

Stroke Worksheet: Backstroke

Kick:

- Small, fast kicks
 - At all times throughout the stroke it is important to keep small fast kicks going
- Long legs
 - Helps them to understand not to bend too much in the middle (e.g. bicycle kicking)
- Keep knees underwater
 - Knees should never break the surface of the water
- Floppy ankles
 - Keep ankles loose and not stiff
- Point your toes
 - If swimmers are having difficulty with keeping their legs straight, tell them to “point their toes”

Pull:

- Body midline
 - Imagine someone drove a post through the center of your skull, going straight through the middle of your body and coming out the other end. That is your MIDLINE, which is a line your arms are NEVER allowed to cross, because then we are pushing ourselves into ‘wiggle swimming’ (a big no-no)
- ‘Thumb out, pinky in’
- ‘Pull at 11 and 1’
 - Imagine you are in the middle of a clock face. When reaching in freestyle and backstroke, you should not reach beyond 11pm and 1am for your pulls. Reaching beyond that will overextend your body and cause over-rotation
- ‘Dry shoulders’
 - When proper rotation is occurring, the entire body below the neck is rotating as ONE BLOCK. Therefore, when proper rotation is occurring, we see each shoulder pop out of the water on each stroke

Breathing:

- COMPLETELY STILL HEAD
 - You should be able to balance a cup of water right on your forehead
- Just because your head is above water doesn’t mean you can breathe whenever you want—it should be a REGULAR PATTERN

Drills:

- Out-of-water kicking demonstration
 - Have swimmers lie on their backs with their hands under their rear end. Hold two kickboards around their legs: one below the knees and one over their ankles. Have them keep their legs straight and kick without hitting a board.
 - Helps teach the kicking shape
- Out-of-water pulling with resistance
 - Push back against palm of swimmer's hand when they're modeling the pull out of water
 - Helps teach the pulling pattern
- One-arm drill
 - One arm down at side, the other pulling. Make sure they are not wiggling down the lane—a wiggling swimmer is pulling left-and-right and not up-and-down, which is the point of the drill
 - Fix midline crossing problem
- Corkscrew drill
 - Arms at sides, kicking with rotation WHILE KEEPING HEAD STILL
 - Works on rotation
- 12 kick/1 pull
 - Swim backstroke, but 1 pull per 12 kicks
 - Work on keeping head still while body rotates
- 12 kick/3 pull
 - Same as above with added pulls
 - Work on rotation
- Stroke count drills
 - Exactly what it sounds like—counting strokes per lap
 - Work on reaching, work on EFFICIENCY
 - Make sure not to OVERREACH
- Fists drill
 - Swim normal stroke but with fists
 - Work on forearm/catch
 - This will force the swimmer to use their entire arm rather than just their hand
- Head still drill
 - Place something on the forehead and try not to let it fall off
 - Balance and rotation