

Backstroke and Freestyle Turns

Freestyle turn:

Let's assume that you have mastered judging the wall for your turn. Do not change your arm rotation into the wall as you need to hit the turn as if you are continually swimming. Let's say that you are going into the wall with your right arm out pointing to the wall meaning that you have completed the underwater part of your left arm. Leave the left arm at your side while starting the underwater stroke of the right arm. When this is complete both arms are at your side. Turn your arms so the hands are facing palms down to the bottom of the pool. The variation of the single arm out front is to have a double arm underwater stroke (both arms at the same time) into the turn, the double arm underwater stroke, you leave both arms in front then pull both at the same time and proceed with the turn. You are now ready to initiate the tuck of the turn. Start by bending in half where you bring your legs and chest together. Once this has happened, bring your legs over and your feet to the wall. The tighter the tuck the faster the turn, to achieve a tighter tuck you should start by rapidly tucking your chin to your chest, and the closer you can bring your legs to your chest the better. During the tuck you first flex your wrists to 90 degrees, then you bend your arms to your face using your "arms and hand" to help speed the turn. Once your hands pass your face they will extend past the head into your spike. Do not touch flat footed or come to a stop. Touch with the balls of your feet with your knees slightly bent. The turn must be completed as one continuous motion, thus leaving the wall immediately. You may push off of the wall on your back. If you are looking at the wall or your head has gone past 180 degrees, you have over rotated. If you are on your back you will need to turn on your stomach by rotating your shoulders. This begins after your feet leave the wall and you have achieved a spike. If you are more advanced, you have initiated the shoulder rotation slightly, as you are tucking before the feet hit the wall.

The tucking of the head starts first, then the arms are pulling like doing a "bicep curl", because the head moves so quickly and travels a short distance the arm pull is almost at the same time as the head tuck. Some advance swimmers will add a dolphin kick at the same time the arms are pulling in the "curl"/flexion action.

Backstroke Turn:

The backstroke turn, which technically is the same as the freestyle turn, once the swimmer has changed his or her body position. A simple but challenging thing to learn is at what point after passing under the backstroke turn flags should I roll over? The slower the swimmer and the shorter DPS you have the closer to the wall you will be. First, count how many strokes you will take from the flags to the end of the pool. Now subtract 3 strokes and try the turn. If you are too close you will need to subtract 4 strokes or too far from the wall subtract only 2 strokes. The last stroke taken from the flags of backstroke is the key stroke where the swimmers change body position to the breast facing the bottom of the pool. When the last stroke is initiated (recovery part) the swimmer leaves the arm over the head with the fingertips pointing to the wall. The swimmer adjusts body position by rotating the shoulders (A swimmer can spin by rotating the shoulders to the desired position while the rest of the body will follow.) to the freestyle position with one arm stretched over the head as if doing a one-arm spike. Remember to take a breath while turning over to the freestyle position. The swimmer is now in proper freestyle body position and ready to begin the first underwater stroke followed by the one allowed, by USA rules, recovery arm stroke then followed by the

final underwater stroke thus beginning the turn. The other variation of that begins after the swimmer changes body position with the spiked arm. The swimmer then does the one allowed recovery stroke followed by a double arm underwater stroke (both arms at the same time) into the turn, the double arm underwater stroke can be done with a regular freestyle turn.