

# Freestyle



Photo Courtesy of Andrew Woo

It is one of the easiest strokes to learn and is usually the first stroke that most children learn after taking water safety. It is one of the most popular strokes when swimming Summer Recreational or USA Swimming. But, how do we describe the stroke to someone who does not know how to swim or has very little swimming background?

In describing the typical freestyle, we see these main points of interest:

- The hand enters the water and extends along the body line.
- The body/hips rotate during the hand entry extension.
- The hand either pitches down to initiate the catch, or pitches slightly outwards and moves beneath the body line.
- The elbow positions above the forearm in a “high elbow position” as the swimmer creates the anchor or catch point.
- The body begins rotating to the opposite side as pressure is applied to the anchor position. The opposite arm then exits and moves forward (recovered).
- The anchor position sweeps in slightly towards the centerline of the body as the recovering hand passes the shoulder line.
- The hips move into the exit rotation phase as the elbow lifts the arm out of the water while the opposite arm extends into the catch phase.
- While the rotation of the hips and the arms are moving, a continuous fast but small amplitude kick is applied through the hips and lower legs.

Granted, there might be a number of different ways to teach the freestyle stroke process, but everyone’s body is different and we as coaches work with what the swimmer’s body gives us—and attempt to make it as efficient as possible.



## ASK THE **SWIMMING EXPERT**

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18 years of coaching experience.  
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