

To ensure you are squeezing the most out of your time in the pool here are a few advanced tips for improving your Front Crawl technique.

IN THE WATER

- When improving your Front Crawl technique aim to keep your body position as flat as you can to be streamlined in the water with a slight slope down to the hips to keep the leg kick underwater
- Try to keep your stomach flat and level to support your lower back.
- With eyes looking forward and down, your head should be in line with the body and the water level should come between your eyebrows and hairline.
- Try to keep your head and spine as still and relaxed as possible. Instead, rotate your hips and shoulders to generate momentum through the water. Your head should only join the rotation when you want to breathe
- Your shoulder should come out of the water as your arm exits while the other begins the propulsive phase under the water.
- The hips should not rotate as much as the shoulders.

ARM ACTION

- Keep your elbow slightly bent as you reach your hand in front of your body to enter the water.
- Entry should be between the centre line of the head and the shoulder line and the hand should be directed with the palm facing down and out so the thumb first enters the water first.
- Don't start pulling back as soon as your hand is in the water – you should give yourself room to reach forward under the water before you start to bring your hand back to the body.
- After entering the water, the arm should perform a three-sweep motion.
- With your elbow slightly bent, sweep forward, then back towards the centre of the body, then out towards the thighs – imitating an hour glass shape.
- Maximise the efficiency of your stroke by completing the whole arm action and not bringing your arm out of the water before it reaches your leg.

KICKING

- Your legs should be close together with ankles relaxed and in a continuous motion.
- There's no need to take large down and upbeats – a steady, small motion is fine. While the most pressure should be on your feet, remember to move your whole legs.
- Try to keep your legs straight as possible. There should be a slight knee bend between the end of the upbeat and beginning of the downbeat but generally the straighter your legs, the more efficient and powerful the kick.
- The more kicks per cycle, the more energy you will use. Sprint swimmers will typically use six or eight kicks for a cycle but someone swimming longer distance should use fewer, more pronounced kicks.

BREATHING

- Try to keep your head turn as smooth as possible when you breathe. Your neck should remain smooth with your head and spine joining the rotation of the shoulders.
- One side of the face should remain in the water and you may want to stretch your mouth to one side to keep it clear.
- Try not to lift your head too much out of the water – the more your head raises, the more your feet and legs will sink in the water.
- After a sharp inhale, turn your face quickly and smoothly back into the water in time with the rotation of your shoulders.
- Exhalation takes place in the water when the head is back to a neutral position and can be gradual or explosive.
- The regularity of breathing is not set in stone – it is better to simply inhale when necessary. A standard technique is to breathe every three strokes, thus alternating the side which the head turns and maintaining balance through the stroke.

TURNING

- When approaching the wall, your last two arm strokes should stop with your hands by your thighs.
- Take your body into a tuck position by bending at the hips and knees. Rotate around the horizontal axis in a somersault, throw your legs over your hips to the wall and open your knees as you plant your feet on the end of the wall.
- Powerfully straighten your legs to transfer the momentum away from the poolside.
- Push your arms in front of your head, squeezing the ears, with the hands one on top of each other and twist back to your front as you're moving forward.
- Parallel to the water surface, use an alternating or dolphin leg kick under the water as the momentum from the push off slows down.
- Then start your arm action with your first arm starting while the body is still slightly submerged – this will help break your head to the surface.