



STROKES & TURNS RULES

STROKES AS DESCRIBED BY SWIMMING CANADA

<https://swimming.ca/content/uploads/2015/05/judge-of-strokes-inspector-of-turns-clinic-21oct2015.pdf>

SW 5 – FREESTYLE

- SW 5.1 Freestyle means that in an event so designated the swimmer may swim any style, except that in individual medley or medley relay events, freestyle means any style other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly.
- SW 5.2 Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall upon completion of each length and at the finish.
- SW 5.3 Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 metres after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface.

FREESTYLE: Start Mechanics

- Any stroke or combination of strokes may be used, so during the start any combination may be seen. That being said, it is very rare to see swimmers pursue anything but 'front crawl'.
- Regardless of 'stroke' – in an event designated as freestyle the head must break the surface by the 15m mark.

FREESTYLE: Swim Mechanics

- Any stroke or combination of strokes (including dog paddle) may be used. Freestyle is 'free style' – anything goes including doing other strokes during the race and even changing strokes in the middle of the race.

FREESTYLE: Turn / Finish Mechanics

- Swimmers may turn in any manner they want as long as they touch the wall at the end of each length of the race.
- A swimmer can go back and "save themselves" if they miss the touch during a turn.
- The infraction for missing the wall is not "officially" called until the swimmer touches the opposite end of the pool from the wall that they missed.
- The touch at the finish may be made with any part of the body.

SW 6 - BACKSTROKE

- SW 6.1 Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.
- SW 6.2 When a backstroke ledge is being used, each inspector at the starting end shall install and remove the ledge after the start.
- SW 6.3 At the signal for starting and after turning the swimmer shall push off and swim upon his back throughout the race except when executing a turn as set forth in SW 6.5. The normal position on the back can include a roll movement of the body up to, but not including 90 degrees from horizontal. The position of the head is not relevant.
- SW 6.4 Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race. It is permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, and for a distance of not more than 15 metres after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.
- SW 6.5 When executing the turn there must be a touch of the wall with some part of the swimmer's body in his/her respective lane. During the turn the shoulders may be turned over the vertical to the breast after which an immediate continuous single arm pull or immediate continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to the position on the back upon leaving the wall.
- SW 6.6 Upon the finish of the race the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back in his/her respective lane. Legal Illegal Legal

BACKSTROKE: Start Mechanics

- Some swimmers may kick out from the start on their side. This is legal but the swimmer must remain past vertical toward the back during this portion of the race.

BACKSTROKE: Swim Mechanics

- Very simple – the swimmer may swim in any manner they choose as long as they remain on their back and break the surface of the water throughout the race.

BACKSTROKE: Turn Mechanics

- There are 3 possible turns you may see while judging a backstroke turn:
 1. The swimmer may touch the wall while on their back and then leave the wall on their back;
 2. The swimmer may turn onto their breast and be right at the wall and unable to initiate a flip turn. This is a defensive turn where they may grab the wall or gutter immediately and then leave the wall on their back again;
 3. The swimmer may roll onto their breast, immediately begin a single (or simultaneous double) arm pull following which the swimmer must initiate their turn and leave the wall again on their back.

BACKSTROKE: Finish Mechanics

- A swimmer may swim in any manner desired while remaining on their back and **MUST** remain on their back until the finish of the race.

SW 7 – BREASTSTROKE

- SW 7.1 After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs during which the swimmer may be submerged. At any time prior to the first Breaststroke kick after the start and after each turn a single butterfly kick is permitted.
- SW 7.2 From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. From the start and throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
- SW 7.3 The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.
- SW 7.4 During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head must break the surface of the water. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke. All movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
- SW 7.5 The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except as in SW 7.1. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.
- SW 7.6 At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

BREASTSTROKE: Stroke Mechanics

- The stroke is a cyclical arm pull and leg kick with the head breaking the surface of the water on each cycle, except at each turn and the finish of the race, where an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted.
- The swimmer may only use the breaststroke kick and the feet must be turned outward during the propulsive portion.
- The elbows must not break the surface of the water.
- The swimmer must remain on their breast.

BREASTSTROKE: Turn/Finish Mechanics

- Two hand simultaneous touch.
- Must remain on breast until touch.
- Elbows may break the surface of the water on the final stroke before the turn and the final stroke at the finish.

SW 8 - BUTTERFLY

- SW 8.1 From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. Under water kicking on the side is allowed. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time, except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall.
- SW 8.2 Both arms shall be brought forward simultaneously over the water and brought backward simultaneously under the water through-out the race, subject to SW 8.5.
- SW 8.3 All up and down movements of the legs must be simultaneous. The legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.
- SW 8.4 At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously, at, above or below the water surface.
- SW 8.5 At the start and at turns, a swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks and one arm pull under the water, which must bring him to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 metres after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish.

BUTTERFLY: Start Mechanics

- Swimmers usually remain on their breast with hands extended forward, kicking in a butterfly-type kick.
- Some swimmers may kick-out on their side – this is legal as long as the swimmer remains past vertical towards the breast.
- The swimmer's first arm pull must bring them to the surface

BUTTERFLY: Stroke Mechanics

- The stroke requires over the water recovery of the arms.
- The swimmer must use a butterfly kick with no scissors, breaststroke or flutter kick movement.
- Rounding motion of the feet is allowed as long as the toes are pointed backward or inward.
- One foot may be higher than the other as long as the feet do not alternate position

BUTTERFLY: Turn/Finish Mechanics

- Two hand simultaneous touch – as in breaststroke – separated hands.
- Must remain on breast until touch.
- No underwater recovery.

SW 9 – MEDLEY SWIMMING

- SW 9.1 In individual medley events, the swimmer covers the four swimming strokes in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. Each of the strokes must cover one quarter (1/4) of the distance.
- SW 9.2 In medley relay events, swimmers will cover the four swimming strokes in the following order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle.
- SW 9.3 Each section must be finished in accordance with the rule which applies to the stroke concerned.

MEDLEY: Start Mechanics • The start mechanics are the same as outlined for butterfly

MEDLEY: Swim Mechanics

- The key stroke mechanics for Medley swimming are the same as outlined for each stroke.

MEDLEY: Turn/Finish Mechanics

- The key turn / finish mechanics for Medley swimming are the same as outlined for each stroke.

SW 10 – THE RACE

- SW 10.3 The swimmer must remain and finish the race in the same lane in which he/she started.
- SW 10.4 In all events, a swimmer when turning shall make physical contact with the end of the pool or course. The turn must be made from the wall, and it is not permitted to take a stride or step from the bottom of the pool.
- SW 10.5 Standing on the bottom during freestyle events or during the freestyle portion of medley events shall not disqualify a swimmer, but he shall not walk.
- SW 10.6 Pulling on the lane rope is not allowed.
- SW 10.7 Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across another lane or otherwise interfering shall disqualify the offender.
- SW 10.11 In relay events, the team of a swimmer whose feet lose touch with the starting platform before the preceding team-mate touches the wall shall be disqualified