

Racing Turns

Competitive swimming events frequently involve two or more laps, or pool lengths, so turns are an important racing skill. Indeed, learning and practicing quick racing turns can be as important to winning as mastering stroke skills. Turning methods vary depending on the stroke. Most competitive swimming pools have bottom and overhead markings, or turn targets, that let you know when to begin your turn. However, these are not helpful if you are not watching for them! Always practice swimming in clear water and with your eyes open. A comfortable, well-fitted pair of swim goggles is recommended for serious competitors.

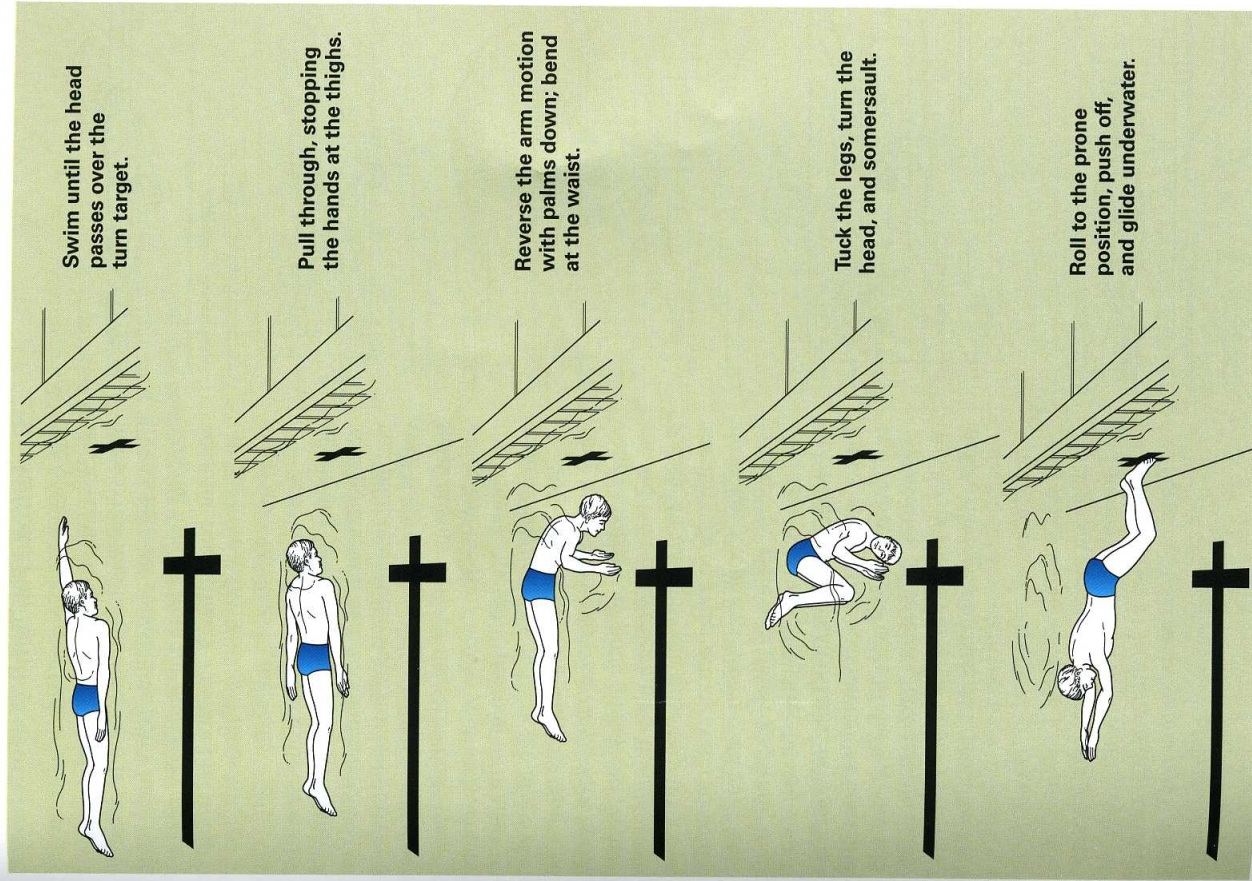


The crawl stroke flip turn also is referred to as the tumble turn.

Front or Crawl Stroke Flip Turn

The preparation for this flip turn begins when you are about one stroke away from the side of the pool. When you reach this point, do not recover your arm from the last stroke but let it trail at your side. Take one more stroke and leave that arm trailing at your side when the stroke is finished. Both palms will be facing down alongside your legs. Bend at the waist and tuck your chin to your chest. Tuck up your legs and, leading with your head, do a half somersault while pulling your palms toward your face.

Be sure to exhale air through your nose throughout the flip turn to avoid getting water in your nose. You will flip over on your back underwater (slightly on one side) with your feet against the wall. Your toes will be pointing up or to the side. Your hands should be above your head. Push off with your feet from the wall. As you leave the wall, roll to a prone position, reach forward with both arms, and glide underwater. As you surface and your glide slows to swimming speed, begin stroking. Do not take a breath until the second or third arm stroke.



Swim until the head passes over the turn target.

Pull through, stopping the hands at the thighs.

Reverse the arm motion with palms down; bend at the waist.

Tuck the legs, turn the head, and somersault.

Roll to the prone position, push off, and glide underwater.