

# **UKCC LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE**

## **Unit 2**

### **Teaching Aquatics - Techniques**

#### **Part 3 – The Strokes**

##### **b) Backstroke**



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# Backstroke

## Study the stroke systematically - B L A B T

- **B**ody Position.
- **L**eg Action.
- **A**rm Action.
- **B**reathing.
- **T**iming / coordination.



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# General description

- Supine.
- Alternating and continuous.
- Arm dominant.
- Governed by ASA / FINA rules regarding technique.

**Notes: Can be popular with beginners because it does not involve the face being in the water / breathing problems.**

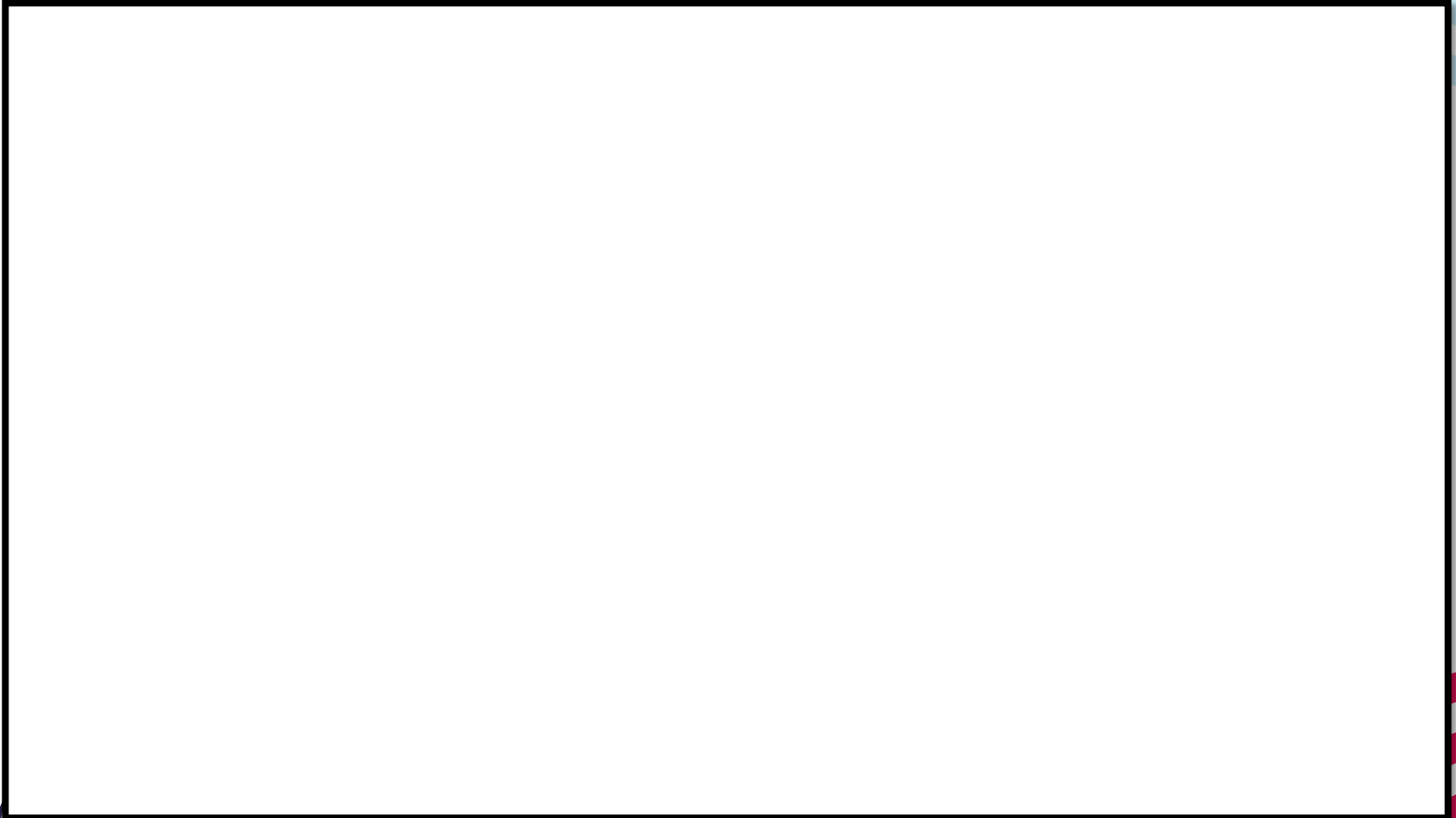
**Due to the structure of the shoulder joint the arm is less effective moving behind the body than in front – hence the need for greater body roll in Bc. to enable the hand to be under the water when the arm is bent and pulling.**



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# Backstroke Video

click play to start (hover mouse over bottom left corner)



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# Backstroke - Body Position cont.

- Flat body position - slight slope from head to feet.



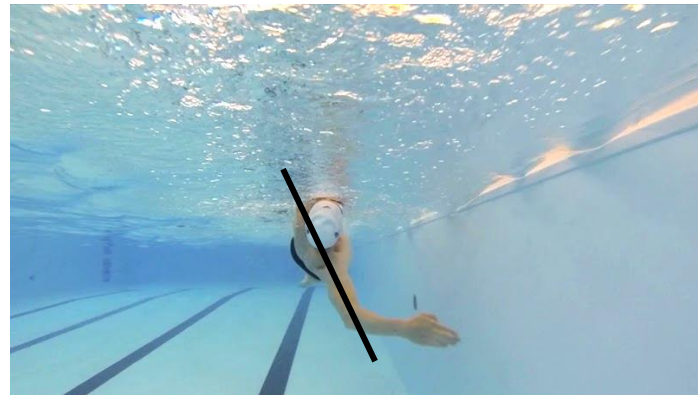
- Head in line with the body / neutral position.
- Head pillowed in the water with the ears just submerged.
- Eyes looking upward and slightly towards the feet.
- Head remains still throughout.



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# Backstroke - Body Position cont.

- Hips close to surface of water.
- Legs in line behind the body – avoid lateral / sideways swing.
- Body rolls throughout the stroke (normally approximately  $45^{\circ}$  but can be up to [but not including]  $90^{\circ}$ ).
- The body roll is towards the pulling arm (look at shoulder line).



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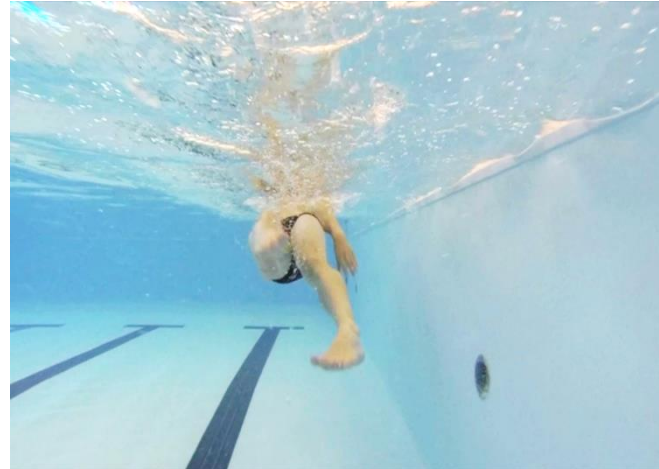
# Backstroke – Leg Action cont.

## Function

- Maintains flat body position.
- Balances arm action.
- Provides some propulsion.

## General

- Alternating and continuous, up beat / down beat action.
- A 6 beat leg kick should be taught.
- Legs should be in line behind the body.
- Legs should be passing close to each other i.e. keeping the body narrow.
- Legs roll with the body / arm action.



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# Backstroke – Leg Action cont.

## Technique - Two phases of the kick:-

- **Up-beat**
  - Knee bends and then whips to straight at the water surface.
  - Knees should remain under the surface of the water.
  - Toes break the surface at the end of the up-beat.
  - Make the water ‘bubble’ / ‘boil’.
  - Ankle must be plantar flexed / toes pointed. (+ in-toeing).



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# Backstroke – Leg Action cont.

- **Down-beat:-**
  - Leg travels down straight.
  - Kick to between 12" – 18" / 30 – 45 cms. depth (depending on age / height).



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# Backstroke - Arm action

**Think of the arm action as:-**

- Entry.
- Catch.
- Propulsive phase.
- Recovery phase.

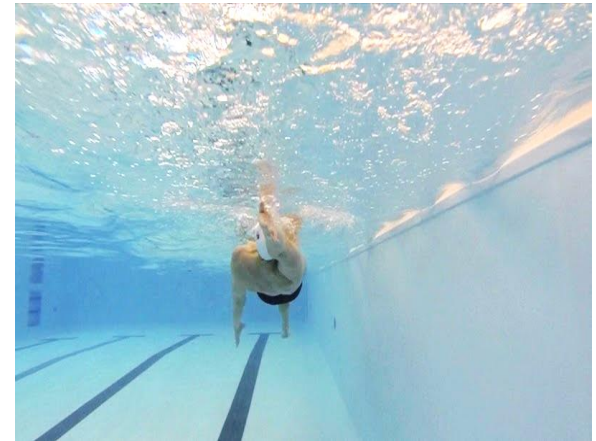


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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

## Entry:-

- Entry takes place behind the shoulder.
- Little finger enters water first
  - arm straight.
  - palm of the hand facing outwards.
  - the upper arm brushes the ear.



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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

## Catch:-

- Hand sweeps down and outwards to ‘CATCH’.
- The palm of the hand is pitched downwards and outwards.
- This is the moment when the swimmer starts to feel pressure on the water.
- The catch takes place at about 8 – 10” deep (depending on size of swimmer).

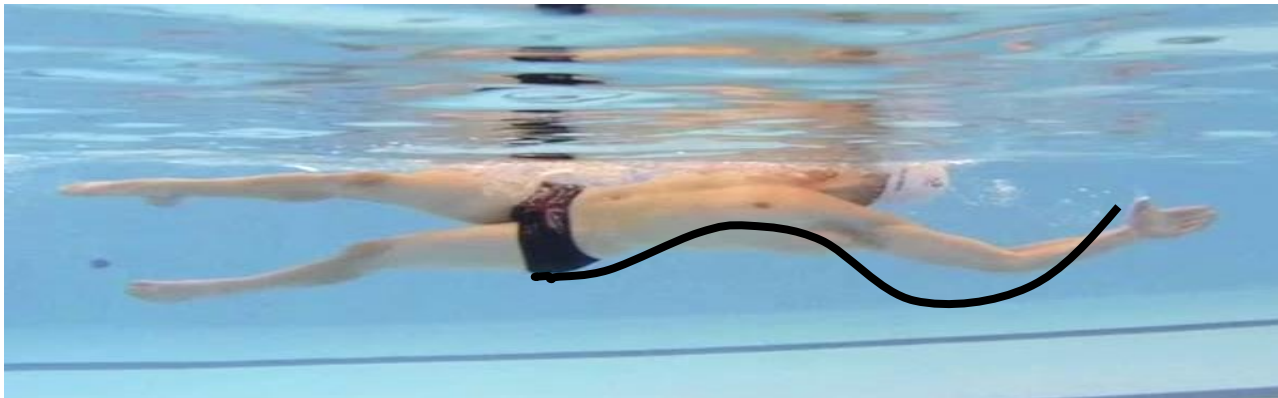


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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

The propulsive phase of the arm action is made up of 3 sweeps:-

- Downsweep (1<sup>ST</sup>).
- Upsweep.
- Downsweep (2<sup>ND</sup>).



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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Downsweep:-

- The body rolls towards the pulling arm.
- The hand moves backwards and downwards with the palm facing backwards.
- Elbow begins to flex / bend.

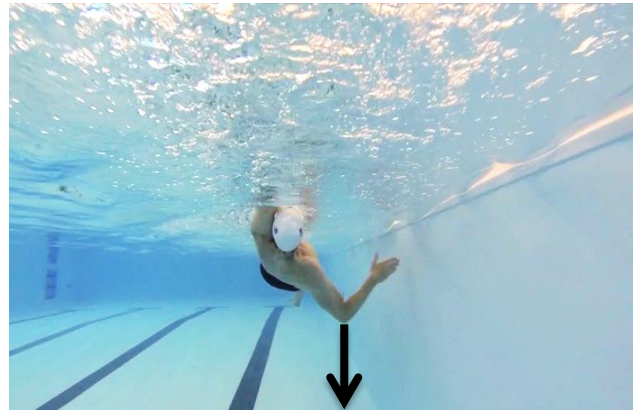


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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

## Upsweep:-

- The hand continues to travel backwards while sweeping upward and inwards.
- Elbow bends to approximately 90° and points downwards to the pool floor.
- Hand should be just below the water surface at the top of the upsweep with the palm facing backwards.
- Hand accelerates as it travels through the sweeps
- This upsweep should feel like a 'pulling' action.



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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Downsweep:-

- The hand continues to travel backwards as it moves downward and inwards towards the thigh.
- The elbow straightens as the hand pushes towards the thigh.
- The hand continues to accelerate and push through turning the palm downwards as it passes the hip.

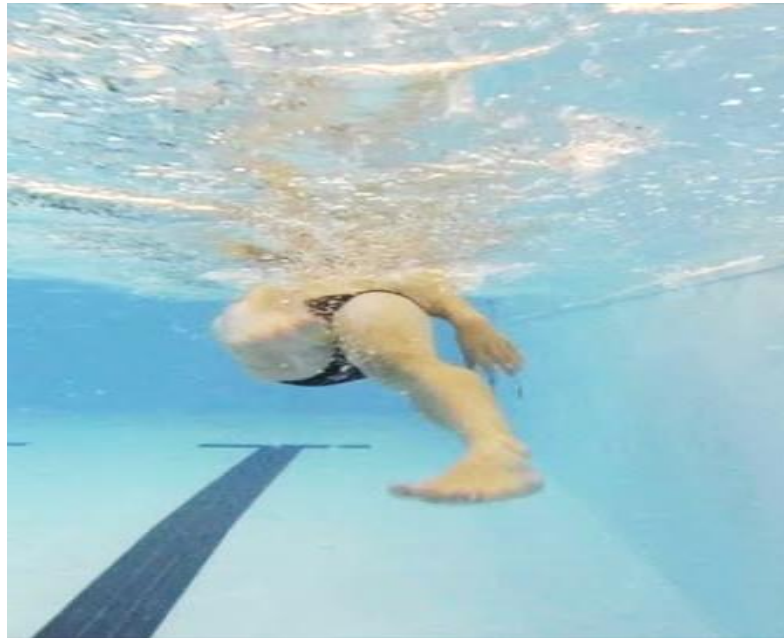


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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

- This 2<sup>nd</sup> downsweep phase should feel like a 'pushing' action.
- The palm of the hand then turns to face the thigh in preparation for the hand / arm exiting the water thumb first.



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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

## Recovery:-

- The thumb should come out of the water first.
- The body rolls towards the pulling arm - this raises / releases the recovery shoulder from the water.



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# Backstroke – Arm Action cont.

- The recovering arm should be straight.
- The recovery arm is carried backwards above its own side of the body (not sideways above the water).
- As it travels backwards the arm rotates to turn the palm outwards and place the little finger ready for entry.



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# Backstroke - Breathing

- Breathing should be every stroke cycle.
- Avoid breath holding.



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# Backstroke - Timing

## Normally:-

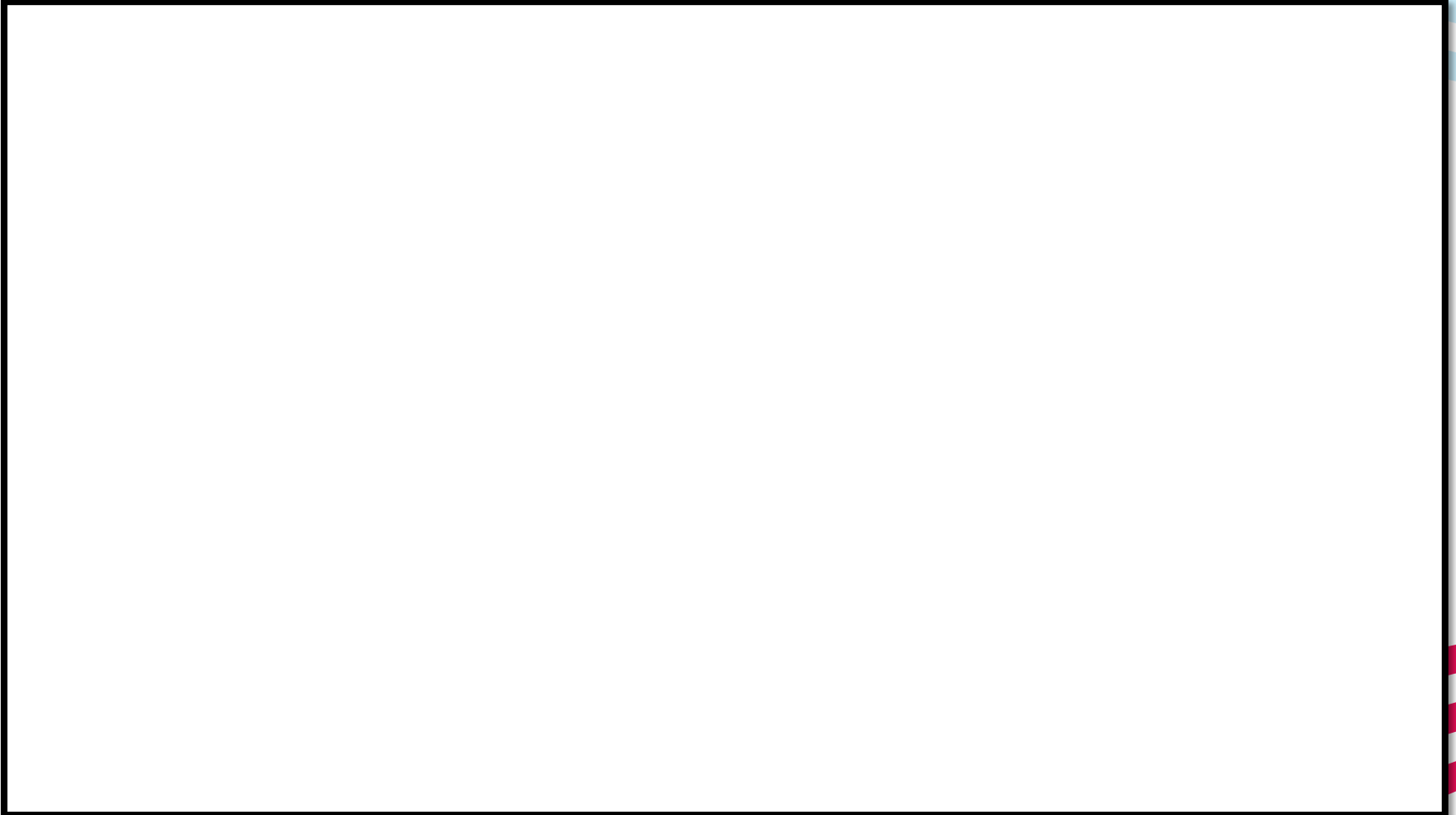
- 6 leg kicks to 1 arm cycle.
- One arm enters the water the other is at the hip / about to recover.
- Breathe each stroke cycle.



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# Backstroke Video

click play to start (hover mouse over bottom left corner)



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# Practices and teaching points

While reading in the text book about the stroke and the teaching of it ..... it is important to be very clear about the difference between:-

- **Practices** – these are listed in the text book and are essentially **WHAT to do** e.g. a width back crawl leg kick with one float held against the chest.
- **Teaching points** – these are essentially about **HOW to do the skill** involved in the practice e.g. (back crawl leg kick)
  - Kick with pointed toes.
  - The toes should just breaking the surface as they kick up.



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# Backstroke

## Reading:-

**Text book – Read Chapter 2.4 for Backstroke technique and practices.**

## Also:-

- Re-read all the power points on Backstroke.
- Do the tasks relating to Backstroke in the text book.
- Look at the Backstroke lesson plan that you will be teaching.



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