

# Backstroke Technique



# Head/Body Position

- Head should be tilted slightly forward (like resting on a thin pillow) ... relaxed
  - Not pressed back ... that will arch the back and sink hips
- The rest of the body will be just under the surface
- When rotated, will still be under the surface
- Shoulders should stay to the side of the body
  - Don't lift out of the water



# Arm Stroke: Entry

- Shoulder-width or slightly wider
- Pinky first

If entry is too narrow or the back of the hand enters first, that very likely means late rotation

- Body needs to be flat (halfway through rotation) upon hand entry
- Late rotation also means that the body will complete rotation during the catch
  - Arm will push down to finish the rotation



# Arm Stroke: The Catch

- The most common element of the best backstrokers in the world
- Hand/arm enter water (moving downward)
- Immediately after entry, the hand changes direction completely and moves to the side
- Distinct, visible elbow bend to make:
  - Fingertips point to the side
  - Palms face back
  - Forearm face back
  - Thumb just needs to be a few inches under surface



# Backstroke Catch





# Backstroke Pull

- Push water back
  - Palm ALWAYS faces back
  - Fingertips point to the side (away from the body)
  - Palms shouldn't angle down/up
  - Bend the elbow to get the whole arm into it
- Hand stays shallow; pushes straight back
- Arm stays to the side of the body
- No up-and-down motion; No “deep” water



# Arm Stroke: Pull & Finish

- After the catch:
  - Hand/arm continue to push straight back
  - Arm stays to the side of the body (connected)
  - No up/down movement
  - The palm and forearm stay flat against the water
- The Finish
  - Just a follow-through or extension of the pull
  - Hold water all the way through
  - Hand moves downward to help body rotate to other side
  - Hand finishes below hips and facing inward



# Rotation

- Rotation is SO important!!!
- Need to rotate to:
  - Hit the catch
  - Have the strongest pull
- Need to rotate **on time** to:
  - Have the best entry
  - ...so you can hit the catch



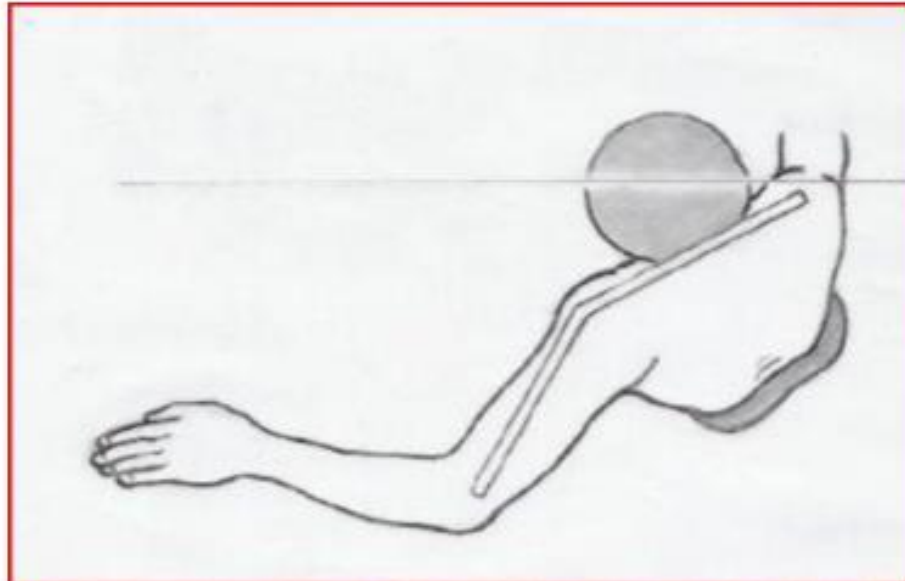


## Rotation: Backstroke

- Rotation is driven by the finish and entry
- Hips and shoulders rotate together
- Shallow pull + 20-30 degree rotation =  
Arm/Shoulder in line and connected



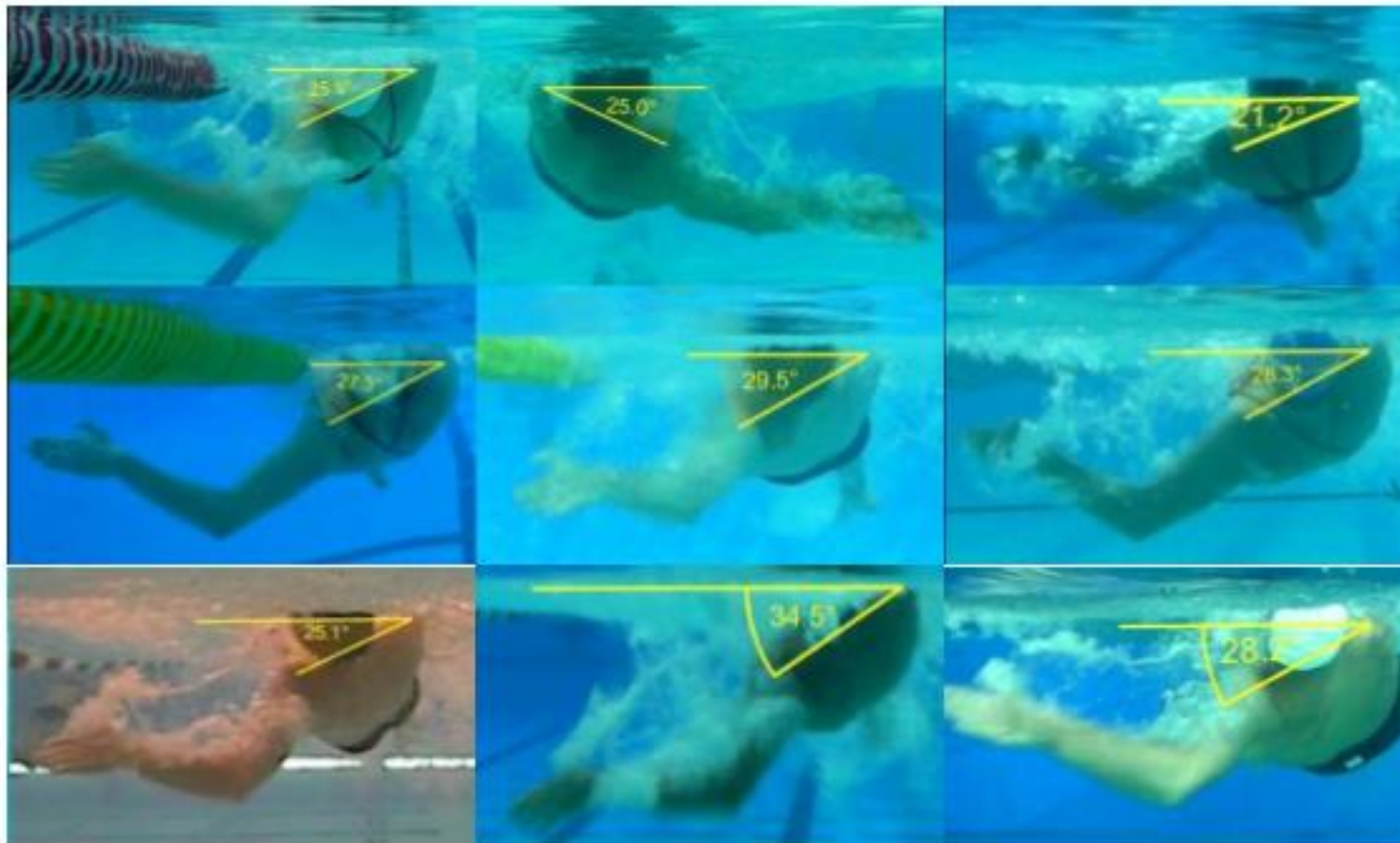
# Rotation & Shoulder





# Rotation: How Much?

- The best backstrokers rotate under 30 degrees to each side





# Rotation: How Much?

- Not necessary to rotate more
  - The best pull is with the arms to the side, fingertips pointing to the side and just under the surface
  - Rotating more...
    1. takes more time (slows tempo)
    2. doesn't help (not necessary to reach deeper)
- Arm just needs to be connected to body