

## **Beginner Freestyle Drills:**

When swimmers are just starting out, the best way to speed things up and build a more efficient stroke is by taking longer strokes, and getting a good side-to-side rotation.

For that reason, these are our two favorite drills for new swimmers.

### **Catch Up Drill**

Catch up drill is a classic drill that is great for getting rid of short, splashy strokes. The idea is to keep one arm out in front of you the entire time you're swimming. You wait until the arm that's taken the stroke "catches up" to the arm that's out front, and then the arms switch.

The goal is to make sure the arm that's out front stays stretched straight out in front. This keeps you long in the water and helps you glide better. A common mistake a lot of swimmers make is to put their arm in the water right above their head with a bent elbow, instead of reaching way out in front to start their pull.

**Watch out for your rotation.** It's really easy to lose the side-to-side rotation you need for a good freestyle technique when doing catch up drill. Make sure you get back up on your side as you transition back to normal swimming.

YouTube Clip: [CATCH UP DRILL](#)

### **Fingertip Drill**

Fingertip drill is another simple drill that helps improve your overall stroke. As your arm comes out of the water, at the end of a stroke, you simply drag your thumb along the side of your body and graze your other fingertips on the surface of the water-- from your hip all the way to your armpit -- before reaching forward and starting your next stroke. Some variations of this drill encourage you to simply drag your fingertips along the surface of the water, no need to touch your body. Do whatever feels best for you.

**The goal is** for you to have your high elbows, to ensure you are not dragging your arms on the surface. It is also beneficial for good rotation along your head-to-toe axis, which helps a lot in longer swims when you want to hold a consistent stroke tempo and prevent fatigue in your shoulders. A good rotation helps engage your much larger lat muscles on your pull instead of your weaker shoulder muscles.

YouTube Clip: [FINGERTIP DRILL](#)

## **Intermediate Freestyle Drills**

Once you've gotten the basics out of the way, there's still a lot to learn before you're moving easily and gracefully through the water. These intermediate drills will help you get there.

### **3-6-3 Swimming**

3-6-3 drill focuses on both long axis, and hip rotation as well kicking, and gliding. You simply take three regular freestyle strokes and then kick on your side on your where your lead arm is fully extended, you cheek is touching you upper arm and your face is down in the water for six kicks. Then keep repeating the cycle.

**The goal is to** achieve a full extension of the lead arm with drive and purpose and matching rotation of the body down the long axis. Many swimmers start with little or no rotation, this drill will give you an understanding of what having a long axis rotation can do for your stroke. You will get really comfortable being up on both sides, which is beneficial for your breathing pattern.

YouTube Clip: [3-6-3 DRILL](#)

### **One Arm Swimming**

Basically, it's just swimming with one side of your body while the other side sits idle. In theory, it allows you to focus completely on one side of your stroke without worrying about coordinating the recovery on the other side.

YouTube Clip: [ONE ARM SWIMMING](#)

## Advanced Freestyle Drills

Fundamentally, if you want to swim faster freestyle, you either need to take faster strokes, or you need to cover more distance with each stroke. That's it. Our advanced drills help you attack both of those goals.

### Over Swimming

This can be fun, but also really exhausting. Over swimming works the "faster strokes" part of the equation. Basically you're trying to push your stroke tempo to the max by taking as many short, fast strokes as you can down the pool.

**The goal is *not* to swim fast**, but simply to push your stroke tempo as fast as it will go. It's totally fine to take short, wimpy strokes. Just get your arms spinning.

**Great for** sprinters and other racers looking to increase their stroke tempo. It's also good for anyone who feels like they might be in a "a rut" with their freestyle.

Ratcheting up the tempo and forcing your stroke to hold on is a great way to discover new opportunities for improvement in your stroke. Obviously, you have to sacrifice your distanced-per-stroke on this drill -- otherwise you'd just be sprinting.

YouTube Clip: [OVER SWIMMING DRILL](#)

~This clip is over swimming Tarzan, which the only difference is Tarzan keeps your head out of the water. This engages your core more, but throws off your body placement

### Slow and Technically Perfect/ Graceful Swimming

This can be a drill for a really disciplined swimmer. We also encourage it as a basic cool down for all of our swimmers. **The goal is to** simply think about how you are swimming, with total disregard for speed and time. Think about your recovery and your body placement. Focus on each pull and how much distance you're covering.

Think about your legs and how they're helping power your rotation. Nice and easy swimming, where you're acutely aware of everything you're doing. Just swim exactly how you'd want to in a race to help build that muscle memory at slower speeds.

YouTube Clip: [GRACEFUL SWIMMING](#)