

BACKSTROKE: QUICK CATCH

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We've all heard about the importance of a deep catch in backstroke. Why, then, does Aaron Peirsol, the double world record holder and double Olympic gold medalist, focus on the complete opposite—a quick catch?

Aaron Peirsol uses a quick catch rather than a deep catch in backstroke because, he says, "It allows me to be more aggressive."

Initiating the catch with the hand so close to the surface, however, increases the chance of pulling air. This is, indeed, the case with Aaron (see **Photo #5** and **Photo #6**). As he gets more aggressive with his stroke, Aaron does pull more air into the catch.



ABOVE » Aaron Peirsol

But because of the little fine points he's set up—the clean entry and the extension forward with arm and hand—he's created a very clean hand for the catch and pull.

While this technique may not work for everyone, it's certainly worth looking into—especially if you're not a backstroker.

Here, *Swimming World Magazine* take a closer look at Aaron's technique. ♦

Glenn Mills is *Swimming World Magazine's* technical advisor. Check out his website at www.goswim.tv. Watch for the new DVD, "Go Swim Backstroke with Aaron Peirsol," coming soon.

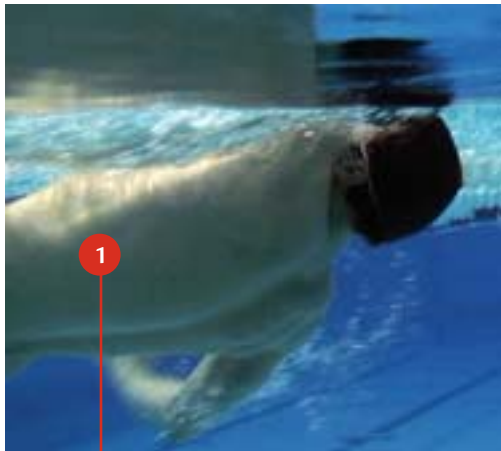


PHOTO #1

Like any good backstroker, Aaron rotates enough to clear his recovering shoulder above the water, creating as little resistance as possible. While he may have a bit less rotation than other dorsal experts, he almost pushes his shoulder out of the water to make sure that it clears the surface.



PHOTO #2

Aaron reaches or stretches into the stroke not only with his arm, but also with his fingers. He directs the arm and hand forward, and continues to extend rather than to send the hand deep into the water. This somewhat unconventional focus means he'll create a very clean entry and will be able to initiate the catch more quickly than if he focused on a deep hand entry.



PHOTO #3

As his hand gets set for the catch, Aaron rotates his hand outward as he begins to roll his body to the other side.



PHOTO #4

Aaron then straightens his arm to create a more solid unit to initiate his quick catch. At this point, his focus is on the elbow and on putting his arm into the most powerful position possible.



PHOTO #5

From the front, we can see that Aaron initiates the catch with a slight hyperextension of the shoulder.



PHOTO #6

But we can also see that he gets his arm into a very powerful position very quickly.