

Swim TO Stay Safe, Swim Safe

Stay, Play, and Learn at Home Swim: Beginner – Lesson Three

Today's Lesson: Kicking and Arms

[Build your swim terms knowledge base](#)

[Flutter Kick](#)

[Front Swim Arms](#)

[Back Swim Arms](#)

Swim Level: Beginner

Learn-to-Swim Levels: Guardian 3, Preschool 2 to 4, Ultra 2 to 3, Youth and Adult 1

Safety Reminders: Caregivers should ensure that children **are supervised and never left unattended in and around water**. Adults and youth who practice any water activities should, also, **have a buddy close by**. Bathtub and shower **safety measures** should be **adhered to at all times**.

For all skills and drills, ensure that the area is free from obstruction and be aware of objects and people around you at all times. Caregivers should ensure that children are properly supervised at all times.

Remember that movement should be comfortable and should not cause any pain or discomfort in the joints or limbs. If discomfort is felt, please modify the movement so that it is comfortable for you. It is highly recommended to stretch prior to beginning any movement exercises.

Knowledge Goal: Word Challenge

Look online, choose from our resource page, or create your own word find, crossword or similar word game using some or all of following words:

Front

Kick

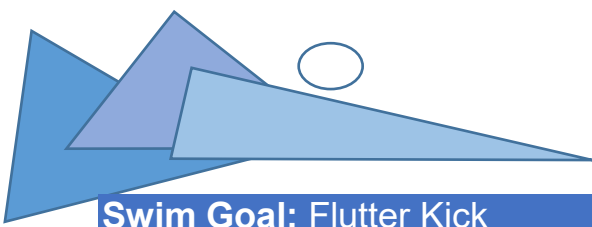
Windmill

Back

Arms

Splash

Before you continue with the lesson, do you know how these words relate to swimming? Revisit these words at the end of this lesson and see if you were right.



Swim Goal: Flutter Kick

Once swimmers are comfortable gliding through water, we add more propulsion by kicking to move further in the water.

How to Start:

Complete as many activities that match your comfort, age and skill level or that of your child's.

Materials:

- An area free from obstructions
- Mat (optional)
- Bathtub
- Bed or mattress (optional)

Steps:

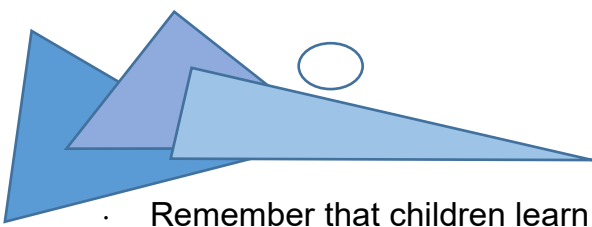
1. Lie flat on your back on the floor or use a mat if preferred in a back glide position, arms straight at your side and your legs straight.
2. Lift one leg up without bending your knee, then lift the other leg up as you bring the first leg back down. The kick movement should start from the hip.
3. Continue to alternate leg movements for 30 to 60 seconds.
4. Practice steps 1 to 3 with flexed feet, then with pointed toes. Which was easier? You are correct: it is easier to flutter kick with pointed toes because your knee is less likely to bend allowing you to kick faster.

Progressions:

- Practice the exercise while taking big breaths to relax the body completely. Are your feet relaxed? Are your legs straight? Ensure that each leg is making the same up and down movement.
- Put your hands under your bottom, tighten your core muscles and try kicking again.
- Practice kicking in the front glide position, try with your upper body on the floor, legs slightly raised. Then try with the upper body raised as well.
- Repetition is the key to ensuring movements become more ingrained and your body is able to perform them more naturally. Repeat all movements at least 10 times before moving on to the next step or progression.

Variations:

- If proper safety supervision is available and space permits, try in a bathtub filled with enough water to cover your feet when in a sitting position. With straight legs, kick slowly, creating little splashes with your feet. Gradually kick faster creating bigger bubbles with your feet.



- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult.
- To incorporate a core strength workout for youth and adults:
 - Try balancing on an exercise ball or bench with legs and feet touching the ground, or lifted off the ground.
 - Try balancing with the upper part of your body on the bed and the lower body off the edge of the bed.
- For older children, youth and adults, incorporate some knowledge principles to provide greater understanding. See below for some 'Did You Know?' tips and encourage the older learner to expand what they know about the science of swimming by visiting the library or looking online.

Red Light, Green Light

Age Recommendation: 3 years +

Learn-to-Swim Recommendation: Guardian 1 to 3, Preschool 1 to 4, Ultra 1 to 3

Materials

- An area free from obstructions.
- Bathtub

Activity

When you say 'green light' have your child kick fast, when you say 'yellow light' have your child kick slowly and when you say 'red light' they should stop.

Tips and Reminders

It is important to keep the legs straight.

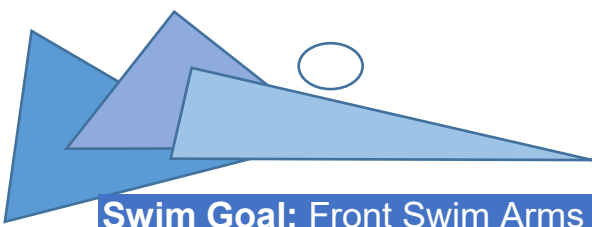
Did You Know?

A kick from the hip with a straight leg reduces drag from the knee.

Pointed toes reduces drag and prevents negative propulsion because water is not being kicked in the wrong direction.

Tips and Reminders

Keep your toes pointed and practice keeping your body aligned by engaging your core muscles when kicking.



Swim Goal: Front Swim Arms

Once swimmers are comfortable with their kick, it is time to introduce arm movement.

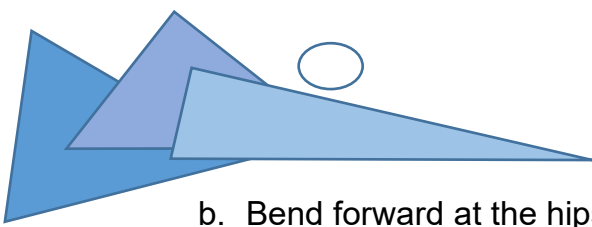
The following drills are aimed at getting swimmers used to the front crawl arm movements. For a more detailed breakdown of front crawl arms see Intermediate-to-Advanced Lesson 1.

Materials:

- An area free from obstructions
- Mat (optional)
- Ball (soccer ball, basketball, volleyball or any ball similar in size and weight)

Steps:

1. Draw a circle in the air with one arm.
 - a. Stand with arms relaxed at your sides, feet hip-width apart and look straight ahead.
 - b. Keeping the arm straight, slowly extend one arm behind you and then above your head.
 - c. Continue moving your arm downwards in front of you and bring it back down to your side where it started.
2. Draw a circle in the air with your other arm.
 - a. Repeat steps 1a-to-c with your other arm.
3. Practice circling both arms together:
 - a. Repeat steps 1a to c with both arms at the same time.
4. Introduce the alternating movement:
 - a. Stand with your arms relaxed at your sides, feet hip-width apart and look straight ahead.
 - b. Keeping the arm straight, slowly extend one arm behind you and then above your head.
 - c. Continue moving that same arm downwards in front of you, back down to your side and at the same time, extend your other arm behind you and above your head.
 - d. The arm moving upwards should reach above your head at the same time as your arm moving downwards returns back to its starting position.
 - e. Continue moving both arms in their circles so that one arm is always up and the other always down like the blades of a windmill.
5. Work on balance:
 - a. Find a ball (soccer ball, basketball, volleyball or any other ball similar in size and weight will work)



- b. Bend forward at the hips, and extend your arms over your head in the front glide position, keeping your chest parallel to the ground.
- c. Have someone place the ball on your back.
- d. Time how long you are able to hold the ball in this position.
- e. Once you are comfortable holding it in this position try adding in the arm movements.

Progressions

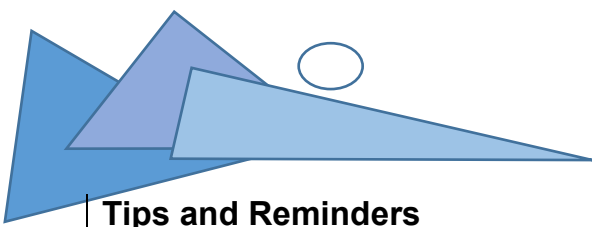
- Are you looking straight ahead? Try not moving your head from side to side or up and down during this drill. Pick a spot to stare at straight ahead and try not to take your eyes off that spot.
- Are your arms alternating? Arms should be opposite each other. When one arm is moving up, the other arm should be moving down.
- Try bending your arms slightly. As you are moving your extended arm down towards the floor, take your thumb and trace it down the side of your body. Your elbow will now bend while bringing your arm down.
- Repetition is the key to ensuring movements become more ingrained and your body is able to perform them more naturally. Repeat all movements at least 10 times before moving on to the next step or progression.

Variations:

- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult.
- To incorporate a core strength workout for youth and adults:
 - Try balancing on an exercise ball or bench with legs and feet touching the ground, or lifted off the ground.
 - Try balancing with the lower part of your body on the bed and the upper body off the edge of the bed.
- For older children, youth and adults, incorporate some knowledge principles to provide greater understanding. See below for some 'Did You Know?' tips and encourage the older learner to expand what they know about the science of swimming by visiting the library or looking online.

Did You Know?

The bulk of the thrust force providing forward propulsion in front crawl swimming comes from the arm movement. While the kick will provide some forward propulsion, the kick is used mostly to keep the body streamlined.



Tips and Reminders

Keep your body level and your arms as close to your body or in line with your body as possible for maximum stroke efficiency to move faster in water.

Swim Goal: Back Swim Arms

Back swim arms are the same as front swim arms only performed in the opposite direction and on your back.

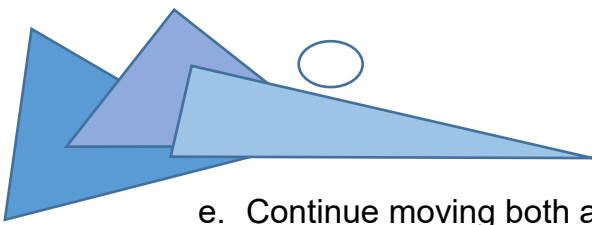
The following drills are aimed at getting swimmers used to the back crawl arm movements. For a more detailed breakdown of back crawl arms see Intermediate-to-Advanced Lesson 1.

Materials:

- An area free from obstructions
- Mat (optional)

Steps:

1. Draw a circle in the air with one arm.
 - a. Stand with arms relaxed at your sides, feet hip-width apart and look straight ahead.
 - b. Keeping the arm straight, slowly bring one up in front of you, then extend it above your head.
 - c. Continue moving your arm, extending and reaching it behind your back and bring it back down to your side where it started. Turn your wrist so that the palm of the hand is facing the direction the arm is travelling.
2. Draw a circle in the air with your other arm.
 - a. Repeat steps 1a-to-c with your other arm.
3. Practice circling both arms together:
 - a. Repeat steps 1a to c with both arms at the same time.
4. Introduce the alternating movement:
 - a. Stand with your arms relaxed at your sides, feet hip-width apart and look straight ahead.
 - b. Keeping the arm straight, slowly bring one up in front of you, then extend it above your head.
 - c. Continue moving that same arm, extending and reaching it back down to your side and at the same time, bring your other up in front of you in the and extending it above your head. Turn your wrists so that the palm of the hand is facing the direction the arm is travelling.
 - d. The arm moving upwards should reach above your head at the same time as your arm moving downwards returns back to its starting position.



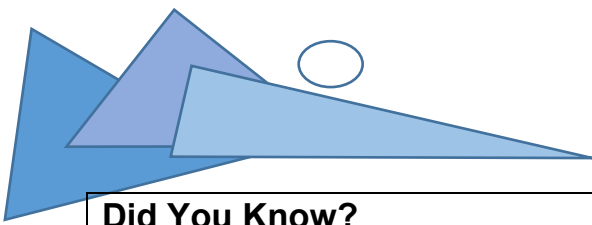
- e. Continue moving both arms in their circles so that one arm is always up and the other always like the blades of a windmill.

Progressions

- Are you looking straight ahead? Try not moving your head from side to side or up and down during this drill. Pick a spot to stare at straight ahead and try not to take your eyes off that spot.
- Keep your arms as close to your head or body as possible as they move past them.
- Are your arms alternating? Arms should be opposite each other. When performing this drill in the water, one arm should always be out while the other is under the water.
- Try bending your arms slightly. As you are moving your extended arm down towards the floor, take your thumb and trace it down the side of your body. Your elbow will now bend while bringing your arm down.
- Repetition is the key to ensuring movements become more ingrained and your body is able to perform them more naturally. Repeat all movements at least 10 times before moving on to the next step or progression.

Variations:

- If synchronizing arm movement is difficult, try keeping your arms at your side and roll your shoulders continuously to get comfortable with that movement. Slowly start adding the arm movement, raising your arm forward as you roll your shoulder forward.
- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult.
- To incorporate a core strength workout for youth and adults:
 - Try balancing on an exercise ball or bench with legs and feet touching the ground, or lifted off the ground.
 - Try balancing with the lower part of your body on the bed and the upper body off the edge of the bed.
- For older children, youth and adults, incorporate some knowledge principles to provide greater understanding. See below for some 'Did You Know?' tips and encourage the older learner to expand what they know about the science of swimming by visiting the library or looking online.



Did You Know?

As the only competitive swim stroke swum on your back, back swim uses a different set of muscles than most strokes. Front swim uses a lot more chest muscles than back swim. Back swim engages the back muscles and works the upper arm muscles more than front swims.

Tips and Reminders

It is important to practice both front and back swims equally to maintain body balance.

Next Lesson: Side Glides

To switch from front-to-back or back-to-front you will have to roll onto your side. Look for our next lesson to learn side glides.

Continue to follow us on the path to learning how to swim.