

A Sport

by Michael Ochs and Emily Butler Smith

Reasons Why

There are many different kinds of swimming strokes. Some of the most common strokes are the front crawl, back crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, and the side stroke. Some of these strokes require a flutter kick—that is, short back-and-forth kicks with feet and toes outstretched. Other strokes—like the sidestroke, butterfly, and breaststroke—involve more specific kicks. Some swim strokes are made for fast, short-distance swims, others are designed for long-distance swimming.

Why Swim

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the United States in 2009, 36% of children ages 7-17, and 15% of adults swam at least six times per year. In addition, swimming is considered the fourth most-popular form of recreation in the United States. One hour of swimming can burn off up to 650 calories, more than you would burn off through other kinds of exercise, such as walking or biking. The US Census Bureau states that swimming is one of the most popular activities among children and teens (ages 7-17). But an estimated 65,000 people in the United States still do not know how to swim.

Swimming Does Your Body Good

While swimming can be dangerous, such as swimming in extremely cold water or swimming right after lunch, there are a lot of benefits, too. However, skateboarding can also be a dangerous sport. You could lose your balance and fall, or worse, crash into cars. Even experienced skateboarders have to be careful when attempting newer, and more complicated tricks. Therefore, it is important for all riders to wear a helmet. While there are several benefits to swimming, you might be wondering, why is it dangerous to swim right after lunch? It's dangerous because your body is still digesting food and you might experience muscle cramps, which are involuntary and often painful muscle contractions. This will tire you out quickly, which isn't safe when in the water. On the other hand, swimming can also strengthen your heart, lungs, and other muscles, and can even reduce stress.

One-Armed Swimmers

Most swimmers don't have to rely on a single stroke. They can use a variety of strokes in ways that work for them, depending on how and where they swim. The sidestroke is a relaxing stroke and can be used when swimming for long intervals as it requires little energy. Lifeguards use a number of strokes well in order to save lives, including the front crawl which gets them to a drowning person quickly. They might even need to swim with one arm against strong ocean currents, using the other arm to hold and carry the person they are saving. The many strokes that swimmers use each have a purpose.

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