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# Four Swimming Strokes Every Swimmer Should Know

**KS2 PE** Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

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## What Are Swimming Strokes?

A **swimming stroke** is a way of moving your arms and legs through water to propel yourself forwards (or backwards). There are **four main strokes** that swimmers learn, and each one uses a different technique and works different muscles in your body. Learning all four makes you a confident, well-rounded swimmer.

## Front Crawl (Freestyle)

The **front crawl** is the fastest and most popular stroke. You lie on your front and move your arms in a circular pattern over the water, one after the other, while kicking your legs straight behind you. Your face stays mostly in the water, and you turn your head to the side to breathe.

Think of it like riding a bicycle — one arm comes forward while the other pulls back, creating a smooth, continuous motion.

## Breaststroke

In **breaststroke**, you lie on your front and push your arms outward and backward together, then draw them back to your chest. Your legs kick in a frog-like motion, pushing outward and snapping back together. Your head stays mostly above water, making it easier to breathe.

Think of it like a frog jumping through water — your arms and legs work like a frog's, pushing against the water.

## Backstroke

As the name suggests, **backstroke** is performed on your back. You move your arms in a circular motion, one after the other, while kicking your legs. Since your face is above water, breathing is easy. This stroke is great for your shoulders and back muscles.

Think of it like front crawl's twin — it's almost identical, just done while floating on your back instead of your front.

## Butterfly

The **butterfly** is the most challenging stroke. Both arms move together in a large, graceful circle over the water, and both legs kick together in a wave-like motion called the **dolphin kick**. It requires strength and coordination, which is why swimmers usually learn it last.

Think of it like a graceful dolphin gliding through the ocean, with your whole body moving as one smooth, powerful unit.

## Why Learn All Four?

Learning all **four strokes** helps you develop different muscles, improves your fitness, and makes swimming safer because you can change strokes if you get tired. Most swimmers start with **front crawl** and **breaststroke**, then progress to **backstroke** and **butterfly** as they become more confident and stronger.