

## Step by Step Open Swim Turn Technique

The details for an open turn for a belly down to a belly down stroke (like breaststroke) are:

1. Approach the wall. Try to make sure you KICK into the wall, instead of pull into it (for breaststroke).
2. Touch the wall with your hands.
3. Begin to pull yourself into a tuck, knees moving up towards your chest.
4. Look at your hands on the wall (you can begin to take a breath here).
5. Pull one hand underwater and away from the wall.
6. Move that elbow underwater towards the hip on the same side while still looking at the other hand left on the wall (helps prevent over twisting).
7. Twist onto your side as that underwater hand swings out (still keep your eyes on your hand on the wall to prevent over twisting) - this requires you to rotate along your spine and tip your hips towards the wall.
8. Continue to pull your knees towards your chest, aim them toward the shoulder attached to the hand moving underwater (this helps you rotate onto your side later).
9. Swing and extend the hand going underwater out and around, still underwater, to point the direction you want to go now (where you just came from).
10. As your feet approach the wall (when you pull your knees up, your feet better follow!), move the second hand off of the wall and towards your eyes, above water.
11. Plant your feet on the wall side by side, toes pointing sideways or upwards (at about 45 degrees).
12. You should be on your side and tipping away from the wall with your upper body.
13. Keeping your head turned (chin on your shoulder) and looking towards the wall (or up towards the ceiling as you follow your hand) as long as possible to help prevent over twisting, move the above water hand into the water just above your head and extend it to meet the underwater hand.
14. Lock the hands together, one on top of the other.
15. Your tipping should have brought you underwater, laying on your side, feet on the wall, hands and arms extended in a streamlined position.
16. Extend your legs and push off the wall on your side.
17. As your feet leave the wall, make sure you are rotated so your belly is more towards the bottom of the pool than the surface (this keeps you legal).
18. **You've done it!**

## **A common part of all turns is the streamline**

To maximize your push off of the wall, remember to streamline.

- Extend your hands over your head, pointing the direction you want to go, placing one hand on top of the other and wrapping your upper hand's pinky and thumb around your lower hand.
- Stretch from your fingertips, through your body, down to your toes.
- Make your body as long and as skinny as possible.
- Your arms should be snug against the back of your head, biceps behind your ears, with a smooth (well, relatively smooth) surface from the back of your hands to the tips of your toes.

Maintain a streamline as long as you are moving faster than you can swim - just before you slow down, you will begin the "breakout" or transition from the streamline to swimming. Details later; for backstroke, butterfly, and freestyle, you begin to kick first, then add arms as you surface, then take a breath after completing a few strokes. Breaststroke is a pull first (full pull, with the hands finishing by your hips), then the hands recover back to a streamline, followed by a kick, then into your normal stroke as you surface.

**Swim On!**

## Flip Turns

Try some of these ideas. If you swim towards the wall and extend your arm straight out, towards the wall, as if you were going to touch the wall at a finish, you should begin the somersault just before your hand touches the wall. Any closer than this and you may crash into the wall. Further out, and you will have to glide in after you have flipped. As you develop your turn technique, you may adjust this distance out a bit further, but the turn should be no slower than the swim - you do not want to waste time gliding or floating (unless you need a break ;-)

Some more tips:

1. Do only a half somersault.
2. As you "flip" look at your knees - try to bring your eyes and knees together - good "tuck" position.
3. Bring your heels in, towards your posterior.
4. Remember to blow air gently out your nose, unless you want a snout full of water.
5. Feet land on the wall, toes pointing up, your back towards the bottom of the pool, your belly towards the ceiling/sky. If you were on land, you would be on your back.
6. Push off the wall, still "back towards the bottom" of the pool, belly towards the sky.
7. Just as your feet leave the wall, begin to twist towards the belly down position by looking (with your eyes only - don't twist your head) in the direction you wish to rotate. Your arms should be streamlined, hands together, straight, pointing in the direction you are traveling (a streamlined position).
8. Another tip - as you flip, push down with the palms of your hands to push your feet over your head (I tried the flip turn for years and until someone told me this important step I really looked awkward doing it. Once I realized how easy it made the turn when both arms were by my side and I pushed down really hard I then discovered what I thought was the real secret to a successful flip turn - Frank S.).

There are various ways to do the transition from pushing off the wall into your stroke (the "breakout"). You might do some dolphin kicks, then flutter kicks, then begin your arms. You might just do flutter kicks. Some don't kick at all - and if you are doing a pull set, you wouldn't kick anyway. There are also varying degrees of rotation during the flip. While the fastest turn is the one where the feet land on the wall pointing up, some folks rotate more than that during the flip and their feet land on the wall pointing anywhere from up to down! Experiment to find what works best for you.