

TUMBLE TURNS

What's the simplest way to shave a few seconds off your 100-metre freestyle time?

- A. Shorten the pool.
- B. Shave your head.
- C. Do tumble turns.

The correct answer is C. Although they intimidate many novice swimmers, tumble turns are easy to execute, once you learn the basic movement – a simple forward roll.

First, you need to learn how to do a somersault in the water.

Because many adults never learned how to do forward rolls, they have no frame of reference for a tumble turn. So the first step is to do forward rolls in the water, away from the wall.

Once you've mastered the basic roll, the next step is to learn to tumble as you approach the wall. Rather than thinking of the wall as a place of rest, think of it as a place to pick up speed. When you do a tumble turn, you accelerate into the wall to gain momentum. As you push off, you will be moving your fastest.

Here's a step by step method for fast, efficient tumble turns:

- As you approach the wall, take your last pull and bring both arms to your sides.
- Quickly drop your chin and do a dolphin (butterfly) kick. This combination forces your hips up and your head down. As a result, you'll naturally start into a "pike" forward somersault.
- As you roll over, tuck your feet and you'll end up doing a $\frac{3}{4}$ turn, with your back down and your feet against the wall, toes pointed up.
- Once your feet hit the wall, extend your arms into a streamlined position, push off and roll onto your stomach as you move away from the wall.

Most world-class swimmers finish their turns on their back and then push off and roll onto the stomach.

It's easy to learn and easy to perform.