

# breaststroke

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## Breaststroke Technique Made Easy



**breaststroke swimming stroke  
broken down and explained**

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*the number one resource for learning to swim and improving swimming technique*

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## Breaststroke Swimming Technique

This stroke, commonly misspelt 'breast stroke', is the oldest and slowest of the four swimming strokes. It is also the most inefficient of all strokes, which is what makes it the slowest. Propulsion from the arms and legs is a consecutive action that takes place under the water. A large frontal resistance area is created as the heels draw up towards the seat and the breathing technique inclines the, body position also increasing resistance. These are the main reasons that make this stroke inefficient and slow.



This stroke is normally one of the first strokes to be taught, especially to adults, as the head and face is clear of the water, giving the swimmer a greater perception of their whereabouts and their buoyancy. There are variations in the overall technique, ranging from a slow recreational style to a more precise competitive style. Body position should be as flat and streamlined as possible with an inclination from the head to the feet so that the leg kick recovery takes place under the water.

The leg kick as a whole should be a simultaneous and flowing action, providing the majority of the propulsion.

The arm action should also be simultaneous and flowing and overall provides the smallest propulsive phase of the four strokes.

The stroke action gives a natural body lift which gives the ideal breathing point with each stroke and a streamlined body position during the timing sequence of the arm and leg action is essential to capitalise on the propulsive phases of the stroke.

## Body Position

The body position should be inclined slightly downwards from the head to the feet.

The body should be as flat and streamlined as possible with an inclination from the head to the feet so that the leg kick recovery takes place under the water.



## Legs

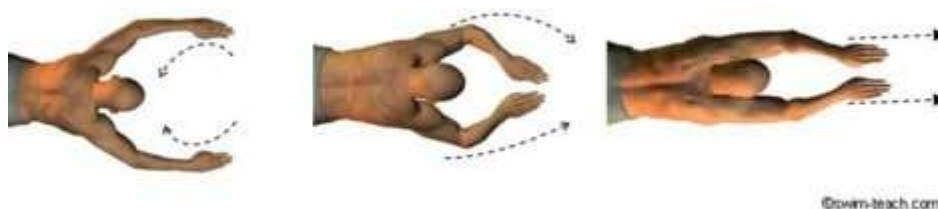
The most important teaching aspect of the legs is that the action is a series of movements that flow together to make one sweeping leg kicking action.



The wedge kick vs. whip kick debate is ongoing and unresolved, so rather than take sides in the argument, it is more important for a swimmer or teacher to recognise the difference. The leg action provides the largest amount of propulsion in the stroke and swimmers will favour a wedge kick or a whip kick depending on which comes most naturally. For a whip kick, the legs kick in a whip-like action with the knees remaining close together. For a wedge kick the legs kick in a wider, more deliberate circular path.

## Arms

The amount of propulsion generated from arm techniques has developed over the years as the stroke has changed to become more competitive. The arm action overall provides the smallest propulsive phase of the four competitive strokes.



The arm action has three stages:

- Catch
- Propulsive
- Recovery

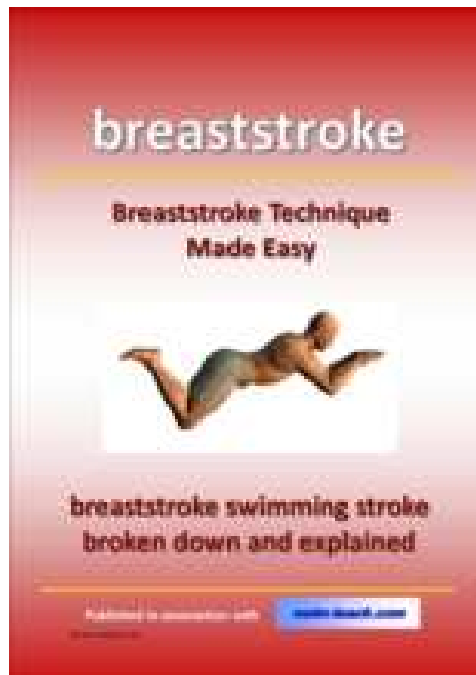
## Breathing

The stroke action gives a natural body lift which gives the ideal breathing point with each stroke.

Inhalation takes place at the end of the insweep as the body allows the head to lift clear of the water. The head should be lifted enough for the mouth to clear the surface and inhale, but not excessively so as to keep the frontal resistance created by this movement to a minimum.

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**Bonus exercise**

## BREASTSTROKE: Breathing



### Static practice, breathing with arm action



**Aim: to practise breast stroke breathing action whilst standing in the water.**

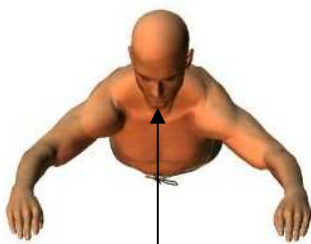
This allows the swimmer to experience the feel of breathing into the water in time with the arm action, without the need to actually swim.

#### Technical Focus

- o Breathe inwards at the end of the in sweep
- o Head lifts up as the arms complete the pull
- o Head should clear the water
- o Head returns to the water as the arms recover
- o Breathe out as the hands recover forward

#### Key Actions

- o Breathe in as you complete your arm pull
- o Breathe out as your hands stretch forwards
- o Blow your hands forwards



Breathe IN as the arms pull down and the head rises



Breathe OUT as the arms recover forward and the face enters the water

For more Breaststroke exercises go to:

<http://www.swim-teach.com/swimming-exercises.bs.html>