

Level 5 Stroke Performance Criteria

Component	Front Crawl	Back Crawl	Breaststroke	Elementary Backstroke	Sidestroke	Butterfly
Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface in a streamlined position; body roll is a fluid motion—head, trunk and legs are aligned	Body is nearly horizontal to surface in a streamlined position; head is still and aligned with body; face toward ceiling, no side-to-side movement; body roll is a fluid motion—head, trunk and legs are aligned	Trunk horizontal to 15° from surface during glide; body incline should become more level following kick	Body horizontal to 15° from surface; trunk and legs are aligned; slight chin tuck, ears near or below the surface	Trunk horizontal to 30° from surface; hips may roll away from midline; bottom ear may be out of water with head raised	Trunk horizontal to 15° from the surface; head, trunk and legs are aligned with minimal movement to the left or right of the midline
Arms	Above-water recovery with arm bent at elbow; arm relaxed as hand moves toward the head; arm extends fully in coordination with body roll; hand and forearm make a downward and outward then inward and upward sweeping action during the power phase; palm presses toward feet until arm reaches full extension during finish	Above-water recovery—arm straight at elbow; hand enters in line with shoulder in coordination with body roll; hand enters little finger first with downward and outward sweeping action with elbow pointing to bottom; hand presses upward to about the chest, then presses downward toward the feet during the power phase—arm fully extended at elbow for the finish	Hands begin outward scull at or narrower than shoulder width—arms slightly bent; sweep the hands downward and outward; bend at elbow increases as hands move toward waist—hands deeper than elbows by end of pull; hands should not sweep beyond the upper chest area; sweep hands back together so that hands travel along the midline underneath the body to a streamlined position	Hands remain under the surface and recover near or at the side of the body; arms may extend at or above shoulder level; arms nearly straight at elbow at beginning of catch; arms partially bent at elbow during extension—wrists may be bent; power phase ends at the level of the hips	Lead arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may be straight during catch action; hand may continue past upper chest Trail arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may remain close to body; hand may pass by thigh; hand may recover past shoulder of leading arm; arm may be partially bent at elbow	Above-water arm recovery—straight elbow, occasional arm contact with the water acceptable; hands should enter at shoulder width, with palms facing down and slightly outward; arms partially bent at elbows; hands follow a rudimentary “keyhole” pattern (outward and inward sweep); hands press back toward the feet past the hips

Level 5 Stroke Performance Criteria—continued

Component	Front Crawl	Back Crawl	Breaststroke	Elementary Backstroke	Sidestroke	Butterfly
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips and propels swimmer forward using a 2, 4 or 6 beat kick; feet remain below surface	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips and propels swimmer forward using a 2, 4 or 6 beat kick; feet remain below the surface	Legs bend at the knees bringing heels toward buttocks—legs bending slightly at hips; knees and hips should be aligned—knees do not separate beyond hip width; ankles bend and rotate outward with toes wider than the heel of foot; knees and ankles extend at the end of the power phase—legs partially bent at the knees and ankles acceptable	Knees remain below surface of the water; knees and hips aligned; knees may be wider than ankles; heels drop by bending knees; ankles rotate outward with toes wider than the heel of foot; lower legs move symmetrically in a circular pattern as knees return to a fully extended position; legs together, toes pointed with minimal movement	Elements of breaststroke or flutter kick acceptable; legs may separate slightly as knees bend in recovery; any type of foot and ankle position acceptable; legs may bend at the knees and held loosely together during glide	Legs may separate slightly at knees during kick with minimal flutter action; single kick action acceptable; hips flex and knees extended; toes pointed; knees slightly bent; hips raise as legs extend
Breathing and timing	Exhale underwater before the next breath during the power phase; head remains in line with the long axis of the body—minimal head movement; alternate side breathing preferred	Rhythmic breathing pattern with inhalation as one arm recovers and exhalation as the other arm recovers; arms in continuous opposition—no hesitation at finish	Pull, breathe, kick, glide sequence; rhythmic breathing with each cycle; glide after recovery with arms extended; slight hesitation before recovery acceptable	Relaxed rhythmic breathing pattern; arms and legs begin recovery at same time; some glide occurs at end of power phase	Any type of breathing pattern with minimal breath holding; arms and legs may move simultaneously; arm action may be continuous; some glide occurs at end of power phase	Face forward head lift begins at start of catch; head re-enters the water after taking breath and hands pull toward waist; one leg kick paired with each arm cycle at minimum; arms should recover directly from the finish—minimal delay before recovery acceptable

American Red Cross Stroke Performance Charts