

Review of Lesson 3

- One-arm kickboard stroke
- Rotational kick

Fingertip Drag and Drive Drill

Objectives: Burn in a compact, fluid recovery motion. Develop a wide stroke. Move your hand to the next anchoring point on the invisible track along which you are traveling.

Equipment: Can be done with or without fins.

Method: For each stroke:

- Keep the fingertips of your recovering arm in the water at all times.
- Initially, focus on **only one arm** at a time. **Right** arm going down the pool, **left** arm coming back.
- Start in side-balance position, lower arm fully extended. Once you start stroking, your shoulders DO NOT rotate all the way to vertical (as in the side balance drill). They only rotate about 45 degrees (though they may come closer to vertical when you breathe).
- Lead with your elbow. Imagine somebody has attached a string to your elbow, and is pulling it along your tracks, toward the far end of the pool.
- Once you begin moving the recovery arm, DO NOT stop moving it until it is fully extended forward. It is important that you do NOT pause anywhere during the recovery movement, as that will rob the power supplied by your core.

Practice the fingertip drag and drive drill very slowly until the movements are comfortable and fluid. Later, you can speed it up by rotating your core faster (**NOT** by pulling harder or kicking harder/faster). **Note:** There is a more detailed, 3-step Fingertop Drag and Drive progression attached on the following page.

One-Arm Kick-Board Paddling Drill Part 2: Connect the Kick!

After you anchor your hand and, just as you begin your pull, kick downward with the same leg to rotate your hip up in the water.

Streamlining from the Wall

Streamline posture: Stand up tall, but relaxed. Minimize the curves in your spine. Extend both arms over your head, place one hand over the other and lock the thumb of the upper hand over the wrist bone of the lower hand. Squeeze your head between your arms.

To streamline from the wall: Stand sideways to the wall, holding onto it with one hand. (If there is nothing to hold onto, start with your back to the wall.) Drop into the water and into the streamline position as you plant your feet on the wall at shoulder width. Your upper body should be 12-18" below the surface and parallel to it. Push off evenly with both legs and glide, while maintaining a perfect streamline from head to toe. You should glide to the surface, with your body parallel to it.

Streamlining from the wall to fingertip drag and drive, or to freestyle: Streamline from the wall as above. As you feel yourself decelerate, rotate to one side by bringing one leg slightly back (learn to do this on both sides). As you near the surface, take your first kick with your lower leg to begin rotation to the other side, and simultaneously take your first stroke with your lower arm. This "breakout" stroke is a very fast, light and compact stroke to maintain your speed – it is NOT a "power stroke". Begin normal freestyle swimming as you rotate to the other side. Generally speaking, avoid breathing on your first stroke.

Lesson 4 Supplement

If you have difficulty with the fingertip drag and drive drill, this supplement breaks down the motion into three separate drills. Master each one in sequence.

Fingertip Drag and Drive Drill Sequence

Initially, these drills should be done very, very slowly and deliberately. Ultimately, they can be done at near swimming speed with swimming breathing. All of these can be done with and without fins. The legs only need to provide a minimal amount of propulsion. Do not worry about kicking when mastering these drills.

Step 1: Half Stroke (a.k.a. Sharkfin)

Start in side balance. You will do one length on one side, with the same arm extended the entire time, and the next length with the other arm. To begin, get comfortable in side balance and then lift the elbow of the upper arm – high and on the **belly** side of your body – **not** behind your back or over your body. Bring the elbow forward, dragging your hand in the water, to a position beside your face. Say “hello” to your hand (out of the corner of your eye, remember that you are looking down.) Memorize that hand position. This is the point at which you will stop dragging and begin driving the hand forward. Not now, though, that happens in the next drill. This is the “sharkfin” position, and you will be struggling a bit not to sink with this much of your arm out of the water. Return the upper arm and hand to your side, while rolling to your back to breathe. Breathe twice and get re-balanced. Repeat until you reach the far end.

Step 2: Single Stroke (a.k.a. Corkscrew)

In this drill you will take a single, stroke with one arm and roll all of the way onto your back to breathe. Then after you have re-balanced and breathed on your back, you will repeat with the other arm (this time rotating in the other direction). Start as above; when your hand comes to your face, **do not stop** but rather drive it forward, replacing the leading hand and at the same time rolling all of the way (270° not a typo!) to your back to breathe. Leave the new leading hand extended out ahead of you (palm up when you are on your back). Take two breaths, get re-balanced and then repeat on the other side.

Step 3: Fingertip Drag-and-Drive Drill

Start as above; rather than rolling to your back for air after the first stroke, perform two or more consecutive fingertip drag-and-drive strokes (alternating). Initially, when it is time to breathe, roll onto your back to breathe and get re-balanced. Do not use swimming breathing until the rotation, timing, and stroking movements are comfortable.

What to think about: (one thing at a time):

- Lead the motion with your elbow.
- Your hands travel along two parallel tracks – they never cross.
- The recovering hand (the one you are dragging forward) follows its track straight ahead.
- The stroking hand (the one pulling back) pulls straight back towards the back of the pool.
- Step 2: Do not hesitate for even a moment when you go from dragging to driving. Make that forward motion seamless.
- Step 3: If having difficulty in this step, focus on **only one arm** at a time. **Right** arm going down the pool, **left** arm coming back.

Sample Practice Session Following Lesson 4

Fingertip Drag and Drive (with or without fins)

- Head:** Neutral on spine, looking straight down except when breathing
- Breathing:** Relaxed, regular breathing pattern.
- Recovering Arm:** Drag fingertips in water to just beside your head or slightly beyond, and with absolutely no hesitation, drive your fingertips into the water forward, along your track to full extension (as you rotate to the other side).
- Anchoring Arm:** Don't think much about anchoring on this drill.

Streamlining to Fingertip Drag and Drive Drill (without fins)

- Arms:** Extended forward, squeezing the head, hand locked over hand
- Head:** Neutral on spine (chin *not* tucked or lifted)
- Torso:** Parallel to the surface
- Legs:** Push off at shoulder width, bring together and relax. *Do not kick too soon.*
- Rotation:** As you decelerate, rotate to the side.
- First Stroke:** Kick with your lower leg first, at the same time taking a fast, light, and compact pull-out stroke with your lower arm.
- Breathing:** Not until second or third stroke.

One-Arm Kick-Board Paddling with a Rotational Kick

Hold kickboard in one hand, stroke with the other. Switch (and rest) at each wall.

- Upper Body:** Head out of the water, but as low as possible – watch the paddling arm.
- Paddling Hand:** Fingertips down.
- Paddling Elbow:** High in the water.
- Pulling Direction:** Straight back.
- Hips:** Rotate to get a longer stroke.
- Kicking:** Propulsive kicking until it is time to pull. Just at that point, perform a rotational kick with the leg on the side where you are pulling. This helps you to glide onto the other side, and gets you hip out of the way of the arm that is pulling back.