

NPTS – National Plan for Teaching Swimming

Once the swimmer has developed the core range of skills required to be confident, competent and safe in the water through stages 1-7 of the National Plan for Teaching Swimming, powered by British Gas, he or she can then take part in different aquatic disciplines through stages 8-10.

Stages 8, 9 and 10 of the NPTS are discipline specific and have synergy with the grass roots programmes developed by the disciplines to support the individual sports.

For the competitive swimming discipline in Stages 8, 9 and 10 the ASA has developed awards specifically to support the NPTS

Entry into the Kelly Development Squad is normally subject to achieving Stage 8 of the NPTS (Club Level 1), which concentrates on developing stroke technique and introducing swimmers to training techniques to develop stamina. Swimmers should be competent in all four strokes and deep water confident. Starts, turns and strokes will be assessed against the ASA Expected Standards

1. Complete a set lasting 400m (e.g. 16 x 25m) on a specific turn around time set by the coach, e.g. 1 minute for each 25m. Complete the set whilst utilising the clock correctly and obeying the lane discipline procedures of pushing off 5 seconds apart, finishing on a full stroke and overtaking using the inside of the lane.
2. Swim 400m continuously using one stroke, executing legal and correct starts, turns and finish without stopping over the set distance. Maintain a legal stroke throughout the specified distance. Demonstrate a consistently efficient stroke throughout the specified distance.
3. Kick 25m Backstroke with/without using a board, maintaining a legal leg kick throughout the specified distance.
4. Kick 25m Breaststroke with/without using a board, maintaining a legal leg kick throughout the specified distance. Leg kick should accelerate in last 1/3 of kick.
5. Kick 25m Butterfly with/without using a board, maintaining a legal leg kick throughout the specified distance.
6. Kick 25m Front Crawl with/without using a board, maintaining a legal leg kick throughout the specified distance.
7. Perform a Backstroke turn from 10m in to 15m out to ASA expected standards.
8. Perform a Breaststroke turn from 10m in to 15m out to ASA expected standards.
9. Perform a Butterfly turn from 10m in to 15m out to ASA expected standards.
10. Perform a Front Crawl turn from 10m in to 15m out to ASA expected standards.

Backstroke

Body

- Back of the head in the water, and held still in a central position. Eyes looking upwards and slightly forwards (in the direction of feet).
- Body almost horizontal, stretched and streamlined on the back, with chest clear of the surface and hips slightly submerged.
- Shoulders and upper body rotating with a controlled roll of the shoulders.

Legs and Feet

- Legs move in a positive alternating leg kicking that predominantly originates from the hip with the knees slightly bent.
- Legs close to the surface, toes pointed and slightly turned inward. There should be a slight splash of the feet as they pass close to each other and the result of the feet pushing against the water.
- The kick should be continuous.
- The kick may be slow and steady, or fast and powerful, dependent on the individual's preference.

Arms and Hands

- Hand is placed into the water, little finger first, palm facing outward. The entry is in line with the shoulder.
- Hand catches and as it starts its pull through the elbow bends with palm facing inwards pressing towards the body keeping the elbow higher than the hands and as the arms straightens.
- The shoulder leads the arm recovery, lifting up and round as the hand leaves the water. The elbow is kept straight as the arm lifts straight up above the shoulder to the entry point.
- A deep 'catch' as the hand enters the water and a strong bent elbow pull as the shoulders roll will result in a more powerful pull and increased distance gained per stroke.

Breathing

- Breathing regularly in relation to the effort phases of the stroke.

Timing

- The kicking and pulling must be co-ordinated and controlled whilst maintaining a steady head position throughout.
- All action must be smooth, continuous and consistent whilst a relationship of stroke length and stroke rate must be developed and vary with the requirements of the swim.

Breaststroke

Body

- From a horizontal, stretched and streamlined position on the front with head inline and face in water, the head and upper body lift during the pull in order to breathe and the swimmer completes into a stretched streamlined position following the kick.

Legs and Feet

- The kick is simultaneous. From legs extended and together, the swimmer bends the knees, drawing the heels close to the seat and still under water; knees remain stable, away from the tummy and hip width apart.
- Both feet turn outward and the 'soles' or 'instep' of the feet flatten ready to kick.
- The feet then kick backwards and slightly downwards pressing against the water until the legs are almost straight.
- On completing the kick, the toes become pointed and the soles turn towards each other.

Arms and Hands

- From a full stretched position, the hands, facing slightly outwards and down, press sideways to a point where the hands start an inward movement.
- The hands then lead the forearms in a downward and inwards circular movement, bringing the hands close together; the hands close together; the hands finish facing each other with the elbows and upper arms squeezed in towards each other.
- With no hesitation, the hands and forearms move smoothly and continuously forwards into a stretched position as started.

Breathing

- Air is exhaled into the water as the swimmer lies in the streamlined and stretched position.
- From the extended position of the pull, the head and upper body lifts as soon as the hands start to pull apart from one another and press sideways.

Timing

- From fully stretched position, the arms pull, the breath is taken, the arms begin to recover, then the legs recover and kick back to full stretch position; pull, breath, kick, stretch.

Butterfly

Body

- Body position starts in a horizontal, stretched and streamlined position on the front; head in line and the face in the water.
- Head and upper body will rise and fall in relation to undulation from the kick, pull breathing pattern.

Legs and Feet

- The kick is simultaneous.
- A full action of the hips, legs and feet occur as the seat lifts and lowers; the knees bend and straighten.
- The feet and toes are pointed throughout. The kick should resemble a whip like kick.

Arms and Hands

- The hands simultaneously enter as arms approach full extension.
- Following the entry, the hands move slightly outward and down to the catch position, moving back and through towards the thighs.
- The arm recovery is a smooth, simultaneous double arm recovery over the water surface.
- Aim for the individual is to gain maximum distance per stroke effectively.

Breathing

- The mouth is lifted above the water line to the front (in some instances it may be to the side) before the hands complete their push through to the legs.
- The head returns to 'face in the water' before the end of the arm recovery.
- The expectation is that the swimmer is encouraged to breathe every alternate arm cycle (every two strokes).

Timing

- A steady constant movement with two kicks to each arm cycle; encouraging the swimmer to breathe each arm cycle (every two strokes).
- The order is kick, pull, kick, recover.

Front Crawl

Body

- Face in the water. Eyes looking downward and slightly forward.
- Body horizontal, stretched and streamlined on the front.
- Shoulders and upper body rotating whilst maintaining a steady and central head position except for when breathing occurs.

Legs and Feet

- Legs moving in a steady alternating leg kick that predominantly originates from the hip with knees slightly bent.
- Feet close to the surface, toes pointed. There should be a small splash of the feet as they pass close to each other as a result of the feet pushing against the water.
- The kick may be slow and steady, or fast and powerful, dependent on the individual's preference.

Arms and Hand

- Hand slides into the water, finger tips first. The entry is usually between the shoulder and head.
- The propulsive phase follows the hand entry; the hand moves slightly forward and down to catch position with the shoulder and the elbow higher than the hand position; presses against the water, then pushes backwards and outwards towards the hand exit.
- The elbow leaving the water first followed by wrist and hand initiates recovery. The arm moves over the water but remains close to the body and head into a controlled hand entry.
- Aim for the individual is to gain maximum distance per stroke effectively.

Breathing

- Breathing is initiated with a controlled turn of the head to the side to quickly inhale air, followed by the head returning to the centre, face in the water and air exhaled.
- A regular pattern of breathing is recommended and the swimmer must be at ease in breathing to either side.

Timing

- The kicking, pulling and breathing must be co-ordinated and controlled.
- All actions must be smooth and continuous whilst a relationship of stroke length and stroke rate must be developed and vary the requirements of the swim.