

Inside the Rulebook – Freestyle

Freestyle is exactly how it sounds—pretty much free. In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style. Note that this does not include the freestyle leg of a medley relay or the individual medley; in these events he/she may not swim in the style of one of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg.

The rules are few. The swimmer may not use a backstroke start, but may start from the block, from the deck, or even in the water. He/she must complete the prescribed distance, touching the end wall at the end of each length. He/she may not use the lane line to propel forward. He/she may stand on the bottom of the pool but may not walk or spring forward.

Similar to butterfly and backstroke, after the start and after each turn, the swimmer may be completely submerged, but the head must break the surface of the water no further than 15 meters from the wall. Once the swimmer breaks the surface, he/she may not be completely submerged until the next turn or the finish.