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Butterfly Progression

1. Streamlining

Hand on top of hand; head between arms; on tip-toes; stretching towards top. Have swimmers do either standing on pool deck or pool bottom. "They must push off every wall into a Streamline position

- Have swimmers push off water and glide as far as they can holding a streamline position. Remind swimmers to take a good breathe of air and exhale slowly as they are doing this drill ("Blow Bubbles")
- Same as above but add kicking ("Go for distance") without a breathe. **STRESS BODY POSITION!!**
- **Butterfly Kick (Dolphin Kick)** – Begin by emphasizing that the legs and feet mirror each other. They do exactly the same. Butterfly kicks begin from the chest area and radiate to the feet making your body work to make your feet crack like a whip. In Butterfly kick their should be body some bending in the body, hips and knees but nothing extreme. Butterfly is a two-way kick. The feet must generate force both down and up. And this is caused by the motion beginning in the chest area and working its way through the hips, then knees and then the feet. The kick must be in rhythm. A constant kick with the body always working like a whip to create the kick. The actual kicking of the feet should remain in a small area. You do not want to kick to deep or do you want the kick to leave the water.
- **Beginning Butterfly Kick**- Should be done on a kick board with the board held with straight arms and near the top. The kick should be generated through the whole body from the chest area through the snap of the feet. Emphasize rhythm; very little knee bend; and the snapping of the feet both downward and upward.
- **POWER KICKING** – same as above but when a swimmer needs a breathe they may push chin forward and breathe and that get face back down in water and exhale slowly ("Blow Bubbles") while they continue to kick. Remind swimmers to keep their butterfly kicks close to the surface and inside a small area. They may also take a single or regular arm stroke when breathing. And remember that underwater dolphin kicking is the "5th Stroke" in swimming. All swimmers should always work on the skill of leaving all walls in a streamline position with a strong, fast dolphin kick until they are to the surface and begin to swim the stroke. Underwater dolphin kick should be emphasized in Butterfly, backstroke, and freestyle races.

2. Dryland and Walking Butterfly

- I would begin to teach the arm stroke out of the water.
- The "T" – This is a very important concept in the teaching of butterfly and also will be used in the Breaststroke. Have swimmers draw a line down the middle of their head and upper body; and then draw a line from shoulder to shoulder. This forms the "T" When I refer to "pressing the "T" the swimmer will understand what this means
- Have swimmers bend over at the waist and extend arms to the front (parallel to the floor) and begin at the entry point of the stroke. Entry should made with the thumbs entering first with the arms extended. As the hands enter the swimmer should also be pressing the "T". This will insure that the upper body is now lower than the hips (Downhill). The ends under the surface will now begin to turn over on the water and begin the catch phase of the stroke. As the hands are catching the water the elbows should begin to bend and stay high (power position) and begin to pull your body over your hands. As the hands begin to press underneath the body they should press in towards the center of the body and then push back and flare out through the bottom of the stroke. During this pulling or press phase of the stroke the upper body should be higher than the hips (Uphill). (This would also be the time that the chin would push forward to breathe). As the arms finish the stroke and are extended back to a straight arm position the shoulders should begin to roll forward as the arms (straight arms) recover closely over the water surface and as the arms recover forward the head should be working back down into its natural position and the swimmer should extend the arms over the water back to the top of stroke and press the "T" as the entry for the next arm stroke begins. Emphasize "acceleration" of the under water pulling or press phase which should continue

through the top of stroke (Entry point). I like to use the term “Quick hands” to begin this acceleration; and to swim from “0-100” hours per mile during this underwater phase of the stroke and carry it through to the top of the stroke (Entry point). I would take each step of the stroke and have the swimmers go through each step and understand what every part of the body should be doing. Very simple with the kick added to the arm stroke it generally a kick at the top of the stroke and a kick at the bottom of the stroke. Walking Butterfly - Now you can have the swimmers practice this arm stroke out of the water and the next step would be to move them into the water. In most pools the water is shallow enough that you can have the swimmers walk on the bottom and just go through the arm stroke while they are slowly walking in the bottom. When they get to a point that they can’t walk anymore then have them push off the bottom and swim the stroke the rest of the way. Remember while they are walking the stroke you can be emphasizing everything said above.

3. Swimming the Butterfly

- Now you can have them swim the stroke. The biggest mistake among young swimmers will be that they will not carry their head low enough in the water (Looking down at the bottom). Most young swimmers will try to swim the stroke with their head in an upward position (Eyes looking forward) and of course if they swim with there head up the rest of the body will want to sink.
- Swim (4) strokes without a breath- Begin by having them only swim (4) strokes without ever breathing; then you can emphasize where the head should be for 95% of the stroke. This is a good time to remind to remember to press your “T” every stroke and also the concept of the stroke being swam in an uphill position (shoulders higher than the hips) and then in a downhill position (shoulders lower than the hips). Also a good emphasis is to remember except during the power phase of the pull or press that the arms are basically straight all the time. And of course; Acceleration; swimming from 0-100 mph from the catch through the entry (the entire stroke cycle). The point that the stroke is at or near (0) mph is when the hands are entering and then turning to catch the water (This is where the hands need to be quick). I would have them do this many, many times until they understand these concepts.
- Adding the breathing- Now that they are getting the idea of the arm stroke without worrying about the breathing; you may add the breathing. Breathing in Butterfly is simply pushing the chin forward enough so that you can take in air. Remember in swimming that all exhaling is done with the face in the water. You could go back to a Walking Butterfly with Breathing to teach this concept. But it should also be utilized as part of the above drill of (4) strokes without a breath. And that simply would be to swim (4) without breathing; take a breath on the (5th) stroke and then swim another (3) without breathing; etc. Again doing these drills with all the concepts that were mentioned above (Pressing the “T”; Uphill/downhill body position; quick hands; acceleration; and the stroke is done with 95% straight arms).
- And always emphasize and yes require that all Butterfly leaving from a wall should begin with underwater dolphin kicks in a nice tight streamline position before the get to the surface and begin to swim.

4. One arm Butterfly – Best done with other arm extended above the shoulder.

- Another good way to isolate parts of the arm stroke and to also teach the concept of the proper point for their kicking is to have them swim with (1) arm at a time.
- It is very important to remember that this is the Butterfly. Swimmers tend to look a lot like Freestyler’s when doing (1) arm swimming because they want to do a very high circular recovery and turn on their side as they do this. I like to have Butterflyer’s breathe to the from and also concentrate on keeping their recovery arm very close to the surface.
- Thumb drag- By having the swimmer drag their thumb over the surface this will make them recover close to the surface and also with a straight arm. At the bottom the press or pull phase when the swimmers hands leave the water they should do so with their thumbs down and a side pitch in their hand. This will naturally lead to a thumb down; straight arm recovery.
- One arm Butterfly with emphasis on certain parts of the stroke in the mind.- Doing these drills with all the concepts that were mentioned above (Pressing the “T”; Uphill/downhill body position; quick hands; acceleration; and the stroke is done with 95% straight arms).
- Different patterns of one arm swimming- To make them think a little bit and mix things up you may them go (4) right, (4) left, (4) regular; etc.

5. Regular Butterfly

- I would recommend that you have your swimmers do a lot of Butterfly. But remember and emphasize this to your swimmers. “The easiest way to do the Butterfly; is the right way!” Constantly remind them of the concepts (Pressing the “T”; Uphill/downhill body position; quick hands; acceleration; and the stroke is done with 95% straight arms).
- Emphasize long swimming – Keep the amount of strokes per length low (efficient). Have them count strokes and have them keep that stroke count consistent.
- Never discourage (1) arm butterfly. Many times a swimmers will do better for their stroke to swim some occasional one arm strokes to get everything readjusted. Also when swimming with lane mates it is recommended so they do not break each others hands.
- Long underwater work (kicking). – You can never work on this skill enough. Also emphasize and remind them to break out strong on their 1st couple of strokes. And never breathe on the 1st stroke off of the start and turns.
- **Breathing Patterns-** For the sake of training a swimmer must always remember that the head need to stay in it’s natural position (Looking straight ahead; or looking at the bottom of the pool in the case of the Fly or Free). I always think that breathing “every other” stroke will always allow the body position to readjust to the correct position “every other” stroke. Pressing the “T” on every stroke is ideal though. In races; depending on the distance; a swimmer should breathe when they need to. The longer the race; the more important it is to breathe enough and early in the race. For a (50) a swimmer may get by with once or twice a length. Work on breathing patterns in practice.
- And keep this always in your swimmer’s mind. “Press your “T”. That will always ensure that by pressing at the top of the stroke with your head down in the water that the hips and back of the body will get back up to the surface to keep your body position level. (Downhill/Uphill)
- Swim the stroke everyday at practices/ and make them swim it at meets.

6. Other Butterfly drills

- **Side-lying Kick-** Dolphin kicking while laying on your side. Allows the swimmer to get that true feeling of the whole body being involved in the stroke. Swimmers can do this on either side; or their front and back.
- **Butterfly kick on your back; arms along side-** This allows the swimmer to use the water surface as a guide to help them master there kicking. Arms should stay along the side and the hands should follow the motion of the hips. Remember that the kicks should be done in a small area (about 9-12 inches below the surface to the surface). Concentrate on their rhythm.
- **Meat Cleaver-** Swim the Butterfly with clenched fists. This allows the stroke to move along a little quicker and also allows the swimmer to realize and use the forearms to help with their pulling or pressing.

7. Butterfly should be taught with emphasis on increased tempo in the arm stroke.

- A swimmer must learn that they need to always swim at a speed that is going to get them to the other end of the pool; not at a speed that is going to cause to do more sinking then moving forward.
- Emphasis a steady arm tempo; a fast rhythmic kick; and always a good solid head and body position.
- The only head movement in Butterfly is the pushing of the chin forward to breathe and then back into its natural position (looking at the bottom of the pool).
- Swimmers as they progress always want to be able to swim each length or distance at a faster speed (or in a lesser amount of time).