

Supported Front Glides

Build confidence in floating.

Relax with body flat at surface.

Encourage putting the face in the water.

The Script:

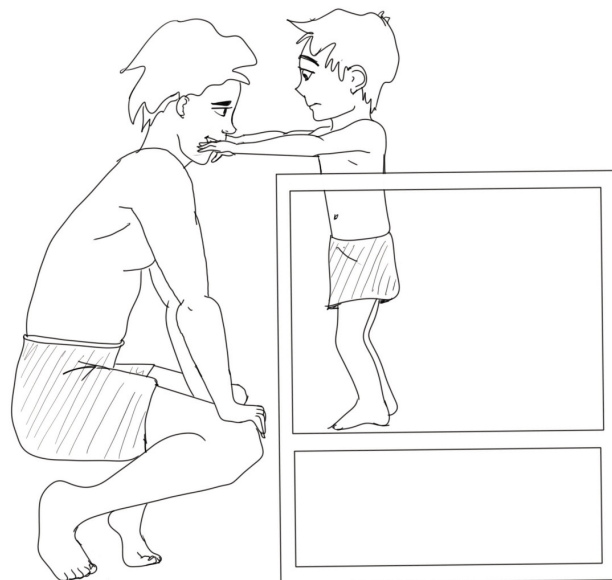
- “Put your shoulders in the water”
- “Reach our arms out in front of you.”
- “Put your [chin, lips, nose, eyes, face] in the water.”
- “Push off with me.”

Repeat this script over and over every time you initiate a front glide with your swimmers.

Telling swimmers to “put their shoulders” in the water gives them a command, or a target for them to accomplish. It is language designed to get a reaction instead of detailing out exactly what the swimmer should do in too much excruciating detail.

Remember to be supportive. Build trust by going slow. There is no need to rush through this progression of supported front glides.

Take your time. Begin close to the swimmer. Let them know, feel, and understand that they can put their



safety and their lives in your hands and that you will not let them go.

Keep your swimmer’s face above water if they do not like going under. Avoid letting them sink or be unsupported in any way.

To beginners, removing support while away from where they can stand or over a bench is like dropping them from a height. They will sink under immediately and panic.

Build trust. Earn their comfort by going slow and establishing habits and feel for the water by holding them at or near the surface using the “hands on shoulders,” or “hands in instructor’s hands” methods.

Build trust

- Prove to swimmer they can trust you by always holding them up.
- Say the same things, follow the same steps; repetition builds trust.

Begin close

- Let swimmer reach for your shoulders before you push off with them.
- As comfort grows, have them reach farther to get to your shoulders.

Shoulders in!

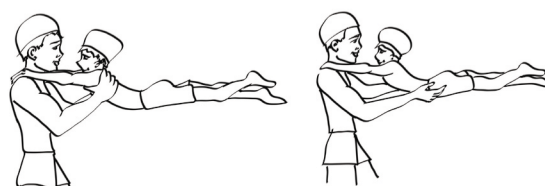
- Put your shoulders in the water too. Get at eye level with the swimmers.

Hands on shoulders

Participant places their hands on the instructor's shoulders.

Keep swimmer's arms straight and attempt to keep body straight. This support is usually used for swimmers that do not put their face in the water. Lift the belly or outside of hips to manipulate the swimmer's body into a straight line.

If possible, encourage swimmer to put their face in the water. Instructor should walk backwards to simulate movement and independent propulsion.



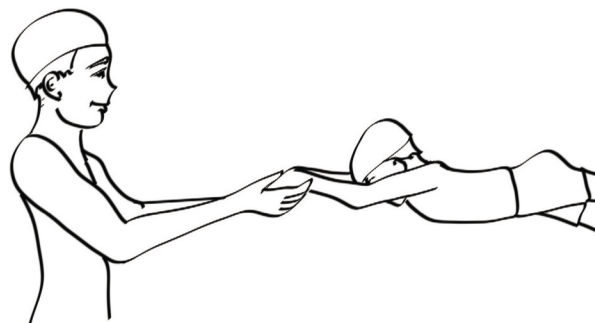
Hands in Instructor's hand

Participant reaches forward in streamline with their face in the water.

The instructor will hold the participant's hands with their own. Push hands to surface and pull to provide motion.

Hold the swimmer at arms length, if needed, use other hand to support belly and body.

Goal is to keep participant's arms straight.



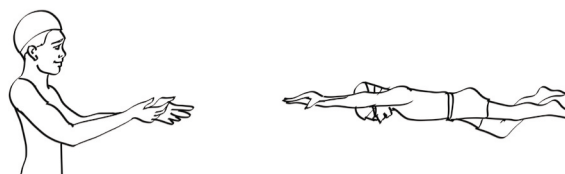
Short glide, then supported.

Instructor stands a body length or two away from participant and waits for swimmer to glide to them.

Goal is for participant to glide with their face down, in the water keeping their body straight.

Once participant gets to instructor, either support with hands on shoulders or hands supported on instructor's hand.

Can also provide support with fingertips under swimmer's palms.



Supported Front Glides continued:

- Keep body straight as possible.
- Build trust through constant support.

We start doing supported front glides with the exact same hand holds with infants.

This is a crucial skill and activity for all beginner swimmers.

Your main challenge will be to keep your shoulders in the water and near the water line without allowing your swimmer to slip underwater or get too egregiously splashed in the face.

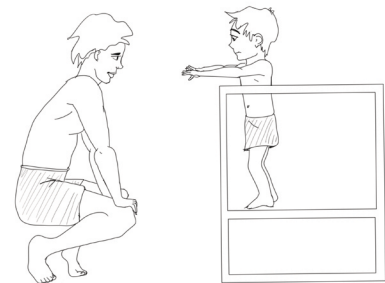
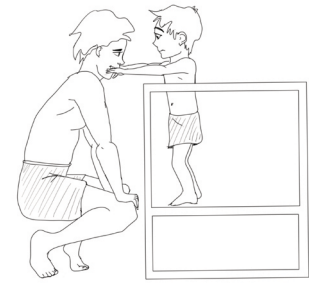
Yes, we want to encourage putting the face in the water, but we do not want to rush the process.

Put significant effort into encouraging a straight flat body that is relaxed.

We want the swimmer to place their weight in their hands on your shoulders and relax the rest of their body to “float” on the surface.

Force their hips up by walking backwards. The flow of water under the swimmer’s body will lift them to the surface.

Put your face in the water while talking and encouraging



swimmer to do the same.

Tell swimmers to kick with small and large splashes. You can make a game out of splashing parts of the pool near your area or other people (within reason).

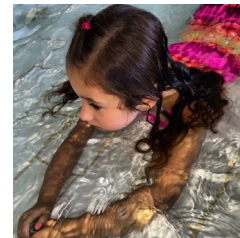
Kicking will help get the body near the surface.

Kicking will be the first mode of propulsion for many new swimmers.

- Keep the swimmer near or at the surface.
- Allow face to remain out of water, but encourage swimmer to put it in. Begin with “kissing the water.”
- Walk backwards to “float” or lift swimmer’s body.

Other ways to practice:

Lay flat in shallow



Alligator walks



Zero depth pool



Use props like kick-boards

Change things up by allowing your swimmers to use kick-boards, barbells, or other float devices instead of you.

Let them cross short distances with the aid of a floating tool.

Keep a hand on the kickboard to increase confidence.

Encourage a strong kick to make the participant move on their own.

Swimmers can choose to put their face in or not.



Put your shoulders under!

You can see from the picture to the right that the swimmer isn't putting their arms in front of them.

Look at the raised head. Yes, it is in the water, but we want the face aimed at the bottom of the pool. You can see the swimmer is clutching the instructor's forearms.

This is NOT an effective way to hold for supported front glides.

Instructor should get their shoulders IN the water. Swimmer should put his hands on top of her shoulders and put face in water looking directly down.



Why float? Glide!

Skip the floats. Go straight into gliding.

Why? If you can glide, you can float. I think floating is fun, entertaining, and exciting. It makes for a great challenge.

If we're maximizing our teaching time, and remember our goal is fun and effective swim lessons, then we can skip teaching floats. Spend your valuable time and effort on teaching glides and floats will come naturally as a result of your instruction. We want forward horizontal motion.

