



## Swim Dictionary

Swimming has swim jargon that sounds almost like another language. Knowing some swimming terminology or swim terms will help you navigate the swimming world.

### Equipment/Gear

When swimming, you'll hear several swimming terms tossed around in regards to swimming equipment or gear. This is what a swimmer will use while in the water to assist with their stroke, kick, or pull.

1. **Buoy:** A flotation device used by swimmers in practice.
2. **Cap:** A cap is a silicone, latex, or lycra material that covers the head to help increase efficiency in the water and reduce drag. Swim caps can keep hair out of a swimmer's face and can help prevent chlorine damage to hair. Caps can be used by male or female swimmers.
3. **Fins:** Large rubber fin type devices that fit on a swimmer's feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.
4. **Goggles:** Goggles are a piece of equipment that goes over the eyes to help swimmers see better underwater and help keep chlorine from irritating their eyes.
5. **Kickboard:** A piece of swim equipment made of foam or hard plastic that floats on the water's surface and is used for kick and drill sets. Kickboards can be used by any age or swim ability.
6. **Paddles:** Swim paddles are hand paddles swimmers attach or hold onto while swim training to help improve their strength and skill.
7. **Parka:** Large 3/4-length fur lined coats worn by swimmers. Usually are in team colors with logo or team name.

### Pool Specific Swimming Terminology

Whether you're swimming at practice, a swim meet, or just getting in a workout at the pool, you're likely to hear some swim jargon around the area. Keep your ears open next time you're at the pool and you might surprise yourself with how much you hear.

1. **Code of Conduct:** The Code is not strict and involves common sense and proper behavior.
2. **Backstroke Flags:** Series of flags stretched out across the width of the pool at both ends to notify swimmers that they're approaching a wall. Swimmers count their strokes from the flags to the wall in order to perform a flip turn or a finish. If you're just starting out, use the backstroke flags as a point to flip over onto your stomach. Do this until you master your backstroke turn.
3. **Blocks:** The platform from which swimmers begin races. Decades ago, they were simple metal or wooden blocks and looked more like podiums than the sleek, high-tech ones of today, but the old name has stuck.

4. **Deck:** The area surrounding the pool. The deck surface is usually made of concrete, tile, or other solid materials. It can be slippery when wet, so be sure not to run around on it! Most pools do not allow swim parents on deck during practice or swim meets.
5. **Lane:** Place in the pool where a swimmer trains, warms up/cool down, or competes in a heat. Two lane lines or a lane line and a wall can make up a lane.
6. **Lap:** Swimming down and back the length of the pool
7. **Lane Lines:** Stretch of rope or wire, usually filled with round, plastic absorbers to minimize waves. Lane lines help keep swimmers from swimming all over the place. They also hurt like crazy when you hit them with your hands :). It's also advised that you don't rest on the lane lines, as a Coach is sure to correct you.
8. **Pace Clock:** The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.
9. **Team Records:** The statistics a team keeps, listing the fastest swimmer in the clubs history for each age group/each event.
10. **Wall:** Place in the pool where a swimmer will start, finish, and turn during a practice or a meet. Walls also allow a safe place for swimmers to rest in between sets and get into the water without getting in the way of other swimmers.

## Strokes

Swimming isn't swimming without knowing some of the strokes!

1. **Backstroke:** This is the only stroke swam on the back and that starts in the water. It can be the easiest for most new swimmers due to it being on the back. Backstroke is done by bringing one arm up and over the head at a time. It's paired with a freestyle (or flutter) kick. Backstroke is 2nd part of the IM and 1st leg of a medley relay.
2. **Breaststroke:** The kick for the breaststroke looks like a frog kick. In that your heels come up together towards your buttocks and then push out/back in a single motion. The arms typically stay just under the water or right at the surface, depending on the swimmer. Breaststroke is the 3rd part of the IM and the 2nd leg of a medley relay.
3. **Butterfly:** Doesn't look like a butterfly at all :). In this stroke, the legs stay together and form a kick much like a dolphin. The arms swing forward over the water together. The butterfly is the 1st part of the IM and the 3rd leg of a medley relay.
4. **Freestyle:** Also known as a front or forward crawl. Freestyle is the most common stroke for beginners to learn. It is always last in the IM and medley relay.
5. **Individual Medley (IM):** The IM is more of a race than a stroke. Swimmers will swim all four strokes in a set order. The order for IM is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.
6. **Relays:** A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team, each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays:
  - 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order.
  - 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle.

## Practice/Workout

Most teams will have phrases, expressions, and swim terms unique to their team. However, the following basic swimming terms will get you started and swimming on your own in no time.

1. **Circle Swimming:** Form of **swimming etiquette** where you swim down the right-hand side of the lane, complete a flip turn, and return on the right-hand side of the lane. In that, you always keep the lane line to your right side (left when on your back). Typically used when more than one swimmer is in the lane.
2. **Cool Down:** Period of time at the end of a practice or workout dedicated to flushing out the remaining lactic acid in the muscles. This ensures a better recovery and helps prevent stiffness and injury. *Also called a warm down.*
3. **Dolphin Kick:** Used underwater in a streamline position when coming off the walls for all strokes except breaststroke. Breaststroke is allowed one dolphin kick during the pullout. Also known as the 'fifth stroke'.
4. **Dryland:** A catch-all term for all physical conditioning done outside of the water. This can range from pre-practice stretching to regular sessions dedicated to lifting weights or doing resistance exercises, yoga, Pilates, spin classes, etc.
5. **Flip Turn:** Used in competition for backstroke and freestyle, and some turns in the IM. Swimmers approach the wall and from their stomachs (Backstrokers will roll from their back to their front) and complete a forward roll.
6. **Flutter Kick:** freestyle kick
7. **Goals:** The short and long range targets for swimmers to aim for.
8. **Open Turn (two-hand turn):** Used in competition for breaststroke, butterfly, and some transition turns in the IM. Swimmers must use both hands to complete the turn. For a legal turn, you must touch the wall with both hands at the same time before turning. In this turn, you do not flip (like in the flip turn), but rather, pivot on the wall.
9. **Pulling:** a swim during which only your upper body is used
10. **Streamline:** When the body is pointing in a long, straight line with the arms at the ears, locked together with one hand on top of the other, while the legs are together and the toes are pointed. It is used on starts and turns because it minimizes drag or resistance underwater.
11. **Sculling:** A drill in which the swimmer gently moves their forearms and hands back and forth through the water, developing a sense of how each move affects the swimmer's forward progress.
12. **Taper:** A few weeks before a major meet, the coach will begin scaling back the volume or workload at practice in favor of working on fine details, like starts and turns. This allows the swimmer to get more rest in hopes of dramatically improving their times at their goal meet. Warning: You may find your swimmer suddenly has a lot more energy after practice while at the same time telling you, "I can't take the garbage out because I'm on taper."
13. **Warm-up:** Time at the start of a practice dedicated to loosening up the muscles to help prevent injuries and work strokes and turns

14. **Yards:** The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the American system. A short course yard pool is 25 yards (75 feet) in length.
15. **Yardage:** The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.

## Practice Drills

A drill is an exercise done specifically to help your swimming technique. It's usually a modified version of one of the four competitive strokes (butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, or freestyle). A drill is designed to help you focus on a specific part of the technique, like your arm position, kicking, or breathing. Coaches use a lot of different drills, but here are a few most common for our practices.

1. **My Favorite Drill:** do a specific drill in between the backstroke flags and sprint the specific stroke outside the backstroke flags.
2. **6 Kick and Switch:** usually for back or free, kick 6 times between each arm.
3. **Shark Fin:** done for freestyle, hold arm above head in a shark fin like way and pause for a couple of seconds, done for each arm pull.
4. **Closed Fist Free:** freestyle, but instead of pulling with an open hand, you will with a closed hand/fist.
5. **Catch Up Free:** freestyle, but you hold a streamline and pull with one arm at a time, after each pull streamline again.
6. **3 Right 3 Left:** freestyle or back, pull with one arm three times and then pull with the other arm three times.

## Swim Meets

Swim meets have their own set of lingo. Here are some terms you may hear on race day.

1. **Check-In:** The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check-in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.
2. **Disqualified:** A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rule infraction. Disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with an open hand above their head.
3. **Dual Meet:** Type of meet where two (2) teams/clubs compete against each other.
4. **Event:** Events are broken down by distance (25, 50, 100), stroke (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly or I.M.) and oftentimes by age, gender and relay type.
5. **False Start:** When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.
6. **Heat sheet:** At large meets, officials distribute printed listings for each heat of each event to be swum. Swimmers should already be aware of what events they are entered in, but the heat sheet will tell them the order of events as well as the group and lane to which they are assigned. Athletes should take this timetable into consideration when planning when to warm up and when to leave the deck to go to the bathroom or the vendor area, lest they miss their heat. **Swimmers should mark on their arm, with sharpie, their list of events (event/heat/lane) this helps the swimmer to stay organized and Ready Bench run smoothly.**
7. **Heats:** Swimmers are grouped in heats according to their entry or seed time, with the fastest swimmers in each heat assigned to the middle lanes and each heat getting progressively faster. The fastest swimmers are distributed among the last three or four heats, with the fastest assigned to lane 4 in the final heat and the next fastest athlete in lane 4 in the penultimate heat, etc.
8. **High Point:** An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre meet information.
9. **Invitational:** Type of meet that requires a club to request an invitation to attend the meet.
10. **Scratch:** To withdraw from an event at a meet. Oftentimes, heading into a major meet, swimmers will enter every event for which they have qualified in order to keep their options open and then withdraw (or opt not to compete in finals) based on how they feel at the meet.
11. **Starter:** The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and ensuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.
12. **Time Trials:** provide an opportunity for swimmers to race for a "time" before the first meet of the season. They are designed to provide an initial baseline time from which to measure a swimmer's progress throughout the season.