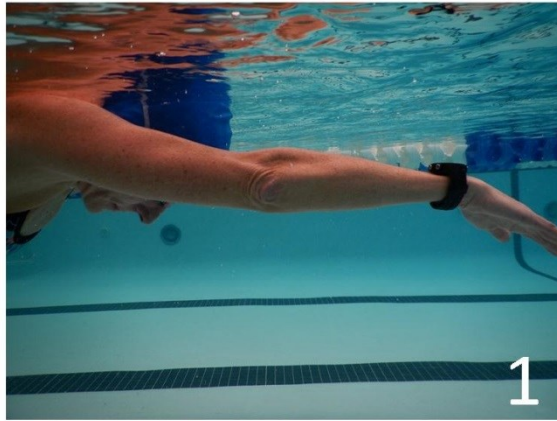


Name That Catch

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Can you name the strokes in the above picture? The catch is one of the most important parts of the swim stroke. And here is the catch! The catch is almost identical in all 4 strokes. So if you want to improve your freestyle it is good to work on backstroke or butterfly and even breaststroke. The better you can develop your catch the better your stroke will become. A lot of triathletes prefer to swim freestyle only and competitive swimmers spend time only on their specialty stroke. Take time in practice to work on your catch in all the strokes.

The catch is the first part of the stroke. When working on the catch make sure to create a position with the hand and forearm to work together and think about how the body moves over it. Do not pivot the wrist; this will keep the forearm horizontal. Do not pivot at the shoulder; this will have you lean on a straight arm

and result in pushing down with no water going backwards. The hand should enter and move forwards without overextending. The hand should then travel downwards slightly into an effective position that enables the hand and forearm to push back on the water. Pivot at the elbow to make this happen and this will result in an early vertical forearm position. Keep your fingertips, wrist and elbow in one alignment as best you can once the catch begins. This position will give you a strong catch and a good feel for the water around the hand.

A good catch will allow you to pull your body more effectively through the water. Do not just pull harder. If you use just strength and poor hand position then the hand slips under the body. The pull phase increases so the hand movement is slow to fast in all strokes. So start working on your catch in all the strokes to improve your swimming. Ask a coach on deck for help with developing a strong catch.