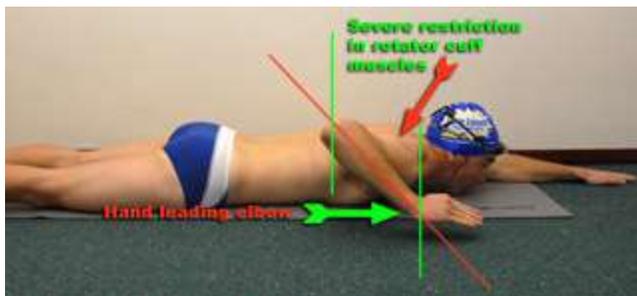


Shoulder injury

Chances are you've experienced shoulder pain or discomfort at some point in your swimming life. If this has ever prevented you from swimming, you will appreciate just how frustrating this can be. Many people spend a lot of money every year visiting a physiotherapist in an effort to manage a shoulder injury but overlook what is actually causing that pain in the first place. 9 times out of 10, this will be your stroke technique.

Correcting your technique is not actually that difficult, but you do need to know what to look out for and just as importantly work diligently to improve in these areas. If available to you, video analysis is a great tool for this because it really helps you identify what you personally need to work on. We recommend you get some if you possibly can.

The following four simple tips will ensure you avoid developing a shoulder injury from your swimming:



A flat body position.

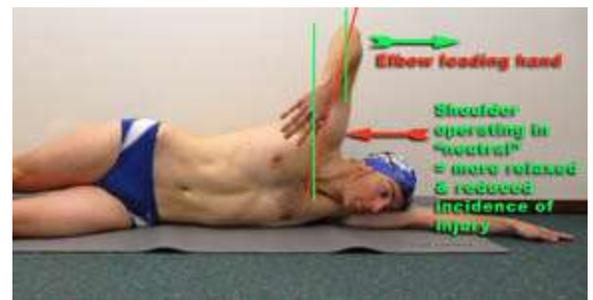
1. Body Rotation

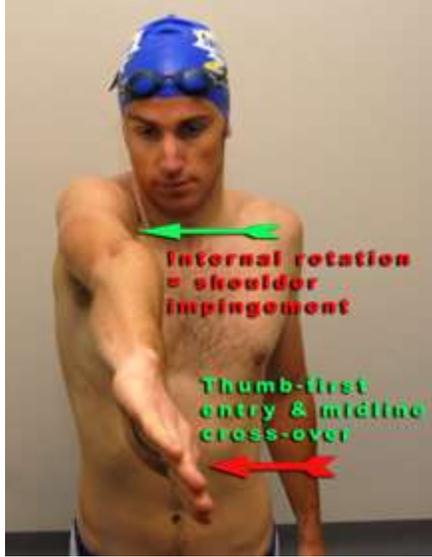
Developing a good, symmetrical body rotation through the development of an efficient **bilateral breathing pattern** is key to removing shoulder injury. Swimming with a flat body in the water with limited rotation along the long-axis of the spine causes the arms to swing around the side during the recovery phase.

Good body rotation.



This swinging action results in large amounts of internal rotation at the shoulder joint which is the major source of impingement and rotator cuff issues. By using several key technique drills this can be easily addressed and fixed.





Avoid thumb first entry.



2. Hand Placement into Water

A hand pitch outwards with a thumb first entry into the water leads to excessive internal rotation which, from approx. 3200 strokes per hour, can eventually lead to acute pain in the shoulder as an 'over-use' injury. Instead of entering thumb first, change your technique to enter with a flat hand, fingertip first. Enter the water with a flat hand facing the bottom of the pool.

3. Swimming Posture

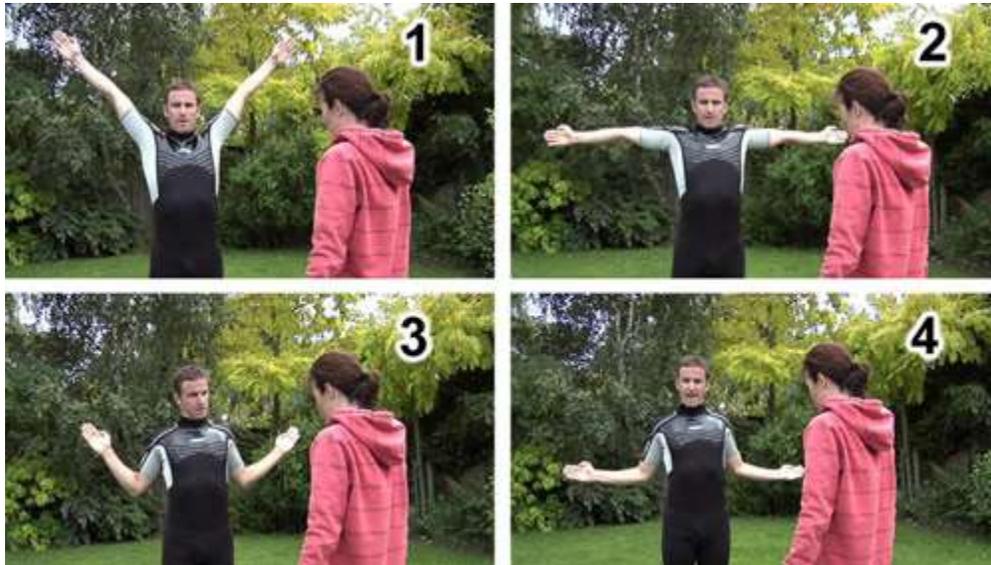
Many swimmers don't give due attention to their upper body posture when swimming. If you inherit poor posture from your daily working life it can really affect how your muscles work when in the pool or ocean.

Poor posture can again lead to impingement, often through a severe cross-over at the front of the stroke.

This can easily be improved by working on flexibility in the muscles at the front of the shoulder and chest. Doing this together with improved stabilization of the muscles at the back of the shoulder improves posture and removes cross-over at the front of the stroke.

To start to introduce better posture while you swim, think "shoulders back, chest forward".

Improved alignment and posture means that the power of the pull phase is dramatically improved because you are now applying propulsion straight backwards, the direction that will send you forward as efficiently as possible.



The YTWL exercise is great for tuning into better posture.

4. Catch and Pull Through

Good High elbow catch and pull technique. →

Without the use of video analysis, many swimmers are unaware of how they pull through under the water.

Typically swimmers will pull through with either a dropped-elbow or with a very straight arm. Doing so loads the shoulder muscles excessively as the majority of the pull-through phase is spent pushing down, rather than pressing back.

Working to develop a high elbow catch technique with enhanced swimming posture will really help utilize the larger, more powerful muscle-groups of the chest and upper back, rather than relying upon the shoulders.



summary

A good swimming technique will have the following factors in place, consistently:

1. **Bilateral breathing** for at least 80% of your training sessions. There are many times (especially in the open water) when unilateral breathing is the better option, but for a healthy, balanced freestyle stroke technique, bilateral breathing is the way to go in training.
2. **Good, symmetrical body rotation**. This can be worked upon through a range of different body rotation drills, often employing fins for support.
3. **Hand entry into the water is finger-tip first**, not thumb-first despite what you may have been taught when you learnt to swim!
4. Avoid midline cross-over at the front of the stroke.
5. Development and maintenance of good upper-body posture.
6. **Target a high elbow (bent arm) catch and pull through**.

Read more at:

http://www.swimsmooth.com/injury_adv.php#ixzz5AVF7fKdl