

**Initial Video** Following a short warm-up, each swimmer will be filmed underwater from the side. At the end of the lesson the coach will provide a very brief assessment of each swimmer's stroke.

## **Fundamentals of Breathing, Posture and Kicking**

**Breathing:** The instant your face goes into the water, begin exhaling through your nose. When swimming harder you will need to exhale through both your nose and your mouth. Keep exhaling through your nose until it clears the water as you rotate your face to the air. Inhale through your mouth only. Quickly. Keep your breathing pattern as relaxed and regular as possible for the speed you are swimming.

**Bobbing:** Use **Bobs** between lengths to rest, and to practice maintaining a steady breathing pattern. To do a Bob: Hold the wall, take a breath, dip your head below the surface (still holding the wall), and exhale evenly through your nose while relaxing every muscle in your body. Keep your eyes open and watch the bubble stream. It should be even. Repeat three or more times to recover and relax between lengths. Bobs are named for their originator, Bob Busby, former U.S. Olympic coach, who used this breathing/relaxation method with all of his athletes (regardless of whether they were beginners or Olympians).

### **Relaxation and “Rewiring” Exercises**

Perform these exercises to rewire your neuromuscular system for functioning in the aquatic environment. We spend most of the day holding our bodies vertical against the force of gravity, without thinking about it. It's automatic. We need to shut off all of that automatic programming and train our bodies to be relaxed in a horizontal posture, in a fluid. At first, that horizontal posture in a fluid automatically triggers the flight response – that's your natural survival instinct at work. In order to swim well, we need to retrain our bodies to be relaxed in the aquatic environment.

- **Bottom Resting:** Exhale all of your breath. Sink to the bottom and relax. Feel where there is tension body, and let it go. Delay returning to a standing position for as long as possible. Try to quiet your body's natural instinct to flee. Relax.
- **Face-Down Floating:** Start standing in the water. Perform a pelvic tilt by tucking the bottom of your ribcage towards your hips. This should get most of the arch out of your lower back. Extend your head upward, keeping your chin in, trying to flatten out the upper part of your back. Take a deep breath and hold it. Extend both arms overhead, lean your body as a column from your ankles, and float face down. Lean on your chest, so that your body is completely horizontal in the water. Initially you may need to support your feet using a noodle, pull-buoy, or a friend! Feel where the tension is in your body and let it go. The objective is to balance on the surface while remaining as relaxed as possible. When you need to breathe, stand up, take a couple of breaths, and repeat.

## **Posture and Kicking Drills**

These can be done with short fins, but do not kick hard – keep the kick compact and quick. The emphasis for these drills is on good posture and compact kicking.

- **Bench Kicking:** Sit on the edge of a bench or chair, or on top of the wall of the pool, lean back, and practice kicking (in the air) from your hips, keeping your knees straight. Point your toes away from your body. Do this for a few minutes before getting into the water to practice the remaining kicking exercises.
- **Vertical Kicking:** In the deep end of the pool, with your body vertical in the water, arms crossed over your chest and hands on the shoulders, kick from the hips with as little knee bend as possible. Maintain a pelvic tilt and keep your head extended high out of the water. Keep the kick small and breathe comfortably.
- **Back Balance:** Stand facing the end of the lane and get into good swimming posture (pelvic tilt, head extended), arms at sides. Lean back and begin kicking on your back,

- keeping your arms relaxed at your sides. Kick gently from the hips for one length. Thighs and feet should roll the surface. Stop and collect your thoughts at the end of each length.
- **Side Balance:** Kick the entire length balanced on one side with good posture (pelvic tilt and head extended). Keep your lower arm extended, palm down, and your eyes looking straight down at the bottom. Keep your hips and shoulders stacked, with your body always facing the near wall of the pool. That way, you will go down the pool on one side, and return on the other. Rest your upper arm on your side, bending it 90 degrees at the elbow, and pressing that forearm and hand against your belly. To breathe, roll your head onto your extended arm (think of it as a pillow) to bring as little of your face out of the water as necessary to get air. Continue exhaling through your nose until your mouth clears the water, then inhale through your mouth quickly and return your head to the eyes-down position.
  - **Single-Stroke Corkscrew:** Begin in Side Balance (see above), then take a single stroke, stopping both arms at the end of the stroke and rolling all of the way onto your back to breathe. Your opposite hand will now be extended out front. Think of this process as “changing hands” out front. Breathe and get re-balanced on your back. Now rotate onto the side with the extended arm, get in the side balance position on that side, and repeat. You will only be taking a small number of strokes during the length. Do not rush any of these steps – take two breaths while getting rebalanced on your back. Then rotate onto your side and be sure that you are balanced there with good posture before taking another stroke. The objective is to condition your body to maintain good posture at the surface while rolling.

### **Sample Practice Session Following Workout 1**

- **Bottom Float:** Relax on the bottom – get your body *and your mind* into the water.
- **Vertical Kicking:** Five minutes: each minute kick for 45 seconds and rest for 15.
- **Front Float:** Five minutes. At first, use a foam noodle to support your feet. When you can do it, kick away the noodle and remain balanced at the surface. When that becomes comfortable, challenge your balance by moving arms apart and back together, then legs apart and back together. Try to relax every muscle in your body that you are not using to balance in the front float position.
- **Posture and Kicking Drills:** Perform each of the following drills for five minutes. Rest at each wall and get re-focused. The number of yards you complete are not at all important at this point. Retraining your neuromuscular system is what counts:
  - **Back Balance:** Five minutes.
  - **Side Balance:** Five minutes.
  - **Single-Stroke Corkscrew:** Five minutes.

### **Workout Notes Online**

Notes for each workout will be available online from the following webpage. If you have taken a previous program, note that this webpage is new, as these workout notes are changing:

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