



MASTERS SWIMMING NSW

Coachers Workshop
23rd – 24th July 2022

Backstroke

Lachlan Hinds &
Bec Sheppherd

PRESENTED BY



Presenters: Lachlan Hinds & Bec Sheppherd

- **Bec Sheppherd (North Shore Masters & Hornsby ASC)**
 - World top 10 Backstroke specialist
 - Multiple National Medalist
- **Lachlan Hinds (North Shore Masters & Hornsby ASC)**
 - Competitive Swimmer for 22 Years
 - Marathon Swimmer (Triple Crown)
 - National Swimmer Masters
 - Coaching Experience 10+ Years up to National Open Level



Topics

- Technique – Theory & Priorities
- Backstroke Priorities
- Backstroke Pull
- Arm Stroke: The Catch, Pull & Finish, Entry
- Rotation
- Drills to Develop Good Head/Body Position
- Starts, turns & finishes
- Questions



Backstroke Technique

- Clear understanding on what to look for; where to look
- Technique priorities:
 - Fastest, most efficient
 - Minimize injury risk
 - Makes sense to move the body forward
 - Makes sense for the “average” person to do



Technique Theory

- Move body forward in the water
- Push water back
- The arm pull is PARAMOUNT
- Kick is secondary propulsive
- Rotation, body/head position (and kick to a degree) is built around the ideal pull
- Developing athletes must be taught with ultimate end-goal technique in mind



Backstroke Priorities

1. The Catch
2. The rest of the pull/finish
 - a) Rotation – how much and timing
 - b) Hand entry
 - c) Kick
 - d) Head/Body position



Backstroke Pull

- Push water back
 - Palm ALWAYS faces back
 - Fingertips point to the side (away from the body)
 - Palms shouldn't angle down/up
 - Bend the elbow to get the whole arm into it
- Hand stays shallow; pushes straight back
- Arm stays to the side of the body
- No up-and-down motion; No “deep” water



Arm Stroke: The Catch

- The most common element of the best backstrokers in the world
- Hand/arm enter water (moving downward)
- Immediately after entry, the hand changes direction completely and moves to the side
- Distinct, visible elbow bend to make:
 - Fingertips point to the side
 - Palms face back
 - Forearm face back
 - Thumb just needs to be a few inches under surface



Backstroke Catch





Arm Stroke: Bad Catch

- NOT:
 - Straight arm
 - Push down with the arm
 - Palm faces downward (for part or all)
- Not hitting the catch can be the result of:
 - Intentionally trying to pull deep
 - Late rotation (so the arm pushes down or to the side while body continues to rotate)
 - No rotation



Arm Stroke: Pull & Finish

- After the catch:
 - Hand/arm continue to push straight back
 - Arm stays to the side of the body (connected)
 - No up/down movement
 - The palm and forearm stay flat against the water
- The Finish:
 - Just a follow-through or extension of the pull
 - Hold water all the way through
 - Hand moves downward to help body rotate to other side
 - Hand finishes below hips and facing inward



Arm Stroke: Entry

- Shoulder-width or slightly wider
- Pinky first - If entry is too narrow or the back of the hand enters first, that very likely means late rotation
- Body needs to be flat (halfway through rotation) upon hand entry
- Late rotation also means that the body will complete rotation during the catch
 - Arm will push down to finish the rotation



Rotation

- Rotation is SO important!!!
- Need to rotate to: –Hit the catch –Have the strongest pull
- Need to rotate on time to:
 - Have the best entry
 - ...so you can hit the catch



Rotation: Backstroke

- Rotation is driven by the finish and entry
- Hips and shoulders rotate together
- Shallow pull + 20-30 degree rotation = Arm/Shoulder in line and connected

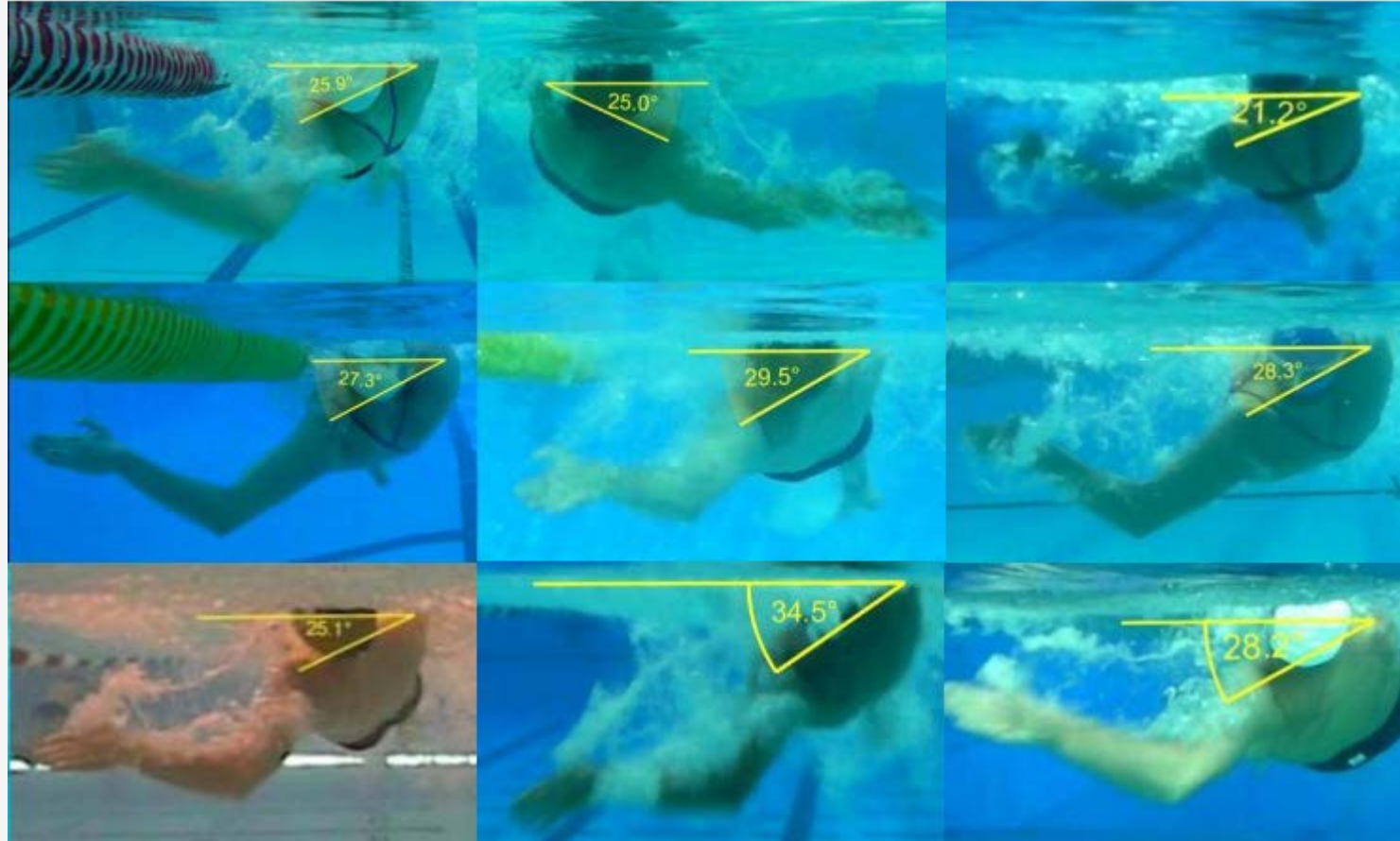


Rotation: How Much?

- The best backstrokers rotate under 30 degrees to each side
- Not necessary to rotate more
 - The best pull is with the arms to the side, fingertips pointing to the side and just under the surface
 - Rotating more...
 1. takes more time (slows tempo)
 2. doesn't help (not necessary to reach deeper)



Rotation: How Much?



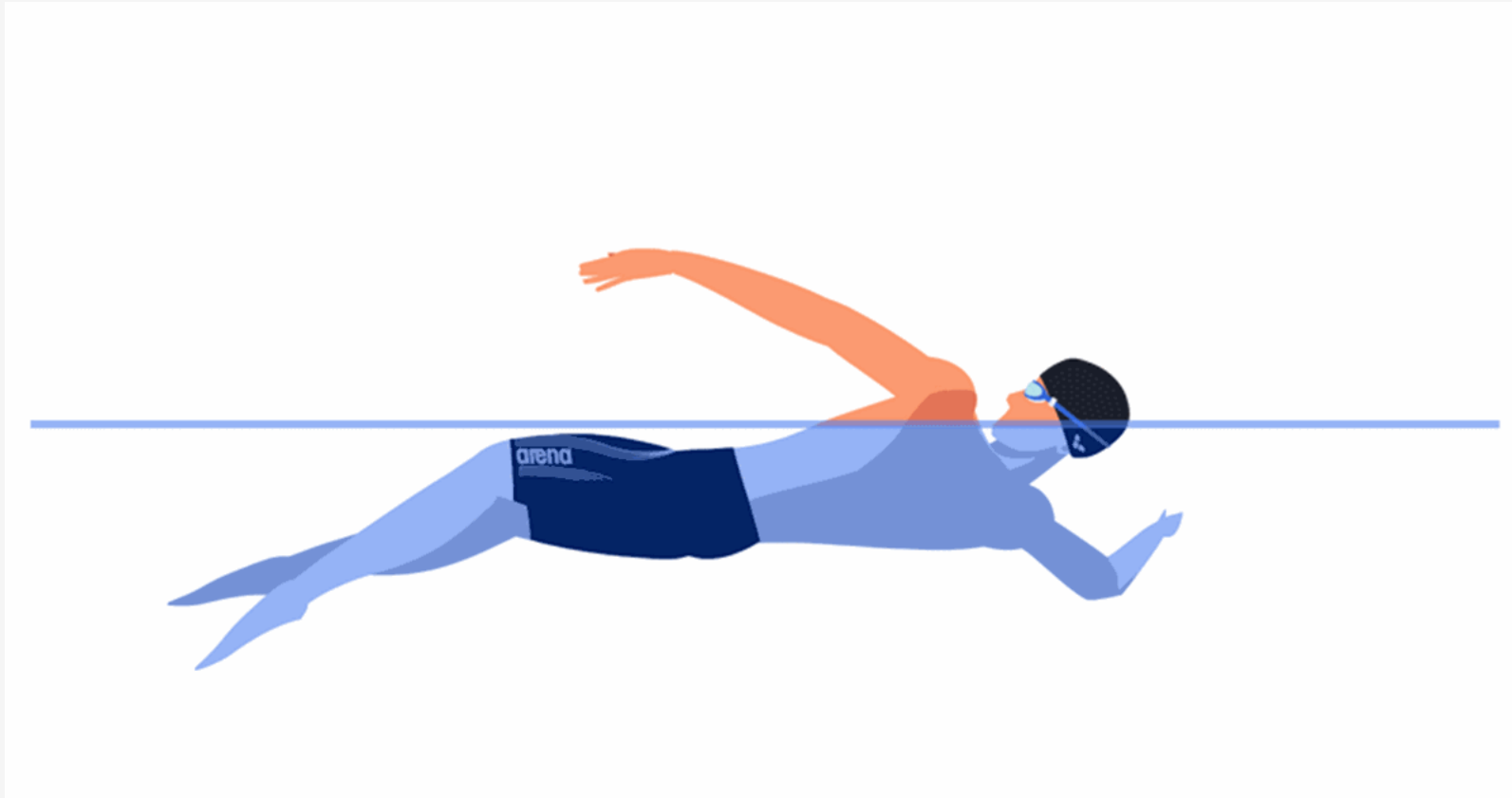


Head/Body Position

- Head should to be tilted slightly forward (like resting on a thin pillow)
... relaxed
 - Not pressed back ... that will arch the back and sink hips
- You need to keep your head still to maintain the stability of your long axis
- The rest of the body will be just under the surface
- When rotated, will still be under the surface
- Shoulders should stay to the side of the body – Don't lift out of the water



Good Body Position



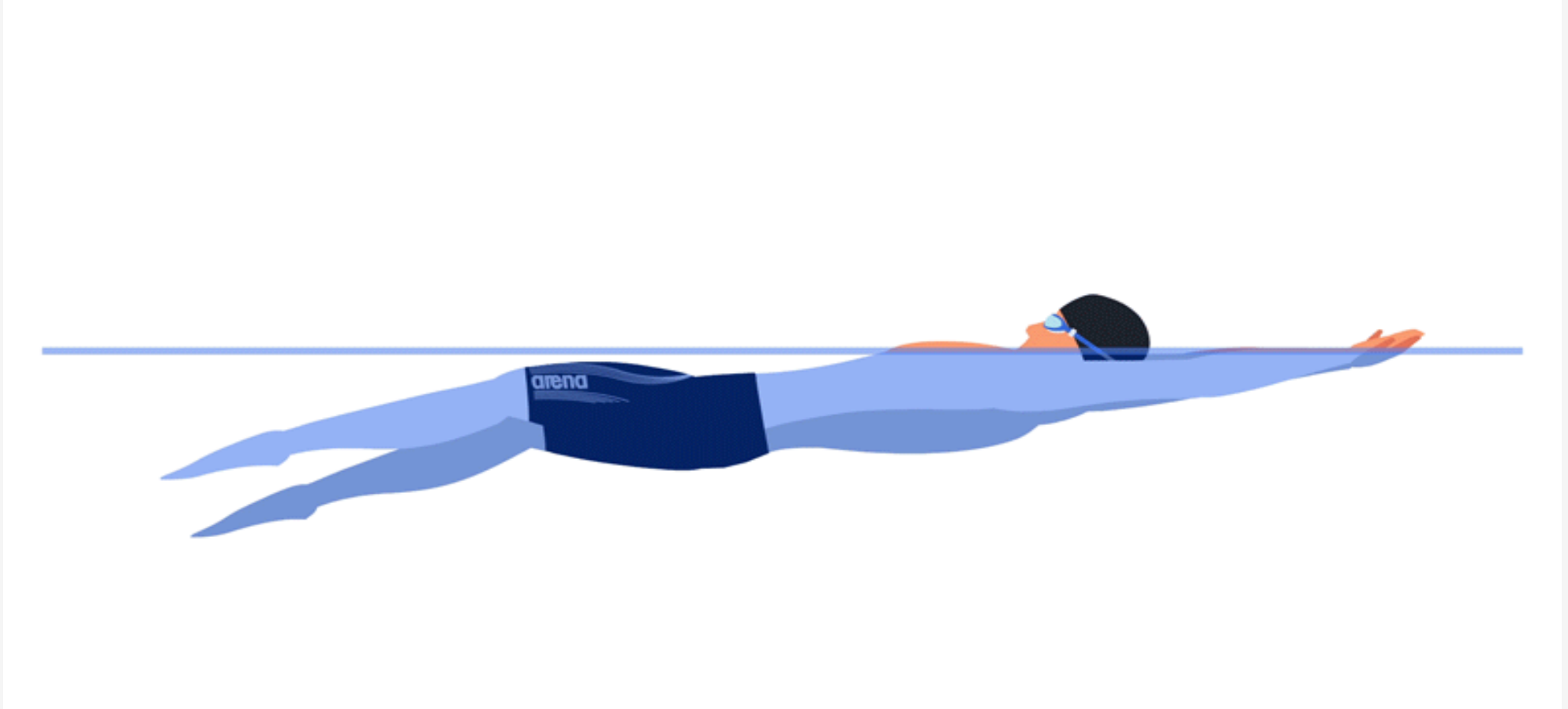


Kicking

- Your kick needs to be energetic - 6-beat kick
- Your kick needs to be focused at your feet and not your knees
- If your knees are coming out of the water there is too much bend at that joint
- The muscles in your hips and ankles have to work hard on the up-beat of the kick
- Bent knees only weaken your kick and work like a break
- The down kick will be outside of the body line... it's ok!!



Streamline Kick



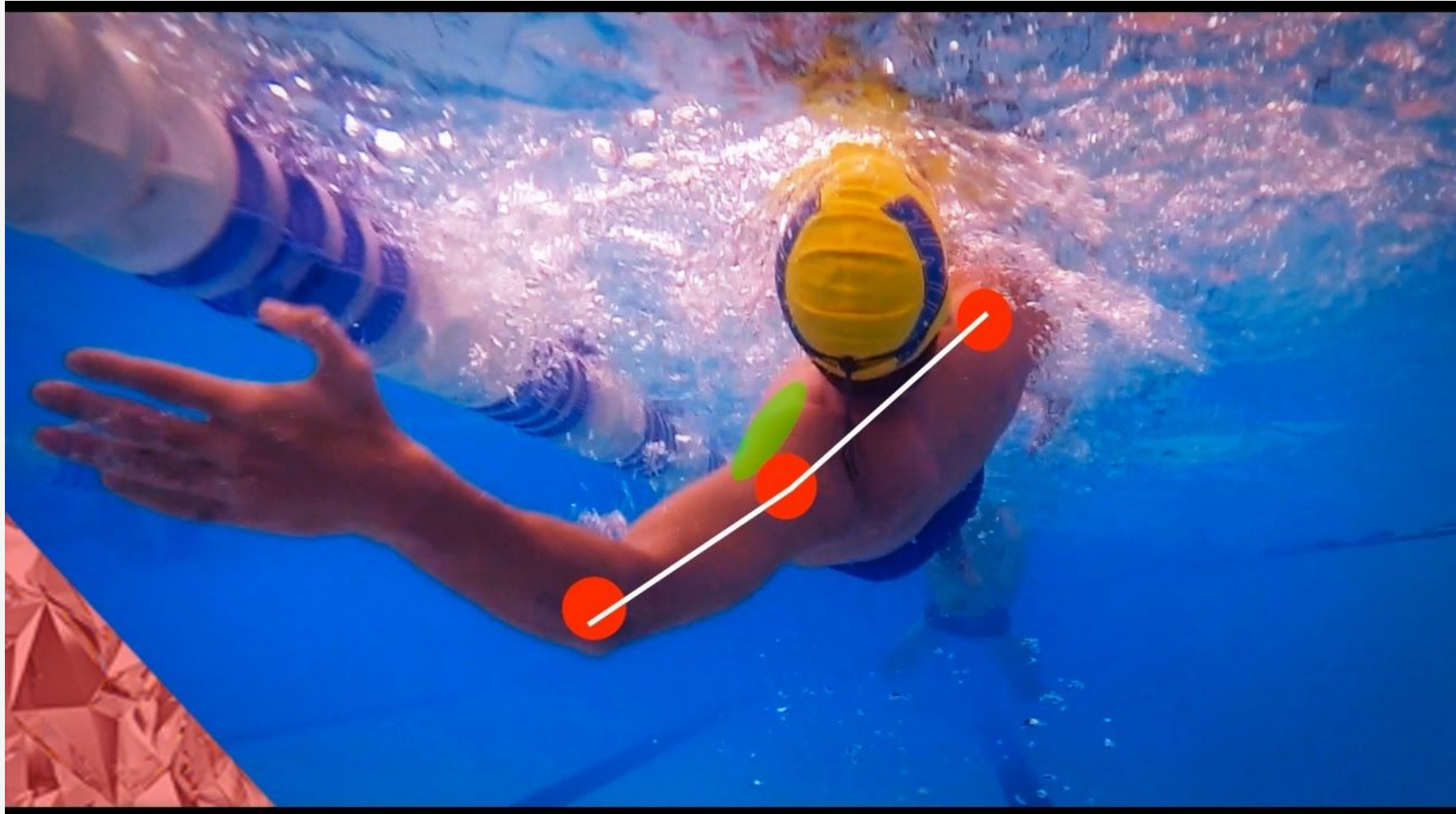


Injury-Free Backstroke

- Shoulder pain:
 - Not from repetitive motion
 - From repetitive motion of poor technique
 - Most likely from being too deep at the catch
 - Arm being too far behind the body
 - Hyperextension – Keep arm more shallow!
- Ask swimmer at when they're feeling pain



Rotation & Shoulder



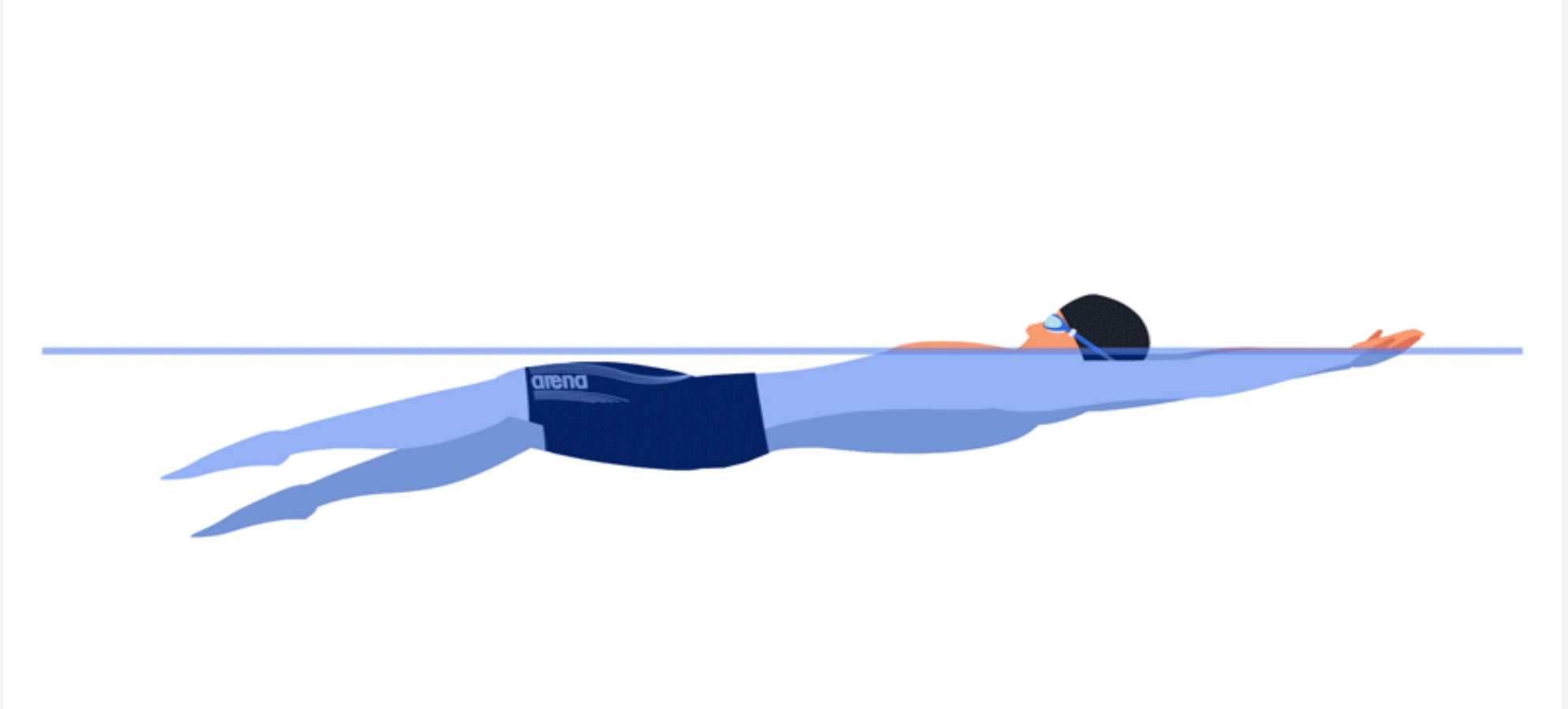


Drills Why do them??

- Improves good habits
- Improves one or more aspect(s) of the stroke
- Can Slow Swimmers down
- Can be used as a tool to reset and readjust
- Goes back to the basics of
 - Kick
 - Pull
 - Swim
- So what Drills should be do?

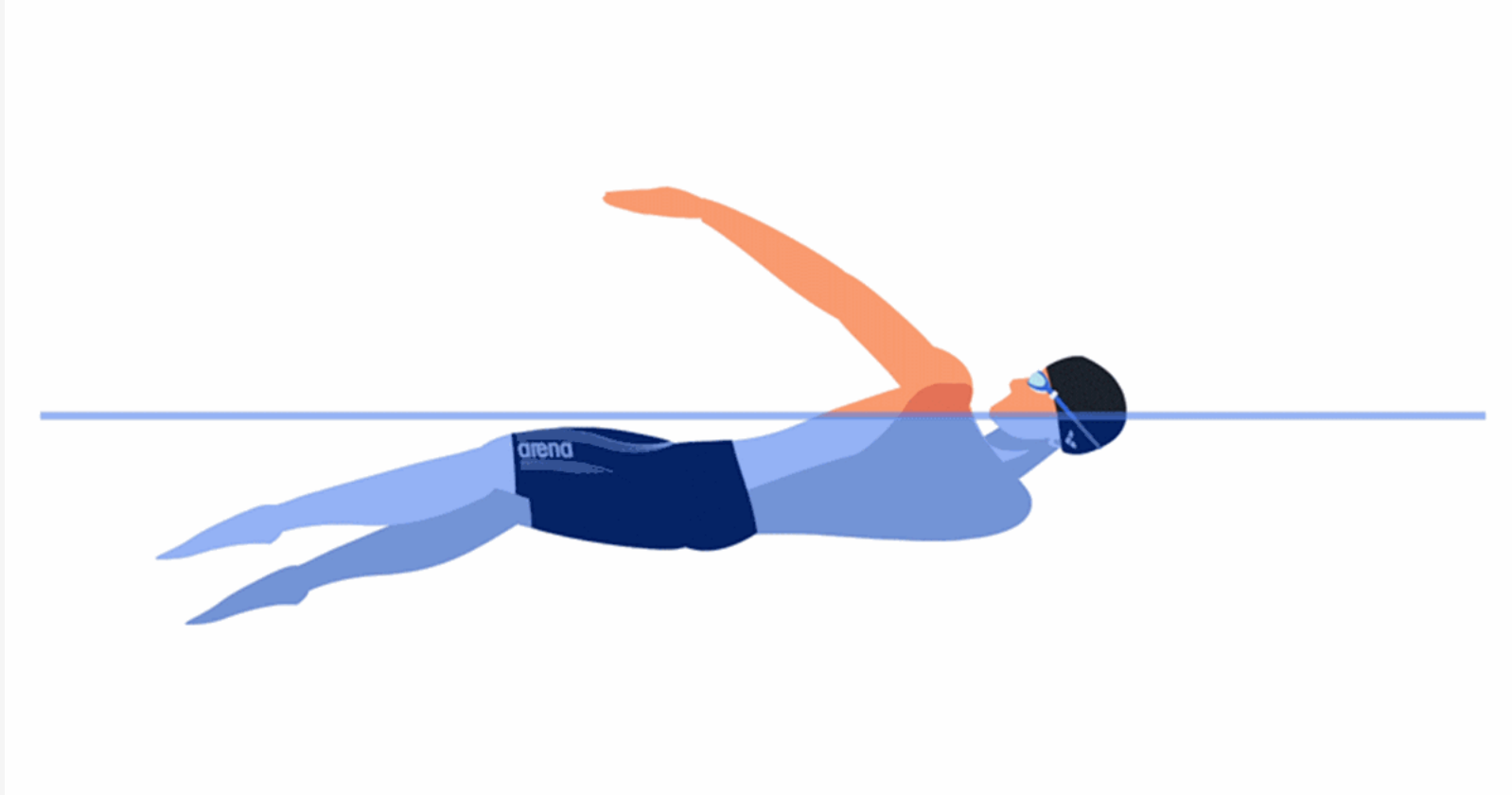


Streamline Kick



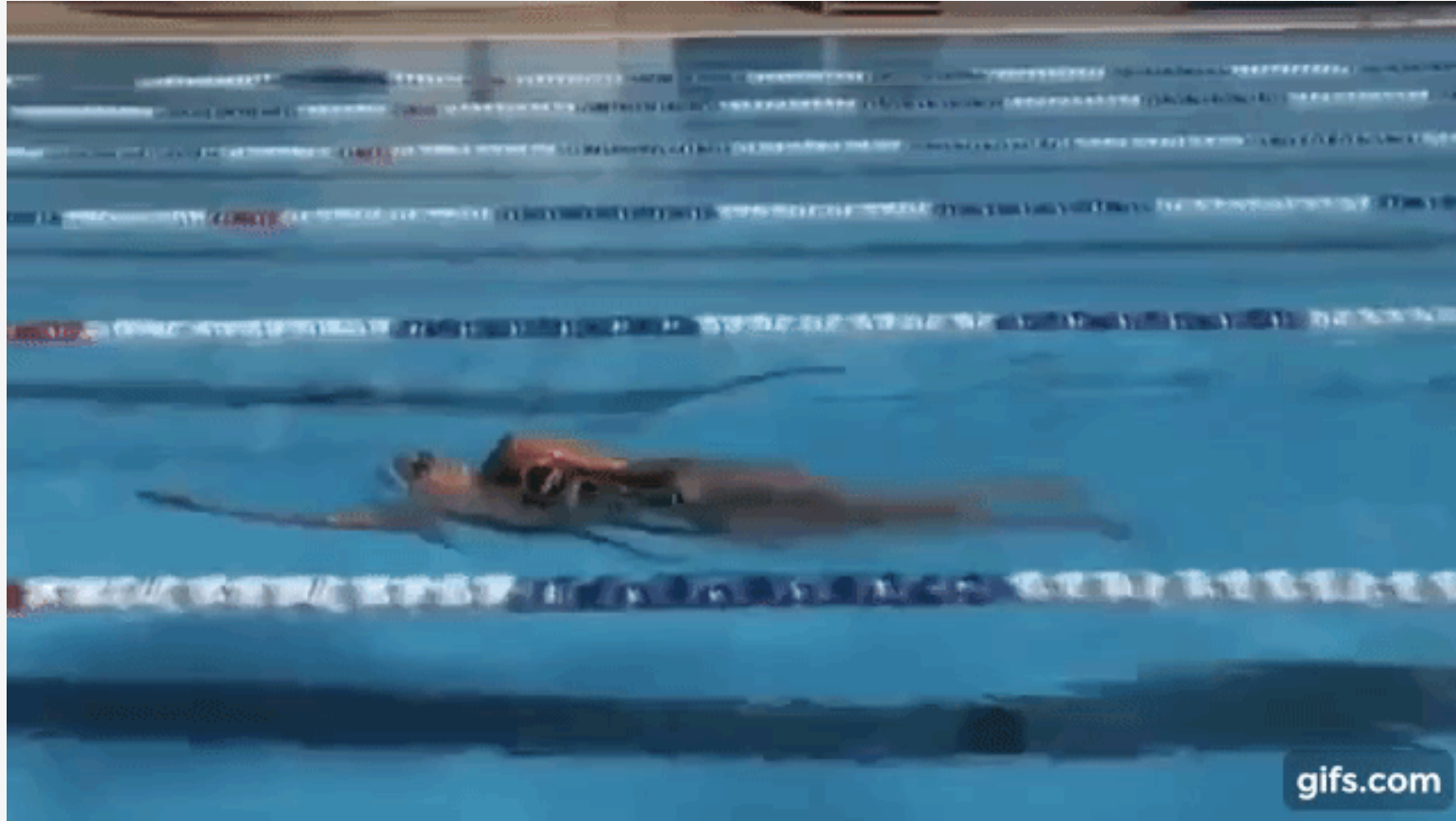


1 Arm





7 Kicks; 1 Arm OR 7-3-7 Drill





Starts

Setup:

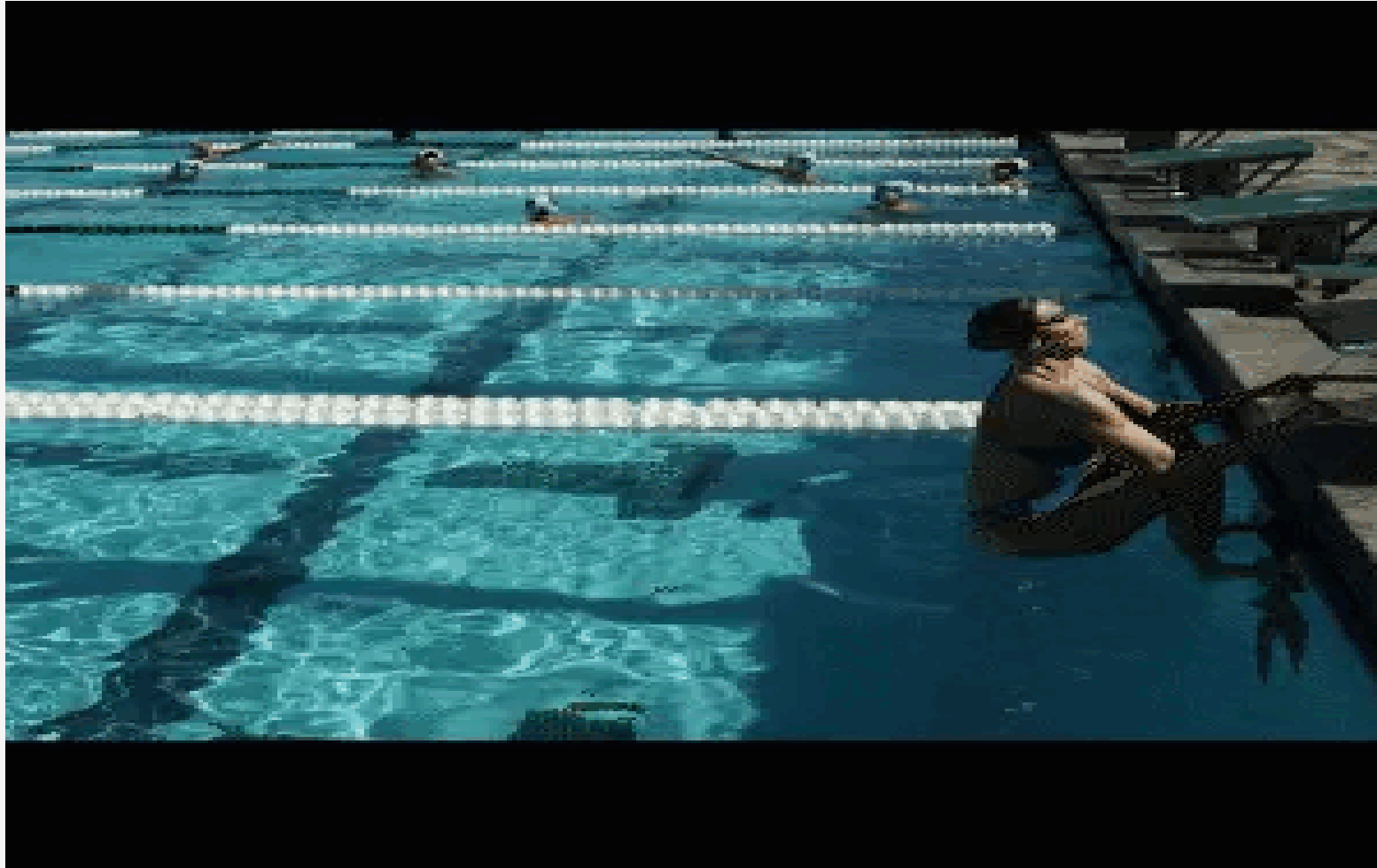
- Aiming for a nice straight back
- Toes above the water
- Legs shoulder width apart

Buzzer:

- Curved back
- Eyes Looking for flags
- Tight Streamline



Start





Basic Way to Improve Curve off the Start



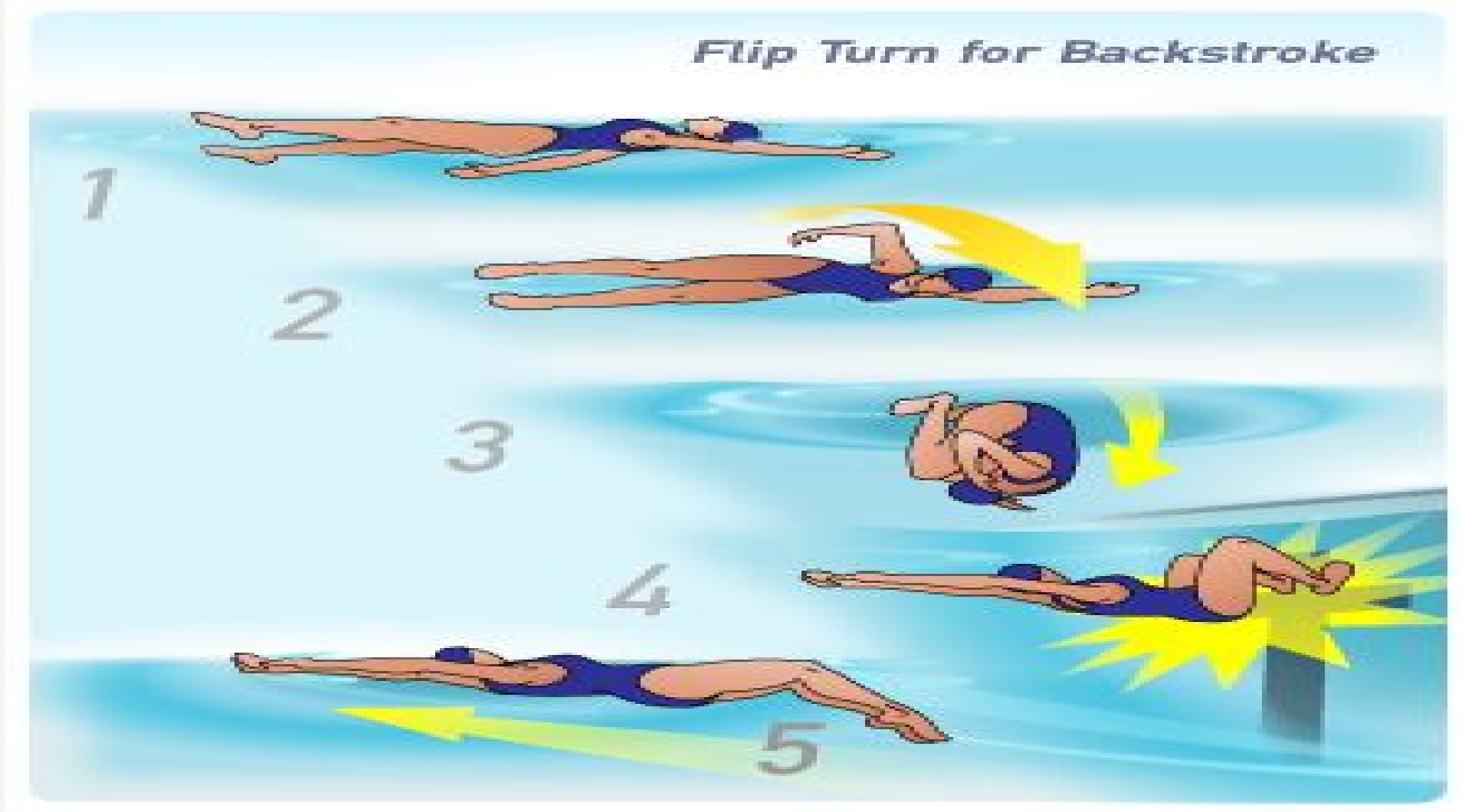


Turns

- See flags
- Counts Strokes
- 1 Arm
- Turn
- Tight Streamline
- Fly (Dolphin) Kicks out of Wall ensure a 1-2 Second Hold
- Aiming for feet past flags



Turns





Finishes

- See Flags
- Count strokes
- 1 Body apart must be above the water
- Must be on your back



End Session Summary

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References if any

- <https://www.arenaswim.com/en/basic-exercises/backstroke>



Questions

