

THE BAC VIEWPOINT

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THE FIFTH STROKE

By Jeff Lee

Underwater dolphin kicks are often now called our “fifth stroke” in swimming. It is also considered the fastest way to swim.

David Berkoff introduced underwater swimming and caused rules to change. Underwater for 15m was and still is considered the Berkoff Rule. He took the idea to Olympic golds in 1988. Michael Phelps was a master at underwater swimming, and we know what kind of success he had.

Mastering the “fifth stroke” is difficult but also important. Improving dolphin kicks can drastically improve a swimmer’s practices and meet results. Here are some tips to swim like a fish:

Use your body! Most swimmers think kicking involves just their legs. Wrong!! You should be engaging your whole body as you kick, which leads us to dolphin kicks.

Some of the fastest parts of a race are immediately after a turn when swimmers push off the wall. Typically, swimmers will kick to maintain speed off the wall.



To speed up the underwaters off the wall dolphin kicks should be used because they involve the whole body. Flutter kicks are quicker, but dolphin kicks are more powerful.

Keep the core tight. This will keep the shoulders still while the swimmer propels oneself with the bottom half of their body. Also, keep the arms still. As a swimmer pushes off the wall, the stomach should be tightened and back straight. Also, focus on keeping the kick small. Tightening the core will eliminate any up and down body movement and it will move your body directly forward.

Practice on your back. Dolphin kicks are easier on your back. It helps with keeping your core tighter while maintaining forward movement.

Non-stop movement. It should be fluid movement, not stop-and-go jerky movement that is caused by a pause at the end of the down kick.

(cont. Pg2)

Missed out on BAC/BLA Face Masks?

You can still get them!! E-mail Paula at swimlaughgrow@yahoo.com or Jeff at MNFECDUDAS@aol.com. Only a few left so hurry!! Donations will be accept on delivery.



MORE ON PG2.....

Little Things Part 4 Starts by Paula Lee

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LITTLE THINGS part 4 STARTS

by Paula Lee



Starts are a quick and seemingly small part of your race. But it's a "little thing" that can be huge, especially if it's only a 50! As you read, remember your own flexibility and strength will determine your individual start, and you will put your own signature on the start of your race.

Freestyle, Breaststroke and Butterfly Start

The official's whistle blows and you're up on the blocks. How can you make your start the Best! Let's start with stepping on the block and finding your ready position. Is the block dry? Are your feet dry? These are little things to remember so you don't slip on your start. Your ready position should be a position where you place your feet and stand relaxed and bent over.

First let's work on your foot placement. Think of a running track start.

Your feet should be one in front of the other, in line with your hips with both feet pointing forward. Try jumping in the air with your feet in a similar position as what you will use on the blocks. Keep trying different stances, experimenting with your right and left foot forward.

How far apart are your feet to get the best jump? Once you have the best position of your feet, think about jumping straight up or if you have a place you can softly land practice your start jumping onto pillows or your bed. (Check with your parents first!)

When the official blows the next whistle, you should move into your starting position, the position you'll hold until you start. You have placed your feet already when you found your ready position. Now grab the front of the block. A "little thing" to remember is to keep your fingers together, including your thumbs. Keep your head down. It's okay to close your eyes; it might help you relax.

When you hear that beep, you should explode off the block. Use those arms to reach forward, trying to flatten your back and pushing with your feet into your best streamline possible. (cont Pg3)

FIFTH STROKE (cont. Pg1)

As soon as the feet finish the down kick they should be starting the up kick. Swimmers should feel a flow to the kick.

Speed up the kick by making it quicker, not bigger. The kick should be a blur because it is so fast. Large, slow dolphin kicks displace too much water and cause more undesired up and down motion with the body with a lot of effort.

Play around with the kick. Make it too big and make it really small. Find out what size kick will fit your body and makes you feel the fastest.



BLUEPRINT SWIM CAMP – Positive Mental Training

by Catie Chang

I spent a lot of time over the past week watching Facebook Live video sessions from coaches all over the country on topics most relevant to swimming on the Blueprint Swim Camp which was featured on line all week. This swim camp was not only geared toward coaches, but parents and athletes as well. There were so many takeaways from this camp that it is hard to fit all of it into one article.

As coaches, we are constantly learning new information on technique, how to better analyze a stroke, dryland training, nutrition, mental training and many more aspects of swimming.

This week, I want to focus on the sports psychology session that I watched. This was a great session to watch because it gave a new perspective on how to change your mindset and easy ways to start thinking about that now before we get back in the water.

When you think about swimming, there are many components to the training that leads up to the competition phase. There is the dryland aspect, in-water training, sleep/rest/recovery, and your mental training/mindset.

This mental training or mindset that you have as an athlete is important in both training and competition. You have to be aware of how your thinking can impact your performance. If you have a negative mindset, you will probably not be successful in completing what you are attempting to achieve. If you approach it with a positive mindset of "you can do it/will do it", you will be more likely to succeed. The positive mentality will prevail compared to the negative one. You train so much physically, focusing on the specific technical details and on doing

the hard work in the pool, but you also need to train your mind to be stronger to achieve more in the sport. This can be done daily whether you are doing it for a couple of minutes a day or once a week, there is some benefit that will impact your overall self-performance and positive mentality in the things you do. From the session, I learned that visualizing races or positive outcomes helps improve your performance. You can visualize your races or in water training right now while we are not in the water. (cont. Pg3)

Little Things (cont. Pg2)

Let's go back a bit before your start. Do you know what job your legs have? Did you know that it's your back leg that keeps you straight off your start and your front leg has the power?

This could help in deciding which leg is forward will work best for you. Your back leg can also help your start by lifting up, which will help you lift your hips and get out over the water. Your main objective should be to try to get out over the water and let gravity pull you down. You should not dive into the water. Instead try to get out over the water in a horizontal position and control your entry.

The entry should be a single-point entry. This means you should enter the water at an angle, and your body follows your hands. Something like this: Hands, shoulders, waist, hips, legs, all going through the same imaginary hole in the water.

If a start is done correctly there is very little splash. How much splash do you make on your start? Once underwater it is the same as a turn with a pullout or dolphin kick to the surface.

Relay Start

Now you have mastered the grab start, what do you change when doing a relay start when grabbing the block is not an option? The relay start, although similar, is done from a standing track position with a small arm swing. One "little thing" to remember when doing this start is to stay low, knees bent and relaxed eyes on the swimmer in the water. Many swimmers will follow the swimmer with their hands to get the rhythm and speed of the swimmer in the water. With this action you can follow them into the wall which will bring you to a good spot to do a small circle with your arms and into your start.

Backstroke Start

Backstroke start is a little different, since you're in the water for your start. Your ready position should still be relaxed with both feet placed on the wall under the surface of the water. A "little thing" to think about is to place one foot a little lower than the other, like a track start on the blocks. Whistle blows and into your starting tuck position, hips tucked in, back straight, eyes forward, pulling yourself into the wall and up out of the water slightly. When the beep sounds, just like your block start you should explode off the wall, pushing up out of the water throwing your head back into a back-arching dive to enter the water. Again, you are looking to enter the water at an angle in a single point entry.

In Summary

Competitive starts are about putting together all of the "little things" at the same time, which will get better with practice. By practicing all of the "little things," these techniques and motions, they become a part of the swimmer's muscle memory. Then when the swimmer enters a race they can put their efforts into racing and do not have to think so much about their start.

Finally, the process of learning the start and perfecting technique is an ongoing challenge of each swimmer no matter how talented they become in the sport.

Learning the basics and little things goes a long way in each swimmer's journey with the sport of swimming.

Blueprint Swim Camp (cont Pg2)

This will significantly improve your training later on because while you are visualizing this, you are also in a way activating your muscles. It sounds silly, but you are preparing and rehearsing your body for the work that is to be done later. You are also taking a step further to enhance your swimming by training your mind to handle different situations when it comes to competition.

Think about losing your goggles at the start of an event. How would you react? You still have to keep swimming, but with visualization training, you can start to think about those "what if" scenarios and how you would better handle them in the future. If you have thought through all the scenarios possible, if something happens during a race, you will not be surprised but able to solely focus on your race without the other distractions. This will help prepare you for a whole new level of racing.

The idea of visualization/mental training allows you to build confidence in yourself because you are thinking about being successful and achieving your goals. As an athlete, confidence is super important. You have to step up to the blocks with confidence and know that all the work you did before this will just happen (muscle memory) and you can just swim. If you have a positive mindset before swimming, you will perform based on that. How you feel or perceive yourself during practice, everyday life and during a competition is how you will perform in the end.

You need to focus on the positive, the confidence and believe in that to perform based on how you perceive yourself. If you are saying that you are an amazing swimmer, and you can complete this set or get your goal time, it is possible. If there is any sort of doubt, then it probably won't happen because something is holding you back: that something is you. You have to be confident and believe in yourself and what you have done to be more successful.

A positive mindset is so important and can change your overall mood instantly. By thinking about the positives, visualizing the outcomes, distractions, the "what ifs," you can then be more successful because you know what to do if any of those things actually happen. You are more able to cope with those situations without being stressed out by the unknowns but can find your way through it.

You have to have self-confidence. The more positive your perception of yourself, the better. Seeing yourself at a higher level will allow you to perform at a higher level.

Think about pushing yourself beyond what you think is possible and how you can be better. Having increased confidence and motivation toward the sport is great because you are not doubting yourself or second-guessing what you are doing. You are more confident and able to focus on what is at hand, but handle it better with confidence and positivity to be successful in all aspects of your life.

In the end, your swimming will be greatly impacted in a positive way, allowing you to better understand yourself as a swimmer, build your confidence and prepare yourself so that little things don't take you off course from what your ultimate goals are.

Daily Activity:

- Write down 10 characteristics that the greatest athletes possess
- Pick 3 of those traits that you feel are a weakness
- Change those 3 words into an "I am" sentence (EXAMPLE: I am a dedicated swimmer who is confident)
- Write that sentence daily for a week and see the impact it has on you
- To go further, you can write it down for a month (challenge yourself!), then add your thoughts/feelings related to that sentence each day
- GOAL: Eventually you may find yourself believing this positive affirmation! This will help your swimming immensely in the long run by giving you a positive mentality and increased confidence in what your abilities are versus what they are not!