

Bilateral Breathing

Most common in freestyle. Breathing to the left side then swimming three strokes and breathing to the right side, then swimming three strokes and breathing to the left side and so on.

Blocks

The starting platforms located behind each lane. Blocks have a variety of designs and should only be fitted where there is a safe diving depth. Blocks may be permanent or removable, but also incorporate a bar to allow swimmers to perform backstroke starts.

Circle (Chain) Swimming

A way of avoiding collisions when there is more than one swimmer in a lane. Swimmers stay to one side of the lane and then swap to change direction. Eg. Always staying on the left side of the lane, similar to driving.

Clock

The big clock on the wall or deck is used for interval training. The red hand goes around every 60 secs. Swimmers who can read the clock and know their times find it easy to monitor their own progress. Your child's coach will be happy to explain the clock to you.

Deck

The circulation area around the swimming pool. During a meet / gala only authorised people may be on deck. This includes swimmers, coaches and officials.

False Start Rope

This is suspended over the pool at about half way which may be dropped to stop swimmers if there has been a false start. Is only used if some swimmers have continued to swim and are unaware that the race has to be re started.

Flags

These are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 5 metres from the wall. They allow backstroke swimmers to determine where the end of the pool is.

Heat Declared Winner

Used in galas if there are no finals. The winners are determined by the fastest times over all the heats and generally the swimmer will only swim once in that event.

Lane Ropes

The dividers used to set out the lanes in a pool are called ropes.

Lap Counter

The large numbered cards for the person turning the cards; used during the freestyle events 800 metres or longer. Counting is done from the non - starting end.

Swimming Terminology



Short Course

Events swam in a 25 metre pool

Long Course

Events swam in a 50 metre pool

Medley

All strokes are used. This can be an individual event, with one person swimming all 4 strokes or it can be a relay event with four people, each swimming a different stroke. The order of the strokes is as follows

- Individual Event:
Butterfly (BF), Backstroke (BC), Breaststroke (BS), Freestyle (FS)
- Relay Event:
Backstroke (BC), Breaststroke (BS), Butterfly (BF), Freestyle (FS)

Open water swimming

Swimming in water other than in a pool, for e.g. the ocean or a lake

PB or Personal Best

The best time a swimmer has done so far in a particular stroke / event.

Pull

A drill where you swim using your arms only. A pull buoy is often used to keep a swimmer's legs together and in a good position while they pull.

Referee

The head official at a swim gala.

Touch Pad

The removable plate on the end of the pool that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touch pad to register an official time in a race

Tumble Turn

Used in freestyle swimming, similar to a somersault under the water upon reaching the pool wall. Is faster than 'touch and go' once the technique is mastered.

Warm up

The swim session a swimmer does before a gala or before their event. This helps to increase blood flow to the muscles which is essential in helping to avoid injury. It is also useful to familiarise the swimmer with a different pool.

Warm Down (or Swim Down)

Used by the swimmer to rid the body of excess lactic acid generated during a race.