

Sam King Swim Clinic Recap

ABC: Always Be Counting (stroke count). The goal is to decrease stroke count. A goal at the Olympic level is 10 strokes to be competitive freestyle, but masters' swimmers should try to be around 20 or lower. Know your stroke count.

FREESTYLE:

1. Body position. Keep a straight body. Tilt forward over the lungs, hips at the surface, eyes down, only back of the head breaking the surface. Flatten lower back, with pelvis tucked. Make sure the body is always moving forward (not side to side). All focus should be on moving forward.
2. Limb connect to Limb stretch it out full extension.
3. Catch: Initiate by "pushing" the elbow forward over the wrist (starting in your scapula). Elbow pit rotates down, and forearm rotates back, with the fingers remaining relaxed. Once you've executed the "catch," connect to your body through your back and lats and accelerate forward past the neutral catch position.
4. Breathing: Freestyle breathing can be a quick 1-2 count instead of a steady 1-2 count. It's important to leave the lead arm stretched out front during the breath. Slow down the tempo of the arms. One should be able to see the catch. Don't start the catch too early. Don't allow the hand to descend in the water before starting the catch—arm remains at the surface throughout the breath. It's almost as if you are performing a catch-up stroke during the breath.
5. Strong body: Keep the hips tucked, the stomach hollow. It should feel like you are swimming downhill. Keep the weight over the lungs. The head is almost underwater, one eye out, breathe in the trough created by the forward motion. Rotation is in the shoulders, not the hips.

STREAMLINE: This is vitally important. One can decrease stroke count if using correct streamline position. Streamline position is your friend in a race. It can save you so much energy in a longer race. Push off HARD from the wall. Hold streamline position for a second before initiating first kick.

BUTTERFLY:

1. Recovery: The hand entry should be soft - no splash. Arms finish out and around, entering shoulder width apart (or just outside, depending on flexibility). Not up and over. Butterfly should be relatively flat (as opposed to up and down movement). Think of extending/pressing the armpit. Reach out and then reach a little bit more concentrating on the armpit. There is almost a slight pause as you make the additional stretch. Hand position - you end up with your hands pushing up and away from the body (not dragging your thumbs on your hips). This position allows your arms to be in the correct position for recovery. Correct recovery will make it seem like you could almost drag your thumbs over the water. There is not a lot of air time for the arms. Keep the body tight (same as in freestyle) as opposed to releasing the hips and lower back during the press; this keeps everything connected.

2. Catch: Like freestyle, with both arms. Complete the “press” after the hand entry, leaving the arms at the surface and extending forward as the chest presses, and at the deepest point of the press, the elbows will start to rotate into the catch.
3. Timing: Two kicks of equal amplitude per stroke. First kick is immediately *after* the hands enter (see above; enter, complete the “down” kick, which results in the stretch forward and the press). Second down kick initiated *after* the catch is completed. You are kicking your body over the hands, allowing you to finish that second kick, and (hopefully) a relaxed arm recovery.

BREASTSTROKE:

Think streamline.

1. OutswEEP: press out, with palms facing out and head down. When feel your lats “loaded” and tensed, palms are going to “round the corner” – similar to setting a catch (albeit much shallower) in other strokes. Everything should remain in a tight line through the outswEEP; biggest mistake is lifting the head during the outswEEP for the breath!
2. InswEEP: Once palms round the corner, the inswEEP is quick, with hands moving together and forward in one explosive motion. OutswEEP is slow to set; inswEEP is quick! Breath occurs during the inswEEP! As arms extend all the way forward, going to pull the head and chest (moving together, do not bury the head!) back into a tight streamline.
3. Timing: Heels come up as the arms shoot forward. Feet should begin to push backward as soon as the arms and hands are fully extended out front. (pull, kick, glide). As you speed up, try reducing the glide time, and bringing the heels up sooner; *do not* try and pull faster – pull speed should remain constant regardless of distance. Longer races – hold the streamline longer! And remember to be conscious of stroke count!