turn head to the side, opposite ear stays in the water.
- Mouth clears water at end of pull, inhale just as recovery starts. Body roll makes it easier to turn your head to the side.
- After you take a breath turn face back into the water and start blowing bubbles.