



PRECISION SWIMMING

MARGARET RIVER

Freestyle Program

Build a faster, more efficient freestyle from the ground up. Body position, kick, rotation, catch and breath, step by step.



How to Read a Workout

Each workout in this guide is written in a standard 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

Key terms used throughout this program.

Rotation

The rolling of your body along its long axis with each stroke. Good rotation connects your pull to your core and reduces shoulder strain.

Recovery

The phase when your arm travels above the water to return to the entry. A relaxed, high-elbow recovery keeps the stroke smooth.

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.

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.

Catch

The moment your hand grips the water at the start of the pull. A high elbow catch sets up power for the rest of the stroke.

Bilateral Breathing

Breathing on both sides, typically every 3 strokes. This balances your stroke and keeps your rotation even.

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

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 used in this program and what each piece does.

Fins (Swim Fins)

Short rubber fins worn on your feet. They make kicking easier and faster, helping you hold good body position while learning drills. Use short training fins, not long snorkelling fins.

Kickboard

A flat foam board you hold in front of you with both hands, arms extended. It supports your upper body so you can focus entirely on your kick.

Pull Buoy

A foam float placed between your upper thighs. It lifts your legs and takes the kick out of the equation, so you can focus on your arm pull and rotation.

Swim Snorkel

A front-facing snorkel that lets you breathe without turning your head. It allows you to focus on body position, pull and kick without worrying about breathing timing. Not a dive snorkel.

Do I need to buy all of this?

Most pools have kickboards and pull buoys available. Fins and a snorkel are worth owning. Ask at your pool what's available.



Drill Guide

The drills used throughout this program. Refer back to this page any time.

Catch-Up

Swim freestyle but keep one arm extended in front while the other completes a full stroke. Your hands 'catch up' at the front before the other arm begins. This teaches patience and a long reach.

Fingertip Drag

Swim freestyle but drag your fingertips along the surface during recovery. This encourages a high elbow recovery and keeps your stroke close to your body.

Side Kick

Kick on your side with one arm extended forward and the other at your hip. Bottom ear in the water. Breathe by turning toward the ceiling. Switch sides each length.

6-Kick Switch

Kick on your side for 6 kicks, then take one stroke and switch to the other side for 6 kicks. This builds rotation timing and connection.

Fist Drill

Swim freestyle with your hands in fists. This forces you to feel the water with your forearms and teaches a better catch position.

Tarzan Drill

Swim freestyle with your head above water, eyes forward. This strengthens your kick and core. Keep your hips up.

Board Kick

Hold a kickboard with arms extended. Steady flutter kick from the hips. Core engaged, body flat.

Torpedo Kick

Push off the wall in streamline. Kick in a tight torpedo position. Focus on body position and kick rhythm.



The Freestyle Blueprint

Build your freestyle one layer at a time. Each step adds a new piece to the stroke.

1

Body Position & Balance

Flat body, still head, connected core.

2

Kick Technique

Steady, hip-driven kick that keeps you moving.

3

Rotation & Timing

Roll your body to connect pull and breath.

4

The Catch & Pull

Anchor your hand and move your body past it.

5

Breathing

Smooth, rhythmic breath without losing balance.

6

Freestyle Session

Put it all together in a complete workout.

Equipment Used

Fins

For kick drills and body position work.

Kickboard

For isolating the freestyle kick.

Pull Buoy

For isolating arm pull and rotation.

Snorkel

For drills without breathing distraction.

STEP 1

Body Position & Balance

Everything starts here. Get your body flat and the rest becomes easier.

1



Step 1

Body Position & Balance

Everything starts here. If your body is flat, balanced and streamlined, the water works with you. If it's not, every stroke fights against drag.

Torpedo Kick

Push off the wall in a tight streamline. Arms extended, hands stacked, core tight. Add a steady flutter kick from the hips. Glide as far as you can without breaking position. Feel the water flow over your body.

"Imagine a rod running from the top of your head to your toes. Stay long and straight. If your hips drop, tighten your core."

Key Focus Points

Flat Body Line

Hips at the surface, core engaged. Your body should be as horizontal as possible. If your hips or legs sink, everything becomes harder.

Head Position

Look at the bottom of the pool, not forward. The waterline should hit at your hairline. If your head is up, your hips are down.

Core Connection

Your core holds everything together. A tight midsection keeps your body flat and prevents your legs from dragging.

Long and Narrow

Extend through your fingertips and toes. The longer and narrower you are, the less drag you create.

STEP 2

Kick Technique

A good freestyle kick is small, fast and driven from the hips.

2



Step 2

Kick Technique

The kick provides propulsion, balance and rhythm. A good freestyle kick is small, fast and driven from the hips.

Board Kick

Hold a kickboard with arms extended. Kick freestyle with a steady flutter kick from the hips. Keep your core tight and body flat. Toes should just break the surface. Don't let your knees bend too much.

"Small, fast kicks from the hips. Think fluttering, not pedalling. Your legs should feel like they're connected to your core, not moving independently."

Key Focus Points

Kick from the Hips

The power comes from the hips and glutes, not the knees. A knee-driven kick creates drag and wastes energy.

Small Amplitude

The kick should be compact. Toes just break the surface on the upbeat. No big splashes, no wide movements.

Steady Rhythm

A consistent six-beat kick provides constant propulsion. The kick never stops, even when you breathe.

Pointed Toes

Ankles should be relaxed and toes pointed. Flexed feet act like brakes. Loose ankles let the water flow.

STEP 3

Rotation & Timing

Freestyle is not a flat stroke. Roll your body to connect your pull and breath.

3



Step 3

Rotation & Timing

Freestyle is not a flat stroke. Your body should rotate smoothly along its long axis with each stroke, driven by the hips.

6-Kick Switch

Kick on your side with one arm extended forward and the other at your hip. After six kicks, take one stroke and switch to the other side. Let your hips lead the rotation. Head stays still, bottom ear in the water.

"Hips roll first, shoulders follow. Don't force it. Let the rotation flow from one side to the other."

Key Focus Points

Hips Lead

Rotation starts in the hips. Your shoulders follow. Think of rotating along your spine like a skewer.

45-Degree Roll

You don't need to roll to your side. A moderate rotation is enough to connect your pull and set up your breath.

Both Sides Even

Rotate the same amount in each direction. If one side feels weaker, that's where to focus.

Head Stays Still

Your head is the anchor. The body rotates around it. Don't let your head rock or turn with the stroke.

STEP 4

The Catch & Pull

Your hand anchors in the water and your body moves past it.

4



Step 4

The Catch & Pull

Your hand anchors in the water and your body moves past it. A good catch and pull is what moves you through the water efficiently.

Catch-Up Drill

Swim freestyle but wait for one hand to touch the other at the front before starting the next stroke. This forces a long reach, a full pull, and patience at the front of the stroke.

"Reach, catch, pull, finish. Don't rush the front of the stroke. Let your hand enter, extend, then set the catch before pulling."

Key Focus Points

High Elbow Catch

As your hand enters, your elbow stays high and your forearm drops to catch the water. Think of reaching over a barrel.

Pull Past Your Hip

The stroke finishes when your hand pushes past your hip. Don't cut it short. A complete pull gives you maximum distance per stroke.

Early Vertical Forearm

Get your forearm vertical as early as possible in the pull. This is how you grip the water and generate power.

Relaxed Recovery

The recovery above the water should be relaxed. High elbow, fingertips close to the water, hand enters in front of the shoulder.

STEP 5

Breathing

The breath should fit into the stroke without changing anything.





Step 5

Breathing

The breath should fit into the stroke without changing anything. A smooth, rhythmic breath keeps you balanced and relaxed.

Side Kick Breathing

Kick on your side with one arm extended forward and the other at your hip. Your bottom ear stays in the water. Breathe by turning your head slightly toward the ceiling. Practice on both sides.

"One goggle in, one goggle out. You don't need to lift your head. Just turn it. The water should sit right at the corner of your mouth."

Key Focus Points

Turn, Don't Lift

Rotate your head just enough to breathe. If you lift, your hips drop. The bow wave created by your head gives you a pocket of air.

Exhale Underwater

Blow out steadily through your nose while your face is in the water. When you turn to breathe, all you need is a quick inhale.

Breathe Every 3 Strokes

Bilateral breathing keeps your stroke balanced and your rotation even. If you only breathe to one side, your stroke will develop unevenly.

Timing with Rotation

The breath happens with your rotation, not in addition to it. As your body rolls, your head turns with it.

Breathing tip: If breathing every 3 feels too hard at first, breathe every 2 on one side. As your fitness improves, work toward bilateral breathing. The goal is a relaxed, rhythmic pattern.



Step 6

Freestyle Session

Put it all together. A 1,400m workout that takes you through every skill in this program.

1

Warm Up

4 x 100m easy freestyle. Settle in.

Easy

20s rest

2

Kick Set

4 x 50m kick with board. Steady rhythm.

Easy

15s rest

Kickboard

3

Rotation Drill

4 x 50m 6-kick switch. Connect the roll.

Easy

20s rest

Fins

4

Catch Focus

4 x 50m catch-up drill. Patience at the front.

Easy

20s rest

5

Breathing Practice

4 x 50m freestyle, breathe every 3 strokes.

Medium

20s rest

6

Main Swim

4 x 100m freestyle. Count strokes per length.

Medium

30s rest

7

Cool Down

2 x 50m easy backstroke. Relaxed and smooth.

Easy

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Total: approx. 1,400 Metres

Stroke count: Track how many strokes per 25m. As technique improves, the count drops. This is the simplest measure of efficiency.



Common Faults & Fixes

The most common freestyle mistakes and how to correct them.

Body Position

Hips and legs sinking

Fix: Engage your core, press your chest slightly, and look at the bottom of the pool. If your head is too high, your legs will drop. Think about swimming downhill.

Head too high, looking forward

Fix: Look at the bottom of the pool, not ahead. The waterline should sit at your hairline. A lifted head pushes your hips down.

Body snaking side to side

Fix: This usually comes from a crossover entry or wide arm recovery. Focus on entering your hand in front of your shoulder, not crossing the midline.

Leg Action

Kick from the knees, not the hips

Fix: Focus on initiating the kick from your hips and glutes. If your knees bend too much, you create drag. Think straight legs with a slight knee flex.

Kick too wide or too big

Fix: Keep the kick compact. Toes should just break the surface. A smaller, faster kick is more efficient than a big, slow one.

One leg kicking harder than the other

Fix: This often matches a breathing-side imbalance. Practice bilateral breathing and kick drills to even out both sides.

Kick stops when breathing

Fix: The kick should never stop, especially during the breath. Practice breathing drills with fins to maintain kick rhythm through the breath.



Common Faults & Fixes

Arm Action

Hand crossing the midline on entry

Fix: Your hand should enter the water in front of your shoulder, not across your head. Practice catch-up drill and watch where your hand enters.

Dropping the elbow during the catch

Fix: Keep your elbow high as your forearm drops to catch the water. Think of reaching over a barrel. Practice fist drill to feel the forearm.

Short stroke, not finishing past the hip

Fix: Push your hand all the way past your hip before recovering. A complete pull gives you maximum distance per stroke.

Thumb-first entry

Fix: Enter the water fingertips first, with your hand angled slightly outward. A thumb-first entry causes shoulder strain and a poor catch.

Wide, sweeping arm recovery

Fix: Recovery should be relaxed with a high elbow, hand close to the water. Don't swing wide. Let your elbow lead.

Breathing

Lifting head to breathe

Fix: Turn your head, don't lift it. One goggle should stay in the water. The bow wave gives you a pocket of air at the surface.

Holding breath, not exhaling underwater

Fix: Exhale steadily through your nose while your face is down. When you turn, all you need is a quick inhale.

Breathing too late in the stroke

Fix: Start turning your head as the pulling arm passes under your chest. By the time the hand exits, your mouth should already be at the surface.

Only breathing to one side

Fix: Practice bilateral breathing (every 3 strokes). Breathing to one side creates an uneven stroke and limits your race awareness.

F R E E S T Y L E

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: Position & Kick

Freestyle starts with a flat body and a steady kick. Get these right first.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

2

Torpedo Kick

4 x 25m streamline kick. Set your body position first.

Easy

15s rest

Fins

3

Board Kick

4 x 50m freestyle kick with board. Steady from the hips.

Easy

20s rest

Kickboard

4

Easy Swim

4 x 50m freestyle. Focus on keeping your body flat.

Easy

20s rest

5

Cool Down

100m easy backstroke.

Easy

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Total: approx. 800 Metres



Workout 2: Rotation & Timing

Roll your body with each stroke. Think hips, not shoulders.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

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

Side Kick

4 x 25m side kick, switch sides each length.

Easy**15s rest****Fins****3**

6-Kick Switch

4 x 50m: 6 kicks on one side, stroke, switch.

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

Freestyle Swim

4 x 50m freestyle. Feel the rotation on each stroke.

Medium**20s rest****5**

Cool Down

100m easy choice.

Easy**--****Total: approx. 900 Metres**



Workout 3: Catch & Pull

Anchor your hand and move your body past it.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

2

Fist Drill

4 x 25m freestyle with fists. Feel the forearm.

Easy

15s rest

3

Catch-Up

4 x 50m catch-up freestyle. Patience at the front.

Easy

20s rest

4

Pull Buoy Swim

4 x 50m freestyle with pull buoy. Long strokes.

Medium

20s rest

Pull Buoy

5

Freestyle Swim

4 x 50m freestyle. Count strokes per length.

Medium

20s rest

6

Cool Down

100m easy backstroke.

Easy

--

Total: approx. 1,000 Metres



Workout 4: Breathing

Fit the breath into the stroke without changing anything.

1**Warm Up**

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy

20s rest

2**Side Kick Breathing**

4 x 25m side kick with breathing. Both sides.

Easy

15s rest

Fins

3**Breathe Every 3**

4 x 50m freestyle, bilateral breathing.

Easy

20s rest

4**Build Set**

4 x 100m freestyle. Build pace, hold the breath pattern.

Medium

20s rest

5**Cool Down**

2 x 50m easy backstroke.

Easy

--

Total: approx. 1,000 Metres



Workout 5: Putting It Together

Combine everything: position, kick, pull, and breathing into one smooth stroke.

1

Warm Up

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

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

Torpedo Kick

4 x 25m streamline kick. Set your body position first.

Easy**15s rest****Fins****3**

Catch-Up Drill

4 x 25m catch-up freestyle. Patience on the lead arm.

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

Drill-Swim

4 x 50m: 25m fingertip drag + 25m full freestyle.

Medium**20s rest****5**

Freestyle Swim

4 x 100m freestyle. Count your strokes per length.

Medium**30s rest****6**

Cool Down

2 x 50m easy backstroke.

Easy**--**

Total: approx. 1,200 Metres

F R E E S T Y L E

Feeling Good?

Try something a little harder. The next five workouts step things up with longer sets, higher intensity, and more demanding technique work. Same focus, bigger challenge.



Workout 6: Threshold Builder

Hold a steady, moderate effort. Build the engine without losing form.

1**Warm Up**

4 x 100m easy freestyle.

Easy**20s rest****2****Drill Set**

4 x 50m: 25m catch-up + 25m full stroke.

Easy**15s rest****3****Build Set**

4 x 100m freestyle, build pace 1-4. Smooth to strong.

Medium**20s rest****4****Main Set**

4 x 150m freestyle at steady effort. Hold your stroke count.

Hard**30s rest****5****Cool Down**

200m easy choice.

Easy**--****Total: approx. 1,800 Metres**



Workout 7: Speed & Efficiency

Go faster without adding strokes. That is real speed.

1**Warm Up**

300m easy freestyle.

Easy

--

2**Kick Set**

4 x 50m kick with fins. Strong and steady.

Medium**15s rest****Fins****3****Descend Set**

4 x 100m freestyle, descend 1-4. Count strokes on #4.

Medium**20s rest****4****Speed Reps**

8 x 50m freestyle at strong effort. Hold technique.

Hard**20s rest****5****Pull Set**

4 x 100m with pull buoy. Long strokes, controlled breathing.

Medium**20s rest****Pull Buoy****6****Cool Down**

200m easy backstroke.

Easy

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Total: approx. 2,000 Metres



Workout 8: Distance Pacing

Learn to hold a pace over longer distances. Same speed, same stroke, every length.

1**Warm Up**

300m easy freestyle.

Easy

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2**Drill Set**

4 x 50m: 25m 6-kick switch + 25m swim with fins.

Easy

15s rest

Fins

3**Main Set**

3 x 200m freestyle at consistent pace. Check your time each 200.

Medium

30s rest

4**Sustained Swim**

400m continuous freestyle. Even splits.

Medium

--

5**Kick Set**

4 x 50m kick, choice position.

Easy

15s rest

6**Cool Down**

200m easy choice.

Easy

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Total: approx. 2,200 Metres



Workout 9: Sprint & Technique

Short, fast reps with full recovery. Quality over quantity.

1**Warm Up**

4 x 100m easy freestyle.

Easy

15s rest

2**Activation**

4 x 25m fast kick in streamline.

Hard

15s rest

Fins

3**Sprint Reps**

8 x 25m freestyle at near-max effort. Perfect entry, fast turnover.

Hard

30s rest

4**Recovery Swim**

4 x 50m easy freestyle.

Easy

15s rest

5**Sprint 50s**

4 x 50m freestyle, fast. Hold form to the wall.

Hard

45s rest

6**Cool Down**

200m easy backstroke.

Easy

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Total: approx. 1,800 Metres



Workout 10: Race Pace Challenge

The full test. Warm up well, swim hard, cool down properly.

1

Warm Up

400m easy freestyle.

Easy

--

2

Drill Set

4 x 50m drill of choice with fins.

Easy

15s rest

Fins

3

Build Set

4 x 100m build, easy to fast.

Medium

20s rest

4

Main Set

5 x 200m freestyle at goal pace. Push through the back half.

Hard

30s rest

5

Cool Down

300m easy choice, mix of strokes.

Easy

--

Total: approx. 2,500 Metres



See You in the Water.

Great work completing the Freestyle Blueprint. You've built the body position, the rotation, the catch and the breath. Now take it to the pool and let the stroke flow.

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