front crawl

Front Crawl Technique
Made Easy

Swim Teach

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front crawl
front crawl swimming technique

Front crawl is the fastest, most efficient stroke of them all. This is largely down to the streamlined body position and continuous propulsion from the arms and legs.

The alternating action of the arms and legs is relatively easy on the joints and the stroke as a whole develops aerobic capacity faster than any other stroke. In competitive terms it is usually referred to as Freestyle.

The constant alternating arm action generates almost all of the propulsion and is the most efficient arm action of all strokes. The leg action promotes a horizontal, streamlined body position and balances the, arm action but provides little propulsion.

Freestyle breathing technique requires the head to be turned so that the mouth clears the water but causes minimal upset to the balance of the body from its normal streamlined position.

The timing and coordination of front crawl arms and legs occurs most commonly with six leg kicks to one arm cycle. However, stroke timing can vary, with a four beat cycle and even a two beat cycle, which is most commonly used in long distance swims and endurance events.

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https://www.swim-teach.com/how-to-swim-front-crawl.html
**body position**

The overall body position for this swimming stroke is streamlined and as flat as possible at the water surface, and the head in-line with the body.

The waterline is around the natural hairline with eyes looking forward and down.

If the position of the head is raised it will cause the position of the hips and legs to lower which in turn will increase frontal resistance.

![Streamlined body position](image)

If the head position is too low it will cause the legs to raise and the kick to lose its efficiency.

Shoulders remain at the surface and roll with the arm action. Hips also roll with the stroke technique, close to the water surface and the legs remain in line with the body.

**legs**

The leg kick for front crawl should originate from the hip and both legs should kick with equal force.

Legs kick in an up and down alternating action, with the propulsive phase coming from the down kick. There should be a slight bend in the knee due to the water pressure, in order to produce the propulsion required on the down kick.
The downward kick begins at the hip and uses the thigh muscles to straighten the leg at the knee, ending with the foot extended to allow it’s surface area to bear upon the water. As the leg moves upwards, the sole of the foot and the back of the leg press upwards and backwards against the water.

The upward kick slows and stops as the leg nears and minimally breaks the water surface. Ankles are relaxed and toes pointed to give an in-toeing effect when kicking and leg kick depth should be within the overall depth of the body.

**arms**

The continuous alternating arm action provides the majority of the power and propulsion of the entire swimming stroke.

- **entry**

Hand enters the water at a 45 degree angle, finger tips first, thumb side down. Hand entry should be between shoulder and head line with a slight elbow bend.

- **catch**

The hand reaches forward under the water without over stretching. Arm fully extends just under the water surface.

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• propulsive Phase

Hand sweeps through the water downward, inwards and then upwards. Elbow is high at the end of the down sweep and remains high throughout the in-sweep. Hand pulls through towards the thigh and upwards to the water surface.

• recovery phase

Elbow bends to exit the water first. Hand and fingers fully exit the water and follow a straight line along the body line over the water surface. Elbow is bent and high and the arm is fully relaxed.

breathing

The head turns to the side on inhalation for freestyle breathing technique. The head begins to turn at the end of the upward arm sweep and turns enough for the mouth to clear the water and inhale. The head turns back into the water just as the arm recovers over and hand returns to the water. Breathing can be bilateral (alternate sides every one and a half stroke cycles) or unilateral (same side) depending of the stroke cycle and distance to be swum.
Types of Breathing

- **Trickle**

The breath is slowly exhaled through the mouth and nose into the water during the propulsive phase of the arm pull. The exhalation is controlled to allow inhalation to take place easily as the arm recovers.

- **Explosive**

The breath is held after inhalation during the propulsive arm phase and then released explosively, part in and part out of the water, as the head is turned to the side.

**timing**

The timing and coordination for this swimming stroke usually occurs naturally.

Arms should provide a continuous power and propulsive alternating action whilst leg kicks also remain continuous and alternating.

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However, there are a few variations.

- **Six beat cycle** – each leg kicks three down kicks per arm cycle. The cycle is normally taught to beginners and used for sprint swims.
- **Four beat cycle** – each leg kicks down twice for each arm pull.
- **Two-beat cycle** – each leg kicks one downbeat per arm cycle. This timing cycle is normally used by long distance swimmers, where the leg kick acts as a counter balance instead of a source of propulsion. This is not recommended for beginners.

**full stroke overview**

- Level body position
- Continuous alternating leg kick
- Continuous alternating arm action
- Regular breathing to the side

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Now put the theory into practice!

Everything you’ve read in this book **PLUS** 22 of the best drills to fine tune your basic front crawl technique

How to Swim Front Crawl is the perfect quick-fix for anyone wanting an easy to follow, concise and simplistic guide book. For the complete beginner, this book helps to learn and understand the basic stroke, and for the established swimmer to adjust and improve. The 22 fully illustrated drills contained in this book cover all aspects of the stroke and can help any beginner to learn and practice, and any swimmer to eliminate bad habits and fine tune their front crawl.

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Example Swimming Drill

The page layout for each exercise follows the same format, keeping all relevant information on one page. The aims, technical focuses and key points are all listed with a photograph and graphical diagram of the exercise.

Get loads of front crawl drill like this one by clicking the link below.  
https://www.swim-teach.com/how-to-swim-front-crawl.html
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Aim: to develop correct body position and confidence in pushing off. The swimmer can start with arms stretched out in front and pushes off from the pool floor or from the wall with one foot and glides through the water unaided.

Technical Focus
- Initial push should be enough to gain good movement
- Head remains still and central
- Face submerged so that the water is at brow level
- Shoulders should be level
- Legs in line with the body

Key Actions
- Push hard from the side/pool floor
- Keep your head tucked between your arms
- Stretch out as far as you can
- Keep your hands together

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FRONT CRAWL: Legs

Holding the poolside

Aim: to encourage the swimmer to learn the kicking action. Holding the poolside enhances confidence and helps develop leg strength.

Technical Focus
- Kick comes from the hip
- Kick is continuous and alternating
- Knee is only slightly bent
- Legs are close together when they kick
- Ankles are relaxed and the toes are pointed
- Kick should just break the water surface

Key Actions
- Kick with straight legs
- Pointed toes
- Make a small splash with your toes
- Kick with floppy feet
- Kick from your hips
- Kick continuously
- Legs kick close together

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