

TNYA Core Freestyle Drills

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Side Kicking (#1)

This is the base position that several other drills will start with. The swimmer is rolled completely onto the right side. The right arm is fully extended out in front, hand near the surface. Head should be looking straight down at the bottom of the pool, skull in line with spine, water flowing over the back of the head. Left shoulder should be exposed to the air. Balance on the short axis so that the left hip is also exposed to the air. Breathe by rotating the head to the side as little as possible. The kick should be very small, fast and gentle. The goal is NOT speed. Rather, the idea is to maintain perfect body position and balance. This should be done on the left side as well.

Side Kicking with stroke (#2)

Advancing the drill, take 16 kicks and then one stroke, rotating over to the other side. The head should remain perfectly still throughout the rotation. Swimmers must learn to maintain balance, such that the hips never drop. Do this with 16, 14, 12, 10, 8, 6 kicks...working down to regular freestyle. This is a great way to get into a rhythm and promote full rotation along the long axis.

Sky Reaches (new)

Starting in the side kicking position, recover one arm with a bent elbow and touch the armpit. Pause. Reaching directly up to the sky. The other arm should remain extended out in front. Pause. Touch the elbow again. Continue through the stroke and repeat with the other arm. If beginning swimmers have trouble keeping their hips high throughout the full motion, simply do this drill with a pause after touching the armpit.

Zipper Stroke (new)

Swim freestyle. As the arm recovers, run the thumb up along the side of the torso, pass through and touch the armpit, then continue extending out of the water with fingertips dragging on the surface. This forces full rotation, high elbows, and relaxed hands and forearms.

Pull without Pull Buoy (new)

Pull freestyle without a pull buoy. In order to prevent accidental kicking, the feet can be tied together, or swimmers can hold a hand paddle between their feet. This forces the swimmer to learn how to balance on the short axis. Otherwise, their hips will quickly sink without a kick to hold them up.

Underwater Free (#24)

Swim freestyle underwater, with the recovering phase under the body. Focus on hand acceleration and feel for the water.

Catch-Up (#17)

Pull one arm at a time, while the non-pulling around remains extended out front. The second arm does not start its pull until the first one completes the entry. This helps maximize distance per stroke and encourages front-quadrant swimming.

Three Stroke Glide (#29)

Take 3 explosive strokes. On the final stroke, lunge into the side glide position. Glide as far as possible while maintaining good balance. Top arm and hip should be exposed to the air.

Evolution Drill (modification of #35)

Take swimmers through the evolutionary process of freestyle. The first phase is dog paddle. Now introduce the idea of long axis rotation: with the head up, stroke the hands all the way to front and all the way to back, rolling the hips back and forth, recovering underwater. Now introduce the idea of minimizing water resistance by swimming "Tarzan" stroke: head up freestyle, above water recovery. Finally, introduce the idea of balancing on the short axis and swimming horizontally: regular freestyle with head down in the water.

Additional Notes:

Freestyle, is swum on the side, not the front. Power is generated through rotation of the hips and shoulders.

Balance on the short axis in order to keep hips at the surface of the water. Press the T in order to raise the hips. Butt (hips) should be exposed to the air. As the swimmer rotates from side to side, the focal point of the T shifts from one armpit to the other.

The head should never move, while the rest of the body rotates around it. Water should flow over the back of the head. The water line should not be at the forehead, but rather at the top of the head.

The Pull: The hand enters at about the shoulder. Watch out for cross over. Throughout the pull, the right hand should never cross to the left side, not should the left cross to the right side. Following entry and a healthy glide, a catch is made. Bend the elbow and swing the forearm downward. More advanced swimmers will be able to work on a more pronounced catch. After the catch, the pull is quite simple: straight down the body. Make sure that the elbow is higher than the hand throughout the entire pull. If the elbow drops lower than the hand, the swimmer will slice through the water without power. Keep the hand in the

“power zone,” a few inches from the body...don't pull too deep. The elbow leads the recovery (remember, elbow always higher than hand). As the arm recovers forward, the elbow should be bent and the forearm should be limp and relaxed – no muscles engaged. Also, the swimmer should have a limp wrist. Think relaxed. Encourage front quadrant swimming. The recovering arm should catch-up most of the way before the other arm starts its pull. Stay long in the water for as long as possible.

Finally, remember that the power comes from the core. The arms are merely levers. They literally provide leverage for the power generated from the core.