

All-Strokes - Stroke Count

By Glenn Mills, GoSwim Video of the Week, September 13, 2017

[Video:](#)

Counting strokes is a simple way to check your technique in the middle of a set.

Why do it:

The simple combination of the number of strokes, combined with your time, gives you an idea if you're holding proper technique when things get tough. Some strokes are easier to manage than others.

How to do it:

1 - First, this isn't about more or less being better, you have to find the optimum count at the optimum rate that gives you the best chance of going to optimum speed based on your goals.

2 - This is about how to adjust your count and where to focus if your stroke count starts to vary too much.

3 - Breaststroke and freestyle are the simplest. Both strokes offer the opportunity to GLIDE more, or change rate more simply by adding addition in the front of the stroke.

4 - Backstroke and butterfly typically have pretty set stroke rates and lengths, which means you'll need to make adjustments to stroke count off the walls.

How to do it really well (the fine points):

If you want to adjust your stroke counts on freestyle and breaststroke, try to breakout at the same spot, and either lengthen or shorten the amount of time you spend in extension.

If you want to adjust your stroke counts for backstroke and butterfly, count the number of underwater dolphins off each wall, and either add or subtract from that number to impact the overall number of strokes per length.

Remember, everything you do will have an impact. The further you go off the wall, the less strokes you take, the less air you'll get. Less air can have a harsh impact on the overall swim... so be careful to not just focus on LESS, but rather, discovering that perfect balance for each stroke... that allows you to go the speed you need to. Then check every few lengths to make sure you're sticking to the plan.