

# BASIC STROKE DESCRIPTORS FOR ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING

## From Going Horizontal

### FRONTCRAWL

#### **First Impression: Looking For ..**

A coordinated, controlled, balanced and streamlined stroke which is relaxed with smooth steady 'purposeful' forward travel.

#### **Body Position:** (*"at the surface"*)

Face down, water at the 'hair line' ; eyes looking down.

The body is 'long' from fingertips to toes and streamlined

Head, torso, hips and legs.....are aligned; there is a long central body 'line' with rotation

Torso or core is stable and balanced; torso: shoulders and hips roll to allow arms to recover smoothly and develop powerful propulsion

Hips stay underneath the water

#### **Leg Action:** (*"fast feet small splash"*)

Alternating, rhythmic and continuous

The action is driven from the 'hip'(say "seat") and is a 'whole leg' movement with slight bend at knees

Legs close together, ankles relaxed' the action is down and up

Some cross over as the hips and torso roll

Heels break the surface of the water with a small splash

#### **Arm Action:**

Alternating and continuous

#### **ENTRY ('Clean')**

Fingers enter the water first; lower than the wrist which is lower than the elbow

Hand enters (slides?) 'softly' in line with the shoulder?

The arm extends fully under the water after entry as a result of body rotation

#### **PROPULSION (Powerful and Purposeful)**

After extension, the hand repositions to 'catch' or 'fix' on the water to start the propulsive phase

The elbow bends quickly and remains high on the underwater phase as the hand pushes powerfully and purposefully backwards under the body and past the hip as the arm straightens again

#### **EXIT ('Clean')**

The elbow bends to 'lift' the hand out cleanly at or past the hip.

#### **RECOVERY (Relaxed)**

The elbow is bent during recovery, 'carrying' the 'loose' hand to the point of **entry** when it straightens etc..

#### **Breathing:** (Controlled)

Options: To one side with one ear and eye in the water every two or four strokes (Unilateral) or both sides every 3 strokes (Bilateral). *The head/face roll with the whole-body rotation not as an independent 'twist'*

Can be 'trickle' or 'explosive' or both.

#### **Timing:**

Breathing is timed with the arm action.

There may be 2,4 or more usually- 6 leg beats per arm cycle



# BASIC STROKE DESCRIPTORS FOR ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING

## From Going Horizontal

### BACKSTROKE

(is *also* not a FLAT stroke)

#### First Impression: Looking For

A coordinated, controlled, balanced and streamlined stroke which is relaxed with smooth steady 'purposeful' forward travel.

#### Body Position: slightly inclined from head to toes ("at the surface")

Ears just under the water; eyes looking up & slightly down towards toes

Torso (core) is stable: shoulders and hips roll around the long body line with the stroke *but the head remains still and central*

Hips remain underneath the water

Legs stay under the water

The body is 'long' from fingertips to toes, in alignment and streamlined.

#### Leg Action: ("fast feet small splash")

Alternating, rhythmic and continuous

The action is driven from the 'hip' (say "seat") and is a 'whole leg' movement; knees bend but to produce a very deep kick and do not break the surface.

Legs close together, ankles relaxed and flexible

Some cross over as the hips and torso roll

"Fast feet - small splash"; toes may just break the surface

#### Arm Action: ("one in one out")

Alternating and continuous

#### ENTRY ('Clean')

Straight arm with little finger or back of the hand entering the water first; 'soft/clean' slide, controlled.

In line with the shoulder and with rotation around the long body line.

The hand sculls out and down to find 'catch'.

#### PROPULSION (Powerful and Purposeful)

The elbow bends on the underwater phase but the hand does not go too deep

The elbow does not remain 'dropped' as the hand 'holds' the water and pushes back all the way past the hip?

It accelerates from catch to exit; "from slow to fast".

#### EXIT ('Clean')

The arm is extended alongside the thigh; it stays straight; the thumb or little finger or even the back of hand slips out of the water first..

#### RECOVERY (Relaxed)

The arm is straight from exit to entry

It travels in a high arc from the hips/thigh over to entry in line with shoulders

**Breathing:** Can be at will but many backstrokers favour breathing in on one arm out on the other

**Timing:** Usually a 6-beat kick for each arm cycle.

