



Love to Swim School

Breathing Easier

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For a lot of triathletes and duathletes who would like to be triathletes, swimming is their weakest link. Two of the most difficult elements of swimming many people have problems with are breathing and balance in the water. Here are some techniques for making your breathing in the water second nature.

For the beginning swimmer, how to breath is the biggest mystery of the sport. Many people don't realize that when a swimmer's face is down she is exhaling, also known as blowing bubbles. Exhaling through the nose allows the swimmer to expel all her old air in the water so that when she turns to breath, she has room in her lungs to take in new air. Exhaling through the nose keeps water from going up it, and by making a noise when you exhale, like a hum, air is guaranteed to be expelled because it is impossible to make a noise without releasing air. Here are some drills to help with rhythmic breathing:

Wall Bobs: Place hands on the wall, feet on the bottom of the pool. Inhale through mouth, begin humming, squat to submerge keeping head and shoulders in line and exhale through your nose. Come up while still exhaling/humming. Bubbles should be constant and consistent. Breaths should be normal size. Inhale through your mouth and repeat. Work up to 10. The goal is for the breathing to be rhythmic, comfortable and habituated.

Bottom Bouncers: This drill is a lot like seat drops on a trampoline. Standing on the bottom, jump up, take a breath and do a seat drop in the water, i.e. let you feet come out from under you and your bottom hit the bottom of the pool. As soon as you get a breath on your jump, you should be exhaling through your nose. Allow yourself to slip under the water as you come down from the jump. Briefly sit on the bottom, exhaling continuously and then push off with feet into another jump. While you are up in the air on the jump, inhale and repeat. Work up to 10.

Moving Bobs: Once you have mastered Bottom Bouncers, the last step in the progression is Moving Bobs. Moving Bobs are kind of a combination of the previous two skills except your jump is moving you slightly forward down the lane of the pool. The idea is to get a feel for the rhythm of the breathing much as it is when swimming. Start with your feet on the bottom. Push up and forward with your feet, get a breath and submerge. Exhale constantly and consistently. When you are almost ready to inhale, but not completely out of breath, push off the bottom with a forward push. At the top of your jump inhale and squat back down under water, exhaling constantly and consistently. How fast you move down the lane is not important. It is important you don't stop and stand up between exhaling and inhaling. The movement should be fluid and rhythmic. Once you can do two lengths of Moving Bobs comfortably, you are ready to get prone in the water.