

## Freestyle Breathing Technique

How many times have you heard the instructor say...Head down! This is one of the most common faults that occur in swimming, in that the head position is held too high in the water. It is important for this to be corrected before the other faults as it is the number one reason why swimmers of any age are not moving through the water smoothly.

Water has the wonderful force called buoyancy that pushes up against the body & allows us to float, however if there is a body part out of the water, it has no buoyancy to push back and gravity is at full force pushing down making it harder to stay on the top of the water.

Children often use a lot of energy just trying to stay afloat & end up leaving themselves short of breath & unable to propel themselves forward. Many swimmers leave at least half of their head out of the water, which in terms of gravity is a lot of force pushing downwards. As a result the legs will sink which will make propulsion even more difficult.

**While swimming**, swimmers should aim to keep their body as horizontal as possible in the water (streamlined).

This is called being balanced. When balanced, the body will create the least amount of drag (resistance).

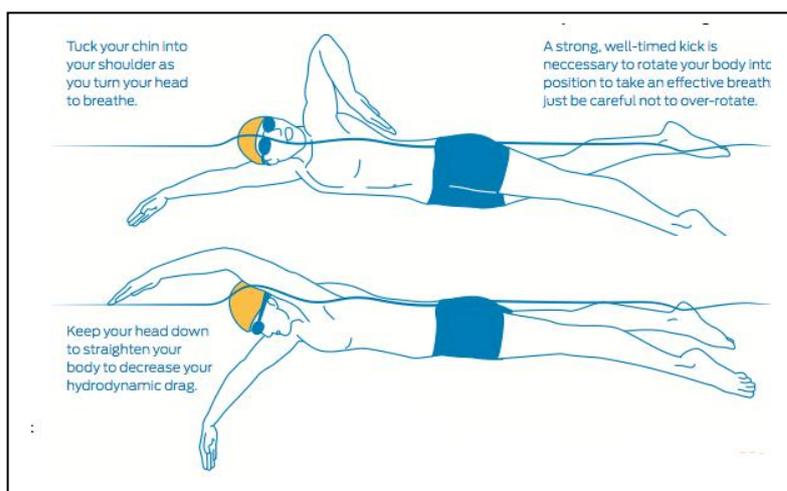
Think “**long neck, chin down**”.



Small drag in streamlined position



Large drag in unstreamlined position



**While breathing**, swimmers should roll their head as little as is needed because rolling too much will disrupt balance.

In fact, if you watch the pros swim, you will see that they inhale with their mouth slightly to the side and in the trough of the bow wave created by their head, so that they need to rotate their head as little as possible. While they do this, typically one lens of their swimming goggles is underwater and one lens above water. However, being able to do this takes a lot of practice but this should be the main aim of breathing head position.

### Conclusion:

We encourage children to look at the bottom of the pool when swimming freestyle and to turn their head only to the side enough to breathe in the pocket created by the downward stroke of the arm.