

## Open Water Swimming Drills

Swimming drills are a great way to improve swimming technique by building mind muscle connection to where your body needs to be during the hand entry, catch, pull, push and recovery phases of the front crawl/freestyle stroke.

Many swimmers do these as a matter of course in the swimming pool but they are neglected in open water. They are great for warm up and to prepare your mind and body for the swim and can be done even in a wetsuit. Open water race drills like sighting, buoy turns, drafting, starts and sprint finishes can be done at any time during your swim.

Drill	Purpose	Key Points	Coaching Point
<b>Kick on Side</b>	Helps you develop good posture, alignment, catch set up and rotation	Kick on your side rotated to 90°, drawing your shoulder blades together and back, keeping hand in line with shoulder with fingertips below wrist, below elbow	Shoulders back, chest forwards
<b>6-1-6</b>	Helps develop your alignment, posture and catch set up position while introducing a stroke	6 kicks on the side, Stroke and rotate, Breathe and 6 kicks on the other side	6 kicks---stroke---breathe---6 kicks
<b>Fist</b>	Swimming with a relaxed fist removes the large surface area of your hands from your catch, leaving only the surface area of your forearms.	Swim your normal front crawl stroke but with a relaxed fist. Use your forearm to propel yourself forward. If you have a good catch this won't be a problem. If you are not moving, you will need to develop your forearm catch position. Change it until you feel traction	Forearms catch -pull - push
<b>Sighting</b>	Swim straight in the water	Extend your lead arm and press down slightly. Bring eyes/goggle just above water like a crocodile, sight on buoy/object, head down and breath to side in normal way. If you don't clearly spot your buoy or object don't be tempted to raise your head just sight it next time.	Crocodile eyes – turn to breathe
<b>Scull # 1</b>	Improve initial catch and feel for the water	Scull with both arms Symmetrically just Wider than your shoulders and back in to the middle, changing angle of hands, keeping pressure on the water, fingertips about 30cm below surface and lower than wrist lower than elbow lower than shoulder, chin on the surface, with pull buoy to isolate your arms (your wetsuit should act like a pull buoy in open water and push your knees and ankles together – don't kick)	"feel" the water

Drill	Purpose	Key Points	Coaching Point
<b>Scull # 2</b>	Focuses on the phase of the stroke between the catch and pull through, under the head, helps correct a wide S-shape or straight arm pull through	Scull with both arms Symmetrically just wider than your shoulders and back into the middle, Changing angle of hands, keeping pressure on the water, fingertips about 60cm below surface face Forward or down, with Pull buoy to isolate your Legs. Or if in a wetsuit push your knees and ankles together and don't kick.	Elbows fixed and stable
<b>Push Backs</b>	Developing the final phase of the arm pull through, Setting up a bent elbow exit from the Water (150° approx.) and prevent elbow pain when swimming Freestyle. This enables you to focus on completing the underwater "push"	Use a pull buoy, face in the water, keep your Elbows fixed by your side and push the water with alternate arms from underneath your shoulders back to your hips, using your hands and forearms. Arms always under water. If in a wetsuit lock your knees and ankles together and don't kick. Keep your hips high and face and chest pressed in to the water to ensure your are streamlined.	Push back, elbows in
<b>Glute Kicking</b>	Helps develop and Refine your glute kicking technique – kicking initiated from your hips and bottom	Lay flat in the water with your hands outstretched like Superman. Kick steadily (not fast) with toes pointed from your hips and engage your glutes. Slight knee bend but initiate the kick from the hip.	Superman extend – glute kick

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