

Learn-to-Swim Level 3—Stroke Development

The objective of Learn-to-Swim Level 3 is to build on previously learned skills by providing additional guided practice. You teach participants to survival float, swim the front crawl and elementary backstroke. You introduce the scissors and dolphin kicks and build on the fundamentals of treading water. Participants should also learn rules for headfirst entries and begin to learn to enter the water headfirst from a seated position at poolside (if the water is 9 feet deep or deeper). As in all levels, you present additional safety skills and messages.

Learn-to-Swim Level 3—Stroke Development Outline

Equipment

- U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets (correct sizes for participants)
- Flotation devices, such as kickboards, foam noodles and pull buoys
- Fins
- Equipment for reaching assists, such as reaching poles and rescue tubes

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Entry Enter water by jumping from the side Headfirst entry from the side in a sitting position* Headfirst entry from the side in a kneeling position*	Demonstrate, into deep water Demonstrate, in water at least 9-feet deep Demonstrate, in water at least 9-feet deep	WSIM, page 196 WSIM, page 196 SWS, page 126 WSIM, page 196 SWS, page 126
Breath Control and Submerging Bobbing while moving toward safety Rotary breathing	Demonstrate, at least 5 times, in chest-deep water Demonstrate, at least 10 times	WSIM, page 196 WSIM, page 197
Buoyancy on Front Survival float	Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds, in deep water	WSIM, page 197 SWS, page 50
Buoyancy on Back Back float	Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds, in deep water	WSIM, page 197 SWS, page 80
Changing Direction and Position Change from vertical to horizontal position on front Change from vertical to horizontal position on back	Demonstrate, in deep water Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, page 197 WSIM, page 198

* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors **SHOULD NOT** teach headfirst entries.

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Treading Tread water	Demonstrate, 30 seconds, in deep water	WSIM, page 198 SWS, page 85
Swim on Front Push off in a streamlined position then begin flutter kicking Push off in a streamlined position then begin dolphin kicking Front crawl	Demonstrate, 3–5 body lengths Demonstrate, 3–5 body lengths Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, page 199 WSIM, page 199 WSIM, page 200 SWS, page 94
Swim on Back Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, page 202 SWS, page 112
Swim on Side Scissors kick	Demonstrate, at least 10 yards	WSIM, page 204 SWS, page 117
Water Safety Reach or Throw, Don't Go Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice Look Before You Leap	Demonstrate Discuss/demonstrate Demonstrate	WSIM, page 70 SWS, page 55 LWT WSIM, page 78 SWS, pages 38 & 52 LWT WSIM, page 75 SWS, pages 28 & 140 LWT
Exit Skills Assessment Jump into deep water from the side, swim front crawl for 15 yards, maintain position by treading or floating for 30 seconds and swim elementary backstroke for 15 yards.		

* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors SHOULD NOT teach headfirst entries.

Learn-to-Swim Level 3 Skills

Water Entry

Enter Water by Jumping from the Side

One at a time, have participants—

1. Stand at the edge of the pool, hold the arms up and out slightly to the side, curl the toes over the edge, take a breath and jump out from the edge and in the water.
2. Sweep down with the arms and use any kick to return to the surface after entering the water.
3. Level off (to bring the body to the surface in a horizontal position on the front or back) and swim back to the edge of the pool after surfacing.

Headfirst Entry from the Side in a Sitting Position

1. Sit on the pool edge with feet on the edge of the gutter or against the side of the pool.
2. Extend the arms over the head.
3. Focus on a target on the surface that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water.
4. Lean forward, try to touch the water and push with the legs.
5. Straighten the body and extend both legs upon entering the water.
6. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.

Headfirst Entry from the Side in a Kneeling Position

1. Kneel on one knee while gripping the pool edge with the toes of the other foot. The toes of the kneeling leg should be in a position to help push from the deck.
2. Extend the arms over the head.
3. Focus on a target on the surface of the water 1–2 feet from the side.
4. Lean forward and try to touch the water. When starting to lose balance, push with the legs.
5. Upon entering the water, straighten the body and extend both legs.
6. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.



SAFETY NOTE

All headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9-feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors **SHOULD NOT** teach headfirst entries.

Breath Control and Submerging

Bobbing While Moving Toward Safety

Starting away from the wall in water about 1 foot over their heads, have participants practice bobbing back toward the wall. Have participants—

1. Relax and hold the arms out in front.
2. Take a breath and hold it.
3. Bend the knees to submerge.
4. Push off the bottom, or kick up if not at the bottom, and sweep down with the arms to rise to the surface. Position the body at an angle to move forward.
5. Exhale slowly (blow bubbles) right before reaching the surface.

6. Inhale when your mouth clears the surface.
7. Repeat steps 1–6 at least 5 times to reach the wall.

Rotary Breathing

Rotary breathing is used when swimming the front crawl. Have participants—

1. Turn the head to one side just enough for the mouth to clear the water, but not so far that the body twists.
2. Take a breath.
3. Return the face to the water and exhale slowly.
4. Repeat steps 1–3 in a rhythmic pattern at least 10 times.



TEACHING TIPS

Introduce and practice this skill in a variety of ways:

- Have participants standing in chest-deep water, bend at the waist, put the face down in the water and practice 10 breaths in a row.
- Have participants bracket on the wall and practice 10 breaths in a row while flutter kicking on the front.
- While also practicing the flutter kick on the front, have participants use a flotation device and—
 1. Exhale and let go of the flotation device with one hand.
 2. Roll the body and turn the head to the same side until the mouth clears the water.
 3. Keep half of the head in the water and take a breath.
 4. Put the face back in the water, grab the flotation device and continue kicking.

Buoyancy on Front

Survival Float

In this level, participants should be able to survival float for at least 30 seconds. Have participants—

1. Take a breath and hold it, then put the face in the water. Allow the arms and legs to hang freely. Rest in this position for a few seconds.
2. To take another breath, slowly lift the arms to about shoulder height and move the arms forward. Separate the legs, moving one leg forward and one leg back.
3. Exhale slowly into the water (blowing bubbles) then gently press down with the arms while bringing the legs together. This movement lifts the mouth above the water for another breath.
4. Return to the resting position. Repeat these steps to take additional breaths.

Buoyancy on Back

Back Float

Refer to *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, page 160. In this level, participants should be able to back float for at least 30 seconds in deep water.

Changing Direction and Position

Change from Vertical to Horizontal Position on Front

Starting from either treading water or after surfacing from jumping into deep water, have participants—

1. Take a breath.
2. Reach forward and pull the water back and kick up (breaststroke or scissors kick).
3. Put the face down, so that the hips rise and the body levels off.
4. Begin swimming.



INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE

It is not always necessary to put the face in the water if the participant is a strong enough swimmer. However, while learning this skill, putting the face in the water makes leveling off easier.

Change from Vertical to Horizontal Position on Back

Starting from either treading water or after surfacing from jumping into deep water, have participants—

1. Kick up (breaststroke or scissors kick), put the head back, arch the back and lean back as if moving into a back float.
2. Extend the arms out and up then push the water toward the feet.
3. Kick again and level off.
4. Begin swimming or floating.

Treading

Tread Water

In this level, participants should be able to tread water for at least 30 seconds in deep water. Have participants—

1. Stay nearly vertical, with the upper body bent slightly forward at the waist with the legs separated.
2. Make continuous sweeping movements with the forearms and hands just below the surface in front of the body. With the shoulders relaxed and the elbows away from the body, move the forearms out then back in. Rotate the forearms and hands as a single unit so the palms push the water in both directions.
3. Using one of the kicks described below, kick with just enough force to keep the head above water.

With a Modified Scissors Kick

Have participants—

1. Recover by flexing the hips and knees and drawing the heels up.
2. Flex the ankle of the front leg and point the toes of the back foot.
3. Extend the front leg forward and the back leg backward, but not completely straight.
4. At the same time, forcefully press the legs together until they are nearly straight.
5. Repeat steps 1–4 continuously.

With a Modified Breaststroke Kick

Have participants—

1. Recover by flexing the hips and bending the knees so that the legs move up.
2. Flex the ankles, turn the feet out and extend the legs out.
3. Forcefully press the feet and knees down until the legs are nearly extended to about shoulder-width apart. The legs do not come all the way together or straight.
4. Repeat steps 1–3 continuously.

With a Rotary Kick

Have participants—

1. Stay nearly vertical, with the upper body bent slightly forward at the waist, making the same sculling movements with the arms.
2. Keep the back straight and the hips flexed so that the thighs are comfortably forward.

3. Pull up the lower legs so that they are at a nearly 90-degree angle to the thighs and the knees are slightly wider than hip-width apart.
4. Rotate the lower legs at the knees, one leg at a time making large circular movements with the foot and lower leg. One leg moves clockwise and the other counterclockwise.
5. As each foot moves sideways and forward, extend it sharply outward.
6. As one leg kicks, the other leg recovers to kick immediately after the first leg kick. Kick just hard enough to keep the head out of the water.

Swim on Front



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the front crawl.

When swimming on front, participants should begin in a streamlined position. To achieve a streamlined position in the water, have participants—

1. Extend the arms overhead.
2. Clasp the hands together with the arms against the ears.
3. Extend the legs together with the toes pointed.



SAFETY NOTE

Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

Push Off in a Streamlined Position then Begin Flutter Kicking

Have participants—

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on front. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, start with the legs straight, together and relaxed with the toes pointed. Keep the knees and ankles loose and floppy, and continuously kick up and down.
3. During the downbeat, start with the thigh and follow through with the whole leg and foot.
4. Snap the foot downward as though kicking a ball.
5. During the upbeat, raise the leg straight toward the surface with little or no bend in the knee, until the heel just breaks the surface.
6. Continue kicking for 3–5 body lengths.

Push Off in a Streamlined Position then Begin Dolphin Kicking

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on front. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, keep the legs together and start the downbeat by bending the knees and extending the legs in a whiplike motion.

3. During the downbeat, bend the knees then extend the legs in a whiplike motion.
4. Extend the legs during the downbeat and straighten the legs on the upbeat until the heels just break the surface. Keep the ankles relaxed.
5. Continue kicking for 3–5 body lengths.

The hips should only rise above and return just below the surface. The kick begins in the upper abdominals, hips and thighs and in a continuous up and down movement.

Front Crawl

In this level, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.



TEACHING TIP

One way to teach strokes is to—

1. Start with body position and the kick.
2. Add breathing to the kick.
3. Add arms to the kick and breathing.

Body Position

Have participants—

1. Move into a face-down, streamlined position.
2. Look downward to the bottom of the pool with the neck flat and waterline at the middle of the top of the head.
3. Rotate around the midline of the body throughout the stroke.

Legs

Refer to Push Off in a Streamlined Position then Begin Flutter Kicking on page 199.

Arms

For each arm stroke, have participants—

1. Slide the fingers of one hand into the water first with the palm pitched slightly outward.
2. Allow the hand to enter the water smoothly, keeping the elbow higher than the rest of the arm. The elbow enters the water last.
3. Extend the arm forward in front of the shoulder.
4. Bend the elbow so that the palm and forearm face toward the feet and press backwards.
5. Allow the elbow and hand to move naturally, just outside the shoulders, as the arm travels backward.
6. Continue pressing the palm and forearm directly backwards. The hand follows a path straight backward that traces the side of the body.
7. Keep the elbow slightly wider than the hand so the elbow can remain bent and the palm and forearm facing back.
8. Keep the hand facing back as long as possible and then move upward as the arm extends.
9. Accelerate the hand through the end of the stroke, until the arm reaches full extension.
10. Lift the elbow so that it is the first part of the arm to exit the water.
11. While lifting the elbow, keep the arm relaxed with the forearm hanging down.
12. Swing the arm around the side in a relaxed motion, keeping the hand wider than the elbow.
13. As the hand passes the shoulder, let it lead the rest of the arm until it enters the water.

Breathing and Timing

Participants should learn to breathe during each arm cycle or every 1½ arm cycles. Have participants—

1. Start turning the head toward the recovery arm (the arm that is out of the water) as it exits the water.
2. Look to the side, keeping the face horizontal and the water line at the top of the head. One ear stays in the water.
3. Inhale when body roll is at its maximum and the recovery elbow is high.
4. After inhaling, return the face to the water in a quick motion before the recovery arm reenters the water.
5. Exhale slowly underwater through the mouth and nose between breaths.

Level 3 Front Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; rudimentary body roll; some side-to-side motion of trunk and legs acceptable
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—underwater recovery or arm straight at elbow acceptable; hand enters at or above the level of the head; arm straight at the elbow during power phase acceptable; power phase finishing at hip level acceptable
Legs	Continuous kicking; occasional bicycling action acceptable; legs bent at the hips or knees during downbeat acceptable; feet may break surface of water
Breathing and timing	Face in water and breathes consistently to the side—occasional head lift acceptable; arms and legs show general alternating pattern

Improving Performance of the Front Crawl

Observations	Interventions
Legs and hips too low	Tell participants to lower head position.
Arm recovery and breathing are difficult	Have participants check head position.
Ineffective kick because legs are too rigid	Tell participants to relax and kick as if kicking a ball.
Head lifted up to breathe	Tell participants to exhale underwater then look to the side. One ear stays in water while inhaling.
Feet break the surface too much	Have participants lift head slightly to drop legs. Be sure kick starts from the hip.
Toes “hook” at end of downward beat because ankles are allowed to flex	Have participants keep toes relaxed and floppy. Have them practice with swim fins.
Arms lift out early	Have participants fully extend arms by pushing toward the feet.
Arms sweep wide in recovery	Practice high elbow recovery with relaxed forearm and wrist.
Hands, elbows and arms drag through the water	Have participants lift elbow higher. They may also need more body roll.
Inefficient propulsion because of pulling with straight arms	Stress a high elbow as the arm pulls through. Have participants practice arm pulls with support, such as a pull buoy.
Inefficient stroke because of incorrect breathing	Repeat learning drills for rotary breathing.

Swim on Back



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the elementary backstroke.

Elementary Backstroke

In this level, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Body Position

Have participants—

- Move into a horizontal, streamlined position on the back, arms at the sides.
- Keep the head submerged to the ears with the face out of the water.

Legs

Have participants—

1. Start with the legs together and extended with the toes pointed during the glide.
2. From this position, recover the legs by bending and slightly separating the knees then dropping the heels downward to a point under and outside the knees. The knees are spread as hip-width or slightly wider.
3. Keep the thighs in line with the hips—the hips should stay near the surface. Do not drop the hips when dropping the heels.
4. Rotate the knees inward slightly while the ankles flex and the feet turn outward.
5. Finish by pressing the feet backward with a slightly rounded motion, ending with the legs in the glide position. As the feet press backward, they move into a pointed position.

Arms

Have participants—

1. Keep the arms and hands just below the surface throughout the stroke.
2. From the glide position, recover the arms by bending the elbows so the hands (palms facing down or toward the body) slide along the sides to near the armpits.
3. Point the fingers outward from the shoulders so that the palms face back toward the feet.
4. Leading with the fingers, extend the arms out to the sides until the hands are no farther forward than the top of the head.
5. Without pausing, simultaneously press the palms and the insides of both arms in a broad sweeping motion back toward the feet, keeping the arms straight.
6. End this motion with the arms and hands in the glide position.

Breathing and Timing

Have participants—

1. Breathe during each arm stroke. Inhale as the arms recover and exhale as the arms press backward.
2. Start the arm recovery just ahead of the legs.
3. Finish the leg thrust at the same time as the arms.
4. Glide with the body streamlined after the combined propulsion.

Level 3 Elementary Backstroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; hips may be bent; chin tucked; ears may be out of the water
Arms	Hands may break water surface during recovery; arms extending above or below shoulder level acceptable; power phase finishing at waist level acceptable
Legs	Knees may break the surface of the water during recovery; knees may be wider than hips and ankles; ankles may be bent throughout power phase; occasional scissors kick acceptable; legs may be partially bent at knee at the end of the power phase; legs apart with occasional flutter kick during glide acceptable
Breathing and timing	Occasional breath-holding acceptable; arms and legs move simultaneously; minimal glide with some forward motion acceptable; little or no hesitation before beginning recovery

Improving Performance of the Elementary Backstroke

Observations	Interventions
Body bent downward at the middle; body sitting in the water	Tell participants to tilt head back, look directly overhead and raise the hips toward the surface.
Extreme arch in back during power phase; face may be submerged	Check head position. Stress keeping arms parallel to surface during power phase.
Knees break surface excessively during recovery	Check body position. Participants who are very buoyant should tilt the head forward slightly and round back and shoulders slightly. This lowers hips and legs. The feet should drop down rather than the knees pull up.
Hands reach too far above head	Emphasize sliding hands away from the shoulders in a perpendicular line with the shoulders.
Water washes over face during arm recovery	Check whether participants are tilting head back, lifting the knees or pushing water toward the face with the hands.
Water washes over face during arm pull	Tell participants to tilt chin downward slightly and pull parallel to the surface.
Hands recover from thighs or hips directly into extended position	Emphasize dragging thumbs up sides of body to armpits.
Power phases of arms and legs not together	Emphasize recovery of arms to armpits before legs start the power phase.

Swim on Side

In Level 3, participants learn the kick used in the sidestroke—the scissors kick. Practice on each side. Some people have a dominant side. In this level, participants should be able to perform the scissors kick at least 10 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.



TEACHING TIPS

- Have participants practice the scissors kick on dry-land, bracketing the wall in the water or holding a flotation device with the lead hand.
- Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the scissors kick.

Scissors Kick

Have participants—

1. Lie on the side. Extend the bottom arm and put the head on the shoulder.
2. From the glide position, recover the legs by flexing the hips and knees and drawing the heels slowly toward the buttocks, keeping the knees close together.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the top ankle and point the toes of the lower foot to prepare for the kick. Move the top leg toward the front of the body and the bottom leg toward the back. When extended, the top leg should be almost straight.
4. Without pausing, kick the top leg straight and press it backwards. At the same time, extend the bottom leg in a motion like kicking a ball until both legs are fully extended and together in the glide position.

Level 3 Sidestroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body in side-lying position
Arms	Bottom arm extended overhead; top arm against the side
Legs	Perform a rudimentary scissors kick on the side with support
Breathing and timing	Any type of breathing pattern with occasional breath-holding acceptable

Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 3:

- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice
- Look Before You Leap

As in earlier levels, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. In this level, participants are introduced to entering the water in a headfirst position. Rules for headfirst entries are taught in “look before you leap” and should be repeated and built upon to ensure that participants

clearly understand where and when it is appropriate to enter the water in a headfirst position. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the participants' level of understanding. Add topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events in or special needs of your local area or region. Refer to **Chapter 4** for details on these topics and for additional topics. Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills they learned.

Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 3, they are starting to show stroke proficiency in the front crawl and elementary backstroke. They demonstrate comfort in deep water and can enter the water headfirst from both sitting and kneeling positions. There is one part to the exit skills assessment—jump into deep water from the side, swim front crawl for 15 yards, maintain position by treading or floating for 30 seconds and swim elementary backstroke for 15 yards.

Learn-to-Swim Level 4—Stroke Improvement

The objectives of Level 4 are to develop participants' confidence in the strokes learned thus far and to improve other aquatic skills. In level 4 participants improve their skills and increase their endurance by swimming familiar strokes (front crawl, elementary backstroke) for greater distances. Participants add the arms to the scissors kick for the sidestroke. Participants also start to learn the back crawl, breaststroke and butterfly and the basics of turning at a wall.

Learn-to-Swim Level 4—Stroke Improvement Outline

Equipment

- U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets (correct sizes for participants)
- Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys
- Equipment for throwing assists, such as ring buoys and throw bags

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Entry Headfirst entry from the side in a compact position* Headfirst entry from the side in a stride position*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9-feet deep Demonstrate, in water at least 9-feet deep	WSIM, page 208 SWS, page 126 WSIM, page 208 SWS, page 127
Breath Control and Submerging Swim underwater Feetfirst surface dive	Demonstrate, 3–5 body lengths Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, page 208 SWS, page 91 WSIM, page 209 SWS, page 89
Buoyancy on Front Survival swimming	Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds, in deep water	WSIM, page 209 SWS, page 50
Changing Direction and Position Front crawl open turn Backstroke open turn	Demonstrate Demonstrate	WSIM, page 209 SWS, page 132 WSIM, page 210 SWS, page 133
Treading Tread water using 2 different kicks (modified scissors, modified breaststroke or rotary)	Demonstrate, at least 2 minutes	WSIM, page 210 SWS, page 85

* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors **SHOULD NOT** teach headfirst entries.

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Swim on Front		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, page 210 SWS, page 94
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, page 211 SWS, page 103
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, page 213 SWS, page 106
Swim on Back		
Push off in a streamlined position and begin flutter kicking	Demonstrate, 3–5 body lengths	WSIM, page 215 SWS, page 88
Push off in a streamlined position and begin dolphin kicking	Demonstrate, 3–5 body lengths	WSIM, page 215 SWS, page 88
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, page 216 SWS, page 112
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, page 216 SWS, page 100
Swim on Side		
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, page 218 SWS, page 115
Water Safety		
Reach or Throw, Don't Go	Discuss/demonstrate	WSIM, page 70 SWS, page 55 LWT
1. Reaching assist		
2. Throwing assist		
Recreational water illnesses	Discuss	WSIM, page 67 SWS, page 15
Think So You Don't Sink	Discuss/demonstrate	WSIM, page 76 SWS, pages 47 & 80 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Discuss	WSIM, page 75 SWS, pages 28 & 140 LWT
Exit Skills Assessment		
1. Perform a feetfirst entry into deep water, swim front crawl for 25 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 25 yards.		
2. Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim back crawl for 15 yards.		

* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors SHOULD NOT teach headfirst entries.

Learn-to-Swim Level 4 Skills

Water Entry

Headfirst Entry from the Side in a Compact Position

Have participants—

1. Put one foot forward and one back, with the toes of the leading foot gripping the edge of the pool.
2. Starting from the kneeling position, lift up so that both knees are flexed and off the deck in order to remain close to the water.
3. Extend the arms above the head.
4. Focus on a target that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water.
5. Bend forward and try to touch the surface of the water with the hands.
6. Push off toward the water. Bring the legs together upon entering the water.
7. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.

Headfirst Entry from the Side in a Stride Position

Have participants—

1. Stand upright with one leg forward and one leg back, with the toes of the leading foot gripping the edge of the pool.
2. Extend the arms above the head.
3. Focus on a target that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water. Bend the legs only slightly while bending at the waist toward the water.
4. Try to touch the surface of the water, and lift the back leg until it is in line with the torso. The forward leg should stay as straight as possible.
5. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.



SAFETY NOTE

All headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9-feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors SHOULD NOT teach headfirst entries.

Breath Control and Submerging

Swim Underwater

Have participants practice swimming underwater for 3–5 body lengths using the breaststroke or a dolphin kick. When using the breaststroke, start with the arms in front, sweep them wide and back towards the feet and recover to the front. When using the dolphin kick, the arms may be in front or to the side. To build momentum, start with the arms in front and sweep them wide and back towards the feet.



SAFETY NOTE

Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

Feetfirst Surface Dive

Have participants—

1. Start by treading water and maintaining a vertical position.
2. Press down forcefully with both hands and kick. Move the hands at the same time and bring them to the sides of the thighs while simultaneously performing a strong scissors or breaststroke kick.
3. Take a breath, at the top of this rise.
4. Keep the body vertical and in a streamlined position as it starts moving downward.
5. Turn the palms outward then sweep the hands upward for more downward propulsion, once downward motion slows. This sweeping action should occur completely underwater.
6. Tuck the body and roll into a horizontal position when the desired depth is achieved.
7. Extend the arms and legs and swim underwater.

Buoyancy on Front

Survival Swimming

In this level, participants must be able to survival swim for at least 1 minute in deep water.

Have participants—

1. Take a breath, bend forward at the waist and bring the hands up alongside the head.
2. Separate the legs into the stride position and extend the arms forward then bring the legs together again and propel diagonally toward the surface.
3. Sweep the arms out and back to the thighs and glide near and almost parallel to the surface.
4. Bend the legs and draw them toward the torso and bring the hands up alongside the head once again when a breath is needed.
5. Extend the arms forward and separate the legs in the stride position once again. Tilt the head back and prepare to breathe out, as in survival floating.
6. Repeat steps 1–5.



INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE

A person who is not very buoyant will likely need to perform these movements slightly faster to prevent sinking before taking a breath.

Changing Direction and Position



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for tips on progressions for teaching the front crawl and back crawl open turns.

Front Crawl Open Turn

Have participants—

1. When approaching the wall, extend the leading arm until it touches the wall.
2. Bend the elbow of the leading arm and drop the shoulder slightly while rotating the body to move the body toward the wall.
3. Tuck the body at the hips and knees; turn and spin away from the leading hand; swing the feet against the wall, one foot above the other (if the right hand is the leading hand, the right foot will be on top); and extend the other arm toward the opposite end of the pool.
4. During the spin, lift the face out of the water and take a breath.
5. Return the face to the water as the leading hand recovers over the surface.
6. Extend both arms in front as the legs push off. Keep the body in a streamlined position on one side.
7. Rotate in the glide until face-down.
8. Before losing momentum, start flutter kicking to rise to the surface and resume the arm stroke.

Backstroke Open Turn

Have participants—

1. At one stroke short of touching the wall, start to rotate to the front by turning the head and looking toward the pulling arm.
2. Take one more arm pull while completing the rotation onto the stomach. Extend the arm until it touches the wall.
3. Bend the elbow of the leading arm and drop the shoulder slightly while rotating the body to move the body toward the wall.
4. Tuck the body at the hips and knees; turn and spin away from the leading hand; swing the feet against the wall, one foot above the other (if the right hand is the leading hand, the right foot will be on top); and extend the other arm toward the opposite end of the pool.
5. During the spin, lift the face out of the water and take a breath.
6. Return the face to the water as the leading hand recovers over the surface.
7. Extend both arms as the legs push off. Keep the body in a streamlined position on the back.
8. Before losing momentum, start kicking to rise to the surface and resume the armstroke.

Treading

Refer to Learn-to-Swim Level 3, page 198. In this level, participants should be able to tread water using two of the following three different kicks—modified scissors, modified breaststroke or rotary kick—for at least 2 minutes.

Swim on Front



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the front crawl, breaststroke and butterfly.

Front Crawl

Refer to Learn-to-Swim Level 3, page 200. In this level, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 4 Front Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body horizontal to 15 degrees from surface; performs body roll; occasional side-to-side motion of trunk and legs acceptable
Arms	Above-water recovery with arm bent at elbow—arm straight at elbow acceptable; hands enter above the level of the head, fingertips first shoulder-width apart; arm extends fully after entry; arm bent at elbow during power phase; power phase finishes beyond the hip
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips; ankles and knees extended but not rigid; feet remain below the surface—moderate splash acceptable
Breathing and timing	Face in water; breathing to the side; exhale under water on each breath; arms alternate—slight hesitation during breathing acceptable

Breaststroke

In this level, participants should be able to swim the breaststroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Body Position

Have participants—

1. Move into a face-down, horizontal streamlined position.
2. Extend the arms to the front with the palms face-down and below the surface.
3. Keep the back straight.

Legs

Have participants—

1. Recover by bringing the heels toward the buttocks as much as possible without upsetting body position and allowing the knees to drop toward the bottom of the pool.
2. As the legs recover, gradually separate the knees and heels until the knees are about hip-width apart and the feet are outside the knees. Keep the heels just under the surface.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the ankles and rotate the feet so that the toes point outward.
4. With a continuous pushing action, forcefully press the feet and knees backward until the legs are extended, toes pointed and the feet and ankles touch, and then hold the legs in a straight line.

Arms

Have participants—

1. Turn the palms outward about 45 degrees to the surface of the water while in a glide position.
2. Slightly bend the arms and press the palms outward until the hands are spread wider than the shoulders.
3. Bend the elbows and sweep the hands downward and inward.
4. Allow the hands to pass under the elbows with the forearms in a nearly vertical position.
5. Sweep the hands inward and upward until the hands are in front of the chest. The hands should be pitched slightly upward and almost touching each other.
6. Continue to bend the elbows while squeezing them to the side of the body.
7. Sweep the hands together in front of the chest then squeeze the elbows close together and push forward with the elbows so that the hands start moving forward.
8. Continue to extend the arms forward while rotating the wrists until the palms are facing down and below the surface at full extension in the glide position.

Breathing and Timing

Participants should breathe during each arm stroke. Have participants—

1. From the glide position, start the power phase with the arms.
2. As the arms and hands start to pull backward, the head and upper body lift naturally for a breath.
3. Take a breath and start to bend the legs to prepare for the kick near the end of the power phase.
4. Without pause, start to recover the arms and drive forward into the water with the upper body.
5. Start the power phase of the kick by pressing backward with the feet as soon as the arms reach full extension, just before the head lowers into position between the arms. The upper body and arms will be in the glide position just before the kick ends.
6. Exhale in a slow, steady manner, mostly through the mouth, in the glide position until just before the next breath.

Level 4 Breaststroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface during glide
Arms	Hands may begin catch wider than shoulder width; arm bend at elbow increases as hand moves toward waist—hands may be level or slightly deeper than elbows; hands may sweep beyond the shoulder, but not beyond waist
Legs	Legs bend at the knees bringing heels toward buttocks; knees may be wider than hips and ankles; heels may break surface of water; ankles may bend throughout power phase; occasional scissors kick acceptable; legs may be partially bent at the knees at the end of the power phase; occasional flutter kick during glide position acceptable
Breathing and timing	Rudimentary form of pull, breathe, kick, glide sequence; minimal glide with some forward motion acceptable

Improving Performance of the Breaststroke

Observations	Interventions
Ineffective kick	Have participants keep ankles flexed and feet rotated outward. They push around and back until the feet touch.
Scissors kick action	Emphasize a narrow kick to avoid scissors action.
Knees and thighs drawn too far under hips	Have participants practice with breaststroke kick with a front glide or using a kickboard.
Propulsion of kick is outward instead of to the rear	Stress pressing feet around and back, not out. Emphasize a semicircular, pushing motion. Wall exercise: gently hold inside of feet during propulsion to add resistance and have the participant feel direction of power. Do this very gently to avoid injury to knees.
Heels move outside knees	Stress proper alignment: knees in line with the hips and heels wider than the knees.
Elbows drop too soon during power phase	Have participants keep elbows high until hands align with them at the end of the down sweep.
Arms pull all the way to the thigh	Have participants shorten the pull and end downward and outward sweep when hands are under the elbows with forearms vertical.
Faulty timing	Have participants practice sequence from glide: pull and breathe, kick and glide.
Ineffective glide while learning	Have participants glide until momentum is almost lost.

Butterfly

In this level, participants should be able to swim the butterfly at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Body Position

Have participants move into a face-down, streamlined position.

Legs

Have participants—

1. Begin the kick in the upper abdominals, hips and thighs in a continuous movement with the legs together.
2. Bend the knees to start the downbeat then extend the legs in a whiplike motion.
3. Straighten the legs on the upbeat until the heels just break the surface.
4. The hips rise above and return just below the surface.

Arms

Have participants—

1. Start with the arms extended in front of the shoulders.
2. Simultaneously bend the elbows so that the palms and forearms start facing the feet. Keep the elbows high with the hands directly below and fingertips pointing down and slightly outward.
3. Continue pressing backward toward the feet with the palms and forearms. The hands move from the wide position at the end of the catch to a point at the waist that is just inside the width of the body.
4. Extend the arms toward the feet which causes the arms to come closer to the body.
5. Accelerate the arms and continue pressing the hands back past the hips.
6. Recover by swinging the arms out of the water and wide to the sides with little or no bend in the elbows, making sure to lead this motion with the hands.
7. Move the arms just above the surface to enter the water in front of the shoulders. Keep the wrists relaxed and the thumbs down.
8. The hands enter the water with the thumbs facing down and the elbows remaining slightly flexed in front of or slightly outside of the shoulders.
9. After the entry, extend the elbows to prepare for the next arm stroke.

Breathing and Timing

Have participants—

1. During the arm recovery, bend the knees to prepare for the first kick.
2. As the hands enter the water, press downward with the chin and the chest and extend the legs for the downbeat of the first kick. The upper body angles slightly downward at this point, and appears to bend or “pivot” at the waist.
3. Let the upper body rise toward the surface while bending the knees to prepare for the second kick.
4. Complete the downbeat of the second kick at the finish of pull and just prior to the hands exiting the water.
5. Exhale fully during the underwater pull as the body is rising up.
6. Inhale just as the arms exit the water.
7. Thrust the chin forward (not upward) just as the face clears the water.

Level 4 Butterfly Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk may be horizontal to 30 degrees from the surface; face in water
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—arms may contact the water; hands may enter wider than the shoulders; arms may be straight at the elbow during the recovery and catch actions; palms face backwards throughout pull; power phase finishing at waist acceptable; arms may be bent at elbow during finish
Legs	Legs may be partially extended at the knee during the downbeat; minimal movement of the hip during the downbeat acceptable; legs may bend at the knees during upbeat—feet may break the surface; some flutter action acceptable
Breathing and timing	Arms pull and recover with minimal leg kick; arms may hesitate at side before recovery

Improving Performance in the Butterfly

Observations	Interventions
Weak arm propulsion, hands enter water too wide or narrow	Emphasize extending arms forward on entry. Keep elbows up and palms facing backward. Conduct arm-strengthening drills.
Hands “slip” by entering water too flat	Emphasize firm wrists, hands and fingers; hands angled down and out and thumbs rotated down.
Loss of propulsion because of dropped elbows	Stress keeping elbows higher than hands but lower than shoulders. Make sure participants are not lifting the body up excessively during the early part of the arm pull, which may force them to push down on the water instead of back.
Loss of propulsion because of pushing arms too wide during backward press under body	Emphasize bending elbows and pressing arms backward with hands coming close together under the body.
Body bobs because arm action stops at point of entry	Emphasize extending the arms forward and having a good kick when the hands enter. Make sure the chin and chest press forward. Make sure that the hands do not dive downward.
Ineffective kick because knees are not fully extended during downbeat	Have participants press feet down and use knees to snap lower legs to full extension. Conduct underwater dolphin kick drills.
Not enough breathing time because of narrow kick	Check coordination of breathing and arm pull. Have participants increase the size of the kick until it is about 2 feet from top to bottom. Make sure the knees are bending enough to set up the kick.
Difficulty in getting arms out and around during recovery	Emphasize accelerating hands through finish and into recovery. Emphasize second kick. Be sure swimmer is not lifting upper body too high out of the water on breath.

Swim on Back



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the elementary backstroke and back crawl.

When swimming on back, participants should begin in a streamlined position. To achieve a streamlined position in the water, have participants—

- Extend the arms overhead.
- Clasp the hands together with the arms against the ears.
- Extend the legs together with the toes pointed.

Push Off in a Streamlined Position then Begin Flutter Kicking

Have participants—

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on back. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, start with the legs straight, together and relaxed with the toes pointed. Keep the knees and ankles loose and floppy, and continuously kick up and down.
3. During the upbeat, start with the thigh and follow through with the whole leg and foot.
4. Snap the foot upward as though kicking a ball.
5. During the downbeat, lower the leg straight down with little or no bend in the knee, about 12 to 18 inches.
6. Continue kicking for 3–5 body lengths.

Push Off in a Streamlined Position then Begin Dolphin Kicking

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on back. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, keep the legs together and start the upbeat by bending the knees and extending the legs in a whiplike motion.
3. During the upbeat, bend the knees then extend the legs upward until the toes reach the surface in a whiplike motion.
4. Extend the legs during the upbeat and straighten the legs on the downbeat. Keep the ankles relaxed.
5. Continue kicking for 3–5 body lengths.

The kick begins in the upper abdominals, hips and thighs and in a continuous up and down movement.

Elementary Backstroke

Refer to Learn-to-Swim Level 3, page 202. In this level, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 4 Elementary Backstroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body horizontal to 15 degrees from surface; trunk and legs are aligned; slight chin tuck, ears near or below the surface
Arms	Hands remain under the surface and recover near or at the side of the body; arms may extend at or be above shoulder level; arms nearly straight at elbow at beginning of catch; arms partially bent at elbow during extension—wrists may be bent; power phase ends at the level of the hips
Legs	Knees remain below the surface of the water; knees and hips aligned; knees may be wider than ankles; heels drop by bending knees; ankles rotate outward with toes wider than the heel of the foot; lower legs move symmetrically in a circular pattern as knees return to a fully extended position; legs together, toes pointed with minimal movement
Breathing and timing	Relaxed rhythmic breathing pattern; arms and legs begin recovery at same time; some glide occurs at end of power phase

Back Crawl

In this level, participants should be able to swim the back crawl at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Body Position

Have participants—

1. Move into a horizontal, streamlined position on the back.
2. Have the waterline run from the middle of the top of the head to the tip of the chin with the ears under water.

Legs

Have participants—

1. Hold the legs straight, together and relaxed. Keep the knees and ankles loose and floppy, and kick up and down.
2. Start the upbeat by bending the knee and whipping the foot upward until the leg is straight and the toes reach the surface, like kicking a ball.
3. Keep the leg nearly straight in the downbeat.
4. At the end of the downward motion, bend the knee and start the upward kick.

Arms

Have participants—

1. With the arm straight, place one hand in the water above the head, just outside the shoulder, little finger first. Keep the palm facing out, the wrist bent slightly and the hands relaxed with fingers straight.
2. Reach downward 8 to 12 inches at an angle then bend the elbow so that the palm and forearm are facing toward the feet and fingertips are pointing to the side of the pool.
3. Keep the arm to the side of the body and the hand and forearm horizontal following a straight path pushing water toward the feet with the fingertips pointing to the side. Accelerate toward the feet with the wrist extended and the palm pitched slightly downward.

4. End with the arm straight and the hand below the thigh.
5. Relax the wrist and lift the arm straight up with the thumb leaving the water first.
6. Rotate the hand so that the little finger leads as the arm re-enters the water.

Breathing and Timing

- The arms move continuously in constant opposition to each other, one arm recovers while the other arm pulls.
- Use a regular breathing pattern during each stroke. Inhale when one arm recovers and exhale when the other arm recovers.
- The body rolls toward the recovery arm just before that hand enters the water.

Level 4 Back Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; ears may be out of water, chin on chest; hips may be bent; rudimentary body roll; slight side-to-side motion between shoulders and hips acceptable
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—elbows below surface acceptable; hands may enter at or above shoulder level; arm straight at elbow during power phase acceptable
Legs	Continuous kicking; occasional bicycling action acceptable; legs bent at knee acceptable; feet may break surface of water
Breathing and timing	Occasional breath-holding acceptable; arms in opposition—hesitation at finish acceptable

Improving Performance of the Back Crawl

Observations	Interventions
Extreme arch in back; head too far back	Tell participants to relax the back, tuck the chin in slightly and keep ears in water.
Hips bend excessively	Have participants practice flutter kick with arms extended behind the head. Have them focus on stretching body and keeping kick lower than body line.
Torso bends side-to-side	Check for proper body roll. Be sure head is aligned with spine and that hands enter water at 11:00 and 1:00 o'clock.
Legs too deep	Stress that toes should reach surface at end of each upward beat. The kick should churn the surface.
Knees bend too vigorously on downbeat	Stress starting the leg movement from the hips.
Hips too low in water	Emphasize body position, check head position.
Arm enters water with back of hand first	Have participants concentrate on arm rotation. Emphasize that the little finger enters first.
"Splash entry": bent arm recovery, elbow enters water first, forearm and hand are thrown into the water	Have participants practice arm strokes with legs supported. Have them do one-arm drills.
Arms overreach on water entry, and hands enter behind head or opposite shoulder	Have participants overcorrect point of entry outside of shoulders. Emphasize an earlier rotation so the body is rotated toward the arm entering the water sooner.

Swim on Side



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the sidestroke.

Sidestroke

In this level, participants should be able to swim the sidestroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Body Position

Have participants—

- Move into a nearly, horizontal streamlined position on the side.
- Keep the head, back and legs in a straight line and with the legs together and fully extended.
- The lower ear resting in the water close to the shoulder, with the face just high enough to allow the mouth and nose to remain above the water.

Legs

Have participants—

1. Extend the bottom arm and put the head on the shoulder.
2. From the glide position, recover the legs by flexing the hips and knees and drawing the heels slowly toward the buttocks, keeping the knees close together.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the top ankle and point the toes of the lower foot to prepare for the kick. Move the top leg toward the front of the body and the bottom leg toward the back. When extended, the top leg should be almost straight.
4. Without pausing, kick the top leg straight and press it backwards. At the same time, extend the bottom leg in a motion like kicking a ball until both legs are fully extended and together in the glide position.

Arms

With the leading arm, have participants—

1. From the glide position, rotate the arm slightly to position the palm down and angled slightly outward in the direction they are facing.
2. Bend the elbow and sweep the hand downward slightly and then back toward the feet, until the hand almost reaches the upper chest.
3. Without pausing, recover the arm by rotating the shoulder and dropping the elbow.
4. Pass the hand under the ear until the fingers point forward.
5. Thrust the arm forward, rotating it so the palm is down for the glide position.

With the trailing arm, have participants—

1. From the glide position, draw the forearm along the body until the hand is nearly in front of the shoulder of the leading arm.
2. Keep the palm down and angled slightly forward.
3. Sweep the hand downward slightly and then back toward the body and into the glide position.

Breathing and Timing

- Breathe with each stroke. Inhale while the trailing arm recovers and exhale as the trailing arm pushes back toward the feet.

- From the glide position, start the stroke with the sweep of the leading arm. Recover the trailing arm and the legs.
- Then kick and stroke with the trailing arm as the leading arm recovers. By the completion of the kick and the stroke of the trailing arm, the arms and legs should be fully extended.
- Glide until the speed slows.

Level 4 Sidestroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; hips may roll away from midline; bottom ear may be out of water with head raised
Arms	Leading arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may be straight during catch; hand may continue past upper chest Trailing arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may remain close to body; hand may pass by thigh and recover past shoulder of leading arm; arm may be partially bent at elbow
Legs	Elements of breaststroke or flutter kick acceptable; legs may separate slightly as knees bend in recovery; any type of foot and ankle position acceptable; legs may bend at the knees and be held loosely together during glide
Breathing and timing	Any type of breathing pattern with minimal breath-holding; arms and legs may move simultaneously; arm action may be continuous; some glide occurs at end of power phase

Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 4:

- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Recreational water illnesses
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Look Before You Leap

As in earlier levels, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. In this level, participants are introduced to entering the water in a headfirst position. Rules for headfirst entries should be repeated and built upon to ensure that participants clearly understand where and when it is appropriate to enter the water in a headfirst position. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the participants' level of understanding. Add topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events in or special needs of your local area or region. Refer to **Chapter 4** for details on these topics and for additional topics. Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills they learned.

Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 4, they are starting to demonstrate effective and efficient strokes in the front crawl and elementary backstroke. They are starting to show stroke proficiency in the breaststroke, back crawl, butterfly and sidestroke. They can enter the water headfirst from both compact and stride positions. There are two parts to the exit skills assessment:

1. Perform a feetfirst entry into deep water, swim front crawl for 25 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 25 yards.
2. Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim back crawl for 15 yards.

Learn-to-Swim Level 5—Stroke Refinement

The objectives of this level are coordination and refinement of strokes. Participants refine their performance of all the strokes (front crawl, back crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, elementary backstroke and sidestroke) and increase their distances. Flip turns on the front and back are also introduced.

Learn-to-Swim Level 5—Stroke Refinement Outline

Equipment

- U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets (correct sizes for the participants)
- Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Entry and Exit Shallow-angle dive from the side*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9-feet deep	WSIM, page 232 SWS, page 127
Shallow-angle dive, glide two body lengths and begin any front stroke*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9-feet deep	WSIM, page 222
Breath Control and Submerging Tuck surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, page 222 SWS, page 90
Pike surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, page 223 SWS, page 90
Changing Direction and Position Front flip turn while swimming	Demonstrate	WSIM, page 222 SWS, page 135
Backstroke flip turn while swimming	Demonstrate	WSIM, page 223 SWS, page 137
Treading Tread water	Demonstrate, at least 5 minutes	WSIM, page 224 SWS, page 85
Swim on Front Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, page 224 SWS, page 94
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, page 224 SWS, page 103
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, page 225 SWS, page 107

* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors SHOULD NOT teach headfirst entries.

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Swim on Back Elementary backstroke Back crawl Sculling ■ Standard scull	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards Demonstrate, at least 25 yards Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds	WSIM, page 225 SWS, page 112 WSIM, page 225 SWS, page 100 WSIM, page 226 SWS, page 83
Swim on Side Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	SWS, page 115 WSIM, page 227
Water Safety How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR Recreational water illnesses Reach or Throw, Don't Go Look Before You Leap Think So You Don't Sink Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide	Discuss/demonstrate Discuss Discuss/demonstrate Discuss/demonstrate Discuss Discuss/demonstrate Discuss	WSIM, page 64 SWS, page 45 WSIM, page 67 SWS, page 15 LWT WSIM, page 70 SWS, page 55 LWT WSIM, page 75 SWS, pages 28 & 140 LWT WSIM, page 76 SWS, pages 47 & 80 LWT WSIM, page 78 SWS, pages 38 & 52 LWT WSIM, page 71 SWS, page 24 LWT
Exit Skills Assessment 1. Perform a shallow-angle dive into deep water, swim front crawl for 50 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 50 yards. 2. Swim breaststroke for 25 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary and swim back crawl for 25 yards.		

* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors **SHOULD NOT** teach headfirst entries.

Learn-to-Swim Level 5 Skills

Water Entry and Exit

Shallow-Angle Dive from the Side

Have participants—

1. Start on the edge of the pool with the feet about shoulder-width apart and the toes gripping the edge of the pool.
2. Flex the hips and knees and bend forward until the upper back is nearly parallel to the pool deck.
3. Focus on a target. To gain momentum for the dive, swing the arms backward and upward, letting the heels rise and the body start to move forward.
4. When the arms reach the farthest point backward, immediately swing the arms forward. Extend the hips, knees, ankles and toes one after another forcibly to drive forward in a line of flight over and nearly parallel to the surface of the water.
5. Keep the body stretched and the hands interlocked and out in front.
6. During the flight, drop the head slightly between the outstretched arms, which should be angled downward slightly.
7. Make the entry at roughly a 45-degree angle to the surface of the water. Once under water, steer upward toward the surface with the hands and head.
8. Keep the body fully extended and streamlined while gliding under water. Before losing too much speed, start the leg kick to rise to the surface and start swimming.



SAFETY NOTE

All headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9-feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, instructors SHOULD NOT teach headfirst entries.

Shallow-Angle Dive, Glide 2 Body Lengths and Begin Any Front Stroke

Have participants follow steps 1–8 for the shallow-angle dive then glide 2 body lengths and begin any front stroke.

Breath Control and Submerging

Tuck Surface Dive

Have participants—

1. Use a swimming stroke and glide with the arms forward to gain forward momentum.
2. Take a breath, sweep the arms backward to the thighs then turn the palms downward.
3. Tuck the chin to the chest, bend the body at a right angle at the hips and draw the legs into a tuck position.
4. Roll forward until almost upside down.
5. Extend the legs upward quickly while pressing the arms and hands forward with the palms facing the bottom.
6. Use a breaststroke arm pull for greater depth after the initial descent slows down.
7. If depth of the water is unknown or if it is less than 8 feet, keep at least one arm extended over the head toward the bottom.

Pike Surface Dive

Have participants—

1. Use a swimming stroke and glide with the arms forward to gain forward momentum.
2. Take a breath, sweep the arms backward to the thighs and turn the palms downward.
3. Tuck the chin to the chest and flex at the hip sharply while the arms reach forward and downward toward the bottom.
4. Lift the legs upward, straight and together, putting the body into a fully extended, streamlined and nearly vertical position.
5. Allow the weight of the legs and forward momentum to cause descent.
6. If depth of the water is unknown or if it is less than 8 feet, keep at least one arm extended over the head toward the bottom.

Changing Direction and Position



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for tips on progressions for teaching front and backstroke flip turns.

Front Flip Turn While Swimming

Have participants—

1. When one stroke length (3½ to 4 feet) away from the wall, keep the trailing arm at the side while taking the last stroke with the lead arm. Both hands will end up at the thighs with the palms facing up.
2. Perform a half-somersault by tucking the chin to the chest and bending at the waist while simultaneously using a single dolphin kick to push the hips forward and upward. Turn the palms down and push the hands toward the head in order to help the legs flip over the water.
3. During the somersault, bend the legs to prepare to hit the wall. The hands will have reached the ears, which helps complete the forward flip.
4. Plant the feet on the wall with the toes pointed up or slightly to the side and the knees bent.
5. Extend the arms into a streamlined position above the head. Push off while facing up or facing diagonally to the side; then rotate to a face-down position during the glide.
6. Before losing speed, start a steady kick and resume the arm stroke.

Backstroke Flip Turn While Swimming

Have participants—

1. Start the flip one stroke from the wall by turning the head and looking toward the pulling arm as it does the catch.
2. While pulling, rotate onto the stomach, drive the head downward and stop the pulling hand at the hips. At the same time, the other arm recovers across the body, enters the water in the same position as in the front crawl and pulls to the hips.
3. Drive the head down and start somersaulting while tucking the knees tightly to the chest. During the somersault, turn both palms down and push the hands toward the head to complete the flip. Keep the legs tucked until the feet contact the wall, toes pointed upward.
4. While still on the back, push straight off forcefully and go into a streamlined position while leaving the wall.
5. Before losing speed, start kicking to rise to the surface and resume the arm stroke.

Treading

Tread Water

Refer to Learn-to-Swim Level 3, page 198. In this level, participants should be able to tread water for 5 minutes.

Swim on Front



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the front crawl, breaststroke and butterfly.

Front Crawl

In this level, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 5 Front Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface in a streamlined position; body roll is a fluid motion—head, trunk and legs are aligned
Arms	Above-water recovery with arm bent at elbow; arm relaxed as hand moves toward the head; arm extends fully in coordination with body roll; elbow and hand move just outside the shoulders as the arm travels straight backward; palm presses toward feet until arm reaches full extension during finish
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips and propels swimmer forward using a 2- to 6-beat kick; heels just break the surface
Breathing and timing	Exhale under water before the next breath during the power phase; head remains in line with the body—minimal head movement; alternate side breathing preferred

Breaststroke

In this level, participants should be able to swim the breaststroke at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 5 Breaststroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 15 degrees from surface during glide; body incline should become more level following kick
Arms	Palms begin moving outward at or narrower than shoulder width—arms slightly bent; in the mid-pull, sweep the hands downward and inward; bend at elbow increases as hands move toward chest—hands deeper than elbows by end of pull; hands should not sweep beyond the upper chest area; sweep hands back together so that hands travel along the midline underneath the body to a streamlined position
Legs	Legs bend at the knees bringing heels toward buttocks—legs bending slightly at hips; knees and hips should be aligned—knees do not separate beyond hip width; ankles bend and rotate outward with toes wider than the heel of foot; knees and ankles extend at the end of the power phase—legs partially bent at the knees and ankles acceptable
Breathing and timing	Pull, breathe, kick, glide sequence; rhythmic breathing with each cycle; glide after recovery with arms extended; slight hesitation before recovery acceptable

Butterfly

In this level, participants should be able to swim the butterfly at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 5 Butterfly Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 15 degrees from the surface; head, trunk and legs are aligned with minimal movement to the left or right of the midline
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—straight elbow, occasional arm contact with the water acceptable; hands should enter at shoulder width, with fingertips facing down; arms partially bent at elbows; arms start wide then move to inside the width of body at waist; hands press back toward the feet past the hips
Legs	Legs may separate slightly at knees during kick with minimal flutter action; single kick action acceptable; hips flex and knees extended; knees slightly bent; hips raise as legs extend
Breathing and timing	Face-forward head lift begins at start of catch; head re-enters the water after taking breath and hands pull toward waist; one leg kick paired with each arm cycle at a minimum; arms should recover directly from the finish—minimal delay before recovery acceptable

Swim on Back



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the elementary backstroke and back crawl.

Elementary Backstroke

In this level, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 5 Elementary Backstroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface with arms at side during glide; chin up, ears in the water
Arms	Arms extend at or slightly above shoulder level with hands no further than top of head; fingers lead arm extension; palms face toward feet; elbows extend as palms push backward and inward, stopping at the hips
Legs	Heels drop by bending knees; ankles bend to 90 degrees and rotate outward with toes wider than heels of the feet; knees and ankles fully extending at the end of the power phase
Breathing and timing	Rhythmic breathing pattern—inhale during recovery and exhale during power phase; arm recovery begins slightly before leg recovery; arm and leg power phase begins simultaneously; extended glide after power phase

Back Crawl

In this level, participants should be able to swim the back crawl at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 5 Back Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body horizontal to 15 degrees from surface; head back with ears submerged; rudimentary body roll; trunk and legs should be aligned
Arms	Above-water recovery—arm may be partially bent at elbow; hands exit thumb-side or little finger first; hands enter little finger first about shoulder-width apart; arm partially bent at elbow during power phase; hand and forearm finish beyond hip
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips; legs slightly bent at the knee during upward kick and straight at knee with toes pointed during the downward kick; feet remain below the surface—moderate splashing acceptable
Breathing and timing	Relaxed rhythmic breathing pattern; arms in opposition—slight hesitation at finish acceptable

Sculling

Have participants—

1. Hold the hands just below the surface while standing in waist-deep water.
2. Keep the palms flat, facing downward, and rapidly move them side to side to create whirlpools. While holding the elbows about a tennis ball's distance from the ribs, move the forearms out and then back in. Keep your upper arms still while the lower arms and hands maintain consistent water pressure.

Standard Scull

To practice the sculling motion, have participants—

1. Move into a back float, lean the head back and place the arms at the side. Keep the hands flat and the fingers and wrists firm.
2. Press the shoulders down and back so that the hips are at the surface. Bend the arms at the elbows so that the hands are beside the hips, keeping the point of the elbow away from the body.
3. Keep the palms flat, while moving the forearms away from the body keeping the elbows wide.
4. Bend the elbows and move the arms back to the body so the hands are about 2 inches next to and slightly below the hips.
5. Continuously repeat Steps 3 and 4 to maintain the standard scull for at least 30 seconds.

Swim on Side



TEACHING TIP

Refer to the Water Safety Instructor's CD-ROM for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the sidestroke.

Sidestroke

In this level, participants should be able to swim the sidestroke at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

Level 5 Sidestroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; hips may roll away from vertical; bottom ear in the water
Arms	Leading arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may be straight during catch; hand may continue past upper chest Trailing arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may remain close to body; hand may pass by thigh and recover past shoulder of leading arm; arm may be partially bent at elbow
Legs	Scissors kick; legs may separate slightly as knees bend in recovery; any type of foot and ankle position acceptable; legs may bend at the knees and be held loosely together during glide
Breathing and timing	Rhythmic breathing pattern; arms and legs may move simultaneously; some glide occurs at end of power phase

Improving Performance of the Sidestroke

Observations	Interventions
Body bent at hips or back severely arched; body almost turned onto stomach or back	Tell participants to stretch the body from the head to the toes during the glide and relax the neck and back muscles.
Head held too high, legs too low	Have participants relax neck muscles and lay the head on the shoulder.
Top and/or bottom knee drawn too far forward toward chest	Have participants keep the back straight. Emphasize relaxation and an easy recovery movement.
Top ankle not flexed during leg extension	Tell participants to flex top ankle while extending the leg so big toe points toward head.
Ineffective glide	Check whether power phase of kick and trailing arm are simultaneous. Have participants glide until momentum is almost lost.
Kick begins before trailing arm starts the power phase	Be sure trailing palm faces the feet before kicking.
Legs drop too deep	Have participants lower their heads into the water and start the next stroke sooner.
Legs open vertically on recovery	Have participants practice kick lying on deck to simulate scissors action.
Breaststroke kick	Have participants practice kick to simulate scissors action—extending top leg forward and bottom leg back—in bracket drill or with kickboard.

Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 5:

- How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR
- Recreational water illnesses
- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Look Before You Leap
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice
- Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide

As in earlier levels, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the participants' level of understanding. Add topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events in or special needs of your local area or region. Refer to **Chapter 4** for details on these topics and for additional topics. Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills they learned.

Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 5, they are starting to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in all strokes. They are starting to work on endurance through longer swims that require using open and flip turns. They can enter the water using the shallow-angle dive and can then continue swimming. There are two parts to the exit skills assessment:

1. Perform a shallow-angle dive into deep water, swim front crawl for 50 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 50 yards.
2. Swim breaststroke for 25 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary and swim back crawl for 25 yards.