



Stingrays Swim Program - Glossary of Terms

Listed here are the most common terms / abbreviations you can expect to see in training programs.

- “A” Stroke - Your best stroke, often Freestyle (FS).
- Active Recovery. Rather than rest at the wall for a prescribed rest interval, your recovery is done with easy swimming. This provides a continuing aerobic effect, while muscles and cardiovascular system recover.
- Ascending - Getting slower (i.e. the time taken increases).
- “B” Stroke – Your second-best stroke.
- Back End Speed (BES) - is the pace of the in the later stages of a swim e.g. 2nd 50M or 100 in the set distance. It is trying to maintain pace.
- Bilateral Breathing – bilateral breathing is used in the freestyle stroke and involves breathing on both sides of the body. This helps to create smooth and even strokes. It also helps to develop a good body roll. This is essential to swim great freestyle. Usually you breathe after a set of three strokes, alternating with breathing in on the left stroke on the first set, and then on the right on the second.
- BK - Backstroke or Back.
- BLIRS – Both arms, Left arm, Right arm, Swim.
- BS - Breaststroke sometimes also BR or Breast.
- Body Position - The way the swimmers body sits in the water, ideally as straight, long and close to the surface of the water as possible. If you are told that you need to raise your body position, this usually means that your hips and legs are sinking too low in the water, which means you are not streamlined and your body has increased resistance through the water.
- Body roll – body roll refers to the rotation of your body from side to side. If you are swimming freestyle, your body should be tilting on its side to a 40-60% angle, but your head should remain straight in the water until you go to breathe.
- Build/Building - Increase speed throughout a swim. Easy at the beginning, building to fast at the end while still maintaining good technique.
- “C” Stroke – Your third best stroke.
- Catch-up - Drill where on FS one hand stays at full stretch ahead until the other meets it then it begins the stroke
- CS – Centre Snorkel
- Cool-down- A slower swim as an essential injury prevention technique, used by the swimmer after a race or training session set to rid the body of excess lactic acid.
- Counting strokes/Strokes Per Length (SPL) - is one of the best ways to get feedback on your technique and efficiency. If your stroke count starts to climb on particular set, it’s often because your efficiency is faltering, and it’s time to focus harder on such technique points as push offs, streamline, catch, head position, foot position, etc. Counting will seem difficult and almost overwhelming at first, but if you keep at it, counting will become almost automatic, and will become one of your most valuable training tools.
- Critical Swim Speed (CSS) - It is all about maintaining pace over a distance. CSS is usually over longer distances and open water swims.

- “D” Stroke – the one stroke you don’t like to swim at all!
- Descending - Getting faster (i.e. the time taken reduces)
- Dive Start - Diving entry from the blocks or pool side in the deep end (usually either a grab start or a track start from the blocks)
- Dolphin Kick - Simultaneous leg kick used in Butterfly. The dolphin kick is usually used for the butterfly stroke, and the start and turns in a race, as it is very fast. It involves a whipping motion with the legs, keeping your feet together, similar to how a dolphin swims.
- DPS - Distance Per Stroke. The distance that you travel during one stroke
- Drag - FS Drill where your fingertips drag through the water on the recovery (also known as trickle)
- Drill - A controlled form of stroke designed to draw attention to a particular aspect of that stroke e.g.: Catch-Up, Drag, Elbows High, and many more
- Easy - Usually swim down or warm up, a slow easy stroke focusing on stretching out the stroke and warming up or down.
- Elbows High - Drill where as it sounds on FS you keep the elbows bent and high out of the water on the recovery part of the stroke
- Early Vertical Forearm (EVF) - position your forearm as close to vertical as early as possible in the catch phase of the stroke to grab the most water as early as possible
- FS - Freestyle or Free (but any stroke will do as long as you can maintain speed)
- FP – Finger Paddles
- Fly - Butterfly
- Form Stroke – Any stroke except FS.
- Front End Speed (FES) is the pace of the first 50m of a race over 100/200/400/800. Sometimes the first 100m can be FES, particularly longer events. FES is always going to be quicker due to being fresh and often having a dive start.
- Glide – In swimming terminology gliding is when you are coasting along with a pause in your stroke e.g. in BS a simple stroke rhyme is pull, kick, glide.
- Go off - Time in which you have to complete a swim or set of repeat distance/times inclusive of rest time
- Grab Start - A type of Dive Start. Note it can also refer to starting from in the pool holding onto the side
- Hard – Fast pace/Sprint speed
- High Elbow- Refers to the recovery phase of the FS, where keeping a high elbow encourages better balance and body roll. Also refers to the pull stage of the stroke, where the elbow remains in a higher position over the hand, giving the sensation of reaching over a barrel when pulling through the water.
- HR - Heart rate
- HVO - High Velocity Overload – Swim part of the length (no more than 15m) at full speed without breathing, rest of the set distance swim easy
- IM - Individual Medley (all four strokes together in order Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle)
- Kick - Legs only (no pulling)
- Kickboard - A flat float used for doing kick

- KiRLS – Drill for a particular stroke, kick on each length, however spilt up the stroke into 25m of: Kick only, 25m Left arm only, 25m Right arm only, 25 Swim (full stroke).
- L/R.- Left arm/right arm You might see something such as 2L/2R BK. This means that you alternate 2 strokes of backstroke with your left arm and 2 strokes with your right arm.
- Length - A completed lap either up or down the pool. This may be a distance of 25 m or 50 m depending upon the size of the pool.
- m (e.g.25m) - Metres – Our Pambula training pool is 25 metres long, therefore, 50 metres is 2 lengths, 100m – 4 lengths, 200m – 8 lengths, 300m - 12 lengths and 400m 16 lengths etc..
- IM - Individual Medley –All four strokes swum in a specified order. The Order is Butterfly, Back, Breast, Free.
- Medley Relay Order is always Back, Breast, Fly, Free
- Negative Split - Go faster for the second half of the set distance than the first half
- Number 1 - Your best stroke.
- Number 2 – Your second-best stroke
- Number 3 – Your third best stroke
- Number 4 – Your least favourite stroke
- OC/CH – Own choice (of stroke to swim)
- Open Turn - The two-handed touch turn completed for Breaststroke and Butterfly
- Pace- The speed that corresponds with a race distance, e.g. 1:20 (1 minute 20 seconds) per 100m.
- PB - Personal Best - this is your best time to date for a particular stroke and distance, remember that long course (50m) times will be slower than short course (25m) so you will have pb's for each
- Percentages - Usually refers to the effort or pace being completed for that swim set. i.e. 80% is pretty hard but not maximum effort or sprint.
- Pull - Arms only (no kicking).
- Pull Buoy - The figure of eight style float that goes between your legs for pull only drills.
- Recovery - On FS when the arm is out of the water being brought back up for the next stroke. Can also be a recovery swim when you slow down to bring the Heart rate down after a high intensity set
- Relay –Team event with 4 swimmers.
- Relay Exchange/changeover- The exchange between the swimmer in the water finishing the leg and the next swimmer on the relay team. A smooth exchange requires the finishing swimmer's hand to touch the wall (or touch pad) at the same time as the starting swimmer's sets off from the starting block.
- RI - Rest Interval - How much rest (usually in seconds) you get after a set swim e.g. 8 x 50m FS RI 20s (8 x 50 metres of Freestyle with 20 seconds rest between each 50m).
- RILBICH – Breathing – on the right, left, Bi-lat & Choice.
- Set - A self-contained part of the swimming session as 'set' by the coach e.g. a 'main set' might be 10 x 100m FS go off 90 secs.
- SKiPS – Stoke Drill, where one length is swum on each of: Swim (full stroke), Kick only, Pull only, Swim (full stroke).

- SKIMPS – SkiPS with an individual medley in the middle - Swim (full stroke), Kick only, I.M , Pull only, Swim (full stroke).
- Sprint - All out as fast as you can go, breathing as little as you can.
- Steady - Swimming at a pace which is easily maintained (not easy or too hard, aiming for consistency of pace).
- Streamline - Underwater body position after diving or pushing off the wall which maximises swim speed and efficiency.
- Stroke - The stroke you are completing.
- Stroke Per Length (SPL) or Stroke Count - Number of strokes per length
- Six -Beat Kick - In backstroke or freestyle, this means that you kick 6 times (6 downkicks) for every complete stroke cycle.
- Swimming drills – when you start to become more confident, you may be asked by your coach to do swimming drills. This is swimming terminology for simple exercises focusing on a particular part of your stroke technique. If you are struggling to get the timing right on your breaststroke kick, for example, you might use a float to hold up your front end and then focus all your attention on the kick to help you improve it.
- Swim Down - Swimming slowly and steadily at the end of the session to warm/cool down.
- Two -Beat Kick - In freestyle, this means that you kick twice (2 downkicks) for every complete stroke cycle. This is a kick pattern often used by distance, triathletes and open-water swimmers freestylers.
- Track Start - A type of Dive Start.
- Tumble turn - The flip (somersault style) turn used for FS and BK. These are underwater somersaults used in backstroke and freestyle that allow swimmers to push off from the wall for the next length. These may seem like a tall order to a novice swimmer, but they are fairly easy once you have mastered the technique.
- Turnaround - How much time it is expected to complete a set swim e.g. 4 x 200m FS on 3.00 (You have 3 minutes to complete each 200 metres - if you do it in 2m50s you have 10s rest)
- UW - Underwater (distance to be swum underwater).
-  - Flippers can be used.  - Flippers cannot be used.