Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy

Scripts for Halliwick AST Videos

Changes since the Halliwick videos were made

1 The International Halliwick Association has made some changes to the Ten Point Programme. Lateral Rotation has been renamed Longitudinal Rotation and Vertical Rotation has been renamed Transversal Rotation. Sagittal rotation has also been included.

2 The term 'hold' has been replaced by the term 'support'

3 The Association is now called the Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy

4 The Basic course has been named the Foundation course.

Users guidelines.

To facilitate the location of text and video shots, set the counter to 0.00.00 at the start of the video.

For information on the work of the Association, publications and training courses for instructors, send a SAE to:

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The Association of Swimming Therapy

Breath Taking

By Danny Mahoney

00:00:51

Physical exercise is important for all us regardless of age, ability or lifestyle. It encourages healthy development when we are young and helps to keep us fit & active throughout the rest of our lives.

Physical activity is good for the heart & circulatory systems, it keeps muscles in good shape & it exercises the lungs.

During exercise we vary our rate of breathing automatically according to the amount of speed or effect required; if we become tired, we can always slow down or take a rest & this applies not only in sport…

00:01:30

….but in all most everyday activities where physical effort is required—periods of physical exertion followed by periods of rest with automatic changes in the depth & rate of breathing according to the amount of effort required. Resting on land is easy enough, you just have to stop. In water it's a different matter.

00:01:52
In water you have to be conscious of your breathing and adjust the rate of your swimming stroke to suit the demands of your breathing rhythm. If you become tired in water you can't just stop, you have to get yourself into a position where you can float with minimum effort while you rest and regain the breath.

00:02:14
Floating in itself is a skill, which has to be learnt, but the key to safety in water is knowing how to control your breathing.

00:02:24
Swimming is a rhythmic exercise and part of the process of learning to swim safely is the development of a steady, regular and efficient breathing rhythm

For each stroke you have to learn the regular point at which you can hold your month or nose clear of the water long enough to breathe in.

You cannot assume that such breathing controls will come naturally, they have to be learnt. The best technique to ensure that you take an “in breath” only when the breathing passengers are clear of the water, is to concentrate on breathing out whenever your face in immersed.

But this raises another point - just how much time do you need to take in sufficient oxygen?

00:03:04
If you are swimming fast or if you are trying to swim against thee force of a current you will need, more air but how do you achieve this if you can only breathe in at one specific point in the stroke?

00:03:24 Man running for ball

On land there is no problem, if you exert yourself, you adjust the depth and rate of your breathing so that you take in more air, it’s an automatic reaction to the extra work you are doing.

In water you have to adjust the rate of your stroke to suit the rhythm of your breathing. Even if you are physically fit you can only afford to swim fast if your breathing control is well developed.

00:03:44
The control of breathing is a fundamental skill but allied to it is the control of balance. You may have perfect balance controls on land, but in water it’s completely different, you have to compensate for the resistance of the water in every move you make and if the water itself is moving the problem is even greater.

00:04:10
For a swimmer with inadequate balance control it's very easy to get into difficulties and if this happens, it becomes even more important that the reaction to breathe out when under the water has become a natural reflex. The life preserving skill in this situation is the ability to keep calm and roll into a safe breathing position with the face out of the water.

Security in the water is dependent in two basic skills.

Breathing Control	Balance Control

Control of breathing and control of balance. In water these are skills, which have to be practised and learnt.

Let's look more closely at breathing control. For the serious swimmer is a finely practised element of the whole swimming stroke brought to a peak of timing to give maximum efficiency, but the basic principles apply in just the same way to the beginner. In the simplest terms we all learn about breathing and the properties of liquids when we're young.

00:05:06
We learn something that it's physically impossible to breathe in and out at the same time; the two are quite separate actions. Though simple play activities you can create an awareness of the properties of liquids even before the children are introduced to the water.

00:05:48
When we're young we also use the control necessary to avoid taking in liquids when we do not want them. In a shower the water running down the face can enter the month but it presents no threat, it can be held quite simply in the front of the month and expelled when necessary.

00:05:48
Familiarity with water begins in the home. Here a child can begin to experience the properties of water in a safe environment. The water in the bath can be controlled in temperature and depth creating he ideal situation for a child to practise he basic elements of breathing control. He can put his head in the water without fear and it doesn't take much experimentation to discover that breathing out under water is the best way to stop it going up his nose or into his month. Through this everyday contract with the water we learn not to inhale and choke on it, but always to blow out against it.

00:06:30
In the bath the water is shallow there should be nothing frightening about it and, of course, it can be controlled very easily. It is here in the home that a child can begin to gain a feeling of psychological security in water.

00:06:44
The public swimming pool, on the other hand is very much larger, the water is deep and there's nothing to hold on to it you're out in the middle. It's not unusual for it to be noisy and crowded and to a child this can be a very intimidating experience, for this reason the first few visits should be made under the most favourable conditions you can create. Many children will adjust quickly to the idea of swimming, but for those with less confidence, the early lessons should always be given with plenty of re-assurance.

00:07:30
The care you take in the first few introductions to the water will determine how willing each child will be to make that mental adjustment to the idea of entering such a large expanse of water. In the unfamiliar surroundings of your local pool, a good way of overcoming any apprehension is to occupy the children with activities which are familiar to them, like washing.

00:08:10
Once safely in the pool, the swimmers are encouraged to dip their faces into the water while blowing out at the same time. All swimmers should be allowed to progress at their own pace and while the aim is to be achieve confidence in the water, watch out for over-enthusiasm which can obscure your view of the swimmers breathing techniques.

This simple exercise also provides a basic introduction to the skills of balance control. The instructors provide only minimal support to encourage the children to maintain their own balance and control their movement though the water.

00:08:48
The easiest way to teach a child to breathe out in the water is to make it fun. Blowing the plastic poached egg so that it flips over takes a bit of practise; you have to blow down on the rim like blowing on hot soup.

This downwards action of blowing against the water is the basis of the principal we are trying to achieve and it's also a good exercise in balance control. Again, don't let over-enthusiasm go too far, it's easy for swimmers to hyperventilate if they are over breathing while not doing sufficient physical work.

00:09:20
If a swimmer can blow into the water, it should be possible to whistle into it. These exercises form the first lessons in oral breathing.

00:09:32 caption **Oral Breathing**

Whistling into the water is fun but when you get bored with it, you can vary the exercise by using toy whistles and trumpets. Never be tempted to carry out any of these breathing practices for too long at a time without a break or a change in the activity. A concentrated exercise should be followed either by one, which is more relaxing, or by a more physical type of game.

00:10:00
Singing is an exercise for the whole group and it rarely loses its appeal. Singing is simple a matter of controlled exhalation and the children are encouraged in their own time, to sing underwater. Moving round in the circle is also a useful practise for the control of vertical balance in the swirling water.

00:10:25
When entirely familiar with the idea of breathing out under water the next stage is to try submerging completely. In this exercise the children are encouraged to escape from the circle of instructors by ducking under their outstretched arms. Once again a strong element of balance control is required if the exercise is performed correctly.

Finding the confidence to submerge completely is a major step for all beginners and, while everyone should be encouraged to do so as early as possible no-one should feel under any pressure, if the idea of escaping from the circle is treated as a game those who are less confident will soon lose their inhibitions. Some will take longer than others and, for those who are not quite ready; the instructors make it easy to cheat, by allowing their arms to be lifted.

The aim of this practice is to achieve a smooth unhurried action with the swimmer allowing a trickle of air to come out of the nose or month while remaining perfectly balanced in the water.

00:11:34..caption…..**Nasal Breathing**
The progression from oral breathing to nasal breathing should not be overlooked. Breathing out through the nose is a separate skill and a very important one for the protection of the sinuses.

Nasal breathing requires more delicate control than oral breathing and it should be perfected before the swimmer is allowed to go under the water for longer periods of time. In this exercise, the swimmer is encouraged to make a humming sound as he submerges, and if he is breathing out correctly you should see a smooth stream of bubbles coming out from the nose.

00:12:12
Breathing out under the water is most easily controlled, when the body is in a vertical position. Water can be kept out of the nose with only the slightest amount of pressure; again the best way to achieve this is to hum.

In the prone position there's no great problem either.

00:12:34
The difficulty arises when the nose is not pointing downwards. In this position you find that breathing out suddenly requires greater control and you have to expel air through the nose at a faster rate. With practise this control can be developed to the point where the swimmer can move easily into one of the most important basic exercises for balance and breathing control the complete somersault.

00:13:00
In the middle of the somersault the swimmer's nose is pointing upwards making it very easy for water to enter the nose and sinus passages. To keep the water out at this point you must be expelling air thought your nose with sufficient force to oppose the pressure of the water.

The same principle applies in a backward somersault where the nose can be pointing upwards for even longer. The deeper you go the harder it is. You have to start by breathing out lightly then increase the pressure as you turn upside down. This way you can make the most of the air supply stored in your lungs.

00:13:40
With any somersault the control of balance is just as important as that of breathing. For this blind swimmer the control of balance is made even more difficult without the aid of sight and the achievement is even greater for the fact that he has only limited movement on land as a result of chronic arthritis.

In all exercises the role of the supporters is only to support, the movement must be initiated and controlled by the swimmer at his own pace.

00:14:14
The push and glide is mainly a prone balance exercise but the recovery to a safe breathing position is through a roll in which the nose is disadvantaged; again, a high level of control over the expulsion of a steady stream of air is vital.

The position of the head in relation the rest of the body is also critical; the head should be well down with the chin towards the chest throughout both the glide and the roll.

00:14:40
The progress of all swimmers is highly dependent on the quality of teaching they receive from the earliest stages. Progress is made through exercises, which stretch them a little further each time, but exercises are useless without a caring and observant instructor.

00:15:00
Each swimmer needs to feel confident in the water and this is developed by giving reassurance and encouragement and by never pushing them beyond their ability at any particular stage. We have to remember that it takes a sizeable jump in mental adjustment to accept the idea of entering the foreign environment of water.

00:15:32
In practice the need for a swimmer to make this mental adjustment should be considered as important as the need to learn the skills of balance and breathing control: the three elements are inseparable.
00:15:32

MENTAL ADJUSTMENT

Breathing control balance control

00:16:12
These swimmers are at a later stage of progress and they are able to keep their faces under for much longer, although they can come up earlier whenever they need.

As always it is important that breathing control exercises are not overdone – in this exercise, as the swimmers are trailed backwards, there is plenty of time to breathe naturally before the next forward movement.

As an instructor you must watch out for swimmers being tempted to hold their breath, they should be trailing a constant stream of bubbles from their nose or mouth whenever they are under the water. Breath holding creates tension which is often shown up by the tendency to grip the hand of the instructor.

00:16:50

The flat hands here indicate that the swimmer is totally happy he has control of his breathing and balance and the contact language through his hands is telling the instructor that he is mentally relaxed. As far as the different strokes are concerned some require greater breathing control than others. The double armed backstroke or rowboat is perhaps the easiest for the beginner. The face is out of the water at all times even though the nose is disadvantaged in this position but by keeping the arms wide and low there is no splash to enter the airway. With leg action alone again there is no splash to interfere with safe breathing and even though the whole body is being rotated round the spinal axis as in all asymmetric strokes the head remains stable keeping the airway clear of the water.

00:17:45

Perhaps the ultimate example of control over breathing balance and mental adjustment is the twin tail, an exercise to test a swimmers ability in all four balance positions: left side, prone, right side , and supine each position can be practised as a single exercise but you should practise all positions equally to avoid creating a dominance

As always, the stroke should be built around the swimmers breathing ability so that the whole exercise is calm and relaxed. By excluding the use of the arms there is no splash to disturb the swimmers concentration on maintaining a regular breathing pattern as the head is held in all possible positions the twin tail is a particularly useful introduction to the front crawl. Where rather than just turning the head out of the water to breathe you should turn your whole body within the cycle of the stroke to roll into an easier breathing position.

00:18:50

When the separate exercises have been mastered all four can be put together in a sequence, a simple roll into each new position avoids any interruption in

the stroke. The ideal, is for a swimmer to be able to control body balance in any position. And to be able to recover to a safe breathing position at will.

00:19:20
Remember with any prone stroke where the body is facing downwards the period of time within the cycle of the stroke when the face can be brought out of the water is quite short. The one thing you must do is breathe so you must find your own breathing rhythm and regulate your arm action to suit your breathing requirements. If you try to fit your breathing into the stroke your will lose your breathing control. The temptation to start competitive fitness training must be resisted until the stroke has been mastered sufficiently well to swim for hundreds of metres before finding and problem with breathing

00:20:00
Even for swimmers at a higher level of competition, if their breathing is inefficient any way the whole stroke will suffer.

We all know we have to learn to swim. Learning to swim means learning to float and learning to control our balance learning to move in water and learning to control our breathing.

00:20:22
You can't enjoy doing something in which you have no skill and it doesn't matter whether you are in the water for competition or recreation, swimming must be an enjoyable activity if your are going to be successful at it.

00:20:48
If swimmers are trained thoroughly in these basic skills in their first introduction to the water the result will be confidence, safety, enjoyment and success.

The Association of Swimming Therapy
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