TEACHING FREESTYLE
Basic Progressions through Advanced Drills

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OUTLINE

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Teaching Beginning Freestyle

5-Step Teaching Progression

1. Body Position
2. Kick
3. Arms
4. Timing
5. Breathing

Each lesson begins with a combination of air exchange drills and breath control.
Essential Teaching Positions for the In-the-Water Instructor & Swimmer

9 STEPS

1) Body Position
   • Arms extended and touching head
   • Arms higher than ears
   • Fingers straight ahead and underwater
   • Head in neutral position
   • Flatten back
2) Kick on the Wall
• Grab above knees, instructors thumb on top
• Long legs and loose ankles
• Control Amplitude

3) Kick with a Board
• Face in the water
• Hold the board with straight arms
• Arms touching the head
• Arms higher than the ears
4) **Kick without a Board**

- Chin should not be on the chest
- Eyes straight down
- Arms higher than the ears

5) **Blowing Bubbles/Side Breathing**

- Out nose
- Arms straight/lead arm hand on the wall or away from wall
- Ear rests on arm when breathing
- Instructor should roll head gently to the side
- Roll breathing-side shoulder up
6) Side Kick with Breathing

• Lead arm extended toward front
• Other arm at the side
• Instructor should stand on the non-breathing side and control the head when the swimmer is breathing
• Turn the head to breathe and return the face straight down
• Keep kicking
7) “Breathe Arm” with a Board

- One arm on the board, arm straight, face in the water
- Other arm also extended but along the side of the board
- Standing on the non-breathing side, the instructor should roll the head to breathe with the area behind the ear touching the leading arm
- The swimmer will pull the arm not touching the board, and breathe when the arm is about at mid-pull
- The face must return quickly to the water, right after the arm begins the recovery and before the arm reaches mid-recovery
8) “Breathe Arm/Bubble Arm” with Assistance

- Instructor should place hands palm up at Position “11” entry
- Swimmer places their hands on the instructors
- When the instructor pulls hand away and off the swimmer’s hands (one at a time) the swimmer will pull and blow bubble on the first hand and pull and breathe on the other
- The instructor can also hold the head with one hand while the swimmer is pulling

9) No Breathing Freestyle (preventing cross over)

- Instructor should hold the swimmer’s head straight and keep it down in a neutral position
- Swimmer should not touch the instructor’s arms when entering
Characteristics of Advanced Freestylers

• Well-defined catch early in stroke (after fingers point down, elbow bends, forearm vertical)
• Palm faces back throughout the pull
• Head returns quickly in the line after each breath
• Arms extend forward – shoulders stay to the side of the face and do not rotate down or in front of the face (only 30% rotation)
• During entire pull the hand follows a path at least as wide as the edge of the body
• Balanced body
• Distance per Stroke – anchoring the hand/forearm
• Connectivity
Advanced Freestyle Drills

• Head up Sailboat
• Head down Sailboat
• Float Legs, almost Position “11”
• Float Legs and add kick at half way
• 6-Count Switch
• One Arm Freestyle with non-working arm by the side, breathing to non-working side
Characteristics of 3 Types of Freestyle

#1 Hip Driven...1st gear

#2 Shoulder Driven...2nd gear

#3 Body Driven...3rd gear
Freestyle Questions

- Head
- Splash
- Rotation
- Entry
- Pull
- Exit
- Hand Speed
- Breathing
- Kick
Stroke Change
Important Considerations

• Recognition
• How to correct
• Underlying cause?
Communicate to Swimmer

- Video
- Mirrors
- Correct Feel
- Why
Coach Must/Swimmer Must

• Reinforce Daily:
  - warm up
  - warm up sets
  - main set
• Easy swimming over a long period of time
• Maintain at faster speed
• Maintain when tired
• Maintain in competition
Top 10 Freestyle Stroke Flaws and How to Fix Them

1. Head too high or moving
2. “Falling Over” leading arm while breathing
3. Cross-over on entry
4. Destructive Entry
5. Poor Catch
6. Dropped elbow during pull
7. Poor rotation
8. Cross-over on pull
9. Interrupted kick
10. Lifting head to breathe
Coaching Tips

Simple Sets with Specific Instructions

10 x 50 Freestyle @ 1:00
• Streamline and two dolphin kicks off each wall
• Hold breath on breakout stroke
• Hold stroke count – 14 for example
• Focus on specific technique
• Breathe every 3rd on lap one, 4th on lap two
• No breathing on last 4-6 strokes into finish
• Finish correctly – touch underwater and on the side
• Know your time
“Magic Words” and Phrases...