

Review of Lesson 1

- Breathing: Maintain a steady breathing pattern; use Bobs to relax
- Fundamental Balance Drills
 - Stationary Drills: Front Hang & Front Float
 - Awareness Drills: Egg, Spin
 - Fundamental Balance Drills
 - Back Balance
 - Back Rotation

Side Balance

This is **the** most important swimming position to master. For endurance-speed freestyle or backstroke, you move from side balance on one side to side balance on the other side.

First, experience the position in the water while being supported by one or two other swimmers (one supporting feet near surface, optional second swimmer supporting leading arm).

The side balance position: Lower arm extended at shoulder depth, palm down. Head looking straight down at the bottom of the pool. Shoulders and hips vertical. Body totally parallel to the surface of the water. Upper arm resting and totally relaxed on your side, hand below hip on thigh. Alternatively, the upper arm may be bent at elbow, with hand across the belly – in this position, apply slight pressure to the belly with the forearm, to remind yourself not to arch your back.

Side balance drill (fins optional): Start at wall with three Bobs to establish a comfortable breathing pattern. Push off gently going immediately to the side balance position and kick *gently* to the end of the pool, maintaining perfect balance on that side. Roll to your back to breathe. Take two breaths and be sure you are balanced before rotating back onto your side. Rest at wall, return on the other side.

Side balance drill with swimming breathing (fins optional): Remember to exhale from your nose while your face is in the water. The force of the exhalation depends on your level of exertion. To breathe: lean on your lower armpit and lat, rotate your head just enough so that your mouth clears the water, exhale a little more forcefully as your face clears the water, inhale quickly from your mouth, rotate your head back to the head-down position. Important points: Keep most of the weight of your head in the water. Do not lift your chin.

Backstroke Kicking & the Rotational Kick

Start in back balance position, kicking comfortably, arms relaxed at sides. Your kick should start from the hip. There should be very little knee bend as you kick your leg forward, and none as you recover your leg back. Your knees and feet should roil the surface of the water. On the propulsive kick you have been doing, energy flows from your hip to your toes. On the rotational kick, the energy goes the other way – instead of kicking your foot forward, you plant your foot and kick the (same) hip away from the foot (down into the water when doing backstroke, up toward the surface when doing freestyle). The hips and core provide most of the rotation, the leg just initiates it. Stay on your side for a bit, and then use a rotational kick to rotate to the other side.

As you become comfortable with this movement, learn to rotate your hips $\frac{1}{4}$ turn *every third kick*. Learn to make the rotational kick as compact as possible, with very little knee bend.

Underwater Video: Drills and Review

Sample Practice Session Following Lesson 2

Until the next lesson, practice drills for as long as you can stand it. Be patient and work slowly and mindfully. Do not practice struggle – if you feel you are getting absolutely nowhere, get out of the pool and try again another day, or swim breast stroke for a change of pace.

Side Balance Checklist – Basic Position

- Lower Arm:** Extended forward at shoulder depth, palm down; relaxed but strong
- Head:** Neutral on spine, eyes facing the bottom, chin not tucked or lifted
- Torso:** Shoulders stacked, hips stacked, no arch in the back
- Upper Arm:** Resting on side, bent at elbow with forearm pressed gently into belly
- Legs:** Relaxed, kicking gently from hips

Side Balance Drill (Fins Optional)

Objective: Perfect side balance for a full length.

- Balance:** Perfect side balance the entire length.
- Breathing:** Roll to your back to breathe. Take two breaths before rotating back to side..
- Kicking:** Just enough to maintain forward movement.

Side Balance Drill with Swimming Breathing (Fins Optional)

Objective: Learn to breathe as deeply as possible in the water.

- Balance:** Perfect side balance the entire length.
- Breathing:** Rotate your head to the air, breathing as low in the water as possible. The more of your face that comes out of the water, the greater the impact on your balance. Do not wait too long to breathe, breathe regularly.
- Kicking:** If using fins, try removing them as this drill becomes more comfortable. Kick just enough to maintain forward movement.

Backstroke Kicking and the Rotational Kick

Objectives: Learn to use your kick to initiate body rotation. Learn to repeat the rotational kick at a fixed interval – for backstroke, every third kick.

- Balance:** Start in back balance with arms relaxed at the sides.
- Rotation:** Be gentle. Do not try to snap your entire torso over with just the kick. The kick just initiates the rotation, which comes from the hips and core.
- Kicking:** Use fins. Kick just enough to maintain forward movement, but be sure to keep legs and fins “high” in the water (do not drop legs and hips).