

A group of swimmers and a coach practicing handstands on a pool deck. The swimmers are in various stages of the handstand, with some fully inverted and others being assisted by the coach. The scene is reflected in the pool water below.

swimnastics

introduction to  
handstands for  
streamline



# handstand basics

1

## hand placement

shoulder distance apart with the middle finger pointing forward, spread the fingers out and press as much of the hand on the floor as possible

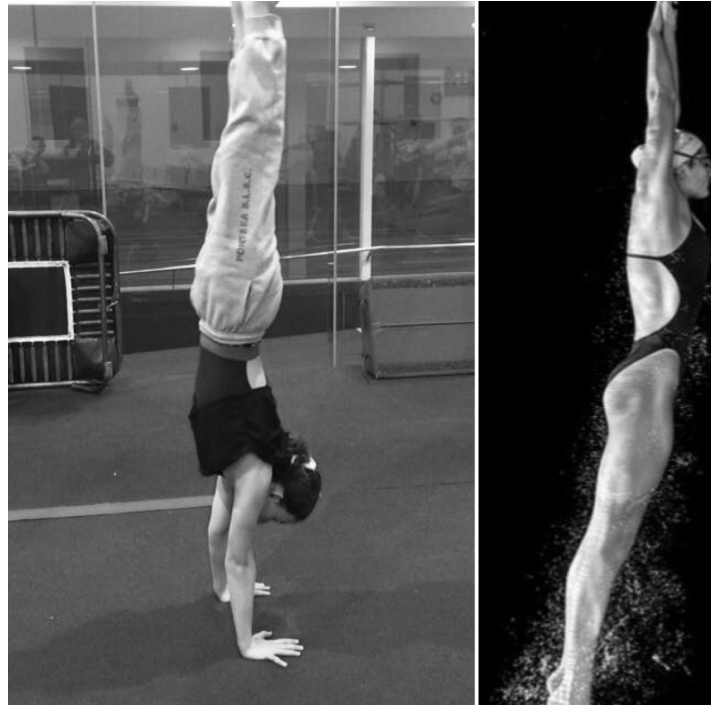
there will be more space between the fingers than in the pool when catching water

2

## shoulders open

there should be a straight line from the hips to the shoulder and then from the shoulder to the wrist. elbows will be straight throughout the entire handstand. ideally we also want shoulder elevation where there is no gap between the ears and the shoulders.

note: some swimmers will struggle to achieve 180degrees shoulder flexion, spend extra time on shoulder and thoracic mobility.



great handstand shape and there is body tension. there could be slightly more opening and pushing of the shoulders with a little extra ribs down towards the hip

3

## create a straight line

when looking at the middle body we want to avoid any rib flaring. the ribs should draw down towards the hip bones. to minimise lower back arching we want a slight tuck of the pelvis, creating a flattening of the lower back. drawing the ribs and hip bones together will straighten out the middle body and create tension through the front line of the body.

in the water: this will minimise water sitting on the lower back or hips being too low

4

## head position

eyes will be on the hands for handstand with the arms resting beside and covering the ears.

if you would like to get more specific for streamline you can ask for the eyes to look backwards however it will be more challenging on balance so maybe only do this when against the wall.

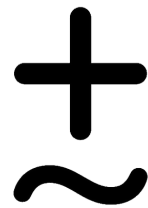


needs to straighten the arms, reduce lower back arching by bringing the belly button to the spine and put the legs together for whole body tension

# swimnastics skill

## handstands

beginner

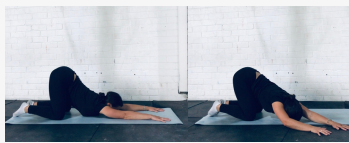


can be completed as a circuit completing 2-3 sets of each exercise

### thoracic extension

cat stretch + sides on floor x 20s e/s

hips over knees, arms straight, chin on floor, aim to get arm pits and chest on floor



downward dog with rotation x 20s e/s

feet wider than hips, hands up to 1 meter in front. opposite hand to outside of foot. open chest to roof.



### active shoulder mobility

prone lying arm raises (option for stick) x 10-15

forehead on floor, arms extended overhead, belly button off ground. lift arms as high as possible, pause at top. slow movements. keep the arms straight, move the hands wider to modify



### posterior body line

feet up the wall (reverse plank) x 30-60s

straight body line from shoulders to toes, hips up, ribs down. advance - arms extended overhead. modify - arms by side



### anterior body line

front support to back support x 3-5 e/s

extend right arm toward roof, rotate body and eyes to face side. continue rotating to face roof, then the other side, then return to front support. maintain hip height, pelvis tucked under, neutral head position and body line from head to toes throughout exercise. change directions.



### skill

spiderman handstand up the wall x 5

eyes between hands! ears between shoulders, fingers spread facing forward, bottom squeezed, round upper back, belly button to spine

~ modifications- 3/4 handstand just walking feet up wall



### drill

partner streamline lifts x 3-5

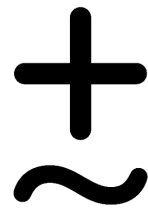
begin lying on back, arms overhead, bottom squeezed and lifted off ground. partner to lift at ankles. hips remain lifted, straight body line from shoulders to toes. lower slow keeping the straight line shape - feet landing first.



# swimnastics skill

# handstands

intermediate



can be completed as a circuit completing 2-3 sets of each exercise

## thoracic extension/rotation

**foam roller thoracic spine (streamline arms) x 10-20**

roller under upper back. arms behind head, press through feet to roll.



**seated twist rotation sequence**

**x 10 each way**

sit crossed legs. twist tall use hand on back of knee, twist in opposite direction with fold.



## active shoulder mobility

**standing overs and unders with stick, against wall x 10-15**

begin facing wall with stick down behind bottom, palms facing wall. lift stick above head. lower. arms remain straight throughout exercise and move simultaneously. hands further apart to modify.



## posterior body line

**plank hold face up, between boxes x 20-60 secs**

heels and shoulders on boxes. pelvis tucked under (posterior tilt). bottom squeezed. rib press down toward hips. arms overhead.  
~ modification- lower arms to thighs, boxes closer together  
+ advancement- boxes further apart, add small weight to hips



## anterior body line

**plank hold, face down, between boxes x 20-60 secs**

shins, armpits and chin on boxes. belly button drawn toward spine. pelvis tucked under (posterior tilt). bottom squeezed. rib press down toward hips. arms overhead. no lower back arching.  
~ modification- lower arms to thighs



## skill

**3/4 handstand against wall x 10-60 secs**

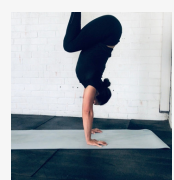
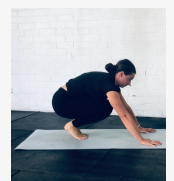
eyes between hands! fingers spread facing forward, arms straight, shoulders squeeze ears to create no gaps in the shoulders, round upper back, belly button drawn toward spine, bottom squeezed.  
~ advancement- full handstand



## drill

**bunny hops x 10**

begin in squat, knees and feet together. reach hands flat on floor in front. eyes between hands! fingers spread, facing forward. push through legs together, aiming to lift hips above hands. shoulders squeeze ears, arms stay straight. avoid falling over by moving 1 hand forward to re-balance. return to squat after each hop

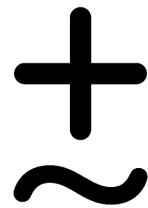




# swimnastics skill

# handstands

advanced



can be completed as a circuit completing 2-3 sets of each exercise

## thoracic extension/rotation

### lat. insertion stretch x 20-30s

knees and elbows on floor, hips above knees, elbows beside head, palms together. stretch chest and arm pits toward floor.



### thread the needle (optional

foam roller) x 5-10 e/w  
start in table-top, knees under hip, hands under shoulders. extend 1 arm toward roof then thread it under other arm.



## active shoulder mobility

### L sit against wall x 15-30s

sit with legs extended together, back flat against wall, arms extended overhead, back of head against wall. aim to keep the ribs down whilst moving the arms towards the wall. keep the arms straight and shoulder width apart. to modify go wider with the arms



## posterior body line

### heal drives off box to neutral spine x 10-15

hips on edge of box, torso on box, legs off box, arms holding on. long straight legs, heels together. belly button drawn in toward spine. begin with toes touching the floor and lift to horizontal with minimal arching in the lower back. keep the legs straight throughout.



## anterior body line

### lying flat dish hold 10-30s

lie on back, with arms overhead and legs up at 90degrees. lower the legs as far as possible keeping the lower back on the floor. hold at the lowest point, aiming to eventually be flat on the floor. modify by placing the arms by side or bending knees.



## skill

### full handstand against wall x 10-30s

walk feet up wall and hands toward wall until in a full handstand. check eyes looking between hands, shoulders squeezing ears, round back, ribs pulled down only toes touching wall. modify by going to 3/4 handstand, advance by trying to balance off the wall.



## drill

### bunny hop, 1/4 turn out x 5-10

begin in squat, knees and feet together. reach hands flat on floor in front. fingers spread, facing forward. push through the legs to bring the hips on top of the hands (keeping the arms straight!). avoid falling over by moving 1 hand forward then rotating and lowering body to side. this exercise is to learn how to safely fall out of a handstand

