

Breakwater Sports

Introduction to the Freestyle One Program

Coach Bill Steele 978-290-1445

www.breakwatersportstraining.com

Program Goal

The goal is to teach you *how* to swim freestyle and backstroke efficiently. How well you swim at the end of the program will depend on how effectively you practice, and how completely you master the fundamentals of each stroke.

Who Takes This Program

This program usually includes people with a wide range of swimming abilities and backgrounds - from newer swimmers to competitive swimmers. Regardless of experience or ability, everyone will profit and improve by learning how to work on the fundamental skills of the sport. One of my first experiences as a coach was teaching young children at swim camps run by Richard Quick, who was the Stanford University and Olympic women's swimming coach. Coach Quick worked on the same skills every day, regardless of whether the pool was full of new ten-year old swimmers, or elite national champions. After twenty years of teaching swimming, I know this approach works.

Attendance

Over the course of the program almost everyone will miss a lesson, and that is no big problem. If you miss a lesson, do not worry that you will not be able to catch up. Owing to the progressive nature of the program, each lesson begins with an extensive review of the previous lesson.

If you do miss a lesson, check the online lesson plans and try to catch up by meeting with one of the other swimmers in the class for a practice session or two. Swimming with a partner from the program is *always* a good idea – you can observe each other's technique while drilling and swimming, and help each other out.

Regarding missed lessons, we cannot schedule individual make-up sessions, we cannot pro-rate the tuition, and except in very rare cases it is not possible to attend a lesson for the same program at another location or time.

When to Practice

When learning new movement skills, frequent, short, focused practice sessions work best. If you are a newer swimmer, you will be much more successful doing six 30-minute practices a week than you will be doing three 60-minute practices. With most drills, the intensity level is relatively low, so you can schedule short swimming sessions following any of your other non-swimming workouts.

How to Practice

Swimming any stroke is a complex, non-intuitive, whole-body movement art that is best learned in small steps. We use a different progression of drills to learn each stroke. Do not be alarmed by the fact that you will not be doing much *whole-stroke* swimming during the lessons. It is much more important to imprint the correct sequences of movements in your muscle memory, and this is accomplished by slowly and carefully performing drills that focus on various aspects of the stroke. All of the drills that we do, including the most basic ones, are used by expert swimmers on a regular basis. Although the drills are progressive, that does not mean that you should ever stop doing the most basic ones. The best swimmers always return to the fundamentals, and they will tell you that they learn something new every time.

Each drill is an exaggeration of one or more aspects of a stroke. With most drills, you will be given a list of things to focus on (your head position or the extension of your

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leading arm, for example). **Remember to focus on just one thing at a time.** Over time, you will begin to “burn” the correct movement patterns into your muscle memory. To swim efficiently and with flow, all movements must become automatic.

When learning a new stroke, we strongly recommend that you focus mainly on the drills for the current lesson. If you are already swimming the stroke comfortably, you can mix drills with whole-stroke swimming, focusing on incorporating one new habit into your stroke at a time. Drilling for a little bit and then going back to swimming your “old” stroke will only reinforce the old habits and movement patterns that you are trying to change.

When you are swimming the whole stroke, always remain focused on some aspect of technique for that stroke, and let the rest of it flow.

Required Equipment

Goggles and a snug-fitting one-piece bathing suit are required for all programs.

Swim fins are optional but highly recommended. I recommend Aqua Sphere Alpha Fins (which float and help to keep your feet near the surface), or Blue Zoomers (~~not Red Zoomers~~). Required and optional pool tools are described on the following page:

<http://www.breakwatersportstraining.com/equipment.html>

And online sources for equipment can be found on the following page:

<http://www.breakwatersportstraining.com/resources.html>

Weather Cancellations Policy

At the first lesson, please check your contact information (phone number and email address) that was provided to Breakwater Sports on the program roster. In the event of a cancellation due to inclement weather or a pool problem, we will make every effort to notify everybody as soon as the situation is known, by sending an email and calling the phone numbers (if available) listed on the roster. When a lesson is cancelled, the program will be extended by one lesson – usually this means just adding a week to the program.

Lesson Plans Online

Lesson plans are available online from the webpage below. Note that these are constantly under revision:

<http://www.breakwatersportstraining.com/handouts.html>

Questions?

Call or send e-mail to Coach Bill: 978-290-1445

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