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.