

Aberdeen LTS Syllabus



This syllabus should be used in conjunction with the exit criteria for each level. The syllabus contains skills not included in the exit criteria, so you must be familiar with the syllabus and not just teach to the exit criteria.

The aim of the scheme is to produce competent swimmers who show a high level of competency in strokes/aquatic skills. The objectives will be achieved by concentrating on the following:

1 In Aqua Fun and Swim Skills 1, water confidence is the most important skill, in order to obtain a horizontal body position. Formal stroke work should not commence until a swimmer is confident in and under the water, able to control their breath under the water and hold a horizontal position on their front and back. In Aqua Fun and Swim Skills 1, swimmers should not wear goggles. Skills must be performed without buoyancy aids in Aqua Fun.

2 The next important skill is a strong continuous flutter kick on the front and back. This maintains the desired body position and builds stamina. No kickboards should be used beyond Swim Skills 2.

3 The position of the head controls the position of the body and it is very important that the correct head position is introduced from the start of teaching the stroke. The head must always be back and perfectly still in backstroke. In front crawl, the swimmer should look down and breathing should always be to the side from Swim Skills 2 upwards. By the end of Swim Skills 3, all swimmers should be skilled in front crawl and backstroke.

4 Breaststroke kick is introduced in Swim Skills 1 and swimmers should be able to kick legally before they are moved to Swim Skills 3. Any swimmer who does not turn their feet out should be taken back onto the side. If they cannot do it at the edge of the pool, they will not be able to do it in the water. Use the assistant in the water to help the swimmer turn their feet out. Breaststroke classes should be recommended to all swimmers who struggle with breaststroke. These classes are free.

5 Butterfly wiggles should be practised in nearly every lesson from Swim Skills 2 upwards, even if only for short distances.

6 In Aqua Fun and Swim Skills 1, the lessons are based on games and fun activities. From Swim Skills 2 upwards, the lessons should still be fun but based on the standard lesson plan.

7 Occasionally, some part of every lesson should be conducted without goggles, so that if a swimmer moves into competitive swimming, they can cope with swimming without goggles if necessary.

8 Use the syllabus and stay within the skills at each level. Work on perfecting the basics before introducing more advanced skills.

9 At this age, swimmers are skill hungry, so take time to instill good practice and fundamental skills.

10 All activities should be based on LTAD, so speed work should be included at this stage.

The success/enjoyment of your teaching is proportional to the planning and preparation you are willing to do. You may have a potential Scottish, British or World Champion in one of your classes and their success depends on you!

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Swimmer/Teacher Aqua Fun & Swim Skills 1	Swimmer/Teacher Swim Skills 2	Swimmer/Teacher Swim Skills 3	Swimmer/Teacher Swim Skills 4 & Club Ready
6 swimmers/2 assistants in water	8 swimmers/2 assistant in water	9 swimmers/1 assistant in water	Up to 15

Aqua Fun Based on Activity Games

Aim: To become water confident and develop core aquatic skills, with buoyancy aids where required

Rules for health/safety

Go to toilet before class
Wear a cap
Stay above water and holding onto the side unless asked otherwise
Listen to and watch the teacher.

Entry/Exit

Enter & exit via steps, holding rails
Swivel in from the side and enter backwards, if deck level pool
Jump in from the side – note, swimmers must not jump into assistants arms.

Orientation

Wet ears, face, hair using games
Moving along the side, holding on with 2 hands
Moving along the side at different speeds, holding on with 1 hand (If depth permits)
Move across pool with noodle
Moving around pool forwards and backwards, round in circles, using hands as paddles
Submerge, eyes open, to identify colours/numbers. Swimmers should not wear goggles at this level.

Breath Control & Submerging

Blow bubbles at surface/turn an egg flip
Trickle/explosive breathing through mouth and nose
Submerge holding breath
Submerge blowing bubbles
Slow, controlled bobs with only one inhalation at surface
Run/jump across pool touching tiles/picking up objects from floor or steps, sitting on the black line etc, if shallow water.

Floating

Star float on front and back with support from assistant and using a noodle, assistant behind swimmer for supine float
Mushroom float
Pencil float
Regain upright position from prone and supine position.

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Streamlining

Streamlined position on poolside, standing and jumping
Introduce push & glide

Propulsion

Introduce kicking and pulling on front & back

Notes on the non-confident swimmer

Fear affects us physically and mentally. It interferes with our breathing and our ability to control our movements. It can stop us thinking clearly. The swimmer must learn to be at ease in the water and the teacher and assistant must exude confidence. The non-confident swimmer does not understand that water will support them if they lie flat out and still or that water will only enter the lungs if it is actively drawn in.

The non-confident swimmer is usually not afraid of putting most of their body in the water, apart from their face! So, start by building up confidence by submerging parts of the body apart from the face. Use a variety of games.

Eyes – We protect our eyes by shutting them, but with practice, we can learn to override this. Even swimmers who keep their eyes tight shut under the water want to wipe them when they surface. This must be discouraged.

Ears – Children can be afraid that their ears will fill up with water or that water will remain trapped in their ears. Also, sounds are different and can be magnified under the water. For example a swimmer may put off blowing bubbles because of the sound. Teachers can make this a game.

Mouth – The swimmer must learn to avoid inhaling water with air. On land, the best way to inhale is through the nose, but in water, it is through the mouth. The swimmer must learn that we have an oral seal that acts as a barrier to water entering the lungs. We can submerge with our mouths open and water does not rush down to our lungs. We can inhale through an open mouth when it is partially submerged, without water entering the lungs. Inhalation should not be rushed and when the swimmer surfaces, a split second is required to allow water around the mouth and nose to run away before a breath is taken in. Some swimmers think they are metres under the water and have a fear of not being able to bring their head out of the water in time to breathe. This leads to panic and gulping, before the face is clear of the water. Swimmers should be taught to breathe on the surface, using toys, before being asked to put their face in the water and finally they should be taught to submerge.

Nose – Sniffing water up the nose is very uncomfortable and beginners should be taught to exhale through the nose to avoid this.

Slow, controlled breathing keeps the body balanced. Exhalation underwater takes longer than in the air because of the different pressure, but it is vital to exhale properly.

Once swimmers are at ease under the water, they benefit from the dive instinct. When mammals submerge, the metabolism slows down and this can lead to a feeling of tranquility.

Large, cold, wet, noisy environment – Familiarity and positive experiences initiated by the teacher will overcome this.

Slow Movement – On land, the swimmer can move around quickly and change direction quickly. In water, it is very different and this apparent lack of control can be a source of fear. The side can look very far away when you know you cannot move fast.

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Redirection of concentration can be very beneficial to overcoming fears, without the swimmer realising what is happening.

When swimmers are learning to jump in, there may be a tendency to jump onto the assistant. This is a dangerous practice and must be avoided. Toes must always be over the edge and the swimmer should look straight ahead. Swimmers should start the action by bending their knees so that they are close to the water and they should jump up and forwards onto a noodle. As the swimmer becomes more confident, they can start in a more upright position. The aim is for a feet first entry, so swimmers must learn to spring up, to get height/time to straighten out their legs

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Swim Skills 1 Based on Activity Games

Aim: To further increase confidence and develop core skills without aids

Breath Control & Submerging

Collect objects from the bottom of the pool or on the steps
Push & glide through hoops at various depths
Practise different breathing positions and types

Floating

Star Float on front with no aid for 5 seconds
Start float on back with no aid for 5 seconds
Mushroom float, lungs full of air, chin on chest, arms wrapped tightly round bent knees and trickle breathing.

Streamlining

Push & glide from the wall on front and back, in streamlined position
Push & glide and add kick

Rotation

Rotate from back to front and front to back round longitudinal axis

Sculling

Sculling action on the poolside
Stationary scull on back

Frontcrawl

Flutter kicking sitting on the side- long legs, toes pointed, ankles stretched, big toes brushing each other
Flutter kicking with noodle under arms/stretched out/1 float/no float. As this is to develop kick, there should be no arm action and face should be in the water to maintain the horizontal body position.
Front paddle

Backstroke

Flutter kicking on back with noodle round back/ tight round neck/stretched out (room for head to rest right back)
Flutter kicking with float on chest, knees under the water and ankles stretched
Flutter kicking with hands by side.
Back paddle

Butterfly

Introduction to undulation

Breaststroke

Sitting on edge of poolside leaning back, legs extended over the water, drop heels, turn feet out, kick heels in a circle. Repeat with eyes closed. **Do not sit swimmers on the pool deck, as they will then have to pull their knees up to their chests.** This action must be avoided. Keep the knees narrow. Only speak about tight feet while teaching this kicking action, never mention pointed toes!

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Notes on Swim Skills 1- Starting to kick

Swimmers can be divided into 2 groups based on their ankle flexibility. The first group walk with their feet straight or with one or both feet turned in. These swimmers are usually good at flutter kicking. The second group walk with their feet turned out and these swimmers tend to be good breast stroke swimmers. Each group finds the opposite way of kicking very hard and great patience and imagination is required to teach this. Watch how your swimmers walk along the poolside. When swimmers start very young, they have a tendency to cycle kick. This is the natural way for them and so the teacher has to take time to lengthen out the legs. Again, this requires patience and imagination. The best teaching point for flutter kick is, "Brush your big toes together".

From Swim Skills 1 upwards, the swimmer must take a breath and put their face in the water before a push off on the front

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Swim Skills 2

Aim: To increase the competency of core aquatic skills & develop basic strokes

Aquatic Breathing & Submerging

Introduce bilateral breathing for frontcrawl
Surface dives
Jump in and submerge
Sitting dive, pool depth permitting, **minimum 1.8 metres**

Streamlining

Submerge and push & glide from wall on front & back
Push & Glide in streamlined position, leading into full stroke
Backstroke legs, one arm extended above head in streamlined position

Rotation

Perform a handstand
Attempt a forward and backwards somersault in tucked position

Sculling

Demonstrate a figure of eight hand movement
Scull head first on back
Introduce sculling on front

Treading Water

Introduce treading water with a variety of leg actions

Frontcrawl

Flutter kicking on front with 1 arm extended, holding the end of the pull buoy, other arm by side and looking directly down. Exhale completely into the water, then rotate to inhale, keeping ear against arm.
Develop the above action without a pull buoy i.e. single arm
Full stroke showing bilateral breathing

Backstroke

Flutter kicking on back with horizontal body position, float on knees or arms by side or arms extended above head, squeezing ears
Introduce arm action on pool deck, with back against a wall, thumb exit, straight arm, with pinkie entering in line with shoulder then push arm towards feet
Single arm, with resting arm against thigh. Check for regular, controlled breathing
Full stroke with smooth, relaxed action, head still, continuous kick and continuous arm action.

Butterfly

Butterfly wiggles on pool deck, legs together, pushing tummy in and out, shoulders stable and head still
Butterfly wiggles on front, looking down and back, arms by side, on surface and below the surface, starting with 2 hands holding side, behind swimmer
Butterfly wiggles on back, legs together, chin on chest and arms by side, gradually increasing distance and developing a continuous rhythm
Introduce arm action on poolside, then in water with no breathing.

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Breaststroke

On back with a noodle, feet turned out before kicking

Check floating skills if a swimmer has great difficulty with Breaststroke kick, as they may not be balanced in the water, in which case a body board may be used.

Swimmers who achieve all criteria except Breaststroke kick should be offered Breaststroke classes.

Introduce arm action on the side, then in water, as small circles.

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Swim Skills 3

Aim: To introduce more advanced stroke technique

Aquatic Breathing

Develop bilateral breathing
Develop controlled bobbing, exhaling completely through mouth/nose both trickle and explosive

Diving & Streamlining

Push and glide, starting with face in water before pushing off & transition into stroke for 10 metres
Dive entry from side
Dive entry with streamlined transition into kick

Rotation

Log rolls in extended position, tight core
Forward rolls

Sculling

Travel head first & feet first, prone & supine, using figure of 8 sculling movement

Treading Water

Maintain vertical position in deep water
Eggbeater, breaststroke and scissors kick
Waving 1 hand to attract attention

Frontcrawl

Frontcrawl kick in streamlined position, no breathing.
Blow/breathing as in Swim Skills 2 and add single arm pull. Rotate shoulders to inhale as hand passes under face and return hand onto float while exhaling. Long, stretched out arm, slow pull, fast kick, breathe every pull.
Front crawl full stroke, no breathing, arms extending after entering the water and pulling directly under the body and accelerating through pull.
Full stroke with bilateral breathing. Slow arms, fast legs.

Backstroke

Full stroke maintaining small fast kick & continuous arm action.

Butterfly

Develop Butterfly arm action
Develop full stroke starting with 1 stroke and building up, always starting in streamlined position

Breaststroke

Develop Breaststroke timing
Develop full stroke by streamlining off the wall, 1 pull, 1 kick, then glide. Gradually increase the number of strokes. Always ensure there is a glide before the next pull starts.

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Swim Skills 4

Aim: To improve the quality of stroke technique, introduce multi-aquatic skills/disciplines & basic lifesaving

Diving & Streamlining

Sitting dive starting with 1 hand on top of the other, thumb curled round and ears squeezed. Use words like smooth, pour, silent. Head kept down and body remains in streamlined position until surfaces.

Develop the sitting dive by lifting hips off the deck and thrusting feet back towards the side.

Further develop diving by introducing crouch dives, ensuring toes curled over edge.

Rotation

Somersault forwards & backwards

Sculling

Hold a stationary scull

Scull on back, feet first, fingers pointing down, no rowing

Scull on front

Perform a sculling sequence

Treading water

Tread water in a vertical position with head clear of the water

Use continuous kicking & sculling to maintain vertical position

Move in various directions

Front Crawl

Front crawl kick on front, streamlined, no floats, head in water.

Front crawl full stroke, with bilateral breathing, slow arms and fast, continuous kick.

Head must be still, apart from when breathing.

Backstroke

Backstroke kick, streamlined.

Backstroke kick as 6 kicks on 1 side, then roll and repeat, arms by side.

Single arm backstroke with roll of hip and shoulder as pinkie enters, maintaining still head and no hesitation at thigh.

Full stroke with continuous kick to the surface, continuous arm action, ensuring very little splashing as hand enters. Hand must not extend below body when pulling.

Head back and still.

Butterfly

Butterfly wiggles on back, front and side.

Butterfly arm action on poolside. Thumbs enter at shoulder width apart, move out to catch just beyond shoulder width, pull directly under the body with high elbow and exit pinkie first at the thigh.

Arm action standing in shallow water and leaning over.

Attempt full stroke with fins, no breathing, for very short distances.

Breaststroke

Simultaneous breaststroke kick on back.

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Pull, kick, glide drill to develop timing, head still.
Full stroke, head still. Use a noodle if pull goes too far back.

Taster Activities

Play a mini-polo game
Introduce synchronised swimming skills
Develop diving skills
Develop water safety skills
Introduce racing skills

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Club Ready

Aim: To improve and maintain stroke technique over distance & develop basic training and race skills, producing a swimmer who is Club Ready

Propulsion & Streamlining

Sculling

Sculling on back, feet first, arms by side, fingers pointing down, no rowing.
Sculling on back, head first.
Sculling while turning through 360° on the vertical axis.

Front Crawl

Front crawl kick streamlined with no float.
Front Crawl drills:
 Single arm, breathing to the resting and to the pulling side. Resting arm must remain against leg
 Stroke count
 High elbow
Full stroke ensuring fast continuous kick, continuous arm action, silent hand entry.
Check blowing into water.

Backstroke

Backstroke kick, streamlined.
Backstroke Drills:
 6 kicks then roll, head still
 Single arm
 Double arm
Full stroke with continuous kick, and continuous arm action, ensuring very little splash as hand enters. Ensure hand does not extend below body when pulling. Head back and still.

Butterfly

Butterfly wiggles on back, front and side, with fins.
Butterfly Drills:
 Arm action on poolside and standing/walking in the water
 Single arm
Full stroke over very short distances with no breathing, with fins.

Breaststroke

Simultaneous breaststroke kick on back and on front streamlined.
Breaststroke Drills:
 Pull/kick/glide
Full stroke ensuring head still, hands always at the surface, fast sculling action under the body.

Club Training Competencies

- Use pace clock for starting, resting & timing
- Develop lane discipline
- Understand terminology
- Use of equipment
- Awareness of perceived effort