

Streamline!!



"Line your fingers up, wrap your thumb around – hand over hand, wrist over wrist, arms squeezed behind your ears with your elbows locked straight, pinch your buns together and point your toes!"

You've heard this a million times. Yet you still push off the wall with your arms more or less in front of you, hands separated, head up so you can see where you are going, toes pointed at the bottom of the pool. We call this the "Superman" position.

"Wait just a minute!" you say, "I have my hands together - I don't do that Superman thing!" OK, maybe you do have your hands together, barely - "fingers over fingers" maybe. But your wrists are floating out to the sides, your elbows are bent, you're still looking out over the top of your hands and there is still daylight between your arms and your ears.

I know that each and every one of you knows how to get your body into a full streamline position. Every one of you has been able to demonstrate a good streamline position while standing on the pool deck.

So what's so hard about doing it every single time you push off the wall? Two things:

First of all, it takes physical effort. If you are not very flexible you will find that you really have to stretch to assume The Streamline Position. But, as with all stretching exercises, the more time you spend in Streamline the easier it becomes. Ideally if you spend enough time in Streamline Position it will eventually become a relaxed position for you. The harder it is for you to assume Streamline Position the more important it is for you to do it often and for extended periods of time.

Second, it takes concentration. Until you can automatically assume The Position instantly as the legs are driving you off the wall, you must apply a bit of brain power every 25 yards.

You know, an excellent opportunity to get in some "streamline time" is when you are doing kicking drills without a kickboard. Use this work as a streamline stretching drill as well as a kicking drill. You will go faster during the kick drill and make significant strides toward improving your streamline position flexibility.

You will find that you will glide farther when you push off the wall. This will allow you to take fewer strokes per lap (which should already be a goal for each of you).

It also takes less energy to be able to glide a long distance off walls than it does to have a short push off and swim the rest of the way.

You will move faster through the water after your push-off which will help you achieve faster times.