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Swim

How to Master the Top 5 Challenges to Breathing in Freestyle

Source: [Kevin Koskella of Triswimcoach.com](#)

The most common question I hear in the triathlete world about the mysteries of swimming efficiently usually involves something with breathing. In freestyle, it is the first step to get your body position right. Then, for many, you throw in breathing and everything goes haywire! This has to do with lack of balance, using your head instead of your core to breath, and a few other factors.

Here are the top 5 challenges in learning how to breathe in freestyle, along with the remedies on how to get over these:

Not Getting Enough Air. There are a couple of reasons this typically happens in freestyle. First, make sure you breathe out all of your air before you rotate to take a breath. When learning, some people try to exhale and inhale while they are rolling to the side for air. There simply is not enough time for this! Your exhalations should only be in the water in the form of bubbles. At first the timing may seem difficult, but eventually you will get used to it. Second, you may be sinking as you breathe. Make sure you are rolling to the side to breathe, and not rotating your head and looking straight up. Practicing the side kicking and shark fin drills, as discussed in [The Complete Guide](#) and in the introductory 4-session online clinic you get by signing up for the [Tri Swim Coach](#) newsletter will also help you with this challenge.

Extended Arm Sinks While Taking a Breath. This is mainly a balance issue. While you breathe to one side, your other arm should be extending. For many swimmers, this extended arm pushes down into the water and they are sinking while trying to inhale. The side kicking and shark fin drills will also help to improve this. Another drill also discussed in the materials that will help with this challenge is the fist drill, which forces you to not use your hands, therefore improves your balance in the water.

Speed is Sacrificed because of a "Pause" While Breathing. A typical scenario is that you feel like you're cruising along just fine and then you take a breath and it feels like you've just lost all your momentum. To



Kevin Koskella is a triathlete swimmer. He is the author of the

website [TriSwimCoach.com](#) a resource for beginner triathletes looking through intermediate triathletes looking with swimming. The site features a newsletter offering articles on triathlon. Kevin has also written an electronic book titled [Complete Guide to Swimming](#) which is available in download form.

