



PRECISION SWIMMING

MARGARET RIVER

Butterfly Program

Learn the most dynamic stroke in swimming. Chest press, dolphin kick, arm timing and breath, connected through rhythm.



How to Read a Workout

Each workout in this program is written in a simple format. Here is how to read it.

4 x 50m

Swim 50 metres (two lengths of a 25m pool), and do it four times. Rest between each one as shown.

Easy / Medium / Hard

Easy = relaxed conversational pace. Medium = working but in control. Hard = pushing yourself, heavy breathing.

20s rest

After you finish the swim, rest at the wall for 20 seconds before starting the next one. If no rest is shown, go straight into the next set.

Warm Up

Easy swimming at the start of the session to get your body moving and your muscles warm. Never skip this.

Cool Down

Easy swimming at the end of the session to help your body recover. Keep it relaxed and smooth.

Build

Start the swim slowly and gradually increase your speed within the same rep. Finish faster than you started.

Descend 1-4

Each rep gets faster than the one before. Rep 1 is easy, rep 4 is fast. Your effort increases with each one.

Drill-Swim

Swim part of the distance as a drill (a technique exercise) and the rest as normal swimming. For example, 25m drill followed by 25m full stroke.

Stroke Count

Count how many strokes it takes you to swim one length. Fewer strokes at the same speed means you are becoming more efficient. Track this over time.



Swimming Terminology

Body Wave

The undulating motion that drives butterfly. It starts in the chest and flows through the hips to the feet. Everything in butterfly connects through this wave.

1st Kick

The kick that happens as your hands enter the water at the front of the stroke. It sets the body wave in motion and keeps you balanced.

Dolphin Kick

A simultaneous two-legged kick where both legs move together. The power comes from the hips and core, not the knees. There are two kicks per stroke cycle.

2nd Kick

The kick that happens as your hands push past your hips at the back of the stroke. This is the power kick that drives your body forward and helps the arms recover.

Keyhole Pull

The underwater arm path in butterfly. Your hands enter at shoulder width, sweep outward, then inward past your chest, and push back to your hips, tracing a keyhole shape.

What's a Lap?

In swimming, a lap is one length of the pool, from one wall to the other. In a standard short-course pool, 1 lap = 25m.

Lap Distance Guide

DISTANCE	WHAT THAT MEANS
25m	1 lap
50m	2 laps nonstop (down and back)
100m	4 laps nonstop
200m	8 laps nonstop

What Does Nonstop Mean?

If a set says "75 Freestyle", that means you will swim three lengths in a row without stopping, swimming freestyle (front crawl), and you will only rest after completing the full distance.

You Can Always Modify

If you need to pause at the wall to catch your breath, that is not bad. This program is designed to build your skills, confidence, and control over time. Progress over perfection.

Different pool length? If your pool is a different length, simply follow the program as written. The structure and training benefits remain the same.



Equipment Guide

The gear referenced in this program and how to use it properly.

Fins (Swim Fins)

Short training fins that add propulsion and help you maintain the body wave while learning. They make dolphin kick easier and let you focus on timing without fatigue. Use short training fins, not long snorkelling fins.

Kickboard

Hold with arms extended for dolphin kick drills. Helps isolate the kick and build the chest-to-hip connection. Press the board down with your chest to feel the wave.

Pull Buoy

Placed between your upper thighs to support your legs during pull-only drills. Useful for isolating the arm action and timing without worrying about the kick.

Do I need to buy all of this?

Most pools have kickboards and pull buoys available. Fins are worth owning if you plan to work on butterfly regularly. Start with fins and a kickboard.



Drill Guide

The drills used throughout this program. Refer back to this page whenever you need a refresher.

Body Dolphin

Kick underwater on your front with arms at your sides. Press your chest down, snap your hips, and let the wave flow to your feet. This is the foundation of all butterfly movement.

Surface Dolphin

Dolphin kick on the surface with arms at your sides. Keep the kick small and rhythmic. Feel the chest press drive the motion, not the knees.

Board Kick

Hold a kickboard with arms extended. Press it down with your chest on each kick. Focus on the chest-to-hip connection, not the size of the kick.

Single Arm Fly

Swim butterfly using one arm at a time. The other arm stays extended in front. Two kicks per stroke: one on entry, one on push. Switch arms each length.

Alternating Arms

Swim 3 strokes right arm, 3 strokes left arm, 3 strokes both arms. Repeat. Build timing by connecting single arm work to full stroke.

Kick-Swim

Alternate 25m dolphin kick and 25m full butterfly. Use the kick length to build rhythm, then carry it into the swim.

Walking Butterfly

In shallow water, walk forward while performing the butterfly arm action. Focus on hand entry, the pull pattern, and the push to the hips. Build muscle memory without fatigue.



The Butterfly Blueprint

Build your butterfly one connection at a time. Each step adds a new piece.

1

Chest-to-Hip Connection

Feel the body wave that drives everything.

2

Build Kick Rhythm

Two kicks per stroke, both with purpose.

3

Sync One-Arm Timing

Connect the arm to the kick, one side at a time.

4

Integrate the Breath

Add the breath without breaking the rhythm.

5

Full Butterfly Swim

Connect all the pieces into one stroke.

6

Butterfly Session

Put it all together in a complete workout.

Equipment Used

Fins

For kick drills and single arm work.

Kickboard

For building the chest-to-hip wave.

STEP 1

Chest-to-Hip Connection

Feel the body wave that drives everything.

1



Step 1

Step 1: Chest-to-Hip Connection

Everything in butterfly starts with the body wave. Your chest presses down, your hips respond, and the wave flows through to your feet. Without this connection, the stroke does not work.

Body Dolphin

Kick underwater on your front with arms at your sides. Press your chest down, snap your hips, and let the wave flow to your feet. Keep the movement smooth and connected. Don't force it from the knees.

"Press the chest, snap the hips. The wave does the work. If your knees are bending a lot, the wave is not starting high enough."

Key Focus Points

Start from the Chest

The wave begins with a chest press, not a knee bend. Push your sternum toward the bottom of the pool, and your hips will follow naturally.

Connected Hips

Your hips respond to the chest press. They snap upward as the chest presses down. This connection is the engine of the stroke.

Small, Fluid Kick

The kick should be compact and rhythmic. Big, wide kicks break the wave and create drag.

Relaxed Through the Core

Stay loose through your midsection. Tension blocks the wave. Let it flow.

STEP 2

Build Kick Rhythm

Two kicks per stroke, both with purpose.

2



Step 2

Step 2: Build Kick Rhythm

There are two kicks per stroke cycle. The first kick sets the wave, the second kick drives you forward. Both matter.

Board Kick

Hold a kickboard with arms extended. Press it down with your chest on each kick. Build a rhythm: press-snap, press-snap. Feel the board move with the wave. Count kicks to build consistency.

"Two kicks, two purposes. The first kick sets the wave. The second kick drives you forward. Neither is optional."

Key Focus Points

Two Kicks Per Cycle

Every butterfly stroke has two kicks. The first as the hands enter, the second as the hands push past the hips.

Chest Drives the Kick

Don't initiate from the knees. Press the chest, let the hips and legs follow. The kick is a result of the body wave.

Even Rhythm

Both kicks should feel connected and even. Count them: one-two, one-two. Don't rush the second kick.

Small and Fast

Butterfly kick is not about how big you kick. It's about how quickly and smoothly you connect the wave. Keep it compact.

STEP 3

Sync One-Arm Timing

Connect the arm to the kick, one side at a time.

3



Step 3

Step 3: Sync One-Arm Timing

Before swimming full butterfly, connect the arm to the kick one side at a time. This builds the timing that holds the stroke together.

Single Arm Fly

Swim butterfly using one arm at a time. Keep the other arm extended in front. Two kicks per stroke: one as the hand enters, one as the hand pushes past the hip. Switch arms each length.

"Entry kick, push kick. Feel each kick lock into the arm movement. If the timing is off, slow down and start again."

Key Focus Points

Entry Kick

The first kick happens as your hand enters the water. It sets the body wave and keeps your hips up.

Push Kick

The second kick happens as your hand pushes past your hip. This is the power kick that drives you forward and helps the arm recover.

Hand Entry at Shoulder Width

Your hand enters directly in front of your shoulder, not wider. Think forward, not outward.

Complete the Push

Your hand must push all the way past your hip before releasing. Don't cut the stroke short.

STEP 4

Integrate the Breath

Add the breath without breaking the rhythm.

4



Step 4

Step 4: Integrate the Breath

The breath is the last piece to add. Time it with the pull and keep your chin low. If the breath breaks the rhythm, the stroke falls apart.

Single Arm Fly with Breath

Swim single arm butterfly, adding a breath every two strokes. As the arm pushes past your hip, let your chin push forward to clear the water. Eyes look forward and slightly down, not up. Return your face to the water as the hand enters.

"Chin forward, not up. The breath follows the stroke, it never leads it. If you're lifting your head, you're breaking the wave."

Key Focus Points

Breathe Forward

Push your chin forward along the surface, not upward. Lifting up causes your hips to sink and breaks the body wave.

Breathe on the Push

The breath happens as your hands push past your hips. The momentum of the stroke naturally lifts your upper body. Don't force it.

Quick Return

Get your face back in the water fast. The longer your head is up, the more your hips drop.

Exhale Underwater

Blow out steadily while your face is in the water. This means you only need a quick inhale when your chin clears the surface.

STEP 5

Full Butterfly Swim

Connect all the pieces into one stroke.

5



Step 5

Step 5: Full Butterfly Swim

You've built the pieces. Now it's time to connect them. Don't worry about perfect mechanics right away. Start by focusing on timing and rhythm. Let the stroke flow and feel how the kick, pull and breath connect.

Connecting It All

Remember the timing you developed in the previous steps. The chest initiates the motion, the first kick helps set the body wave, the pull drives the breath, and the second kick finishes the stroke and carries the body forward.

Start with short, controlled swims and focus on smooth rhythm rather than power. When the timing is right, the stroke will feel lighter, smoother and much easier to sustain.

"Start short. Begin with 15-25m efforts. It's better to swim 15m of smooth, well-timed butterfly than 50m of struggling fly. Quality over distance. Build up as the timing becomes natural."

Key Focus Points

Initiate from the Chest

Let the chest start the body wave before the arms begin the pull. The wave creates the rhythm that everything else follows.

Connect the 1st Kick

The first kick happens as the pull begins. It sets the wave in motion and keeps the body balanced through the stroke.

Breathe with the Pull

Time the breath with the chest lift as the hands press downward. Don't force it. Let the body wave do the lifting.

Finish with the 2nd Kick

The second kick drives the body forward and helps the arms recover back overhead. This is where your speed comes from.

Start short: Begin with 15-25m efforts. It's better to swim 15m of smooth, well-timed butterfly than 50m of struggling fly. Quality over distance. Build up as the timing becomes natural.



Step 6

Butterfly Session

This workout is the Butterfly Blueprint in action. 2 minutes rest between each set. 30 seconds rest between reps.

1

Warm Up

1 x 200m freestyle. Easy, technique-focused warm up.

Easy

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2

Kick Set: Chest-Hip Connection

4 x 25m butterfly kick with kickboard. Press your chest, feel your hips respond.

Easy

30s rest

Kickboard

Fins (optional)

3

Kick Set: Build Rhythm

6 x 25m butterfly kick: alternate each length on your left side, right side and back. Then 4 x 30 seconds vertical kick.

Medium

30s rest

4

Drill Set: Timing & Breath

6 x 50m butterfly drill: alternate each 50 between one-arm drill (left arm / right arm) and double arm pull down.

Medium

30s rest

Fins (optional)

5

Main Set: Full Butterfly

6 x 100m: first 25m full butterfly swim, last 75m freestyle. Connect rhythm and timing into full butterfly.

Hard

30s rest

6

Cool Down

1 x 200m freestyle. Easy, relaxed recovery swim.

Easy

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Total: approx. 1,550 Metres

Main set focus: The 25m of butterfly in each 100 is where you apply everything from Steps 1-5. Don't fight the stroke. Focus on smooth rhythm and let the technique carry you. Use the 75m freestyle to reset before the next rep.



Common Faults & Fixes

Body Position

Body not streamlined

Fix: Stretch and extend during the glide. Practice underwater dolphin kick with arms at your sides, then in streamline. Use fins to help maintain position.

Too much or too little undulation

Fix: The body wave should be smooth and continuous, not exaggerated. Practice with one-arm butterfly: hold a kickboard with one arm, stroke with the other. Keep your eyes forward.

Leg Action

Feet breaking the surface during kick

Fix: Bend slightly more at the hips and keep your kick below the surface. Use fins to progress the kick and build the right range of motion.

Only kicking on the downbeat (missing the upbeat)

Fix: The kick has two phases: down and up. Practice underwater dolphin kick in different positions: on your front, on your back, on your side. Back kicking drills help you feel the upbeat.

Kick coming from the knees, not the hips

Fix: The wave starts in your chest and flows through your hips to your feet. If your knees are bending too much, the kick is not starting high enough. Practice vertical kicking in deep water.

Arm Action

Hands entering too wide

Fix: Your hands should enter at shoulder width, not wider. Practice standing in the water at shoulder depth and rehearsing the entry position. Think about throwing your hands forward, not outward.

Not finishing the stroke fully at the back

Fix: Your hands should push all the way past your hips before releasing. Practice one-arm drills and walking butterfly in shallow water, focusing on the push through and release.



Common Faults & Fixes

Breathing

Head lifts too early

Fix: Your head should start to rise as the second half of the pull begins, not at the start. Your chin should reach the surface just as the pull finishes. Practice with fins to slow it down.

Breathing too late

Fix: Start breathing in as soon as your chin clears the surface (right when the pull finishes). Do not wait. Practice: two strokes, breathe, dive forward into streamline, four kicks. Repeat.

Lifting head up instead of forward

Fix: Push your chin forward along the surface, not upward. Lifting up causes your hips to sink. Your eyes should look forward at the water surface, not up at the ceiling.

Coordination & Timing

Poor timing between arms and kicks

Fix: There are always two kicks per arm cycle. The first kick happens as your hands enter the water. The second kick happens as your hands push past your hips. This timing is non-negotiable.

Kick timing drill progression

Fix: A) One arm at your side, stroke with the other for 4 strokes. Switch arms. Then one arm extended, stroke with the other for 4 strokes. Switch. Breathe every second stroke.

B) Pull-only drill with a pull buoy, focusing on the arm pattern without the kick. Then add the kick back in.

Remember: Butterfly is the most physically demanding stroke. If your technique breaks down, shorten the distance or add fins. It is always better to swim 25m of good butterfly than 50m of bad butterfly.

BUTTERFLY

Practice Workouts

Ten standalone sessions to put your skills into practice. The first five are accessible for all levels. The last five are for when you are ready to push further.



Workout 1: Body Wave Basics

Butterfly starts with the wave. Get the rhythm in your chest and hips before adding arms.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****2**

Body Dolphin

4 x 25m underwater dolphin kick on your front. Press chest, snap hips.

Easy**20s rest****Fins****3**

Surface Dolphin

4 x 25m dolphin kick on the surface, arms at sides.

Easy**15s rest****Fins****4**

Kick-Swim

4 x 25m: dolphin kick into easy freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****Fins****5**

Cool Down

100m easy freestyle.

Easy**--****Total: approx. 600 Metres**



Workout 2: Dolphin Kick Focus

Two kicks per stroke cycle. The first is big, the second is quick. Build both.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****2**

Board Kick

4 x 50m dolphin kick with kickboard. Rhythm over power.

Easy**20s rest****Kickboard****3**

Streamline Kick

4 x 25m underwater dolphin kick in streamline. Tight core.

Easy**20s rest****Fins****4**

On Your Back

4 x 25m dolphin kick on your back, arms at sides. Feel the wave.

Easy**15s rest****Fins****5**

Easy Swim

2 x 50m freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****6**

Cool Down

100m easy backstroke.

Easy**--**

Total: approx. 700 Metres



Workout 3: Single Arm Fly

One arm at a time lets you focus on timing the arm entry with the kick.

1**Warm Up**

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

2**Single Right**

4 x 25m right arm butterfly, left arm extended. Two kicks per stroke.

Easy

20s rest

Fins

3**Single Left**

4 x 25m left arm butterfly, right arm extended.

Easy

20s rest

Fins

4**Alternating**

4 x 25m: 3 right, 3 left, 3 both. Repeat.

Easy

20s rest

Fins

5**Easy Freestyle**

2 x 100m freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

6**Cool Down**

100m easy choice.

Easy

--

Total: approx. 800 Metres



Workout 4: Breathing & Timing

Breathe forward, not up. Keep your chin low and your hips high.

1**Warm Up**

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

2**Dolphin Kick**

4 x 25m dolphin kick, arms at sides. Focus on the chest press.

Easy

15s rest

Fins

3**Single Arm + Breath**

4 x 25m single arm fly with breathing. Chin stays low.

Easy

20s rest

Fins

4**Short Fly**

4 x 25m full butterfly. Breathe every 2 strokes.

Medium

30s rest

Fins

5**Recovery Swim**

2 x 100m easy freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

6**Cool Down**

100m easy backstroke.

Easy

--

Total: approx. 800 Metres



Workout 5: Short Fly Reps

Keep the reps short so the technique stays clean. Quality over distance.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****2**

Dolphin Kick

4 x 50m dolphin kick with fins.

Easy**20s rest****Fins****3**

Fly Reps

8 x 25m butterfly. Full rest between reps.

Medium**30s rest****Fins (optional)****4**

Drill-Swim

4 x 50m: 25m single arm fly + 25m freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****5**

Cool Down

200m easy freestyle.

Easy**--****Total: approx. 1,000 Metres**



See You in the Water.

You've built the butterfly from the ground up. Chest press, kick rhythm, arm timing and breath, all connected through the wave.

Now take it to the pool and let the stroke fly.

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