

## **Breathing –it’s vital!**

One of the first areas to look at when you have a new swimmer joining your squad is breathing!

Sounds simple enough but the holding of breath is a very common problem that many take through to adulthood. This can cause many problems- anxiety, quick fatigue, poor body position due to air in lungs, high head position and often a jerky head movement in breathing.

Some may hold their breath, exhale at the end but still be exhaling when their mouth is clear, meaning there is less time to take a good breath of air.

It is also important to check the depth of inhalation and ensure that a swimmer is breathing deeply and using their full lung capacity. This is a significant factor in overall lung health of older swimmers.

Breathing should be a steady release of air – like a sigh through either the mouth, nose or both ensuring all air is released by the time the swimmer clears their mouth to inhale.

Get swimmers to swim focus on their breathing: swim some 50’s breathing every 2,3, 5 and as a challenge 7!

In addition, encourage swimmers to bilateral, even if they do not do it all the time to bring balance into their stroke.

Anne Smyth

MSNSW Branch Coaching Director