

Flying into Fly

By Wayne Goldsmith

Is there anything better in swimming than swimming great fly? When you get it right, everything seems to flow, arms and legs working in rhythm – no wonder they call it FLY – it feels like you are flying through the water: not swimming – but actually flying.

But like anything that looks easy and feels that good, it takes a lot of hard work to turn the basics of the stroke into the fundamentals of flight!

FIVE FANTASTIC FLY FACTS:

Everyone's fly will be different: everyone is unique. However, there are five consistent factors in all fast fly:

1. Long arms / fast legs: keep your arms, long, loose and relaxed and your legs moving with power, speed and strength.
2. Kick in both directions with power and rhythm: make sure your legs keep working in both directions with power flowing – HIPS, THIGHS, KNEES, SHIN, FEET!
3. Power on / power off: a fly fundamental – power on when your hands and arms are in the water, power off when they are out of the water recovering forward.
4. Breath early, breathe low: keep up and down head movements to a minimum – push your chin forward to breath and keep it low and close to the water.
5. Slow to feel, accelerate through pull: keep your hands soft and relaxed and feel the water, then apply pressure and accelerate your hands all the way through your pull.

Now you have the fabulous fly fundamentals, let's turn them into fast flying:

FIVE FABULOUS FAST FLY SETS:

FLY FLYERS:

Swim 6 strokes of fly at top speed without breathing. The aim is to go as far as you can on each stroke: **LONG AND STRONG**. Have a team mate put a marker, (your pull buoy is a good marker) along the side of the pool to indicate how far you got in six strokes.

Now go back to the start and aim to get to the SIX STROKE marker in only FIVE STROKES. When you achieve the "SIX IN FIVE" target, aim for SIX IN FOUR – i.e. the distance you went in six strokes achieved in only four.

Then.....DOUBLE UP.

Swim 12 strokes of fly at maximum speed and once again ask a team mate to mark the distance. Can you swim 12 IN 11, then 12 in 10?

All repeats are done at maximum speed with legal underwater kick distance and with a push start.

FLY SCORERS:

Give yourself a STARTING FLY SCORE of 15 for short course and 30 for long course.

Each STROKE is worth one point.

Each BREATH is worth one point.

The aim is to get your FLY SCORE down as low as you can, for example:

Short course: Starting score = 15 – which could be 10 strokes and 5 breaths. You decide how your starting score is broken down.

Then aim for 14 – either by taking one less stroke or one less breath.

All FLY SCORER repeats are done at maximum speed with legal underwater kick distance and from a push start.

To make it really challenging, decrease the value of strokes and breaths, e.g. each stroke is only worth $\frac{1}{2}$ a point so you have work harder to reduce your score.

FLY KICKERS:

Kick a lap of fly (hands in long streamline, breathing as you need). Record the time. This is called your FLY KICK BASE TIME.

Now kick another lap of fly, this time with your hands by your side. Record the time.

Next lap is kicking on your left side. The following lap is kicking on your right side.

The final lap of the series is kick with your arms folded above your head and your hands holding their opposite elbows.

The aim of each lap of kicking is to get as close as you can to your FLY KICK BASE TIME.

All Fly Kickers are done at maximum speed with legal underwater kicking distance.

FLY LAPPERS:

Swim a lap of fly at maximum speed. Record the time. Double it.

Swim two laps of fly at maximum speed. Record the time.

What was the difference between the two times?

5 SECONDS OR MORE: WERE YOU STILL ASLEEP WHEN YOU DID THIS?

4 SECONDS: OK – COULD BE BETTER.

3 SECONDS: GOOD – KEEP WORKING.

2 SECONDS: GREAT

1 SECOND: FANASTIC

LESS THAN ONE SECOND: GOLD MEDAL!

Swimming fast is great: learning to maintain top speed for longer is sensational. Aim to keep your 2 lap time as close as possible to your 2 x one lap time.

FLY IN / FLY OUT or FIFO sets:

A great way to improve fly, underwater fly kick, fly turns and even the starts and turns of your freestyle and backstroke!

The basic set is:

5 x 200 on 4:15 FREESTYLE with FIFO (i.e. FLY IN FROM THE FLAGS / FLY OUT FROM THE FLAGS).

So each 200 starts with a fast underwater fly kick (as always to legal distance), then steady freestyle to the flags. When you hit the flags it's fly (NO BREATHING) to the wall (AIMING TO GET THERE IN NO MORE THAN 2-3 STROKES), a fly turn, fast underwater fly kick back out to legal distance and then back into freestyle. Each 200 finishes with fly – again no more than two or three strokes from the flags at maximum speed and no breaths.

Variations:

- Longer or shorter repeats (longer works better though).
- More repeats.
- Less rest.
- Faster speed.

So in summary:

Find five fun fabulous fantastic fast fly fitness factors.... and work on them every day!

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