Basic Swimming Techniques

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If you know basic swimming techniques, nothing beats jumping into a pool of cool water on a hot day. But getting into a swimming pool can do more than offer refreshment. Swimming is one type of exercise that burns calories, builds muscle strength, and boosts cardiovascular fitness.

Backstroke Technique
The backstroke combines arm and leg movements that push a swimmer through the water. Here's how it works:

- Move arms alternately in a windmill pattern.
- Cup hands. The thumb should come out of the water first when starting the arm movement.
- Form an -S' with the arm that is underwater.
- Kick in a fluttering motion.
- Bend knees.
- Emphasize the upward kicking motion.
- Keep head face up.

Breaststroke Technique
It's all about timing with this basic swimming technique. The body moves up and down while the swimmer coasts through the water. Try these tips to improve your breaststroke swimming technique.

- Keep arms overhead when beginning the stroke.
- Bring arms toward the chest and pull on the water.
- Cup hands.
- Return arms to starting position.
- Use a frog kick. Start with knees pulled up to the chest, then push backward, and snap legs together. This pushes the water and sends the swimmer forward.
- Take a breath each time you make an arm stroke.

Butterfly Technique
The butterfly is one of the most difficult swimming strokes. Swimming the butterfly stroke relies on precision timing. Plus, arm strength is a definite benefit for successfully swimming this stroke. Time it like this:

- Move the arms together while pulling through the water.
- Cup hands with palms facing out.
- Swing arms forward in a sweeping motion when the arms are above the water.
- Bend knees slightly and keep them together, then straighten the knees and push downward.
- Whip feet down.
- Complete two kicks per arm movement.
- Take a breath with each arm stroke.

The Crawl or Freestyle Technique
Freestyle swimming is one of the easiest strokes to master. Use these methods to fine-tune the stroke.

- Alternate arms and move in a windmill motion.
- Extend arm to full length and pull through the water
- Form an -S' pattern with the arms when under water.
- Cup hands but relax the wrist.
- Use a flutter kick.
- Take a breath by turning the head to the side when the shoulder is raised out of water to make the stroke.
- Turn head back into the water and exhale through the nose and mouth.
- Turn the head to the opposite side for the next breath and continue alternating sides.

These basic swimming techniques will help your overall swimming performance.