

## How to Have a Powerful Freestyle Kick

### Keep these points in mind to help fix your flutter kick

A sizable percentage of the propulsion in your freestyle comes from your kick, but you need to have proper technique, strength, and endurance to take advantage of your legs.

Here are some keys for getting a more technically sound freestyle kick.

### Remember Your Feet

The most important thing to keep in mind in regard to a proper freestyle kick is that propulsion comes from the top of your feet. So, the more you can relax your ankle and point your toes, the better. By doing those two things, you increase the surface area pushing against the water and that allows you to push more water away from your body, increasing your propulsion. Everything else your legs do (mechanically) aid the “flick” that happens from your feet on your down-kick. This includes the knee bend, hip swing, and core firing.

### Start With the Core and Hips

Your core and hips should always initiate your flutter kick. Think of your kick like a wave, one that starts in the midsection of your body and goes down to your toes.

Some swimmers initiate their kick with their knees, causing a huge bend in their knees. Instead, your knees should only be bent at about 120 degrees. This is similar to how much knee bend you have when you walk. Also, when you walk, you’re swinging your legs more from your hip than from your knee. Follow that thinking when you kick.

### Kick the Heel Out

You want your heel to exit the water on every up-kick, which ensures that you’re bending your knees enough. Some swimmers try to kick too much with their hips and don’t bend their knees to initiate the flick with their feet. Your entire foot doesn’t need to exit the water, just the heel to halfway down the arch. If you’re flexing your foot well throughout your kick, your toes might also break the surface.

<https://youtu.be/u8a3CIJ3AxM>

## Why You Should Be Working On Your Freestyle Kick

Doing kicks goes beyond just giving your shoulders a break (although that is a solid reason in itself).

And it's easy to understand why we ignore our legs – they are working down below on their own, while we are paying attention to what is happening right in front of us with our arms and hands.

But having a solid flutter kick will help you become a better swimmer overall.

- **Added propulsion.** The immediate goal of developing a faster flutter kick is as basic as wanting to go faster. The faster you can kick, the faster you can swim. It's as simple as that.
- **A strong kick gives you a killer body position in the water.** Beyond propulsion, kicking—particularly for sprinters—helps the speed-seeking swimmer maintain a high body position in the water. While we are still a ways away from sprint swimmers completely hydro-planing across the water, that is the goal.
- **A strong kick launches you into your arm pull.** Strong legs and a strong kick add power to your hip rotation. This in turn helps you drive your arms forward for a faster and more dynamic arm pull. Your freestyle strokes benefit from having more power from the core and your kick.
- **A strong kick keeps your stroke together.** Strong legs come in handy towards the end of races, where your muscles are failing left and right, with your stroke disintegrating with each passing meter. Having the endurance in your lower body is essential to keeping your body position in the most efficient and powerful position possible.

## How To Improve Your Freestyle Kick

### 1. Improve ankle strength.

Skipping rope is not only a low impact way to quickly develop strength in your ankles and calves, but it will also develop overall athleticism and help you be lighter on your feet, which comes in handy for developing quicker turns and starts.

### 2. Balance out your kick.

For most swimmers there is a near total focus on the downward portion of the kick, with the upward motion acting as a recovery movement. While we lack the musculature to develop a truly balanced kick, one of the fastest ways you can improve your kick is by being more attentive to the upward part of the kick.

Incorporating vertical kicking into your training is one of the easiest ways to force yourself to be more attentive to the upkick. One of my favorite kicking drills, when done correctly it forces you to be more balanced with your kicking in order to keep your head above the water.

### 3. Stop kicking down, and start kicking backward.

Just like how with our pull we strive to have an early vertical forearm so that we are pulling our bodies forward through the water by pulling backward, with our feet **we want to be kicking the water backward, and not just downwards.**

This requires flexible ankles, otherwise, swimmers will bend their knees to a nearly 90-degree angle in order to push water backward with the top of their feet.

### 4. Improve ankle flexibility.

Having flexible ankles means that you can catch more water with your foot, and achieve an EVA (early vertical ankle) that will allow you to push more water backward.

Here are two quick fixes for low-mobility ankles:

- **Ankle rockers.** A simple stretch you can add to your pre-and post-workout dryland work. Sit on the back of your ankles. Lean back, lifting your knees off the ground. You'll feel the stretch pretty quickly at the top of your feet. Hold for 1-2 minutes. Repeat a couple times.

- **Ankle rotations.** As a swimmer, you've mastered a wide variety of arm swings. You can do the same with your ankles, doing 15-20 foot rotations in each direction. The best part is that you can do it while sitting on the couch.

## **5. Kick Mindfully.**

When doing kick sets you should be mindful of the movements of your legs, of driving from your hips, of cracking your ankles like a whip.

Mindless kicking is fun for aerobic endurance I suppose, but you want to be efficient as well, and this comes by being mindful of your kicking technique. I watch swimmers pay careful attention to the placement of their hands in the catch and pull, but when it comes to kick they thrash their legs back and forth with little thought to what they are doing.

## **Drills for a Faster Freestyle Kick:**

### **1. Kickboard Drill**

Ensure you keep your hips close to the water surface and your legs well-aligned with your back. Never arc your lower back. For extra resistance, you may hold the kickboard in a vertical position in the water (partially immersed). Keep your hands straight with your head slightly above the water surface.

Remember to maintain a good breathing rhythm and kick from your hips.

### **2. Kicking on Your Back**

It is easier to develop your kick by kicking on your back (backstroke). It offers a sure possible way of kicking directly from the hips – stretching your legs and kicking outwards.

Besides, it is easy to execute. Simply lie on your back, stretch your arms forwards and put your chin down. Maintain a streamlined position with your hips closer to the surface while kicking powerfully from your legs (hips). It is also effective at increasing your strength and endurance for swimming as well as your speed.

### 3. Using Swim Fins

Swim fins can also enhance your freestyle kick. They create extra resistance to help you build your swim strength and endurance while increasing your swimming speed.

First, you must get a good, comfortable pair of fins. Get into the pool and lay flat as you would do in normal freestyle swimming. Kick directly from your hips while flexing the lower part of your legs (knees and ankles). You should not attempt to start with a faster kicking; else, you can get exhausted quickly. Instead, use a shorter rhythm or execute short rapid kicks with breaks in-between for resting. Focus on tightening your core muscles and using the large muscles around your hip.

### 4. Kicking on Your Side

Another effective drill to try out is kicking on your side. Lay on your side while putting one arm (a convenient one) forward. Put your chin down – look downwards.

Kick powerfully as normal but from your hips. It may be a little difficult because you mustn't lose your balance. Also, you mustn't turn over to your back or stomach.

Stretch out your ankles with your toes pointing downwards. You may try any kick timing. The drill enhances your kick while you develop a better sense of rotation and a flexible spine.

### Amazing:

Alexander Popov, two-time Olympic champion in both the 50m and 100m freestyles could kick a [50m long course in 27 seconds](#). Cesar Cielo, world record holder in the 50 and 100m freestyle can kick the same length in [30 seconds](#).

Happy New Year,  
Reza

[VIDEO: Improve YOUR Freestyle Kick](#)