

Open Water Swimming Techniques



Front Crawl

- Exhale underwater
- Practise breathing to both sides. Breathing every third stroke (to either side) is more efficient than breathing every second stroke, and means you can breath away from wind and waves if necessary
- stretch your arm fully forward before placing it in the water to increase the length of your stroke
- Glide. Faster strokes does not mean faster swimming: good long distance swimmers often have a slow steady rhythm and good glide between strokes. Try it in the pool: reducing the number of strokes you take to do a length may make your time faster rather than slower
- Keep up a steady leg kick: legs only provide a small part of your propulsion but they keep you horizontal in the water so use them!
- Take it easy for the first 90 degrees of the arm stroke (from the point where your hand enters the water to being underneath you), then put some power into your stroke, pushing the arm back. Think of brushing your hand against your hip before taking it out of the water to finish the stroke. This is the powerful part of your stroke
- Practise breathing above the chop, so you don't inhale mouthfuls of water. Your outstretched arm with palm flat in the water provides a pivoting point as you inhale: simply rotate your chin further from the surface of the water before you breathe in.
- as you bring your arm forward use a high arm stroke to ensure hands clear the water in rough conditions



- Learn to 'spot'

- A vital part of the outdoor swimmers stroke is the 'spot': where you look up to see where you're going.
- Spotting is simple in Breaststroke. To spot in Frontcrawl, take a breath and then on the next stroke simply look up as your forward arm enters the water and begins pulling down. You needn't raise your whole head out of the water, and don't breathe on this stroke (your throat will be too constricted) just look up enough so you can see, then lower your head and complete the stroke. Breathe on the next stroke.