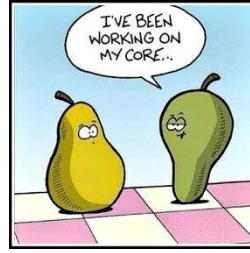


Hard Core



A strong Core is central in all swimming strokes.

For all strokes the Core is central to maintaining a good body position in the water. The Core connects your upper and lower body allowing the transfer of energy from your arms to your feet. A strong and connected core allows you to swim with your whole body as a unit, as opposed to having disunity between what the arms and shoulders are doing and what the hips, legs and feet are doing.

In Freestyle and Backstroke, your core keeps you in line and stops you zig zagging down the pool. Your core is integral to the rhythm and timing of your stroke, connecting your arms and shoulders to your hips, legs and feet, thus allowing you to swim with your whole body. Your strong core links and connects your hip rotation to your catch which engages more power. Engaging your core reduces the legs from sinking. Your core is the central base of support where the power to use your arms and legs originates.

A strong core is a factor in injury prevention acting like a shock absorber and keeping your body aligned. It promotes good posture, which is so important out of the water as well as in.

So how do we develop awareness of the Core while swimming?

Think pull belly button to spine and lightly squeeze your butt.

Some simple drills to do with swimmers to build Core Awareness:

- Float: switch on core (pull belly button to spine), bring in kick and then stroke.
- For Freestyle and Backstroke place a pull buoy between your ankles, suck in your belly button, lightly squeeze your butt and swim without the ankles, legs or hips sinking; and very importantly don't sway down the pool.
- Dolphin kicking – facedown, on left side, on right side and on back
- Water polo drill with strong flutter kick
- Vertical kicking
- Push offs with underwater dolphins trying to get as far as possible

Out of the water swimmers should work on developing their core:

- Russian twists
- Flutter kicks
- Super mans
- Bicycle crunches
- Plank (front and side)
- Scissor crunches

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