



# Swim Better

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Technique tips to help  
improve your swimming!

Free eBook



An aura is a sensation, a feeling, a subtle sensory stimulus. It's something we can experience when suspended in water, when moving through it, feeling it against our skin.

Welcome!

My name is Laura, and I'm excited you're here to learn more about swimming.

I created Aura Move as a way to empower people to become stronger, faster swimmers for life. Swimming is a highly technical sport and I enjoy helping people improve their form, whether that's confidence to finish their first lap or stand on top of the podium.

Regardless of age or experience, I firmly believe it is never too late to swim better.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura'.

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# Improving Efficiency

Your ideal swimming technique is unique. The most efficient way to swim depends on your experience, physiology, mobility, injury history, and goals. One of my biggest learnings as a coach was recognising that a perfect technique doesn't exist! There will always be subtle variations in the way people swim.

Becoming an efficient, faster swimmer requires improving five key areas, in order of importance:

- Optimising breathing
- Reducing drag
- Optimising stroke direction
- Optimising stroke length
- Optimising stroke frequency

I often see people trying to improve their swimming by pulling harder to improve propulsion. While improving propulsion will help, it is much harder to increase power than it is to reduce drag! Pulling harder, or swimming with poor technique uses more oxygen, fatigues the body faster, and is an inefficient way of improving. People who are able to streamline their body are immediately at an advantage because it requires less effort to move through the water. Water is much denser than air, which means it uses a lot of energy if you try to fight through it, rather than work with it.





# Stroke Variables



Manipulating the length, speed and direction of your stroke can improve your freestyle.

**Stroke direction** is the path your palm and arm takes during the pulling phase. This can have a significant impact on your swimming, because poor pulling direction can reduce speed and even cause injury. The palm should ideally face the back wall, and travel just inside the bodyline during the pull.

**Stroke length** is defined by where your hand enters and exits the water. Ideally your hand should enter fingertips first, in front of the shoulder. The hand exits around your mid-thigh level.

**Stroke frequency** is determined by the number of strokes you take in a set period, often measured in strokes per minute. Your ideal stroke frequency will vary depending on your experience, physiology, and goals. As an example, long swims have a generally slower stroke frequency, and short sprints have a higher stroke frequency.





# Phases of Freestyle

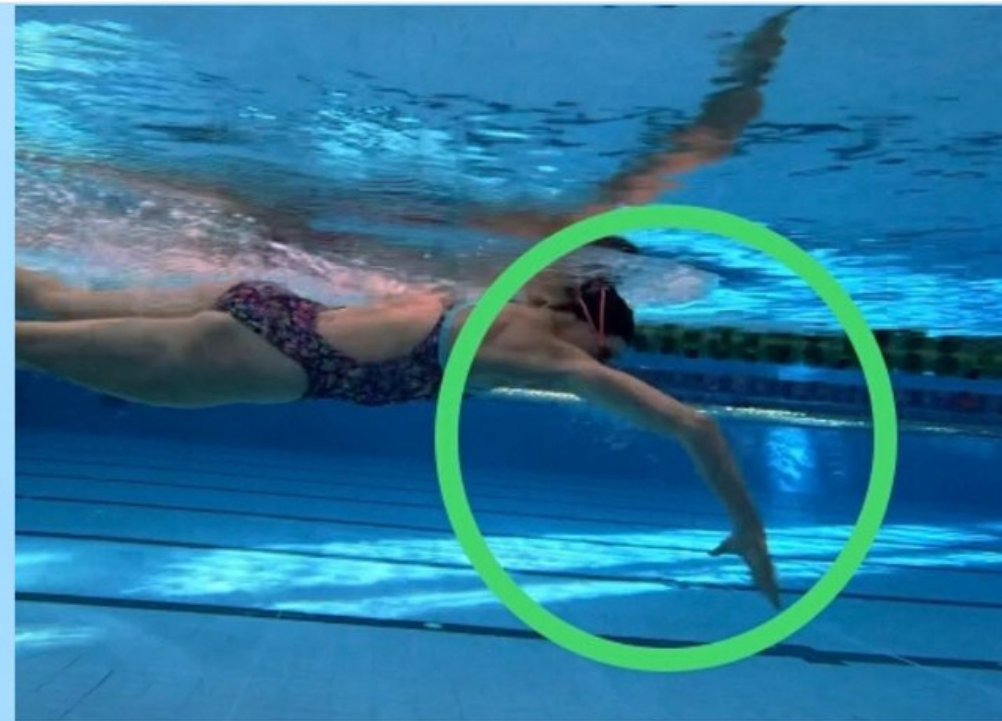
The phases of freestyle help to break down the overall movement. Understanding these phases can be beneficial in identifying opportunities for improvement in your technique and isolating a skill during drills.



Entry



Extension



Prep

## Phases of Freestyle



Pull



Push



Recovery

For a deeper dive into the phases of freestyle, and what to focus on, visit the [Aura Move website](#) for technique courses and eBooks.



# Drills



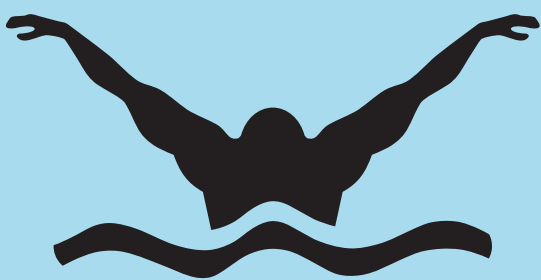
## Why

Drills are used to improve technique by isolating and improving a specific aspect of the stroke.



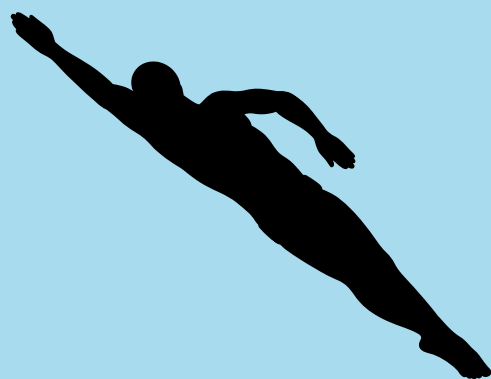
## How

Perform drills for short durations (l.e 15m - 50m) and utilise equipment (l.e fins and snorkel).



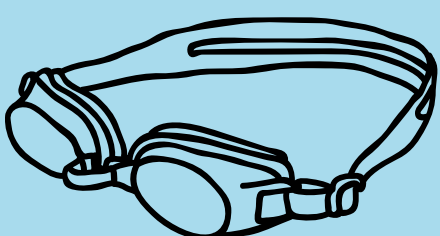
## What

Choose drills for your skill level. If the drill is too advanced, or you don't understand why you're doing it, it's hard to focus and improve technique.



## Types

There are different types of drills such as isolation drills, exaggeration drills, contrast, and speed drills.



## Example Set

6x50 as 25 drill / 25 swim

- 2x Scull
- 2x Single arm freestyle
- 2x Kick 6 and swap



# Reading a Swim Clock

You should learn to read a swim clock if you're getting more serious about lap swimming or are thinking about joining a squad.

It can be challenging to figure out at first, but using the swim clock often will make it easier. You can track your progress and set interval repeats by using the swim clock. Figuring out your time for each repeat will show you if you're speeding up or slowing down. In a set of 10x100m at zone 3, for example, you will try to hold the same time for every repeat. By watching the clock you ensure your training is consistent.

## ***Swim clocks***

A swim clock looks like a large analog clock with a few small tweaks: There's only one large hand, and the clock has seconds written on it instead of hours.

This means that there's a "60" written at the top of the clock instead of a "12." This is why swimmers often refer to the "60" as "the top." There are slightly larger needle marks every 5 seconds. Similarly, the 30, called "the bottom," is on the bottom of the clock. When doing a set, you might hear a coach or fellow swimmer say, "Let's leave on 'the bottom.'" This means leave the wall when the second hand gets to the 30. When reading the clock, you want to notice what number and colour you leave the wall on.





# How to Use a Swim Clock

## How to use a swim clock

You can use a swim clock to time yourself or to perform set intervals.

## Timing yourself

The pool clock is a simple, effective way of calculating your swim speed.

Knowing your speed is a good indicator of how well you're swimming. If your times are improving, you know that your training is on the right track.

The best way to get your time is to leave on “the top”. Leave the wall when the hand gets to the 60. After you've swum the distance that you want to time, glance back up at the clock. This will help you determine what your time is.

For example: Say you've sprinted a lap of freestyle. When you touched the wall, the second hand was at the 23. That means you swam the lap in 23 seconds.

It gets more complicated if you leave the wall at a different time. If you left the wall on the :10 and touched the wall on the :37, then you'll have to do some math to figure out your time. Take the first number and subtract it from the second to get 27. This means you swam the lap in 27 seconds.

## Swimming sets

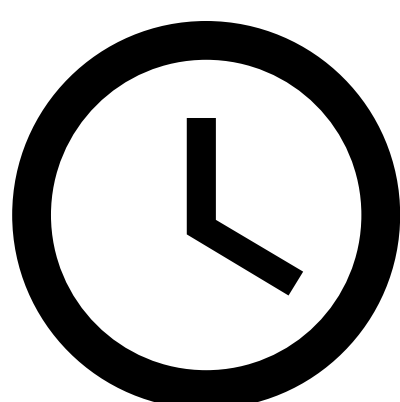
Another way to use a swim clock is if you're using intervals in training. If you're in a squad your coach may sometimes determine an interval to leave on. When keeping track of intervals, you'll have to do some math.

For example,  
10x100m on 2.30

Means you will swim 100m every 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Reading the swim clock is important for setting off on the correct interval time. Setting intervals can help to challenge you to maintain a speed throughout a set.

## Key things to remember

- Watch the clock when you leave the wall (pay attention to the colour of the needle)
- Look at the clock when you come back to the wall (pay attention to the colour of the needle)
- This allows you to figure out what your time was by doing some simple subtraction.





# Training Principles

Heart rate 'Zones' and 'Rate of Perceived Exertion' (RPE) are two simple methods for tracking training effort.

Heart rate zones are an objective measure of physical exertion. Elevating your heart rate with tough swim sets will improve fitness and cardiovascular health.

RPE is a subjective measure of effort. It refers to how hard it *feels* during a swim set. RPE can improve your fitness by helping you to tune into internal sensations rather than just focusing on external factors like distance or speed. By paying attention to perceived effort level, you can adjust intensity to match training goals, whether it's building endurance, refining technique, or increasing speed.

## Training Zones





# Squads and Pacing

Joining a squad is an excellent way to access structured programs, enhance accountability, and connect with like-minded individuals.

Squads cater to various skill levels, reach out to the coach for guidance on what to expect. It can be daunting to join a squad, so I suggest attending at least three times to overcome nerves.

Here is a rough guide on swim paces.

What time could you hold (approximately) for 6x100m

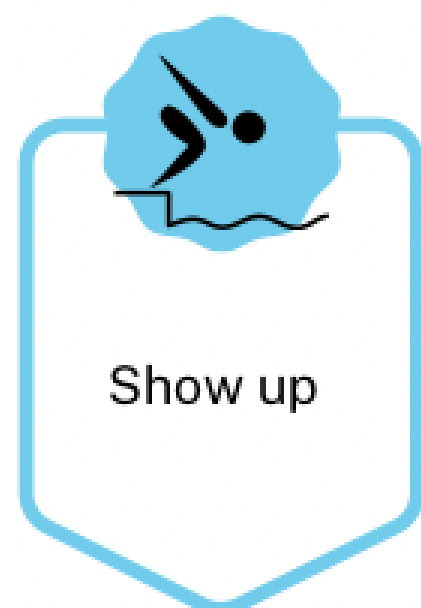
- Level 1: Slower than 2.40/100m
- Level 2: 2.20 - 2.40
- Level 3: 2.00 - 2.20
- Level 4: 1.40 - 2.00
- Level 5: 1.20 - 1.40
- Level 6: Faster than 1.20







# 5 Essential Skills for Better Swimming

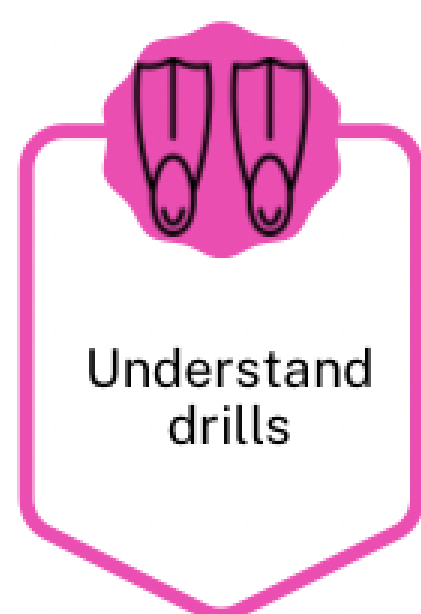


Show up



01

Swimming requires rhythmic coordination of the body. Specificity and frequency (that is swimming, and swimming often) is the best way to progress. Getting stronger in the gym, or fitter running will only have a minor impact compared with practicing swimming.



Understand drills



02

Knowing *why* you're doing a particular drill, and *how* it will help improve your stroke. Drills are used to isolate and improve specific parts of the stroke. I recommend using fins for drills.

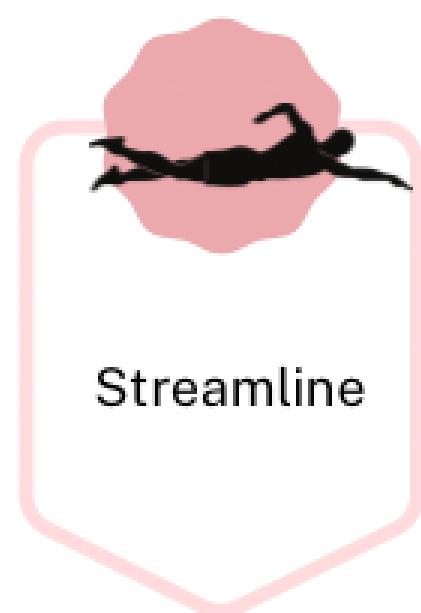


Foster a curious mindset



03

Mindful swimming can help improve your technique. Be curious about how you move through the water. Tune into your body, what do you feel? what can you hear? Incorporating creativity can enhance enjoyment and improve technique.



Streamline



04

Streamlining the body while swimming will help you to swim further and with less effort. You are streamlined when the head, hips, and heels are near the surface.



Intensity



05

Swim with a variety of intensity levels to maximise the effect on your cardiovascular system. Mix in sprints or intervals that make you feel breathless. It's tempting to just plod up and down, but stressing your system can elicit greater physical benefits than constant easy swimming.





Improving your swimming will take time, persistence, and patience. Exhale, focus on the process, and stay curious about how you move through the water.

[www.auramovenz.com](http://www.auramovenz.com)