



Why do we teach “Catch-up Freestyle”?

This type of Freestyle is different to what you see in the Olympics or what we call conventional Freestyle. Beginner or Catch-up

Freestyle is when the hands meet after each stroke, so only one arm is moving at a time.

The benefits of teaching Catch-up Freestyle before teaching conventional Freestyle are obvious to those who have done so. Young children find catch-up much easier to comprehend as they are only using one arm at a time. However more importantly, just like Streamlined/Torpedo kicking, Catch-up Freestyle prepares and strengthens a child’s core region so the swimmer can develop a long, powerful Freestyle stroke.

When children are taught conventional Freestyle too early, the arms tend to move too quickly and the correct breathing technique becomes difficult to teach.

Another bad habit swimmers often fall into, is not reaching out far enough during the recovery portion of the freestyle stroke. Often the swimmer will take a shorter arm stroke with the hand entering the water along side the head or perhaps just in front of it.

This results in short, choppy arm strokes as well as an increase in the number of strokes over a given distance.

Catch Up Drill is a swimming staple for many reasons. It allows the swimmer to work on the timing of their breath, a good rotation, and a steady kick. It isolates each arm but allows newer swimmers to balance their stroke with less difficulty than they’d have with the opposite arm glued to their side. Catch Up Drill can help correct a short hand entry by forcing the swimmers to extend their recovering arm further in an effort to touch their opposite hand.

ONLY when swimmers have mastered a good Freestyle technique (toward our “Great White” level), will we slowly modify the drill to a 3/4 Catch Up Drill – This means that your fully extended hand begins the catch when the recovering arm is 3/4 of the way recovered. This is closer to a natural Freestyle.

