



# Swimming the Side Stroke

by Evelyn Moldal

You may be surprised to learn that swimming dates back about 10,000 years ago during the NEOLITHIC AGE, which was the latter part of the STONE Age. How do we know this? We can thank the HUNGARIAN explorer LÁSZLÓ ALMÁSY and his crew. In their 1933 expedition to catalogue the known prehistoric rock art sites in the EGYPTIAN desert they discovered the most famous example we have today. The carvings and paintings, known as the CAVE OF THE SWIMMERS, depict prehistoric humans who appear to be swimming. Almásy HYPOTHESIZED (an explanation based on evidence) that the swimming scenes were realistically depicting their surroundings before the climate changed.



Spell: SURPRISED FAMOUS EXPLORER EXPEDITION

What activity dates back approximately 10,000 years ago? SWIMMING

What is the name given to this period of time? NEOLITHIC AGE

Neolithic comes from two words, 'neo' and 'lithic'. What does neo mean? NEW What does lithic mean? STONE

Question Type Key

KNOWN – SEMI-OPEN – PRIOR KNOWLEDGE – MATH – OPEN – VAKT



What environmental change occurred that marked the transition from the Stone Age to the Neolithic Age? EARTH'S CLIMATE BECAME WARMER

What is the name given to the prehistoric carvings and paintings that depict people swimming? THE CAVE OF THE SWIMMERS

Where is the Cave of Swimmers located? THE EGYPTIAN DESERT

What year was the Cave of Swimmers discovered? 1933

How many years ago was that?  $2020 - 1933 = 87$

What was the name of the explorer who led the expedition that discovered the Cave of Swimmers? LÁSZLÓ ALMÁSY

What country was he from? HUNGARY

Seven countries border Hungary. Can you name two? SLOVAKIA, UKRAINE, ROMANIA, SERBIA, CROATIA, SLOVENIA, AUSTRIA

Swimming as a sport began to gain POPULARITY in the early 19th century when the National Swimming Society of GREAT BRITAIN began holding competitions. During this time there were two swimming strokes used, the side stroke and the breast stroke although the breast stroke was preferred by most swimmers.



Question Type Key

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Spell: SPORT PREFERRED SOCIETY COMPETITIONS

When did swimming as a sport begin to gain popularity? EARLY 19TH CENTURY

What country held swimming competitions that sparked its popularity? GREAT BRITAIN

Name one of the swimming strokes used in these competitions. SIDE STROKE, BREAST STROKE

What was the stroke most preferred by swimmers? BREAST STROKE

How many centuries ago was the 19th century? TWO CENTURIES AGO

As you can imagine, the side stroke got its name because the swimmer lies on one side. Arms and legs are used SIMULTANEOUSLY however they are used differently. This allows the swimmer to switch sides when fatigue begins to set in. Utilizing a different group of muscles provides a much needed rest during long-distance swims because it offers a recovery period for the LIMBS. Life guards and other rescue PERSONNEL often use this stroke when responding to an emergency because the ENDURANCE it affords increases the likelihood of a successful rescue.



Spell: IMAGINE SWITCH RECOVERY RESCUE

Question Type Key

KNOWN – SEMI-OPEN – PRIOR KNOWLEDGE – MATH – OPEN – VAKT



The side stroke got its name because the swimmer \_\_\_\_\_ . LIES ON ONE SIDE

What word did I use that means 'at the same time'? SIMULTANEOUSLY

What does the swimmer do when they feel fatigued? SWITCH SIDES

What is a synonym for fatigue? TIREDNESS, WEARINESS, EXHAUSTION, LETHARGY, etc.

What is an antonym for fatigue? ENERGIZED, REFRESHED, ALERT, etc.

Why do life guards and other rescue personnel use the side stroke most often? IT INCREASES ENDURANCE/IT INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SUCCESSFUL RESCUE

To learn the side stroke you will need to get your body in the correct position and be able to carry out the simultaneous movements of your arms and legs. There are three steps to practice when learning this stroke; the swim position, arm stroke and scissor kick. It is often best to practice on land before attempting them in the water. You just need a little bit of space and something sturdy you can rest the top half of your body on while your legs have ample room to move. A strong coffee table, bed or couch without an arm rest are a few examples of furniture that could be used. Let's give it a try now by following these steps...

Spell: WATER      STURDY      COFFEE      FURNITURE

Where should you practice these movements before attempting them in the water? ON LAND

How many steps are there to practice learning this stroke? THREE; 3

Two things are needed to be able to practice on land Name one.

Name both. A LITTLE BIT OF SPACE, SOMETHING STURDY TO REST THE TOP HALF OF YOUR BODY ON

Give me an example of something I mentioned that could be used to rest your body on. A STRONG COFFEE TABLE, BED, COUCH WITHOUT AN ARM REST

Can you think of anything else that could be used for this?

### *Step 1 - Swim position*

Start by laying down on the side that feels most comfortable and stretch your body to make it as long as possible keeping your toes in a pointed position. Think about making a straight line with your arms. Your bottom arm should stretch out under your head and your top arm should lay on your hip pointing toward your feet, with both palms facing down. Practice tilting your head at an angle that allows you to see your hip.

Get a good feel for this position before going to step 2.

Question Type Key

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Spell: DOWN COMFORTABLE STRAIGHT TILTING

When laying down on your side, what position should your toes be in? POINTED POSITION  
What kind of line should your arms make in the starting position? STRAIGHT LINE

Your bottom arm stretches out under your \_\_\_\_\_. HEAD  
Your top arm should lay on your hip and point towards your \_\_\_\_\_. FEET

What body part should your head be tilted towards? HIP

### Step 2 - Arm stroke

This step can be practiced in standing or sitting position first. As the movements become easier you can try them while in swim position. When you are ready you can take this move to the water!

With your arms in swim position (see step 1) imagine, or VISUALIZE you are reaching for a ball with the hand that is above your head. Then at the same time, bring both hands toward each other as if you are passing the ball to the opposite hand. Then at the same time, the top arm pushes back while the hand under your head pushes forward with a glide. Think: PULL, PUSH, GLIDE... PULL, PUSH, GLIDE. This action returns both hands to the starting position. Practice this movement 10 times with the left hand above your head and then 10 times with your right hand above your head. Continue practicing until the movements feel natural.

For a great example, watch this video from 0:56 - 1:34 

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN0eGhrfEs0>

Spell: DOWN COMFORTABLE STRAIGHT TILTING

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Name one position this stroke can be practiced when on land. STANDING POSITION, SITTING POSITION

You should begin to practice the arm stroke while in swim position when the \_\_\_\_\_ . MOVEMENTS BECOME EASIER

What is a synonym for imagine? VISUALIZE

What did the text suggest to imagine that you are reaching for? A BALL

You could really choose anything to visualize...name another object that could replace the ball.

In your visualization, what does the hand that reaches for the ball do after the ball is in the hand? BRINGS IT BACK TO THE OTHER HAND

What three words are helpful to remember for the arm movements? PULL, PUSH, GLIDE

### Step 3 - Scissor kick

SCISSOR kicks provide the power behind this stroke. To practice this step you will need to lay down on an object that is long enough to support your body from the thighs up. This gives your legs enough room to practice the correct form.

To start, lay on your side with both legs fully extended. Take your top leg and bend it, bringing your knee to a 90° angle and at the same time your bottom leg bends back. Then bring both legs back to starting position. It may be helpful to visualize what it looks like to close a pair scissors.

You may want to practice one leg at a time until you are ready to make them move simultaneously.

For a great example, watch this video from 0:20 - 0:50 

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN0eGhrfEs0>

Spell: ANGLE POSITION 90° VISUALIZE

What gives this stroke power? SCISSOR KICKS

Describe the angle of your knee during the first move. IT BENDS TO A 90 DEGREE ANGLE

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What does your bottom leg do when this is happening? IT BENDS BACK  
When both your legs come back together, what is helpful to think of? CLOSING A PAIR OF SCISSORS

### *Step 3 - Synchronization of the arms and legs*

I recommend practicing this standing up.

The LEAD arm (the arm under your head) pulls you forward. Then the top arm and the top leg work together, both bending up. At the same time, the lead arm is pulling down to meet the other hand. When the hands get close enough to meet that's when they push apart again and the legs are coming together like closing a pair of scissors. Think...PULL, PUSH, GLIDE.

For a great example, watch this video from 1:34 - 0:50 

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN0eGhrfEs0>

In what position should you first practice this step? STANDING UP

What is the arm under your head referred to as? THE LEAD ARM

What three words are helpful to remember? PULL, PUSH, GLIDE

Once you have practiced these steps and feel comfortable with the movements it's time to take it to the water. Be patient with yourself and most of all, have fun!

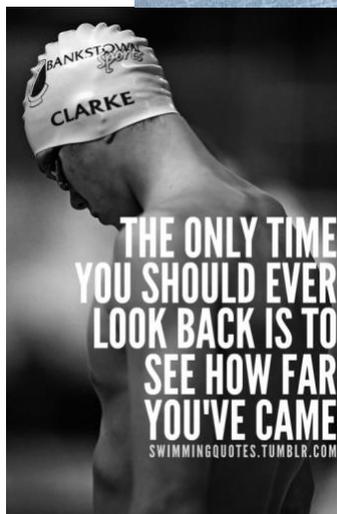
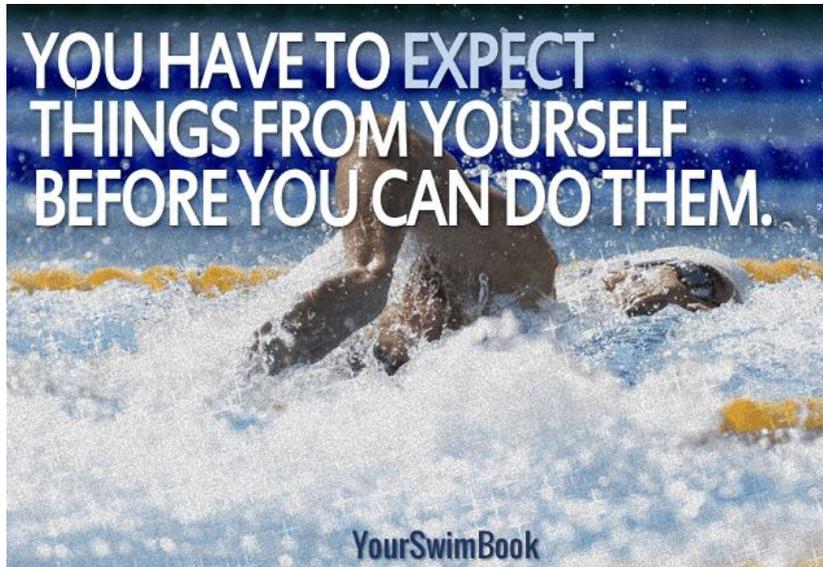
## **CREATIVE WRITING**

After reading the two memes below, which one resonates the most with you? Why?





Can you think of something inspirational or motivational that would make a good meme?



Resources:

<http://www.enjoy-swimming.com/learn-to-swim.html>

<https://www.britannica.com/sports/swimming-sport>

<https://www.athleticscholarships.net/swimming-history.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN0eGhrfEs0>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WadiSuraSwimmers.jpg>

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/2a/4c/20/2a4c20b5d4e9710cc216570721516756.jpg>

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Evelyn Moldal is an S2C Practitioner at Interplay Therapy Center and President of the Tampa Bay Letter Board Community. If you are looking for her you will likely find her reading, dancing or geeking out on all things quantum