

# ESC Acton Group Criteria



All group moves are made with the advice of the relevant teaching/coaching staff. The Lead House Coach has the final say. The criteria below will help guide the teachers in their decision making, but it will be used as a minimum standard to move up.

Swimmers in the teaching pool groups (Starfish – Rainbowfish) may bring own float or one can be provided. Swimmers in the main pool groups (Dolphins and above) are expected to have their own kickboard, pull buoy and short training fins. They may also want a swim mesh bag to carry them in.

All swimmers should bring a water bottle (with water) to all training sessions and race meets. When attending swimming competitions swimmers should have a towel to dry off between warm up and races. Once dry, they should wear club t-shirts to stay warm and dry on poolside. ESC club hats should be worn when racing.

## Group: Starfish (Teaching pool)

### Outcomes:

1. Push and glide on the back with arms extended in a streamlined position.
2. Push and glide on the front with arms extended in a streamlined position.
3. Kick 1 length backstroke with an efficient kick.
4. Kick 1 length front crawl with an efficient kick.
5. Push and glide, and swim 1 length backstroke (performed to Swim England expected standards).
6. Push and glide, and travel 1 length on the front.
7. Perform a tucked float for 3-5 seconds.
8. Perform star float on front and back for 5 seconds.
9. Jump in from poolside and submerge to a minimum depth of 0.82m.
10. Fully submerge to pick up an object.

### Introduce

1. Push off the wall and complete 5 dolphin kicks.
2. Perform a seated dive.
3. Perform a handstand.

## Group: Seahorse (Teaching pool)

### Outcomes:

1. Kick 1 length butterfly on the front or on the back.
2. Push and glide, and swim 1 length backstroke (performed to Swim England expected standards with alternating arms).
3. Push and glide, and swim 1 length front crawl (performed to Swim England expected standards).
4. Perform a head-first sculling action for 5m in a flat position on the back.
5. Perform a feet-first sculling action for 5m in a flat position on the back.
6. Perform a tucked forward somersault.
7. Perform a handstand and hold for a minimum of three seconds.



### Introduce

1. Kick 1 length breaststroke on the front/back.
2. Sink, push and glide on the front with arms extended in a streamlined position.
3. Sink, push and glide on the back with arms extended in a streamlined position.
4. Initiate fast underwater dolphin kicks.

## Group: Goldfish (Teaching pool)

### Outcomes:



1. Complete 1 length breaststroke with an efficient breaststroke kick on the front.
2. Push and glide, and swim 2 lengths backstroke (performed to Swim England expected standards developing their catch and push when pulling).
3. Push and glide, and swim 2 lengths front crawl (performed to Swim England expected standards).
4. Complete backstroke underwater phase in a streamlined position.
5. Complete front crawl underwater phase in a streamlined position.
6. Complete butterfly underwater phase in a streamlined position.

### Introduce

1. Swim into the wall and perform a tucked forward somersault, and push off from the wall in a streamlined position.
2. Push and glide, and swim 1 length butterfly.
3. Perform a kneeling dive.

## Group: Rainbowfish (Teaching pool)

### Outcomes:



1. Push and glide, and swim 4 lengths backstroke (performed to Swim England expected standards).
2. Push and glide, and swim 4 lengths front crawl (performed to Swim England expected standards).
3. Push and glide, and swim 2 lengths breaststroke (performed to Swim England expected standards).
4. Push and glide, and swim 2 lengths butterfly (performed to Swim England expected standards).
5. Swim into the wall, perform a tucked forward somersault, and push off from the wall in a streamlined position.
6. Review outcomes from the previous groups in the teaching pool.

### Introduce

1. Perform a grab start.
2. Introduce breaststroke underwater phase in a streamlined position.
3. Swim into the wall on your back, perform a tucked forward somersault, and push off from the wall in a streamlined position on your back.

## Group: Dolphins (Main pool)

The primary goal of this group is to transition from the teaching pool to the main pool by building endurance, developing all four competitive strokes, and introducing key race skills in a fun and encouraging environment.



### Outcomes:

#### Strokes & Endurance

1. Sink, push, glide and swim **50 metres backstroke** (performed to Swim England expected standards).
2. Sink, push, glide and swim **50 metres front crawl** (performed to Swim England expected standards).
3. Sink, push, glide and swim **50 metres breaststroke** (performed to Swim England expected standards).
4. Sink, push, glide and swim **25 metres butterfly** (performed to Swim England expected standards).
5. Kick 25m on each stroke with/without using a board.
6. Swim continuously **200m** using one stroke.

#### Starts & Turns

7. Perform a standing dive (grab and track start) **from the poolside**, complete underwater phase and transfer into stroke.
8. Perform a **backstroke start** using the side, complete underwater phase and transfer into stroke.
9. Perform a **front crawl turn** from 10 metres into 10 metres out.
10. Perform a **breaststroke turn** from 10 metres into 10 metres out, including the breaststroke underwater phase in a streamlined position.
11. Perform a **butterfly turn** from 10 metres into 10 metres out.

#### Training Skills:

12. Swim using correct **lane etiquette**.
13. Complete a set lasting **200m** on a specific turnaround time.

### Introduce

1. Perform a **backstroke turn** to prepare for mastery in Herrings.
2. To use a **pace clock** to build time awareness.
3. **Introduce Medley turns** as a precursor to the 100 IM.
4. Perform a standing dive (grab and track start) from the **block**, complete underwater phase and transfer into stroke.

## Group: Herrings (Main pool)

This group focuses on refining all four strokes, mastering starts and turns, and building the aerobic fitness required for competitive swimming.



### Outcomes:

#### Strokes & Endurance

1. Swim **50 metres backstroke** (performed to Swim England expected standards) including the start, underwater phase, turn and finish.
2. Swim **50 metres front crawl** (performed to Swim England expected standards) including the start, underwater phase, turn and finish.
3. Swim **50 metres breaststroke** (performed to Swim England expected standards) including the start, underwater phase, turn and finish.
4. Swim **50 metres butterfly** (performed to Swim England expected standards) including the start, underwater phase, turn and finish.
5. Kick **50m** on each stroke with/without using a board.
6. Swim a continuous **100 individual medley** using legal turns.
7. Swim continuously **400m** using one stroke.

#### Starts & Turns

8. Perform a **backstroke turn** from 10 metres into 15 metres out.
9. Perform a **butterfly to backstroke turn** from 10 metres into 15 meters out.
10. Perform a **backstroke to breaststroke (bucket turn) turn** from 10 metres into 15 meters out.
11. Perform a **breaststroke to front crawl turn** from 10 metres into 15 meters out.
12. Perform a **standing dive** (grab and track start) from the block, complete underwater phase and transfer into stroke.

#### Training Skills:

13. Complete a set lasting **400m** on a specific turnaround time set by the coach using the pace clock.

### Introduce

1. The concept of **negative splitting** (swimming the second half of a race faster than the first).
2. The importance of **streamlining** and underwater kicking for speed.
3. The basics of **race strategy**, such as pacing and finishes.

## Group: Seals (Main pool)

This group focuses on developing a competitive mindset by building endurance, perfecting race skills, and preparing for competition.



### Outcomes:

#### Strokes & Endurance

1. Complete **all turns** using correct underwater phases.
2. Swim a continuous **200 Individual Medley** using legal turns.
3. Swim continuously **1000m** using one stroke.

#### Race Skills

4. Perform a **dive from the block**, complete the underwater phase and transfer into stroke.
5. Perform a front crawl **relay takeover** – as an outgoing swimmer.
6. Perform **25m** head-first and feet-first **sculling**.
7. **Tread water** using eggbeater action for 30 seconds.

#### Training Skills

8. Complete a set lasting **1000m** on a specific turnaround time using the pace clock.
9. Maintain times on a set of **8 x 100-metre freestyle** sprints with reduced rest.

### Introduce:

1. An advanced understanding of swimming competition **rules and disqualification protocols**.
2. **Goal setting** for specific races and meets.
3. Basic dryland exercises to improve strength and flexibility.

## Group: Piranhas (Main pool)

Swimmers at this stage have achieved a high level of technical proficiency and are focused on developing speed and endurance to achieve competitive goals.



### Outcomes:

#### Race Proficiency

1. Demonstrate consistently **high-quality and technically correct strokes** to a competitive standard. (All strokes to be consistently of high quality, technically correct and to a competitive standard.)
2. Swim skills all to be consistently of high quality, technically correct and to a competitive standard.
  - Racing **starts** on all strokes to a very good, refined level.
  - **Turns** on all strokes and medley turns all to a very good, refined level. Introduce the backstroke to breaststroke crossover turn.
  - **Underwater phases** are correct and able to perform strong **breakouts** phases.
  - **Finishes** on all strokes to be consistently, technically correct.
3. Perform a continuous **400m swim on freestyle** (200m on other strokes), focused on technique, to a very good standard.

#### Training Skills

4. Able to maintain a strong pace throughout a set as instructed by the coach using a pace clock.
5. Complete a set lasting 1500m on a specific turnaround time set by the coach using the pace clock.
6. Able to maintain stroke technique on longer distance swims. i.e. 400m for freestyle.
7. Have an advanced understanding of swimming competition rules and disqualification protocols.

### Introduce:

1. Advanced **race strategy and pacing**, including a deeper understanding of how to swim a race to your strengths.
2. **Individualised training**, with a focus on specific events (e.g., sprint vs. distance).
3. Perform a range of structured dryland exercises to develop core strength, coordination, and flexibility.
4. The importance of **recovery**, including nutrition and sleep.
5. Leadership qualities and serving as a role model for younger swimmers.



## Group: Marlins (Main pool)

As the highest-level group, Marlins are dedicated to maximizing their performance through advanced training, strategic race planning, and consistent commitment to the sport.



### Outcomes:

1. **Achievement:** Consistently meet all Piranhas group outcomes.
2. **Performance:** Achieve and maintain time standards for **county or regional-level competitions**.
3. Demonstrate advanced dryland training including strength, mobility, and conditioning exercises, applying correct technique.
4. **Commitment:** Demonstrate a high level of **attendance**, discipline, and a positive attitude towards training and competition.
5. **Leadership:** Serve as **role models** for younger swimmers and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of all aspects of competitive swimming.