

Adult Learn-to-Swim – Going to Extremes



Sometimes going to extremes is the best option!

Going to extremes is a very useful strategy to help adults learn to swim. Not only can they learn faster, but they also get a better understanding of the principles of swimming and how their body functions in the water. Along with this they develop a style that best suits them.

I spent a lot of time showing learn to swim adults the 'correct' technique and then getting them to try it. They thought, and felt, that they were doing the same as demonstrated but often they weren't. By getting them to "go to extremes" with the technique they realised a lot quicker where the middle ground and correct technique lay.

Going to extremes means getting them to try some things fast then slow, sometimes hard then soft, sometimes long then short. Swimming about 10 metres at each extreme is usually enough.

The sweet spot for using this technique is when people are 'stuck' trying to achieve a skill or they have the muscle memory of a bad swimming style.

Here are a few examples when I use this:

Strokes

Swimmer too tense - Tense the whole body as much as possible and then try and swim, then relax the whole body (almost floppy) as much as possible and swim, then in between.

Swimmer's hands too tense - Keep the fingers and thumb tightly together for the entry and pull, then totally relax the hand and then in between.

Incorrect entry point - Enter the hand into the water close to head by the ear, then as far in front of the head as possible and then in between.

Incorrect entry point - Enter the hand into the water very wide (Y position), then right in front of head and then in between in line with the shoulders.

Pull not effective - Pull through the water very gently, then pull through the water as strongly as possible and then in between.

Messy strokes - Do big splashy strokes, then soft and quiet as possible strokes and then in between.



Kicking Techniques

Ineffective kick - Kick as fast as they can, then kick as slow as they can and then in between.

Ineffective kick - Kick with very tense legs, then floppy relaxed legs and then in between.

Ineffective kick - Do big deep kicks, then very small kicks and then in between.

Head Position

Incorrect head position - Have them looking as far forward as they can, then straight down and then in between

Rotation & Glide

No glide - Keep the arm in the water out in front and glide as long as possible when swimming, then move the arms continuously with no glide, then in between.

Poor rotation - Get them to swim flat, then over-rotate side to side and then in between.

Breathing

Insufficient body roll - Have them exaggerate the body roll to get a breath.

Inefficient breathing - Get them to hold their breath when their face is in the water between breaths, then blow out all the air in their lungs when their face is in the water and then somewhere in between.

Not getting enough air – Get them to keep their face out of the water until they get a full breath, then have them try and take a very fast breath then in between.

Going to extremes works well for any skill that an adult learn-to-swim student is having difficulty with.

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