

# Improving your Breaststroke Technique

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

## IN THE WATER

- To improve your breaststroke technique your body position should be with your head facing forward in line with your body.
- Keep your shoulders, hips and legs as horizontal as possible but slope your body slightly to allow the leg kick to stay beneath the water.
- The leg kick uses your core and abdomen muscles more than freestyle so it's important to not to let your hips drop in the water. Your legs should be behind you rather than below you.
- Try to keep your neck and shoulders as relaxed as possible to aid the arm action and reduce strain. Look downwards as you glide to avoid straining your neck.

## ARM ACTION

- From the glide position the hands should be pitched down and out.
- Keep your elbows high as you skull your hands out and round.
- Your hands should then sweep back in to the body as though they were to meet at the upper chest.
- Try not to sweep your arms too wide – remember much of the propulsion comes from the legs – not the arms.
- Your hands can recover under or over the water but your elbows should remain below the surface.
- Your arms can then stretch forward with your hands close together to restart the arm action.

## KICKING

- In contrast to front crawl, the majority of propulsion comes from the leg kick.
- Your knees should be just a little over hip-width apart, facing down, slightly out behind the hip line.
- Turn your feet out as they sweep out and backwards in a circular action. Keep your feet flexed rather than loose.
- The legs finish together, long and in a streamlined position with the feet in-toed.
- The legs are recovered to bring the heels towards the seat with the soles of the feet facing outwards. Concentrate on bringing your feet to your bum rather than your knees to your chest.

## TIMING

- Good timing of the arm action and leg kick are imperative to make the most out of your breaststroke.
- Try to time your arm action and leg kick so there is always something propelling you through the water.
- The arms will be propulsive while the legs recover and the legs propulsive while the hands recover.

## BREATHING

- Lift your shoulder to bring your face out of the water to breathe. Don't raise your head – let the head naturally rise with the shoulders so your chin is resting just above the water.
- Lifting your head rather than your shoulders can lead to back pain and lowers your hips which will increase resistance.
- Inhale through your mouth before letting your shoulders drop as you sweep with your arms. Exhalation usually occurs explosively during the glide.

## TURNING

- Your hands should touch the wall simultaneously below, at, or above the water surface.
- Rotate your body on its side as the hips pike, knees tuck and feet plant on the wall.
- Move your higher hand over your head to spear and push through the water as your kick off from the wall.
- Stay streamlined and parallel to the water with your chin on your chest after extending your legs.
- Perform one long, propulsive arm action with your hands staying close to the body line and finishing at your thighs.
- Keeping your hands close under your body, bring your arms back to the front of your head and powerfully kick to continue momentum.
- As you lift your head, start your regular arm action with your head breaking the surface before the hands being to sweep back to the body.