



The *front crawl* has three parts: the flutter kick, the rotating arm stroke, and rhythmic breathing. It is the fastest and one of the most graceful of all swimming strokes.

The flutter kick relies on relaxed ankles and the use of the entire leg. The movement begins at the hips and flows to the feet. As one foot moves downward, the other comes up in a beating or fluttering rhythm. The kick should be smooth and steady, of even range (8 to 12 inches), and just below the surface of the water. You can practice the kick by holding the edge of the pool or by supporting yourself on a buoyant kickboard.

Practice the arm stroke in waist-deep water. Bend forward so that the top of your body is in a swimming position. Extend your right arm and bring it down to your hip so that you are pushing water toward your feet; then raise that elbow to extend your arm forward again. Alternate with your left arm. Keep your fingers together and slightly cupped.

Push off into a glide. Use the flutter kick and arm stroke together to move through the water. Remember to exhale through your mouth and nose while your face is in the water. To inhale, roll your head to one side as the arm on that side is pulling to your hip and the elbow is lifting out of the water. Inhale through your mouth, then turn your face back into the water as your arm is recovering to the extended position in front of you.

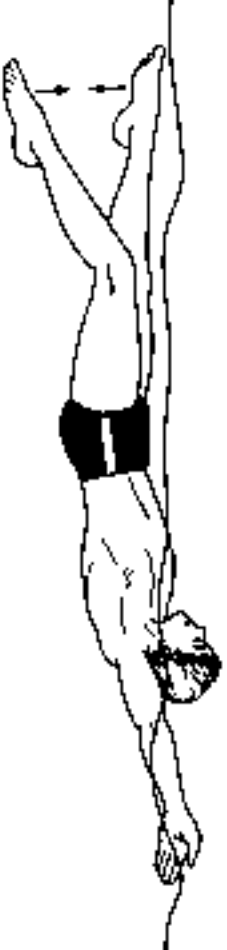
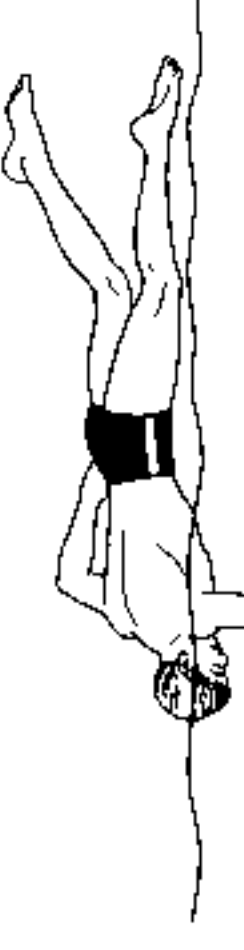
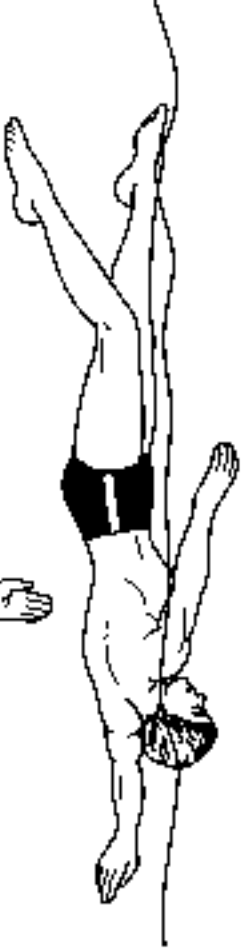
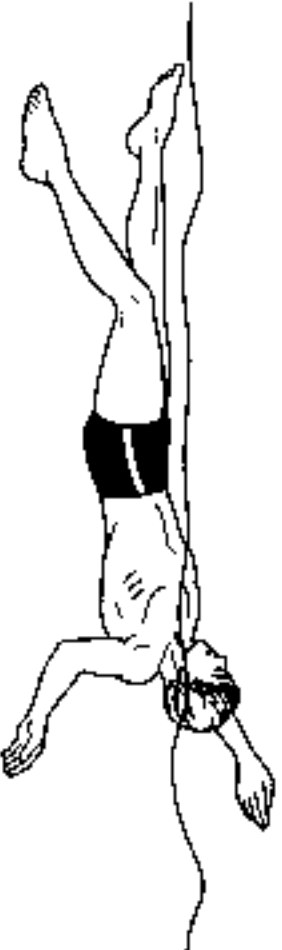
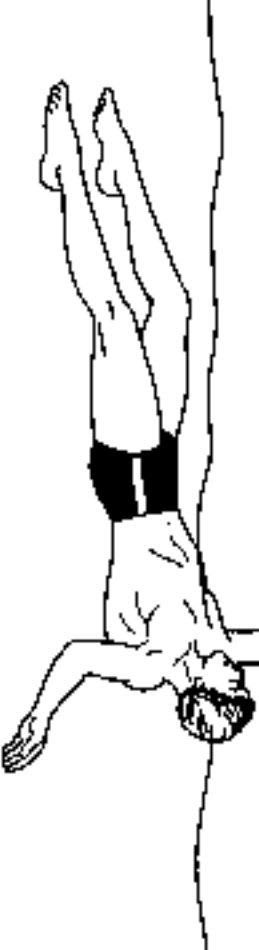
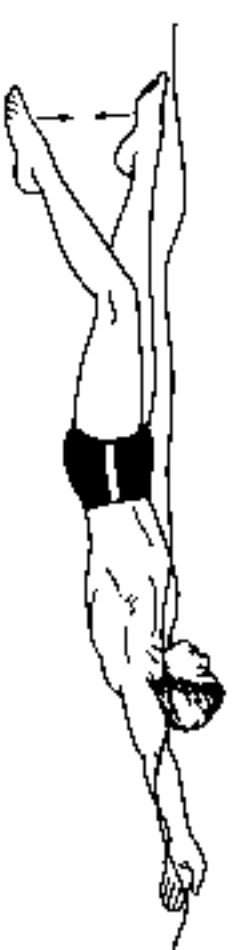


Front Crawl

Front crawl

Back Crawl

The *back crawl*, or racing backstroke, has the advantages of speed and a faceup position. The leg motion is the flutter kick, and the arms work in a continuous alternating motion with one pulling as the other recovers. Bring your arm out of the water at your hip and through the air to slice back into the water at a point beyond your head. Keep your fingers together and your hands slightly cupped.



Back crawl



Sidestroke

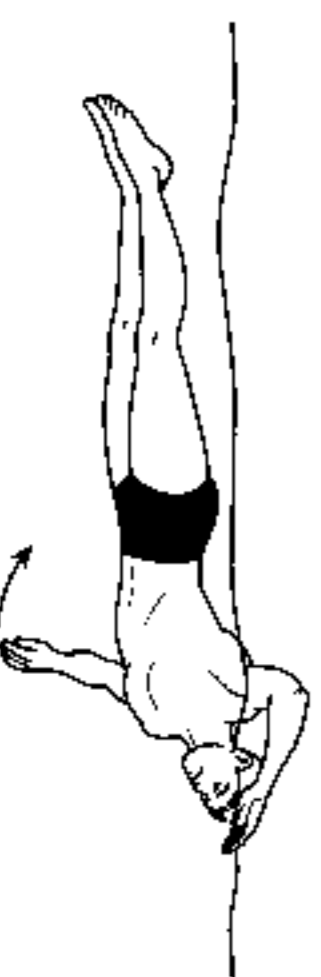
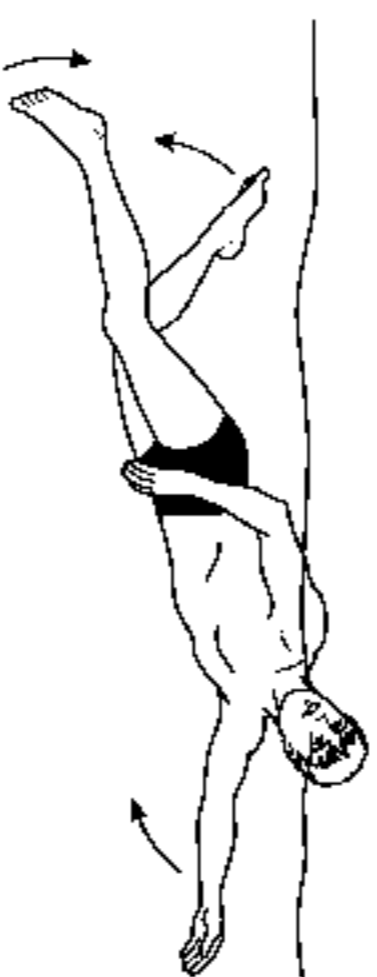
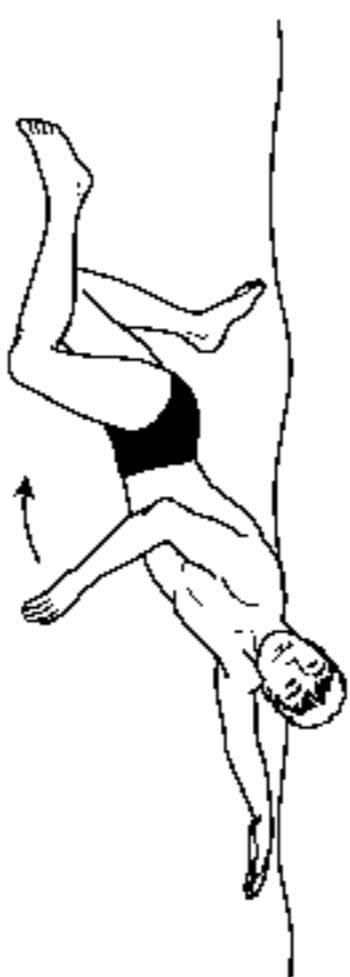
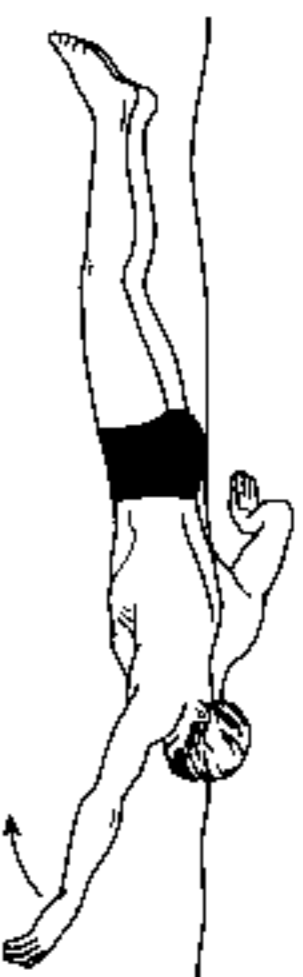
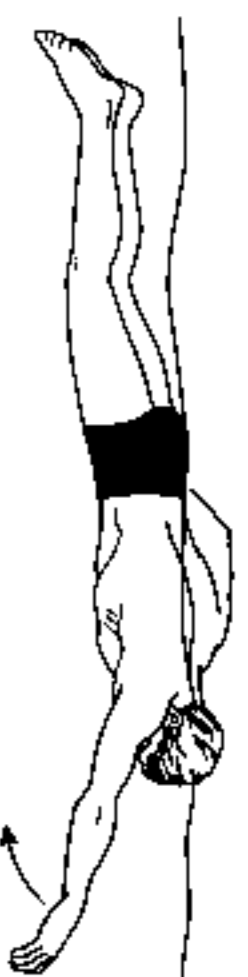
The sidestroke is a good long-distance stroke with a long, restful glide. It also introduces the scissors kick, which is used in swimming rescues.

Start in the extended glide position on your side with one ear in the water, your nose and mouth turned to the shoulder out of the water, and your eyes looking toward your feet. Begin moving the leading arm into a catch motion, then start the trailing arm and leg action. The leading arm pulls as the trailing arm slices through the water toward the upper chest; the legs bend as the trailing arm moves forward. Pull the leading arm to a point just below your chest. As your arms begin to change directions, extend your top leg forward and your lower leg back. Without stopping, continue to move your arms and snap your feet together in a scissoring motion. The stroke is complete when you arrive back at the glide position. Hold the glide position for three or four counts and repeat the stroke.

Sidestroke

Trudgen

Experienced swimmers frequently prefer the *trudgen* as a strong, energy-conserving, all-purpose stroke. It combines the arm movements and breathing of the front crawl stroke with the scissors kick. The kick is completed with hips turned up on the rhythmic breathing side just as the arm on that side completes its pull. The legs trail in the extended position as the other arm pull is performed. This interesting stroke was named for Englishman John Trudgen, who introduced the stroke in competition in 1868.



Trudgen

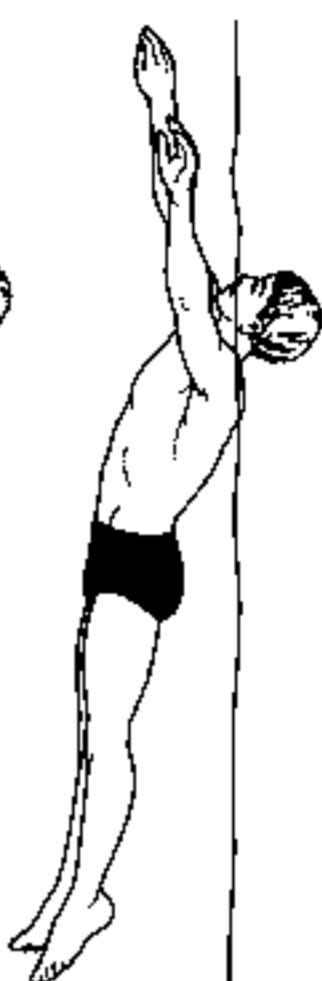
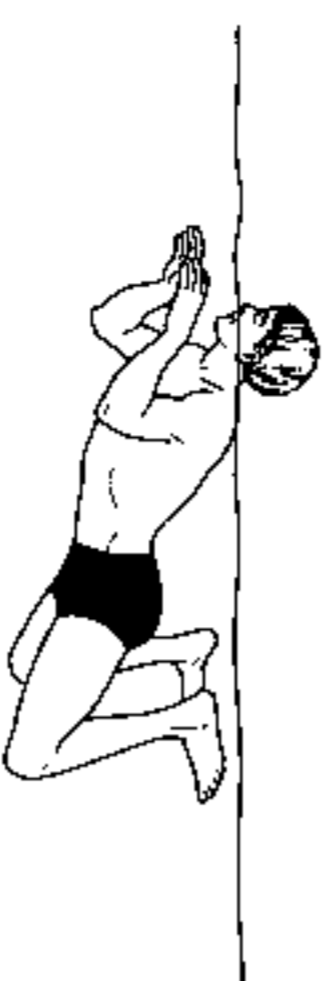
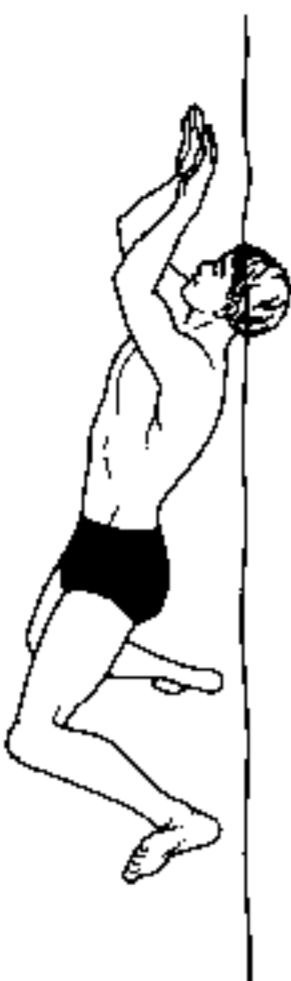
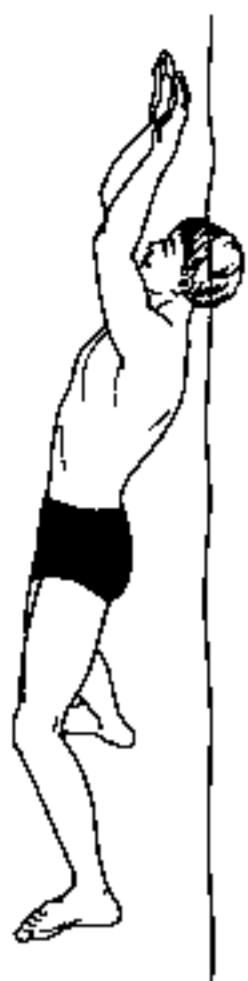
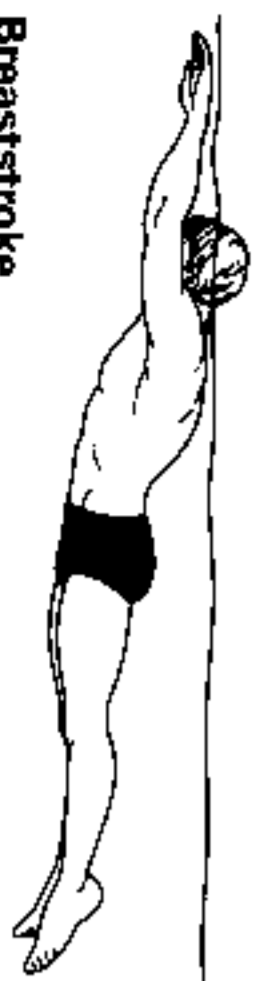
Breaststroke

This is one of the oldest strokes used in Scouting, and variations range from a restful distance stroke to a competitive racing stroke. With an extended glide as is taught in Scouting, the *breaststroke* is a powerful, long-distance stroke that conserves energy and has applications in lifesaving. The stroke uses a whip kick and shallow arm pull.

Start in the prone glide position with your face in the water. As you drop and pull your hands, lift your face out of the water to breathe and draw your feet toward your hips. When your arms are at shoulder level, your legs should be under your hips with your feet drawn up. Inhale and have your face ready to go back into the water. Rotate your hands until they meet under your chin and thrust them through the water to the extended position. Push your legs out and back in a circular motion as your face returns to the water, ankles touch, and legs extend. Hold the glide for a count of three or four while exhaling into the water. Then begin the stroke again.

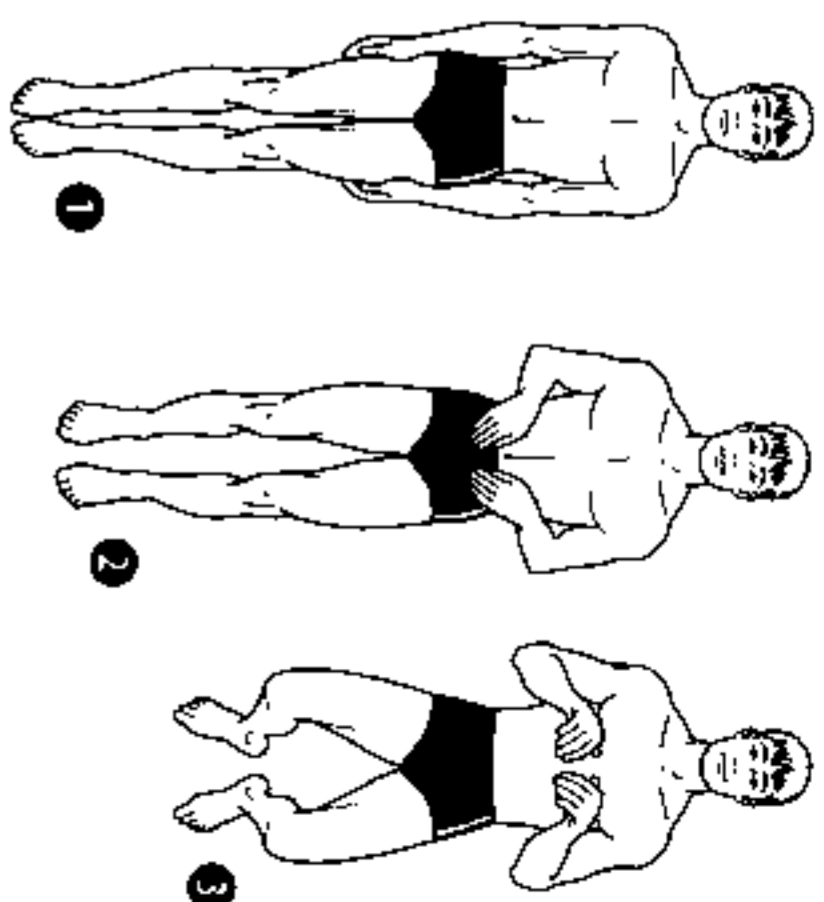
Elementary Backstroke

The *elementary backstroke* is the resting stroke for the last 50 yards of your test, and you should be less exhausted at the end of the distance compared with when you began the stroke. Use this stroke for long-distance swimming or for when you are tiring and want to rest while continuing to make progress.



Start on your back in the glide position, legs extended, arms at your sides, hands at your thighs, and toes pointed. Move your hands up while you begin to drop your heels. As you extend your hands outward, turn your toes outward. Now complete the power part of the stroke by sweeping your hands down toward your feet and whipping your feet back together in circular motion. To avoid getting water in your mouth and nose, keep your forehead slightly higher than your chin as your arms push toward your feet.

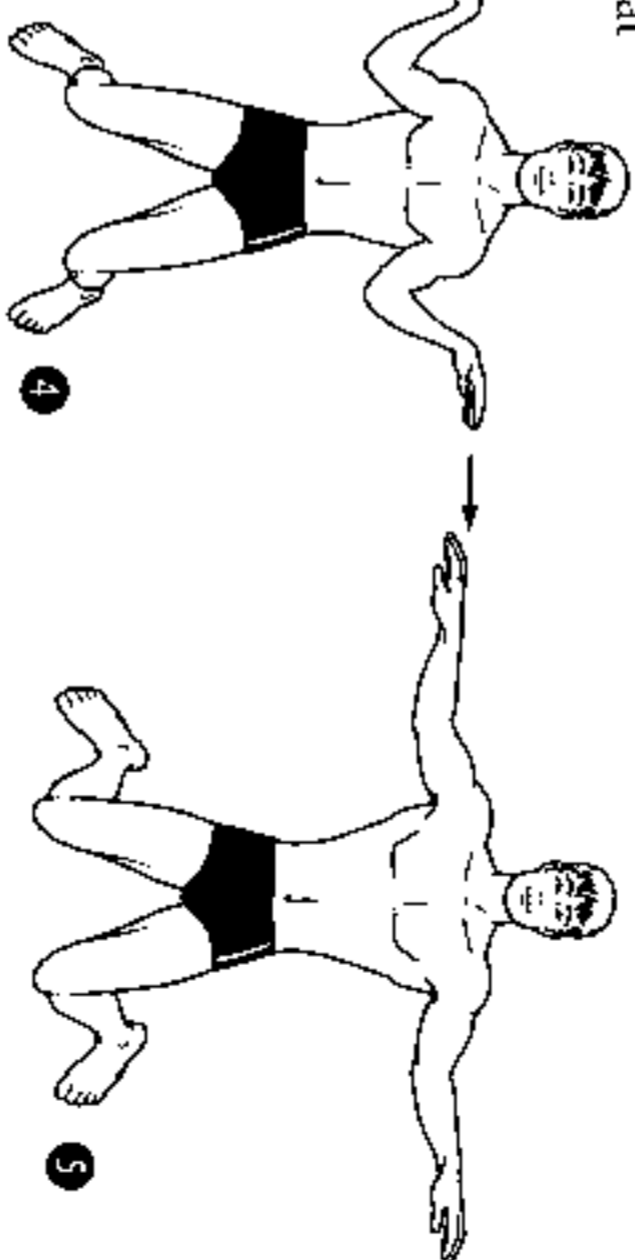
Make your movements continuous, resting only at the end of the stroke to permit a long glide. As you finish your glide, repeat the process. Keep your head in line with your body. Don't be in a hurry. Remember, this is a resting stroke, so be sure to relax and glide for three or four counts.



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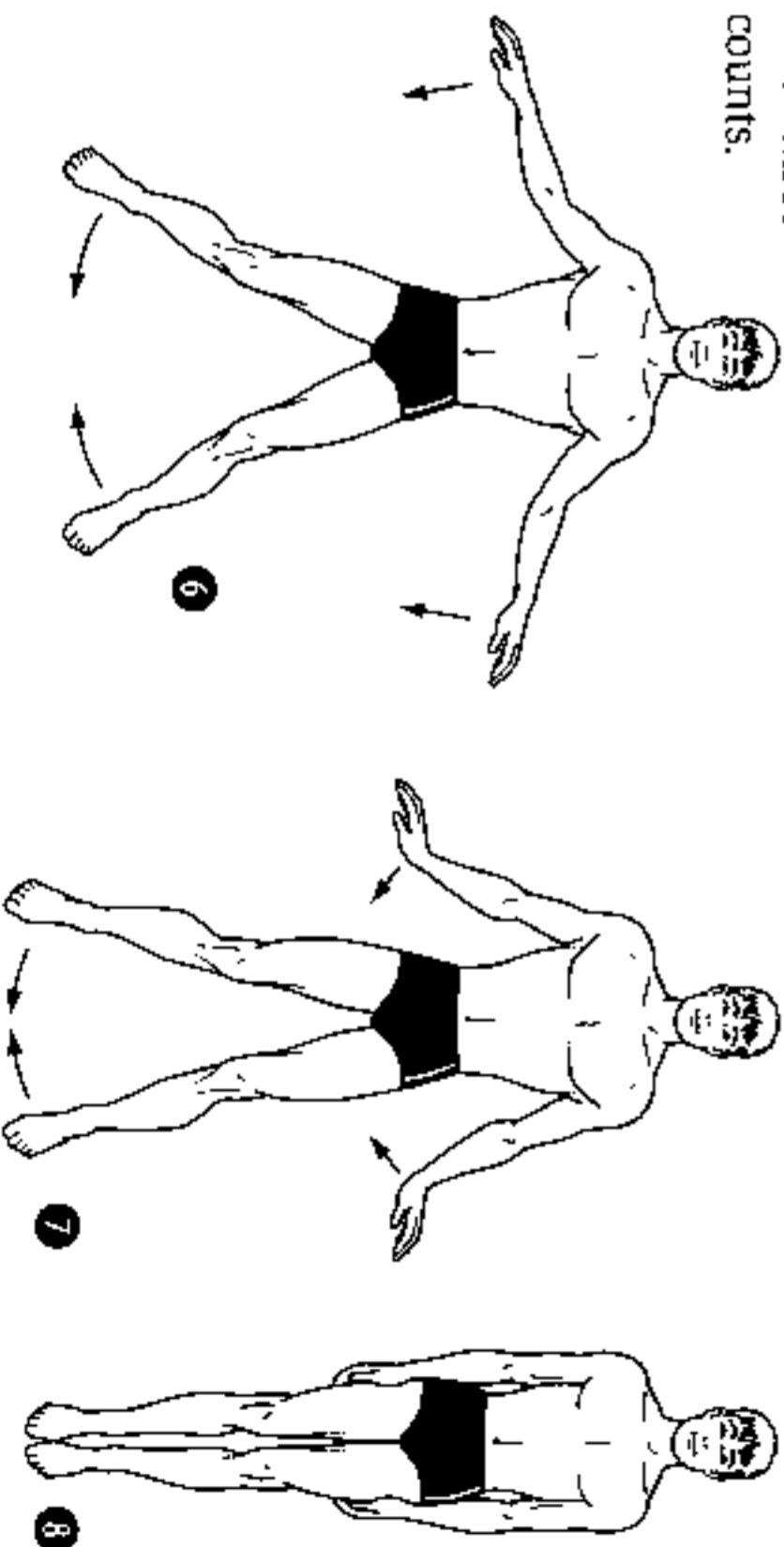
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