

# Skill & Topic Library

## 6 / STROKE MECHANICS

### Teaching This Stage

This stage refines stroke technique on all major competitive strokes and encourages swimming as part of a healthy lifestyle. As you work with students at this stage, focus on the following important milestones:

- Developing endurance in the competitive strokes
- Developing skills related to competitive swimming like flip turns
- Enhancing skills and building endurance in deep water

### Positively Impacting Students

Remember, as a cause-driven leader at the Y, you have an opportunity to positively impact the students you work with. In addition to developing the recommended skills for all to have around water, the related activities and safety and character topics in this library help foster the following:

 Achievement

 Relationships

 Belonging

### Keeping Students Safe

You also have a responsibility to keep students safe as they explore the aquatic environment. In addition to a thorough understanding of aquatic safety, you have a responsibility to adhere to the child abuse prevention best practices included in your Y's policies and procedures. If you suspect a student has been abused or if you see abuse happen, including sexual abuse, please follow the mandated reporter policies in your state.

### Using This Library

The skill progressions in this library help you break swimming skills down into easy-to-learn steps, allowing students to achieve more, faster. The activities in this library give students a chance to practice the skills. You can choose activities based on the needs of your Y and your students.

We define parent broadly to include all adults with primary responsibility for raising children, including biological parents, adoptive parents, guardians, stepparents, grandparents, or any other type of parenting relationship.



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# Greeting

## SETTING EXPECTATIONS

### Ask Permission

To teach the habit of asking permission before getting into the water, have students repeat the phrase “Before I get into the pool, I must always ask first.” This is an IMPORTANT rule. Then have students ask their parents or you, if their parents aren’t available, for permission. Reinforce that they should always have someone watching them around water.

### Pool Rules

Ask students to list the rules they should follow at a public pool and why they think the rules are in place:

- Walk. Don’t run.
- Play safely. No pushing or rough play.
- Nonswimmers are allowed in shallow water only (i.e., water that comes only to the person’s armpits).
- All youth must take a safety swim test and wear a colored safety band at the pool.
- Use pool lifelines for temporary support only.
- Holding your breath and swimming underwater for long distances is not allowed.
- Diving is allowed only in marked areas.
- Diving from the deck is allowed only where the water is more than nine feet deep.

- Lifeguard towers are for lifeguard use only.
- Keep the area around the lifeguard tower clear.
- Emergency equipment is for lifeguard use only.
- [Any pool rules specific to your facility.]

### Pool Tour

Take students on a tour of the pool:

- Point out where the water depth changes from shallow to deep.
- Identify the lifeline(s). Explain that, to swim in the deep area, children must pass a safety swim test.
- Identify the lifeguard(s). Explain that when a lifeguard blows his or her whistle, everyone in the pool should turn, look, and listen to the lifeguard’s instructions.
- Review posted pool rules. Explain rules are designed to keep people safe so everyone can have fun.

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

### Animal Names

Have students pick an animal that starts with the letter of their first name, for example, Dolphin Dion. Use the animal names throughout the session.

**Variation:** Use food, places, or an adjective.

### Name Dance

Have students choose a movement for each syllable of their name. For example, Perry’s name has two syllables, so he might do a head nod for “Per” and a hip shake for “ry.” Once Perry has demonstrated the movement(s) while saying his name, the whole group does it. Go around the group until every student has created his or her own name dance.

### Name Game

Have students line up along the wall. Go down the line pointing to each student and singing the following:

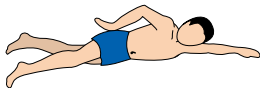
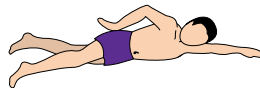
Names, names, what’s in a name? I’ve got a name,  
you’ve got a name. What’s your name?

The student says his or her name. Have the group repeat the name so everyone becomes familiar with everyone else’s name. Repeat for all students.

### Name Toss

Have students stand in a circle. One person begins by saying the name of another student and one thing he or she likes about that student before tossing a ball to him or her. That student says the name of a different student, what he or she likes about that student, then tosses the ball to him or her. Repeat until everyone has had a turn.

# Skill / Endurance

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Endurance, any stroke or combination of strokes, 25 yd.</b> Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Endurance, any stroke or combination of strokes, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Endurance, any stroke or combination of strokes, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Endurance, any stroke or combination of strokes, 100 yd.</b> Build to 100 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Endurance, any stroke or combination of strokes, 150 yd.</b> Build to 150 yd.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### Balloon Relay **S A**

Divide students into teams. Have half of each team line up on the opposite side of the pool. Give the first person on each team a blown-up balloon. On your signal, students push the balloon with nose, cheeks, or forehead while swimming across the pool to a teammate on the other side of the pool, who swims it back. The relay continues until all members of each team finish.

### Battleship **S A**

Have students imagine that the pool is a battleship. The deep end is the bow of the ship, the shallow end the stern, the left side as you face the bow is port, and the right side as you face the bow is starboard. Tell students that you will say one of these directions and they should respond by swimming to that side and sitting on or touching the pool edge. For instance, if you say "Port," students swim to the left side of the pool.

### Carp & Cranes **S A**

Mark off a square or rectangular playing area in the pool with a lane line dividing the area in half at the center. Mark end lines clearly, as they will serve as home bases for the teams. Divide students into two equal teams and have them line up along the lane line facing each other, with the end lines behind them. Designate one team carps and the other team cranes. When you call out "Carp" or "Cranes," that team tries to catch members of the opposing team before they can reach the safety of

their end line. The captured members join the other team. The team with the most players at the end of play wins.

### Forty Ways **S A**

Have students line up at one end (or at the side) of the pool. Have the first student in line swim across the pool using a stroke of his or her own choice. The second student then swims across using a different stroke, and so on until all students have gone. Any innovative way to move through the water is acceptable. If you play for more than one round, change the order of the students for each round.

### Newspaper Relay **S A**

Divide students into teams. Have half of each team line up on the opposite side of the pool in waist-deep to over-the-head water. Give the first student on each team a newspaper page. Tell the student to swim a set distance on back without getting the page wet and then hand the paper over to a teammate on the other side of the pool.

### Noodle Relay **S A**

Divide students into teams. Have half of each team line up on the opposite side of the pool. The relay consists of three heats, with each person on the team swimming across the pool three times, switching off to a teammate on the other side of the pool between lengths. In the first heat, everyone sits on a pool noodle. In the second heat, everyone lies on their stomachs on a pool noodle. In the last heat, everyone pulls the pool noodle across the pool.

### Obstacle Course **S A**

Create an obstacle course in waist-deep to over-the-head water (depending on students' skill level) using some of the following equipment: diving bricks, kickboards, buoyed lines, rope, large plastic hoops, mats, poker chips, buckets, balls, or other pool equipment, and a stopwatch or a clock that times to the second. Specify which skills you want students to use in different parts of the course in order to provide skill-specific practice. Students first try to swim through the course without stopping, then swim through for time.




### Relay Races **S A**

Divide students into teams of equal ability and have them race across the pool. As students finish, they exit the pool and line up. The first team to line up gets a round of applause. The other team(s) gets big smiles and words of encouragement.

#### Variations:

- Bob across the pool.
- Swim backward across the pool.
- Swim on back across the pool.
- Let students make up their own variation.

# Skill / Front Crawl

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Front crawl, rotary breathing, 15 yd.</b> See 5 / Stroke Development.</p> <p><b>2 Front glide, with flutter kick, 25 yd.</b> See 5 / Stroke Development.</p> <p><b>3 Front glide, rotary breathing, 25 yd.</b> Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>4 Front crawl, bent-arm recovery, 25 yd.</b> Same as progression 3, but during arm recovery, immediately lift elbow high, fingertips stay close to body and surface. Build to 25 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Front crawl, bent-arm recovery, 25 yd.</b> Launch into front glide with flutter kick, alternating arms. During arm recovery, immediately lift elbow high, fingertips stay close to body and surface. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Front glide, with flutter kick, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Front glide, rotary breathing, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>4 Flip turn</b> In chest-deep water, practice flipping forward.</p> <p><b>5 Front crawl, flip turn, 50 yd.</b> Perform front crawl. When nearing wall, tuck chin and somersault, curling legs tightly into body. When upside down, push hard with feet off wall and twist body to front. Build to 50 yd.</p>	<p> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>



## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Kick With Flotation **S A**

Have students flutter kick on their fronts with a kickboard or other flotation device. Ask them to focus on kicking from the hip.

#### Vertical Flutter Kick **S A**

Have students flutter kick, vertically, in deep water. They can begin with a flotation device if needed.

### ARMS

#### Catch-Up Drill **S A**

Have students begin in a streamlined position on their fronts. As they do a full pull with one arm, the other arm stays in streamlined position. When the first arm comes to meet the second arm, the second arm begins to pull. Have students practice at least five kicks per arm pull.

#### Chicken-Wing Drill **S A**

Have students perform front crawl. When their arms begin the recovery, have them bring their thumbs up and tuck them into their armpits so their upper bodies are propelled by the “wings” created by the forearms. Tell them to keep their arms in a V shape. Explain that the feeling of having their elbows bent severely is the same feeling they want to have during arm recovery.

**Instructor note:** Use this drill to help correct a persistent windmill-type stroke. Have students swim

close to the wall. They will either bend their elbow or hit their hand on the wall.

#### Fingertip-Drag Drill **S A**

To reinforce high-elbow recovery, have students practice pulling their thumbs to their sides and dragging their fingertips on the water until they extend out in front for the pull.

#### Fist Drill **S A**

Have students perform front crawl with closed hands or holding tennis balls. Have them practice keeping their bodies balanced and feeling the forearm in the stroke.

#### One-Arm Drill **S A**

Have students put one arm in front and the other at their sides. Have students perform one-arm front crawl for four to eight strokes, then repeat on the other side. Ask them to focus on arm pull and recovery.

#### Pull-Buoy Swim **S A**

Have students, particularly those who can't float or who have a weak flutter kick, perform front crawl with a pull buoy between their legs to provide additional buoyancy, which minimizes kick action and emphasizes arm action.

#### Shark-Fins Drill **S A**

During front crawl, have students pretend to make shark fins with their arms. Ask them to practice putting their elbows in first on the recovery.

#### Throw-It-Away Drill **S A**

Have students perform front crawl, pretending they have a weight in their hands. After they complete the pull, tell them to throw the “weight” out of the water.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

#### Minimum Number of Strokes **S A**

Have students perform front crawl across the pool and count the number of strokes it takes them to get to the other end. Let them rest, then repeat the swim. Encourage them to make it across with fewer strokes on the second length.




#### Side-Glide Drill **S A**

Have students begin in a streamlined position, count three kicks, then body roll to the side as one arm drops to the hip and the other remains extended. Have students count for three to eight kicks before rolling to the other side, then repeat the entire series.

#### Thumb-Touch Drill **S A**

Have students perform front crawl. During the pull, have them touch their thumbs to their thighs before overarm recovery.

# Skill / Back Crawl

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Back crawl, 15 yd.</b> Launch into back glide with flutter kick. Keep hands straight and in line with shoulders as they enter water smoothly while body rolls. Little finger enters water first. Alternate arms. Build to 15 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Back glide, with flutter kick, 25 yd.</b> Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Back crawl, pull, 25 yd.</b> Launch into back glide with flutter kick. Keep hands straight and in line with shoulders as they enter water smoothly while body rolls. Little finger enters water first. Pull is continuous. Alternate arms. Build to 25 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Back crawl, pull, 25 yd.</b> Launch into back glide with flutter kick. Keep hands straight and in line with shoulders as they enter water smoothly while body rolls. Little finger enters water first. Pull is continuous. Alternate arms. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Back glide, with flutter kick, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Flip turn</b> In chest-deep water, practice flipping forward.</p> <p><b>4 Back crawl, pull &amp; flip turn, 50 yd.</b> Perform back crawl. When nearing wall, flip onto front, tuck chin, and somersault, curling legs tightly into body. When upside down, push hard with feet off wall and stay on back. Build to 50 yd.</p>	<p> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Back-Fin Kick **S A**

Have students flutter kick on their backs using flippers. Flippers force the kick to come from the hip.

**Variation:** Have students hold their arms in a streamlined position or at their sides, or perform arm action.

#### Back Kick With Kickboard **S A**

Have students hold kickboards to their chests and practice flutter kick on their backs.

### ARMS

#### 30-60-90 Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl by lifting one arm straight from the leg to 30 degrees, then moving it back to their sides. Have them lift the same arm to 60 degrees and back, then to 90 degrees and back. Finally, have them lift the arm all the way around and back to their sides (full back-crawl pull). Repeat with the other arm.

#### Bent-Arm Pull Using Rope **S A**

Have students swim on their backs next to the lane rope. Ask them to reach with the arm closest to the lane, grab the lane rope, and pull it to complete an arm pull. The other arm remains at the hip. Repeat on the other side on the return length.

#### Double-Arm Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl using both arms simultaneously with a flutter or dolphin kick. Have them bend the elbows and work on shoulder flexibility.

#### Little-Finger-First Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl, putting their little fingers into the water first on entry (i.e., thumb out, and little finger in).

#### Sailboat Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl. Tell them to begin the pull with their thumbs up. Have them stop their arms at the midpoint (90 degrees), pointing their arms straight up like the mast of a sail, then return their arms to their sides. Alternate arms.

#### Stop-&-Go Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl by lifting one arm straight from the leg to 90 degrees, then moving it back to their sides.

#### Touch-Down Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl, keeping one arm at their hips while the other arm completes its pull and recovery, catching up to the second arm. Repeat with the second arm.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

#### Changeover Drill **S A**

Have students perform seven strokes of front crawl, then flip over and swim seven strokes of back crawl.

#### Goggle Drill **S A**

Have students perform back crawl with their goggles on their foreheads, forcing them to swim without moving their heads so their goggles do not slip off.

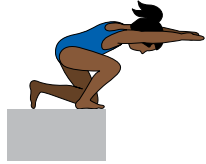
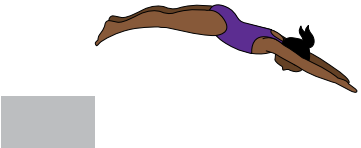
#### Kick-Switch Drill **S A**

Have students perform back glide and flutter kick with one arm in a streamlined position. Have them kick three to eight times before switching arms and repeating. Have students work to move side to side during the body roll as they reach back with one arm and then the other.

#### Shoulder-Roll Drill **S A**

Have students kick on back in a streamlined position, with their hands at their sides and their palms down. Have them do three to eight kicks while rotating to the side and lifting their opposite shoulders. Repeat on the other side.

# Skill / Dive

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Dive, sitting</b> See 5 / Stroke Development.</p> <p><b>2 Dive, kneeling, over object</b> Kneel on edge of deep end with one knee on pool deck and the other knee bent, arms in a streamlined position. Instructor holds object (pool noodle) to dive over. Bend at waist and touch hands to surface of water, fingers pointing toward bottom. Lean and slide into water, hands and head first.</p> <p><b>3 Dive, kneeling</b> Same as progression 2, without object.</p>	 <p><b>1 Dive, kneeling</b> Kneel on edge of deep end with one knee on pool deck and the other knee bent, arms in a streamlined position. Bend at waist and touch hands to surface of water, fingers pointing toward bottom. Lean and slide into water, hands and head first.</p> <p><b>2 Dive, standing, over object</b> Stand on edge of deep end, toes on edge of pool deck, arms in a streamlined position. Instructor holds object (pool noodle) to dive over. Bend at waist and point hands toward surface of water, fingers pointing toward bottom. Lean and slide into water, hands and head first.</p> <p><b>3 Dive, standing</b> Same as progression 2, without object.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### Chop, Chop, Timber **S** **A**

Have students sit on the side of the pool and curl up in a little ball (like a seed). “Water” the students with a watering can, or by sprinkling or splashing water on them. Encourage students to stand up and “grow” when they get wet. “Chop” the students one at a time by lightly tapping at their shins and having them dive into the water.

### Diving Contest **S** **A**

Run a diving contest. Give “awards” to students for things like smallest splash, straightest dive, silliest dive, etc. Make sure students stay safe when they dive; discourage backward or spinning dives.

### Favorite Animal **S**

Have students stand or sit on the side of the pool. Ask them to think about their favorite animal but not tell anyone what it is. Begin calling out animals (e.g., “Who likes tigers?”). Students dive into the pool when they hear the name of their favorite animal and then return to the wall.

**Variation:** Use colors, sports, fish, school subjects, etc., as a theme.

### Hoop Dive **S** **A**

Hold a hoop in the deep end, and have students dive through the hoop.

**Variation:** Hold the hoop further from the wall, and then have students dive through it. You can also have students dive over a pool noodle.

### Long, Shallow Dive **S** **A**

Have students dive in and surface glide upon entry. Encourage students to enter the water further out each time, attempting to add distance rather than depth to the dive. Once in the water, have students angle their hands up toward the surface to slow their downward motion as they stay in a streamlined position.

**Variation:** Once students have mastered this dive, they can start the dive with a back-and-forth arm swing to gain momentum.

### Object Dive **S** **A**

Have students perform a dive and collect an object at the bottom of the pool.

**Variation:** If students cannot make it to the bottom, have them dive and swim to a floating object and collect it.

### Racing Start **S** **A**

Have students stand in a stride position (feet on the pool deck) and attempt a competitive racing start or dive: bent over in a crouched position, fingertips touching the side of the pool, and chin tucked. When you say “Take your mark...go!” students dive into the pool headfirst.

### Rocket Booster **S**

Have students sit on the side of the pool with the soles of their feet on the pool wall, arms over their ears, and hands together over their heads. Have them “blast off” by diving into the water, their noses just missing their knees, and pushing off the wall with their feet (the push is their “rocket booster”).


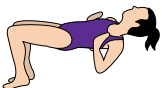
### Submarine **S**

Have students line up at the deep end of the pool with their toes over the edge. Tell students to stand tall and straight with their arms over their heads and their hands together. Say “I am a submarine booster; wait until I come to boost you off.” Move behind the students and, one at a time, place your hands on each student’s waist and tell the student to bend forward with hands pointing into the water. Guide the student into the water, saying “Blast off!” as each diver is launched. Remind students to steer themselves up once their arms enter the water.

### Superhero Dive **S**

Have students imitate a superhero flying position as they dive. Have them bend over to point their hands toward the water, keeping their heads down and their ears between their arms until their legs are in the water.

# Skill / Resting Stroke, Elementary Backstroke

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Back glide, elementary backstroke kick, 15 yd.</b> See 4 / Stroke Introduction.</p> <p><b>2 Back glide, elementary backstroke arms, 15 yd.</b> On back with pull buoy, begin with hands at sides, then slide them up to armpits. Extend arms out to side (slightly above shoulders). Press palms toward feet in a sweeping motion. Repeat. Build to 15 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Resting stroke, elementary backstroke, 15 yd.</b> Combine progressions 1 and 2. Build to 15 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Back glide, elementary backstroke kick, 25 yd.</b> Using kickboard, perform inverted breaststroke kick: feet drop below knees and flex while toes turn out and legs whip around together. Do not let knees break surface of water. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Back glide, elementary backstroke arms, 50 yd.</b> On back with pull buoy, begin with hands at sides, then slide them up to armpits. Extend arms out to side (slightly above shoulders). Press palms toward feet in a sweeping motion. Repeat. Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Resting stroke, elementary backstroke, 50 yd.</b> Combine progressions 1 and 2. Build to 50 yd.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Count-the-Kicks Drill **S A**

Have students swim elementary backstroke kick with a kickboard. Count the number of kicks per length. Have students attempt this drill a few times so they can work on reducing the number of kicks each length.

#### Inverted Breaststroke Kick **S A**

Have students perform inverted breaststroke kick while holding the kickboard to their stomachs. Tell them to drop their feet directly below their knees, lift them toward their shins, and turn them out as their legs whip together. The knees should not break the surface of the water.

#### Noodle Kicks **S A**

Have students hold a pool noodle behind their backs and work on whip kick while they watch their legs. Have students do 10 scissor kicks with their knees straight, then 10 whip kicks. Have them practice watching their legs and seeing the difference between the kicks.

#### Vertical Breaststroke Kick **S A**

Have students tread water using breaststroke kick. Ask them to keep their hands out of the water or place them on top of their heads while they kick for one minute to condition legs, develop thrust, and get a feel for pushing water with their feet.

### ARMS

#### Arm Mantras **S A**

Use the following mantras to describe what elementary backstroke arms look like:

- Tickle, T, Touch
- Monkey, Airplane, Soldier
- Chicken, Airplane, Soldier
- Little Bird, Big Bird, Flap
- Little T, Big T, I

#### Elementary Backstroke on Land **S A**

Have students stand on the pool deck and practice elementary backstroke arms: slide hands up sides to armpits, extend arms at shoulder height with palms facing feet, press palms toward feet in a sweeping motion, slide hands up sides again, and repeat.

**Variation:** Have students try adding a kick motion with one leg while standing.

#### No-Kick-Pull Drill **S A**

Have students perform elementary backstroke wearing hand paddles and holding a small tube, pull buoy, or kickboard between their thighs. Tell them not to kick. Ask them to be aware of the push of the paddles against the water, which develops a feel for the pull, helps streamline it, and improves the lift of the elbows. Only use paddles of an appropriate size for short

periods of time, because overuse can cause shoulder injuries. Hand paddles should be slightly bigger than a student's hands. If the hand paddle pulls away from the hand at any time during the pull, it may create drag that impedes forward progress. Use additional stroke drills to correct the drag detected using the paddles.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

#### Alternating Glides **S A**

Have students glide on their backs and perform the elementary backstroke arm pull while keeping their legs together, then glide with their arms at their sides, performing only the kick. Repeat.

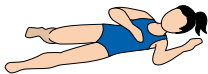
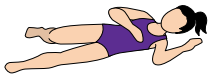

#### Integrated-Movement Mantra **S A**

Have students use this mantra to practice synchronizing elementary backstroke arms and legs: "Pull, kick, glide, two, three."

#### Rocket Glide **S A**

Have students perform the elementary backstroke and pretend they are rocket ships. With each "blast" (kick and pull of the arms) let them see how far they can last in the glide before blasting off again.

# Skill / Resting Stroke, Sidestroke

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Scissor kick, 25 yd.</b> Begin in side-glide position with legs together. Bend top knee forward as bottom knee bends back. Snap both legs together. Repeat. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Sidestroke, arms, 25 yd.</b> Begin in side-glide position. Extend one arm in a streamlined position; keep other at hip. Pull top hand toward body, while bottom hand moves up to meet it. Push bottom hand back to hip, while top hand returns to a streamlined position. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Resting stroke, sidestroke, 25 yd.</b> Combine progressions 1 and 2. Build to 25 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Scissor kick, 50 yd.</b> Begin in side-glide position with legs together. Bend top knee forward as bottom knee bends back. Snap both legs together. Repeat. Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Sidestroke, arms, 50 yd.</b> Begin in side-glide position. Extend one arm in a streamlined position; keep other at hip. Pull top hand toward body, while bottom hand moves up to meet it. Push bottom hand back to hip, while top hand returns to a streamlined position. Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Resting stroke, sidestroke, 50 yd.</b> Combine progressions 1 and 2. Build to 50 yd.</p>	<p> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>



## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Flotation Kick **S A**

Have students hold a short barbell or flotation device in one hand and practice scissor kick.

#### Group Kicking **S A**

Have all students lie on their sides, facing the same direction, four to five feet apart at the wall. Have all students bend their knees, then stop; extend their legs straight, then stop; and execute a thrust of the legs together, then stop. Then have them recover their legs to a bent position, pause, set the feet, pause, extend the legs, pause, set the feet, and thrust. After students have mastered the various parts of the kick, have them perform recovery-extension-thrust in one continuous motion.

**Variation:** Have students perform the drill on land, with their legs extended over the edge of the pool, or as an individual drill in which they are supported by a buddy or a kickboard.

#### Kick at Side of Wall **S A**

Have students lie on their sides, holding onto the edge of the pool, and practice the scissor kick on each side.

#### Kick on Land **S A**

Have students lie on their sides on land and practice the scissor kick.

#### Noodle Kicks **S A**

Have students hold a pool noodle behind their backs and work on whip kick while they watch their legs. Have students do 10 scissor kicks with their knees straight, then 10 whip kicks. Have them practice watching their legs and seeing the difference between the kicks.

#### Vertical Kicking **S A**

Have students practice treading water with a basic scull and scissor kick. Designate which foot goes forward.

### ARMS

#### One-Arm Drill **S A**

Have students perform sidestroke, pulling with only one arm, while the other arm remains in a streamlined position. Switch arms and repeat.

#### Pick-an-Apple Drill **S A**

Have students perform sidestroke, moving their arms as if they were picking an apple from a tree, putting it in a basket, then reaching for another.

#### Pull-Buoy Arm Drill **S A**

Have students practice sidestroke arm pull with a pull buoy between their legs.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

#### Arm-Leg Coordination **S A**

With or without a flotation device, have students perform sidestroke with a focus on coordinating each arm independently with the scissor kick. Then have them try the entire stroke, first with a flotation device, if desired, then without one.

#### Kicking With Arm Assist **S A**

Have students perform sidestroke. To emphasize the timing of the top arm and the leg kick, have them hold onto their top leg with their top arm and push on the leg with the arm during the kick. Repeat on both sides.

**Variation:** Have students practice breathing by exhaling with their faces in the water during the glide and inhaling during the body roll as the bottom arm begins the pull.



#### Sidestroke Mantra **S A**

Have students use this mantra as they perform sidestroke slowly: "Pull, kick, glide, two, three."

#### Sidestroke With Kickboard **S A**

Have students perform sidestroke with a kickboard. Ask them to support their bottom hands with the flotation device and practice coordinating the top arm and kick. After they have accomplished this, have them practice with just the bottom arm and the kick. Finally, have them perform the full stroke without any flotation device.

# Skill / Tread Water

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Tread water, scissor &amp; whip kick, 1 min.</b> Jump in and tread water for 1 min. Scull with arms and use any kick to maintain a vertical position. Swim to wall and exit.</p> <p><b>2 Tread water, scissor &amp; whip kick, 2 mins.</b> Same as progression 1. Build to 2 mins.</p>	 <p><b>1 Tread water, scissor &amp; whip kick, 2 mins.</b> Jump in and tread water for 2 mins. Scull with arms and use any kick to maintain a vertical position. Swim to wall and exit.</p> <p><b>2 Tread water, retrieve object off bottom, tread 1 min.</b> Jump in and retrieve object from bottom of pool. Surface, tread water for 1 min., scull with arms, and use any kick to maintain a vertical position. Drop object, swim to wall, and exit.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Kick-Outs **S A**

Have students float vertically in deep water wearing a flotation device (e.g., life jacket, float belt) and kick to bring shoulders out of the water for 10 seconds. Increase time and remove flotation device as students' endurance increases. Remind students to keep their bodies aligned from head to toe (hips under the shoulders). Then have students move to a horizontal position and front glide with kick to the wall.

#### Kick-Ups **S A**

Hold a rescue tube or pool noodle above students' heads while they tread or kick in the deep end. Students can use a flotation device or hold onto a pool noodle or tube.

**Variation:** Raise the tube and have them try to kick up to it.

### ARMS

#### Smooth the Sand **S A**

Have students practice sculling by moving their palms close together as if they were making a pile of sand, then flipping them away from each other as if they were smoothing the pile of sand. Use flotation devices as needed.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

#### Assembly Line **S A**

Have students form a single-file line and tread water while passing a dive ring or other object over their heads to the person behind them. Continue until the object reaches the last person, then have them pass the object back to the front of the line.

#### Honest Abe **S**

Divide students into two groups. Hand out four to five pennies to each student. Ask students to place half of the pennies facedown on the pool deck and half faceup. Have the students tread water about four feet from the side. Tell them that you will call out statements such as "Running is allowed on the pool deck." If they think the statement is true, they rush out of the water and turn all their pennies faceup; if they think it is not true, they turn all their pennies facedown. The first team to turn over all their pennies correctly wins.

#### Noodle Push **S A**

Have students find a partner and face that person with a pool noodle lengthwise between them. Have students put their hands on the pool noodles and tread water as they attempt to push their partner across the pool.

#### Noodle Stunts **S A**

Move students into deep water and give each a pool noodle. Ask them to try to balance on their pool noodle

in a sitting position. Once they have achieved this, ask them to try variations such as those that follow:

- Spinning in a circle
- Pretending to row using the breaststroke, crawl-stroke pulls, or variations of sculling
- Performing a front or back flip while squeezing the pool noodle behind the knees, with the arms pulling opposite the direction of the flip
- Placing the pool noodle underneath the body to practice front crawl, butterfly, and breaststroke arms (with no kick)
- Performing a handstand on the pool noodle
- Balancing on the pool noodle in a kneeling position
- Floating on the back with the pool noodle under the ankles or behind the knees

#### Tidal Wave **S A**

Have students tread water in a circle and try to pass a ball around the circle without touching it, using only the movement they create in the water. When the ball goes all the way around the circle, have them reverse direction.




#### Tread Water in a Circle **S A**

Have students tread water in a circle while passing a dive ring or small ball around the circle. Build to one to two minutes, depending on stage.

#### Tread Water in a T-Shirt **S A**

Have students wear a T-shirt and tread water.

# Skill / Breaststroke

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Breaststroke, kick, 25 yd.</b> See 5 / Stroke Development.</p> <p><b>2 Breaststroke, arms, 25 yd.</b> Begin with arms stretched out in front, palms facing away from each other. Spread arms apart, bending elbows. Scoop hands toward chest, bring them together, then cut through water back to starting position. Use any kick to propel forward. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Breaststroke, 25 yd.</b> Begin with breaststroke arms. As hands come together in front of chest, lift head to breathe, pull heels up, and begin kick. Inhale and surge forward by submerging face and kicking legs together. Return legs and arms to starting position. Build to 25 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Breaststroke, 25 yd.</b> Begin with breaststroke arms. As hands come together in front of chest, lift head to breathe, pull heels up, and begin kick. Inhale and surge forward by submerging face and kicking legs together. Return legs and arms to starting position. Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Breaststroke, kick, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Breaststroke, arms, 50 yd.</b> Build to 50 yd.</p> <p><b>4 Open turn</b> When nearing wall, extend arms toward wall. When hands touch, tuck legs and pull them toward wall. Bring arms together in front of the body, overhead. Push off in a streamlined position.</p> <p><b>5 Breaststroke, open turn, 50 yd.</b> Combine progressions 3 and 4. Build to 50 yd.</p>	<p> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Breaststroke Kick on Back **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke kick on back with a kickboard or arms in a streamlined position.

#### Chin-Kick Drill **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke kick while keeping their chins at the surface of the water and their arms at their sides.

#### Heel-Touch Drill **S A**

Have students hold their hands together, clasped at the small of their backs, and perform breaststroke kick, taking a breath with every kick at the proper time. Ask students to touch their heels to their fingertips on recovery to practice flexing the foot up and pushing the water back with the soles of the feet.

#### Kickboard Series **S A**

Have students practice breaststroke kick with support, such as a kickboard, pool noodle, or other flotation device. If using a kickboard, have students hold it with their arms outstretched. If using a pool noodle, have students place it behind their backs, holding each end in their hands.

#### Push-Kick Drill **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke kick while holding onto the wall. Stand behind each student and place your hands on the soles of the student's feet. As the student kicks, use your hands to provide resistance, helping the student practice an effective kick and develop a feel for pushing water with their feet.

#### Vertical Breaststroke Kick **S A**

Have students tread water using breaststroke kick. Ask them to keep their hands out of the water or place them on top of their heads while they bob up for air for one minute to condition legs, develop thrust, and get a feel for pushing water with their feet.

### ARMS

#### Arm Mantras **S A**

As students practice breaststroke arms, have them think about the following:

- Make a pizza and cut through the middle.
- Spread peanut butter, scoop the bread together, and cut the sandwich.
- Scoop ice cream and eat it.
- Place hands in a bowl of frosting, scrape frosting off the sides, lick hands, and stretch out to give some frosting to a friend. Remember to "lick and kick" for proper stroke coordination.

#### Arm-Position Drill **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke with a pool noodle or other flotation device around their chests, under their armpits. Ask them to pull only, with their heads up. The pool noodle or other flotation device prevents the pull from moving behind the shoulders and strengthens the arms.

#### Breaststroke Pull With Dolphin Kick **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke arms with dolphin kick.

#### Pull With Support **S A**

Have students practice breaststroke pull with a pull buoy or a pool noodle. Have students place the flotation device between their thighs to discourage kicking.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

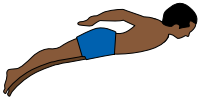
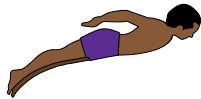

#### One-Pull-Two-Kicks Drill **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke, pairing one pull with two kicks. Ask them to focus on the glide and breathing at the right time throughout the drill.

#### Sea Horse Drill **S A**

Have students perform breaststroke. When they begin the pull, students lift their chests up and thrust their hips forward so their torsos are vertical and their hips and shoulders align. Then they kick into a glide. This should look like an exaggerated breaststroke.

# Skill / Butterfly

PREREQUISITE	STAGE PROGRESSION	ADVANCED
 <p><b>1 Butterfly, kick, 15 yd.</b> Push off wall into front glide. Move whole body in a rhythmic motion with hips close to surface. Build to 15 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Butterfly, simultaneous arm action, 15 yd.</b> Push off wall into front glide. Begin pull underwater; hands press out, squeeze in, then press out again, making a keyhole shape. Arms accelerate out over water, swing out to the side, and then come back around to the front. Thumbs drop in again to complete recovery.</p> <p><b>3 Butterfly, simultaneous arm action &amp; kick, 15 yd.</b> Combine progressions 1 and 2. Build to 15 yd.</p>	 <p><b>1 Butterfly, simultaneous arm action &amp; kick, 15 yd.</b> Push off wall into front glide. Move whole body in a rhythmic motion with hips close to surface. Perform front-crawl arms, but move arms simultaneously. Thumbs drop first, almost lining up with eyes. Hands press out, squeeze in, then press out again (with breath). Arms move out over water to the side and around. Thumbs drop in again to complete recovery. Build to 15 yd.</p> <p><b>2 Butterfly, kick, 25 yd.</b> Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>3 Butterfly, arms, 25 yd.</b> Build to 25 yd.</p> <p><b>4 Open turn</b> When nearing wall, extend arms toward wall. When hands touch, tuck legs and pull them toward wall. Bring arms together in front of the body, overhead. Push off in a streamlined position.</p> <p><b>5 Butterfly, 25 yd.</b> Combine progressions 3 and 4. Build to 25 yd.</p>	<p> <b>Stroke competency achieved</b></p> <p>Challenge advanced students to swim longer distances.</p>

## Activities

**S** School Age  
**A** Teen & Adult

### LEGS

#### Dolphin Kick on Back **S A**

Have students perform dolphin kick on their backs to practice the knee bend and hip movement.

#### Dolphin Kick With Kickboard **S A**

Have students perform dolphin kick with a kickboard, then take the kickboard away and have them perform it without the kickboard.

#### Head-Down-Kick Drill **S A**

Have students perform dolphin kick with their heads down, chins tucked, and their arms at their sides, breathing every two kicks.

#### Head-Up-Kick Drill **S A**

Have students perform dolphin kick with their heads out of the water.

#### Side-Kicking Drill **S A**

Have students perform dolphin kick on their sides in a streamlined position, with six kicks on one side and six kicks on the other.

#### Single-Leg-Kick Drill **S A**

In a streamlined position, have students perform butterfly kick with just their right legs, then repeat with

their left legs. Ask them what the kick reminds them of (flutter kick).

#### Underwater Dolphin Kick **S A**

Have students perform dolphin kick underwater with their hands at their sides, then with their hands in a streamlined position. Ask students to pretend they are fish, mermaids, or dolphins and that their legs are glued together.

### ARMS

#### Arms-Only Drill **S A**

Have students focus on arm movements by performing butterfly using only their arms and holding a pull buoy between their thighs or dragging their legs.

#### Keyhole **S A**

Have students perform butterfly arms standing up: draw a keyhole with arms, focusing on a strong push at the end and overarm recovery.

#### One-Arm Drill **S A**

Have students perform butterfly across the pool, pulling with one arm, then swim another length pulling with the other arm. Have them swim a final length with both arms.

#### Thumb-Touch-Hip Drill **S A**

Have students perform butterfly and pause when their hands touch their hips while they continuously kick. Repeat.

### BODY & BREATH CONTROL

#### 3 x 3 x 3 Build-Up Drill **S A**

Have students perform butterfly, pulling three times with the right arm, then three times with the left, and finishing with a complete stroke three times.

#### Butterfly With Fins **S A**

Have students perform butterfly with fins.

#### Dolphin Dives **S A**

Have students perform butterfly by pushing off the bottom, launching out of the water, taking a stroke, then diving back to the bottom to push off again.

#### Kick-Pull-Kick-Stop Drill **S A**

Have students begin in a streamlined position, do one kick, and then begin a keyhole pull with their arms. As their hands begin to press past their waists, the second kick takes place; the legs “slam” down as their hands finish the press. Their hands and arms then retract close to their bodies before the hands extend back out, similar to the breaststroke recovery. Repeat.

#### Pause Drill **S A**

Have students perform butterfly, pausing at the end of each stroke to practice developing an explosive finish.

# Safety & Character Topics

At the Y, we set ourselves apart because we are committed to delivering an experience that goes beyond physical skills. Use the character and safety topics that follow to promote cognitive and social-emotional development. This holistic approach creates a safe space where adults and children can build relationships and feel like they belong, in addition to feeling a sense of achievement as they develop important life skills.

TOPIC 6.1	TOPIC 6.2	TOPIC 6.3	TOPIC 6.4
<p><b>HYPOTHERMIA</b></p> <p><b>Discuss what hypothermia is:</b></p> <p>Hypothermia is when a person’s body temperature becomes dangerously low, usually because of prolonged exposure to cold temperatures.</p> <p><b>Explain how to prevent hypothermia:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cover all exposed areas of skin.</li> <li>- Keep moving in freezing temperatures, no matter how tired you are.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discuss how to treat hypothermia:</b></p> <p>Warm up gradually, use blankets, and seek medical help.</p>	<p><b>RESCUE BREATHING</b></p> <p><b>Ask students why it’s dangerous when a person is unconscious or not breathing and what they should do to help:</b></p> <p>The person isn’t getting any oxygen in the body, which could lead to serious injuries. Call 911 and perform rescue breathing.</p> <p><b>Share how to perform rescue breathing:</b></p> <p>Blow air into the mouth to inflate the lungs.</p> <p><b>Have students practice rescue breathing on a mannequin or kickboard.</b></p>	<p><b>HYPOXIC BLACKOUT</b></p> <p><b>Discuss hypoxic blackout and how it can happen:</b></p> <p>Holding your breath and swimming underwater for a long time can cause a person to black out or lose consciousness.</p> <p><b>Discuss how to prevent hypoxic blackout:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don’t hold your breath and swim underwater for long distances.</li> <li>- When swimming short distances underwater, always have a buddy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>BENCHMARK SKILLS</b></p> <p><b>Discuss why it is important to learn to swim long distances:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It can save your life.</li> <li>- It’s a good way to stay physically active.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discuss what students can do once they’ve become strong swimmers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Swim team or triathlons</li> <li>- Synchronized swimming or diving</li> <li>- Swim instruction and lifeguarding</li> <li>- Swimming for fun and physical activity</li> </ul>



TOPIC 6.5	TOPIC 6.6	TOPIC 6.7	TOPIC 6.8
<p><b>GOAL SETTING</b></p> <p><b>Ask students why goals are important:</b></p> <p>Goals help you focus on something you are trying to do or achieve.</p> <p><b>Ask students to set personal swimming goals:</b></p> <p>Have them think about the skills they have already learned and what they want to accomplish by the end of the session.</p> <p><b>Help them achieve at least one of their goals throughout the session.</b></p>	<p><b>CPR</b></p> <p><b>Ask students what CPR is and why someone would need it:</b></p> <p>Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) helps maintain vital blood flow to the heart and brain. If someone doesn't respond, check for breathing and a pulse. When you can't see, hear, or feel any signs of breathing and you can't find a pulse after 10 seconds, the person probably needs CPR.</p> <p><b>Demonstrate how to check for a pulse and to see if someone is breathing by listening, feeling, and watching for signs of breath. Let students practice on one another.</b></p>	<p><b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b></p> <p><b>Discuss why physical activity is important:</b></p> <p>It makes your heart healthy, strengthens your muscles and bones, lengthens your life, and prevents illness.</p> <p><b>Ask students to list some fun ways to be physically active:</b></p> <p>Playing sports, running, swimming, etc.</p> <p>Swimming is a healthy way to be physically active; it exercises your whole body but is gentle on your joints. The water's buoyancy supports body weight, which means less pressure on your joints.</p>	<p><b>CRAMPS</b></p> <p><b>Ask students to describe a cramp:</b></p> <p>A cramp is an uncontrolled tightening of muscles, usually in the legs or the feet.</p> <p><b>Discuss how to treat cramps experienced while swimming:</b></p> <p>For cramps that occur in the pool, swim to the side, climb out, knead and stretch the cramped muscle, and try to walk to release the cramp. For cramps that occur in open water, when you are far from shore, try to knead and stretch the cramped muscle while you are in a resting position.</p>