

SEPTEMBER 2025

New Zealand Police

Recruitment Swim Prep Programme

Introduction

During training at the Police College, you will be required to demonstrate the following water skills:

Swim (front crawl/
freestyle) for 50 metres
without stopping, in 60
seconds.

Tread water in an
upright position
continuously, without
touching the bottom of
the pool, for 5 minutes.

Complete a vertical
duck dive to 2 metres to
retrieve a rubber brick
and swim back to the side
of the pool.

The following training guidance is designed to help you improve your overall efficiency in the water. The aim is to build water-based skills and confidence, supporting your progress toward meeting the NZ Police swim standards, which will be assessed during the recruit training course at Police College at the beginning of the 20-week training programme.

Key Information

Swimming Ability

Before beginning these sessions, you should already possess a basic level of swimming proficiency and water confidence. If you're unsure of your ability, please consult a qualified learn-to-swim coach before attempting any of the drills.

Safety Considerations

If you have any medical or physical limitations, seek guidance from your health professional before starting.

Always assess the risks associated with the aquatic environment prior to starting. A designated safety person and a qualified lifeguard must be present on site during all sessions to ensure safety.

Session Purpose

This session is designed to provide technical guidance and skill-based drills aligned with the three New Zealand Police swim standards. They are not intended as fitness workouts; however, additional swimming while at the pool is encouraged to support overall conditioning.

Frequency

For best results, complete these sessions 1–2 times per week, consistently over several weeks. Regular practice will help reinforce technique efficiency, build confidence, and improve overall swimming performance.

Swimming Drills

Streamline Position Drill:

Wall Push-Offs

This drill develops a strong streamline position to reduce drag and improve efficiency in the water.

1. Begin in the water, ready to push off the wall.
2. Form the Streamline: Stack your hands, fully extend your arms overhead, press your biceps to your ears, and keep your head in a neutral position, eyes looking down.
3. Engage Your Body: Tighten your core, keep your legs straight, and squeeze them together to create a long, narrow shape.
4. Push Off: Push off the wall with force, maintaining your streamline. Do not kick or move your arms—glide using only the momentum from your push-off.
5. Hold the Position: Stay in streamline until you naturally slow down. Focus on staying tight and minimizing resistance.
6. Repeat: Return to the wall and repeat 6–10 times, emphasizing precision and consistency with each push-off.

Streamline Kick Drill:

With/Without Fins

This drill helps you maintain a strong streamline position while incorporating a gentle kick to build core strength and reinforce body alignment.

1. Push Off: Start by pushing off the wall in a tight streamline, slightly submerged. Allow your body to naturally rise to the surface as you glide forward.
2. Streamline Position: Stack your hands, fully extend your arms, press your biceps to your ears, and keep your head neutral.
3. Begin Kicking: Once gliding, initiate a light flutter kick from the hips. Keep knees relaxed and toes pointed.
4. Maintain Alignment: Keep your body long and narrow. Engage your core gently and avoid side-to-side movement.
5. Drill Focus: Kick for a set distance (e.g., 15 meters) without breaking streamline. Don't lift your head or separate your arms. Stay relaxed to conserve breath.
6. Repeat: Swim back and repeat 4–6 times, focusing on control, alignment, and consistent technique.

Single Arm Freestyle Drill:***Focus on Kick***

This drill isolates your kick and improves body balance while reinforcing freestyle technique using one arm.

1. **Push Off:** Begin in a streamlined position, then start swimming freestyle with one arm. Keep your non-stroking arm either extended in front or by your side—whichever feels more stable.
2. **Kick Consistently:** Maintain a steady flutter kick driven from the hips. Keep your knees relaxed and toes pointed.
3. **Stay Aligned:** Focus on body alignment and keeping your hips high. Use your kick to maintain balance and minimize excessive rotation.
4. **Breathe Smoothly:** Breathe to the side of your stroking arm with controlled head movement. Alternate breathing sides each lap if needed for balance.
5. **Switch Arms:** Swim a set distance (e.g., 25 meters) with one arm, then switch arms on the return lap.
6. **Repeat:** Complete 4–6 repetitions, resting 20–30 seconds between each. Prioritize control, balance, and consistent technique.

Freestyle Stroke Drill:***Catch-Up Freestyle***

This drill improves stroke timing, body alignment, and balance by emphasizing full extension and control during each arm stroke.

1. **Push Off:** Begin in a streamlined position and swim freestyle at a controlled pace, using one arm at a time.
2. **Catch-Up Timing:** Keep one arm extended in front while the other completes a full stroke. Wait until your stroking hand taps the stationary hand before beginning the next pull.
3. **Kick Steadily:** Maintain a small, fast flutter kick driven from the hips to support body position and balance.
4. **Breathe Smoothly:** Keep your head neutral and breathe to the side of your stroking arm. Avoid lifting your head too far out of the water.
5. **Swim & Switch:** Swim a set distance (e.g., 25 meters), focusing on timing and control.
6. **Repeat:** Complete 4–6 repetitions with 20–30 seconds rest between each. Emphasize full extension, consistent kick rhythm, and smooth transitions.

Treading Water Drills

Vertical Kicking with Support

Purpose: Build leg endurance and correct body position

How to do it:

- ✦ Use a kickboard or pool noodle under your arms for support.
- ✦ Stay vertical and perform a flutter kick or eggbeater kick.
- ✦ Focus on keeping your head above water and your body upright.
- ✦ Duration: 3 × 1-minute rounds with 20-30 seconds' rest.

Deep Breath Buoyancy Drill

Purpose: Improve lung inflation and natural buoyancy

How to do it:

- ✦ In deep water, take a full, deep breath and hold it.
- ✦ Focus on floating vertically with minimal movement, using gentle sculling (with hands) and light kicks.
- ✦ Feel how lung inflation helps keep you buoyant. Remain relaxed throughout.
- ✦ Practice 3–5 rounds of 30–60 seconds, with a short 15 second rest between rounds. Gradually increase duration of each round.

Surface Area Awareness Drill

Purpose: Maximize lift and stability by increasing surface area

How to do it:

- ✦ Tread water with arms extended sideways and palms facing down.
- ✦ Use wide, slow sculling motions and maintain a broad leg position (eggbeater or wide flutter kick).
- ✦ Focus on feeling the resistance and lift from the water.
- ✦ Duration: 3 × 1-minute rounds, progressing to 2 minutes. Take a short 15sec rest between rounds.

Relaxed Tread with Closed Eyes

Purpose: Promote relaxation and energy conservation

How to do it:

- ✦ Tread water using your preferred technique (eggbeater or sculling + flutter kick).
- ✦ Close your eyes and focus on slow, rhythmic breathing.
- ✦ Minimize unnecessary movement and stay calm.
- ✦ Duration: 3 × 1-minute rounds, progressing to 2–3 minutes. Take a short 15 second rest between rounds. Gradually increase duration of each round.

Under Water “Brick Retrieval” Drills

Static Breath Hold (Dry or Poolside)

Purpose: Improve lung capacity and breath control

Tip: Practice box breathing beforehand and during rest between rounds (inhale 4s, hold 4s, exhale 4s, hold 4s) to calm the nervous system.

How to do it:

- ✦ Sit or float calmly in shallow water.
- ✦ Take a deep breath, fully inflate your lungs, and hold your breath without straining.
- ✦ Focus on staying relaxed and still.
- ✦ Time each attempt and rest 1–2 minutes between rounds.
- ✦ Complete 3 rounds for max time
- ✦ Goal: Gradually increase hold time over several sessions.

Underwater Confidence Swim

Purpose: Build comfort and control while submerged

Tip: Avoid hyperventilating before submersion—this can be dangerous.

How to do it:

- ✦ In a shallow to mid-depth pool, push off the wall and swim underwater for a short distance (e.g., 5–10 meters).
- ✦ Focus on staying calm, streamlined, and in control.
- ✦ Surface slowly and exhale gently.
- ✦ Repeat 3–5 times with full recovery between efforts.

Shallow Duck Dives

Purpose: Practice efficient underwater entry and retrieval positioning.

How to do it:

- ✦ From a standing or floating position, bend at the waist and dive downward into a vertical “handstand” position
- ✦ Use your arms to slice through the water and your legs to kick downward.
- ✦ Touch the bottom or retrieve a submerged object (e.g., dive ring).
- ✦ Focus on smooth, controlled movement and efficient use of energy.
- ✦ Repeat 5–8 times with rest between dives.
- ✦ Gradually progress into deeper water (2m+), based on comfort level and technique improvement

Finishing Notes

Progress at your own pace

Only move to the next drill when you feel comfortable and confident in your ability.

Consider filming your practice

Video feedback can be a powerful tool for self-analysis or peer critique to help refine your technique.

Consistency is key

Regular practice and repeated exposure to these drills will lead to noticeable improvement in your water skills.

Be patient with the process

Skill development and confidence take time. Trust that progress will come with persistence.

If the drills feel too challenging

It may be beneficial to seek support from a qualified learn-to-swim instructor. Once your foundational water skills improve, you can return to these drills with greater success.

