

LESSON 2: FREESTYLE AND BACKSTROKE

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcome

Lifetime activities: Refines activity-specific movement skills 1 or more lifetime activities (outdoor pursuits, individual-performance activities, aquatics, net/wall games or target games). (S1.H1.L2)

Embedded Outcome

Movement concepts, principles & knowledge: Applies the terminology associated with exercise and participation in selected individual-performance activities, dance, net/wall games, target games, aquatics, and/or outdoor pursuits appropriately. (S2.H1.L1)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- refine freestyle and backstroke.
- demonstrate the survival stroke.
- demonstrate an open turn.

Equipment and Materials

- Kickboards*
- Life jackets or flotation belts*

*Make flotation devices available for students to use in all practice tasks.

Introduction

Today, you will work on drills for freestyle and backstroke and learn the survival stroke and open turns for freestyle.

Instructional Task: Freestyle Kick

■ PRACTICE TASK

Working the width of the pool and using a kickboard, swimmers practice the flutter kick with floppy ankles and minimal knee bend.

Extensions

- Students kick with their faces in the water while breathing to the side.
- Students add pulling on the side to which they breathe, one hand on the kickboard and one hand pulling; students move up to arms alternating in the freestyle movement.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students perform drills at their own pace.
- Students choose their lanes.
- Students move to next drill only after comfortable with current one.

What to Look For

- Students show fluid movement.
- Students propel themselves efficiently through the water.

Instructional Task: Freestyle

■ PRACTICE TASK

Students swim 4 × 25 yards or meters of freestyle.

Extension

Have students add a fingertip drag—dragging the fingertips in the water on recovery.

Refinements

- Students practice breathing every three strokes to emphasize balance in the stroke.
- Have students extend their arms fully during entry.
- Students may try using a six-beat kick.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students swim at their own pace.
- Students choose their lanes.

What to Look For

- Students are using the fingertip drag.
- Students have high elbows and a narrow path through the water.

Instructional Task: Backstroke Kick

■ PRACTICE TASK

Using the width of the pool, swimmers kick on their backs in a streamlined position, using similar movement to the freestyle.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students swim at their own pace.
- Students choose their lanes.
- Students can use kickboards.

What to Look For

- Students' chins are up, their ears in the water.
- Students' hips are up.
- Splash is minimal.
- Propulsion is smooth.

Instructional Task: Backstroke

■ PRACTICE TASK

Students swim 4 × 25 yards or meters of backstroke.

Refinements

- Help students increase shoulder rotation by telling them to think about the pinkie finger entering the water first.
- Students repeat backstroke laps with a focus on pushing the water with the hand all the way to the thighs.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students swim at their own pace.
- Students choose their lanes.

What to Look For

- Students' ears are in the water.
- Arm movement is oppositional.
- Propulsion is smooth.

Instructional Task: Survival Stroke

■ PRACTICE TASK

In at least shoulder-depth water, students float with their arms and legs dangling down like a jellyfish. When they need to take a breath, they first exhale all the way and then using their arms and legs (scissor kick), lift their faces out of the water to inhale.

Extension

Set a goal of a certain number of repetitions or minutes for students to do the survival stroke.

Guiding questions for students:

- When would you use this skill?
- Why is it important to remain calm and relaxed?

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students can choose to work in pairs for support if they are uncomfortable with the skill.
- Proficient students can perform the skill in the deep end.

What to Look For

- Students are relaxed and calm while performing the stroke.
- Students are able to perform the skill for several minutes.

Instructional Task: Freestyle Open Turn

■ PRACTICE TASK

Students start near the wall. They touch the wall with one hand, turn around, push off the wall in a streamlined position, and resume swimming.

Extensions

- Students can start in the middle of the pool, swim to the wall, perform the turn, and resume swimming back to the starting point.
- Students repeat and swim to the opposite end, performing another open turn.

Refinements

- Students practice a longer underwater streamline off the wall.
- Students emphasize kicking hard after pushing off the wall.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S2.H1.L1. Use the first refinement to the practice task to reinforce terminology such as streamline, drag, and resistance.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Beginners may practice touch and go on a wall outside the pool.
- More advanced students may focus on a faster touch and go.

What to Look For

- Students are moving smoothly and comfortably.
 - Students are pushing off the wall as quickly as possible.
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Formal and Informal Assessments

- Informal assessment or a rubric or checklist for evaluating stroke technique
- Exit slip: What are the critical elements of the backstroke?

Closure

- Describe two cues for the backstroke and freestyle.
- Remember, you can be safe in deep water, but if you're unsure, use your survival float.

Reflection

- How long were students able to perform the survival stroke? Do they need more practice?
- Are they ready to move on to a flip turn?
- Which elements of the freestyle and backstroke still need refinement?

Homework

Review videos of the freestyle and backstroke on the school's physical education website.

Resources

Internet keyword search: "freestyle," "backstroke," "swim open turn," "survival stroke"