

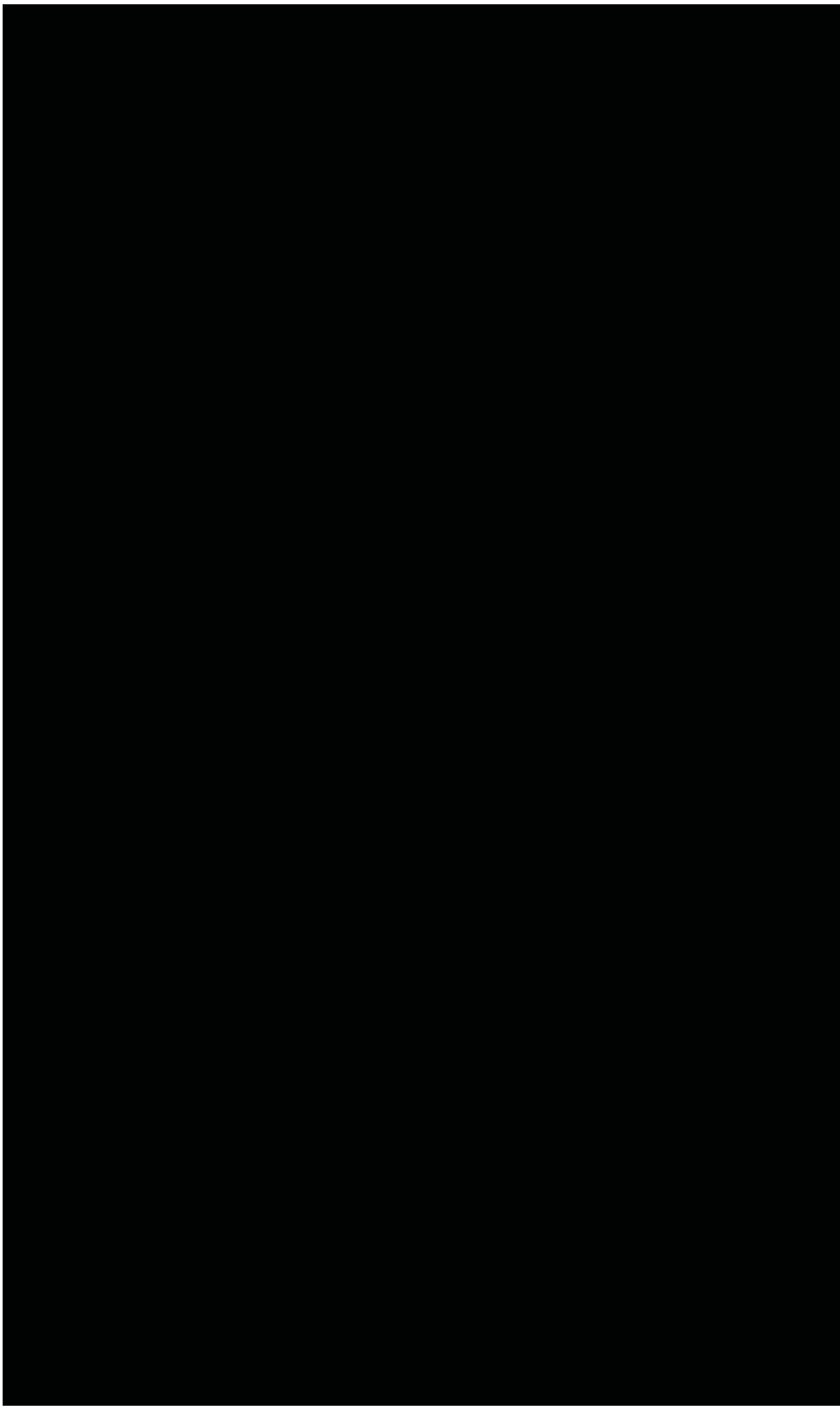
Freestyle teaching 10 &U

Mark Bottrill

Start from the Head

- Head position and breathing. Head down, neutral spine: look for “long neck”.
- Breathing: exhale on the bottom of the pool, most of breath out prior to roll for inhale.
- Correct position is goggle in/goggle out for inhale.
- Watch for what the mouth is doing as that indicates whether the swimmer has held breath too long completing the breath cycle.

Goggle in/out



Teaching Breathing

- There should be a 'puff' at the end of the exhale breath. Using bobs, you can get the kids to bob just at and under the surface and create that exhale reflex with the 'puff'. What you should see is that the inhale starts immediately off the 'puff' at the end of the exhale. Quick breath at surface and back under. This will help quicken the breath cycle.
- Any long breath cycle in any stroke will have timing and coordination implications

- Teach the head position with kick in a streamline with both hands on a kick board, breathing to the side (goggle in/out) or to the front (judge what works best for the swimmers you have) but look for a 'quick' breath, and the head back down again, eyes on bottom
- Next you can kick with only one hand on the board and breath to one side, change arms at 12.5 or 25. Most of you should know this, but it comes down to what you are looking for from the drill. In this case, breathing correctly with minimal head movement
- Then introduce 'catchup' style alternating hands on the board and bilateral pattern.
- Encourage bilateral at all times. At a later age, some may choose a pattern of some type.

Breathing and arms

- Head/nose should be back on the center line for the completion of the breath cycle half way through the recovery.
- This also aids the high elbow recovery and roll of the body, any high head position will flatten the shoulders and prevent roll, thus making it harder to create high elbows.
- It is very important to teach the correct timing of the breath cycle as where the head goes, so does the body and many errors have their genesis in incorrect breath timing.

Bobs and Breath control

- If the swimmer has trouble with the inhale/exhale cycle, or move their head around too much (looking at ceiling) to create the 'time' to do the inhale cycle then freestyle movements are going to be compromised. It might sound Red Cross, but you have to teach breathing properly.

Kick Kick Kick

- A good kicker will always be a better swimmer long run than one who can't. I encourage you to teach and train, combine drills and kick, but always come back to kick. Board, no board, head down, under water, on your side and back.
- If using a board, encourage straight arms and keep the hips up. Churn the water from the kick not break the water by crashing it from above the surface. Making a splash is different than moving water propulsively. Watch for keeping the heels and toes in the water vs above. It is easier to splash than move water, but sometimes you have to start somewhere as certain kids just need to get their feet up higher in the water. Use your judgement.

- Kick from the hips with pointy toes and little knee bend. Bent knees often originates from low hip position on kick board.
- If using a board keep head low to surface or head in water to encourage proper body position.
- Correct bent knees asap. It is a difficult habit to break. To create kicking from the hips you can do standing leg kicks on an raised edge (such as a step or pool edge) to teach on land, as well as stream line leg kicks. Kick on the back with a board over the knees to remind when knees hit board works too.

- For young swimmers kicking on the back is a great way to do it as they all seem to be able to float well. On the back you can teach streamlining as well as see their knees.
- Kicking on back is harder than on the front with a board and you cover off both backstroke and freestyle. Kicking on the front will not necessarily help backstroke but kicking on the back does help freestyle due to smaller tighter kick cycle.

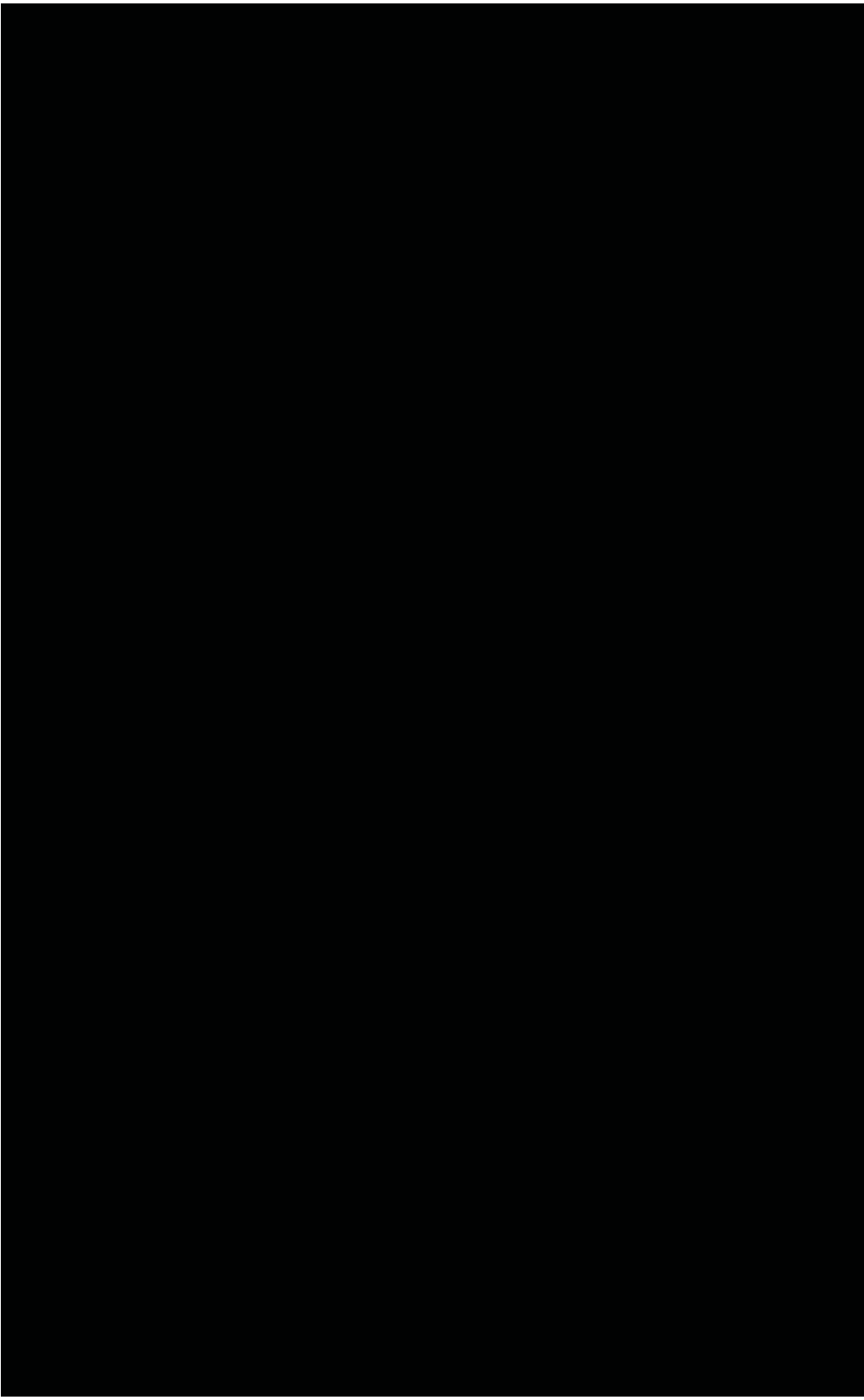
Fast Feet!

- Fast feet! You must have the correct foot speed. Fast churning motion for a propeller like kick vs a 'Stern paddle wheel' boat thrashing down the river.
- Coaching tip is to shout the timing out (speed you are looking for) to the group as they go. For example counting 123456!, 123456!, or kick kick kick etc so that the feet keep up to YOUR command.

Kick to Swim

- If you do a set of k/s what ever you see for the kick tempo while not using arms you must see while they are swimming. For young kids keep the set short like 25 kick 25 swim or even 12.5's so they can keep the fast feet.
- Get them to think of it as a kick set you happen to be able to use your arms on.

Fast feet into swim



Teaching Arms

Many drills to choose from, but what to watch?

- Keep each hand on their 'own' side of the body, no cross over (usually due to exaggerated head movement)
- Teach finger tips down, fingers 'draw' on bottom of pool
- Shape of the stroke you are looking for is 'sausage shape' vs an oval ellipse.
- High elbows and lead elbow for as long as possible
- **"length of recovery through the elbow"**
- Exact timing moment of recovering hand should be as pulling hand passes under nose, push 'feeds' the recovery entry phase

Drills

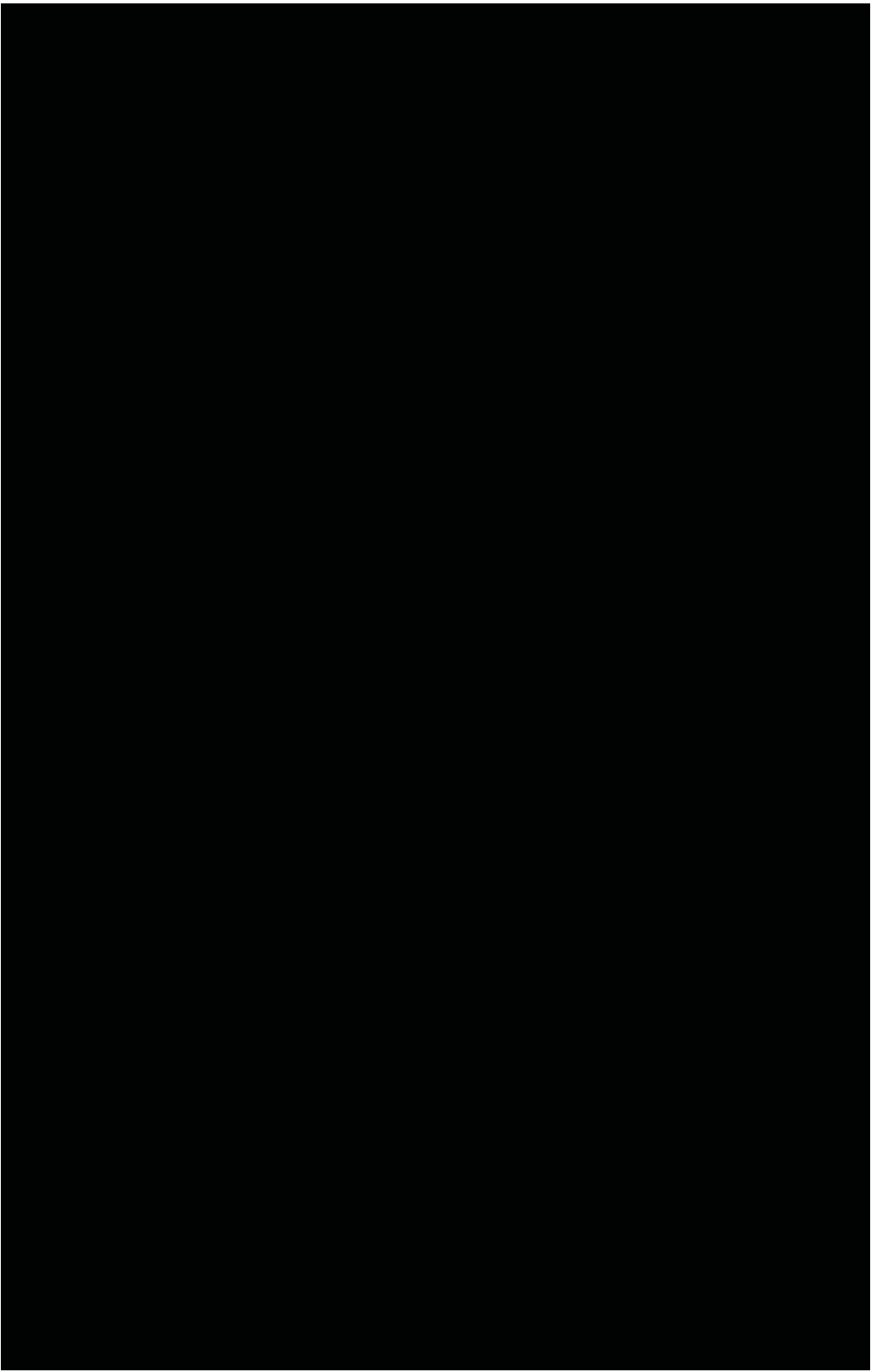
- Goggle in/out: watch for planeing of hand, not 'grappling' for the water: palm down and in line with the shoulder: good drill for head position on breath and also a kicking drill. Once familiar with the drill can couple the drill with another or swim such as 25 goggle drill 25 back of hand drag
- Breathing drills: while swimming, get children to breath out all air under water and have breath expelled by the time hand gets to belly button.
- Kickboard drill: for teaching breathing technique and exhale cycle, also for kicking during the breath phase.
- Catchup Drill with a board, head must be down -nose on center line before hand returns to board. You should not 'see' your hand on recovery
- Can substitute this drill for 'catch up free' drill

Drills continued

Back of Hand Drag: purpose is varied:

- starts the recovery with elbow in correct position
- tactile feeling of back of hand on the water will assist in 'sausage' shape of recovery action
- tactile feeling of recovery 'tracking' from back to front of shoulder, not from the side or to the front of head: want more of a straight line
- head must be down 'nose on center line' before hand is in front of shoulder: (fix late breath cycle)
- more resistance keeping kick going while swimming

Back of Hand Drill

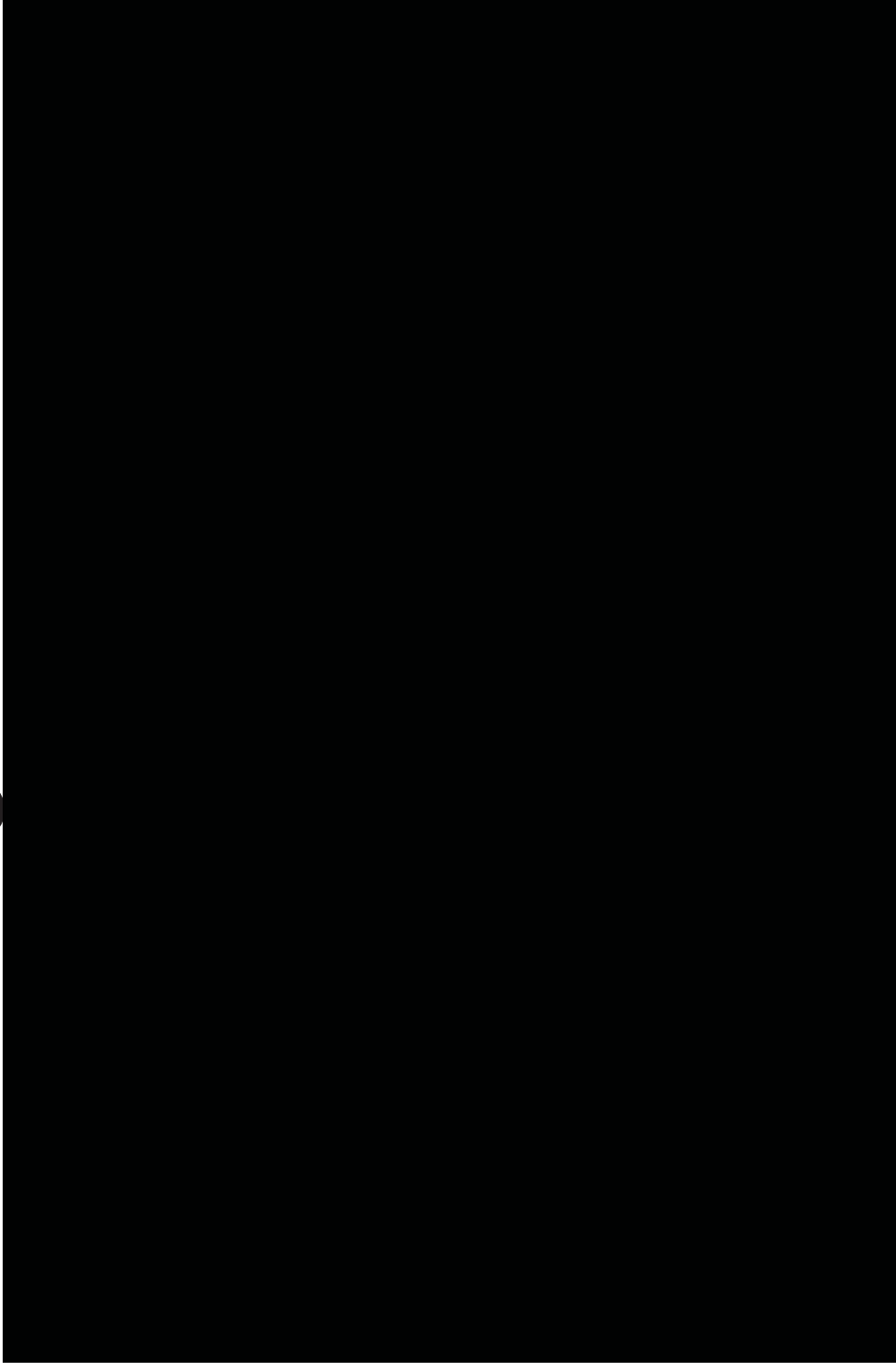


Drills continued

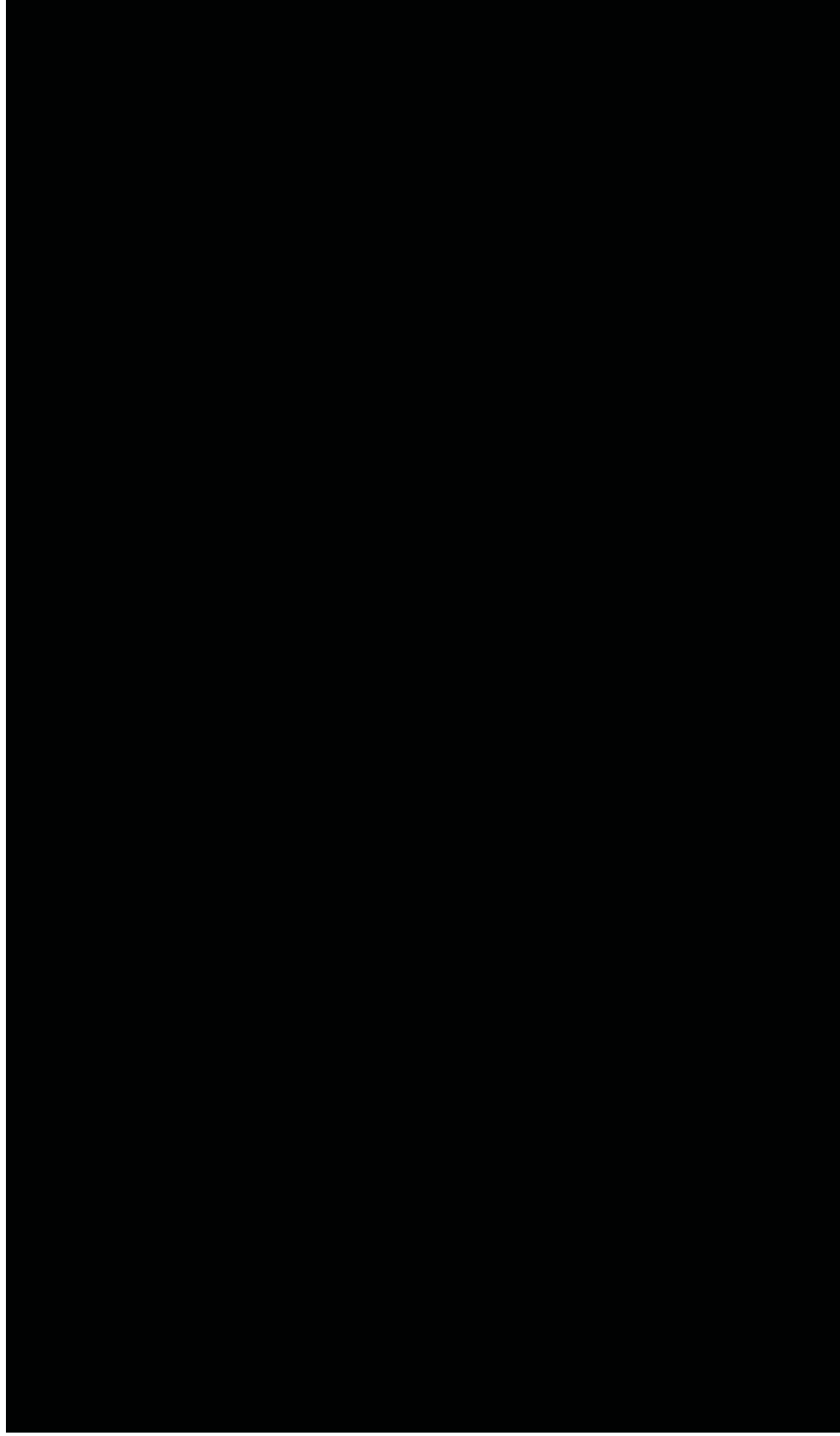
- Dog Paddle: really useful for teaching timing of arms as the resistance of 'recovery' with the elbow and forearm pushing forward needs to be balanced with the pull/push of the opposite arm
- Also use for kicking while swimming and kicking through breath cycle
- 12 beat side to side drill: teaches body roll and length of stroke

Count kicks and while getting to numbers 9-12 start moving arms like regular freestyle action as the swimmer changes sides to then proceed to kick on

Dog Paddle



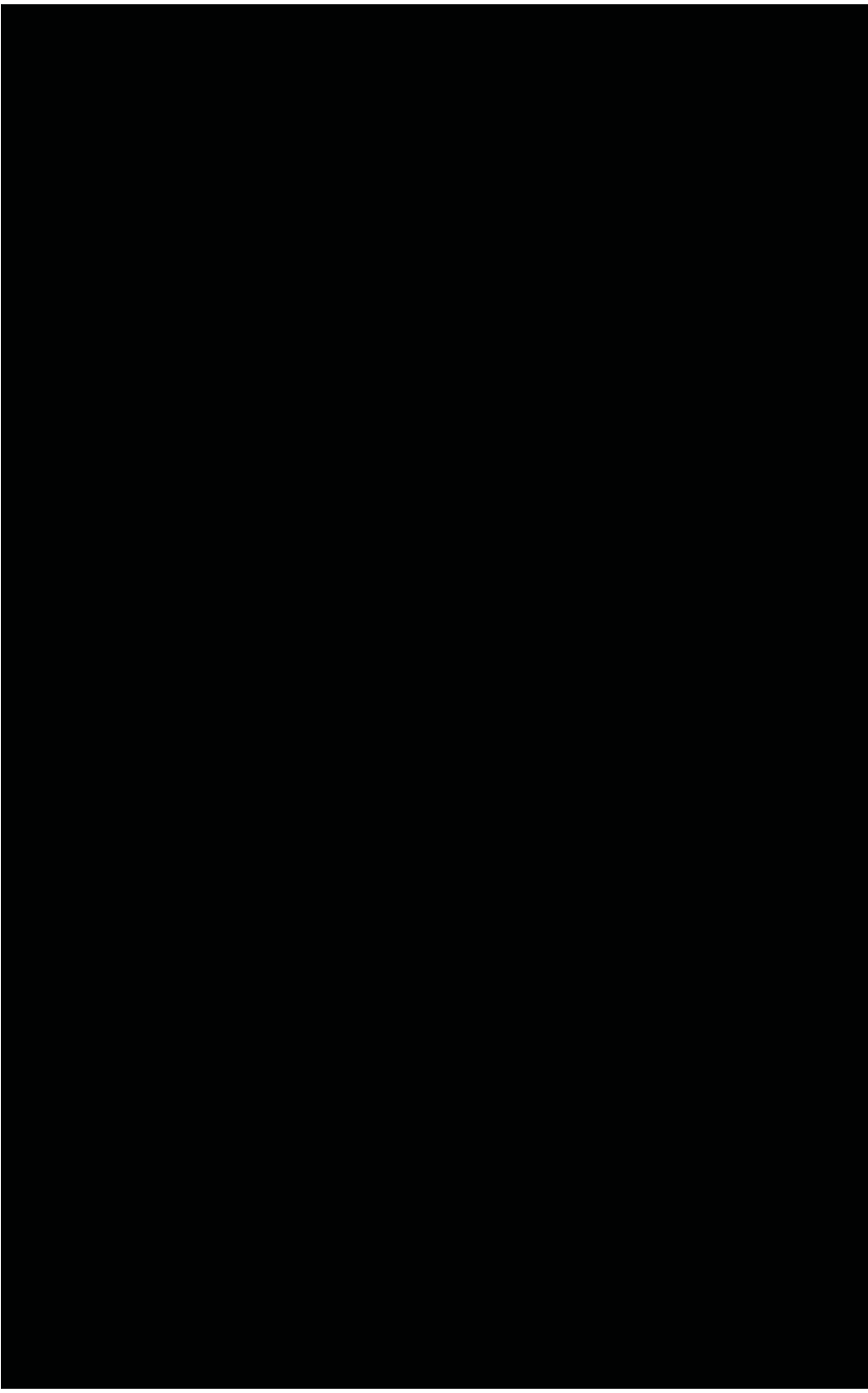
3 Pump (advanced 12 kick)



Push offs and turns

- Teach dolphin kick off each pushoff and each turn. Set a number you want to see always, between 4-6.
- Each repeat should start with the feet on the wall, one hand on the wall, the other extended in front, push off on side (as this teaches the first part of the kick sequence correctly) and encourage 4 kicks on side/2 on front before you surface.

Push off position

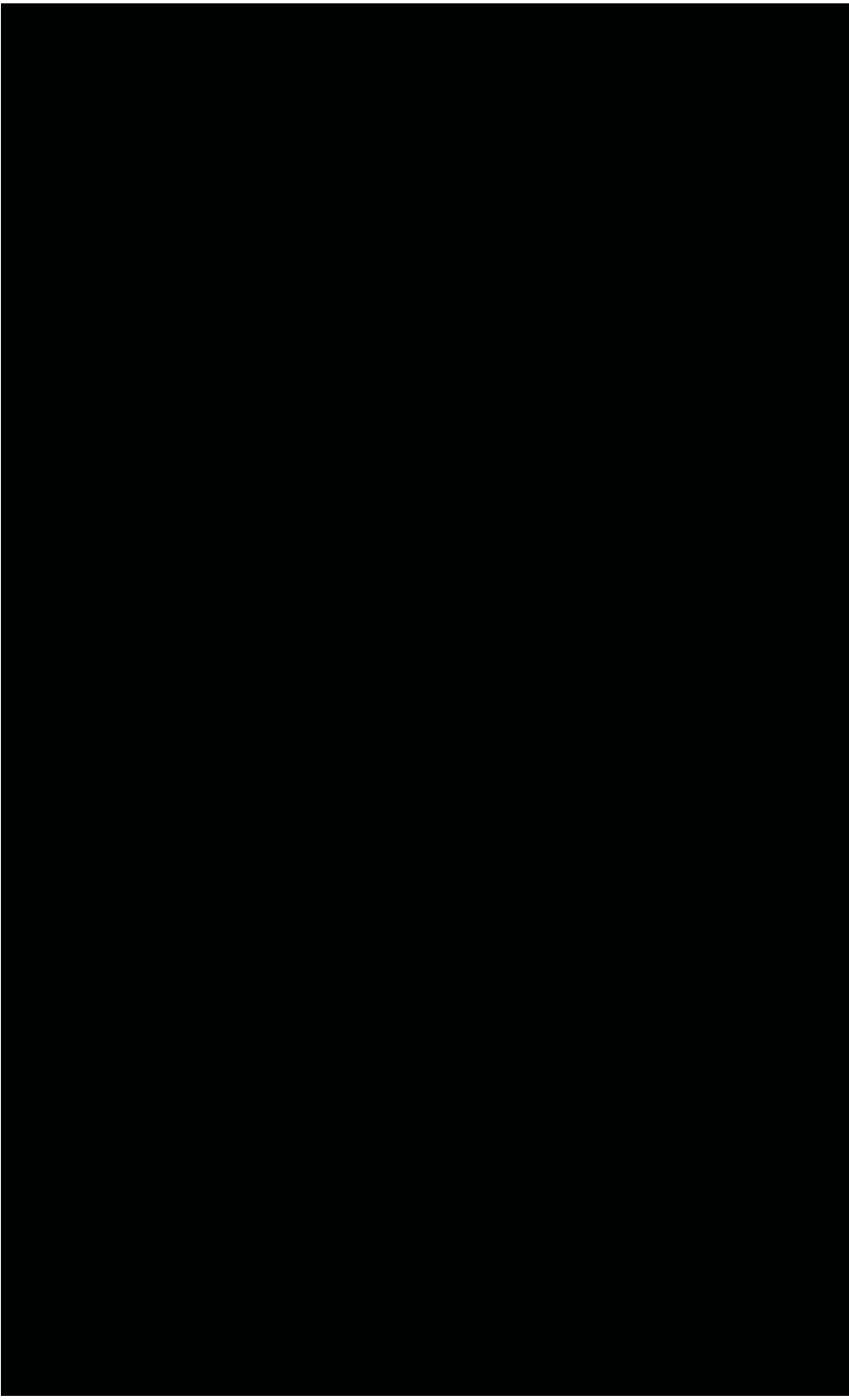


Teaching and Training

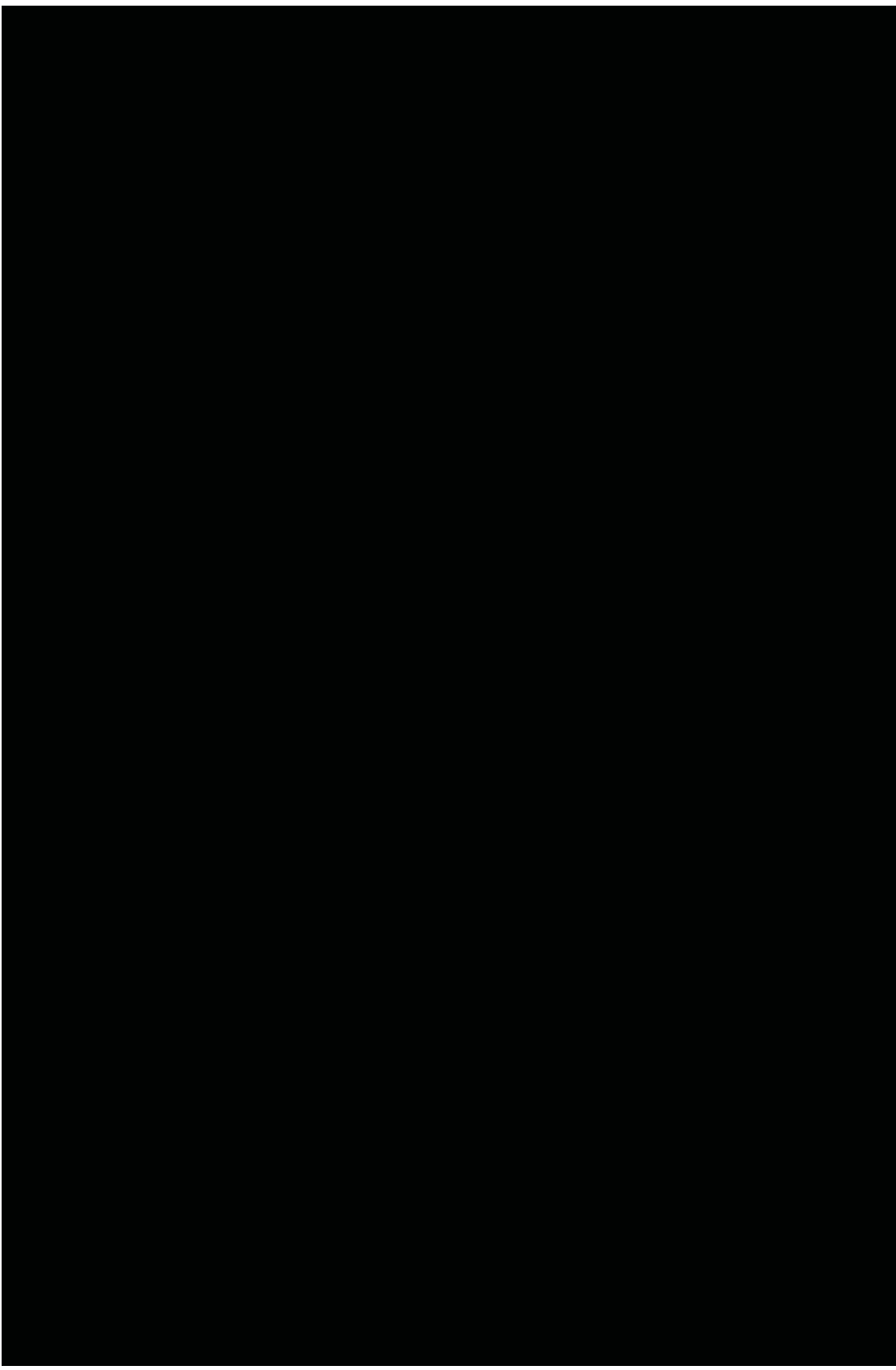
- Once you establish the knowledge base of the drills you then couple the drills together with a set. Keep the set short such as:
 - 10*50 as 25 catchup on board/25 Breath 3
 - 6*100 as 25 catchup swim/50 swim breath 3/ 25 fast kick
 - 16*25 Freestyle odds Choose a drill, evens fast swim fast feet
 - 10*50 odds kick! (fast) evens back of hand/swim watch for 'carrying' the kick

There is a lot of kick in this workout, the legs will be fit

Stream kick into swim



Carrying the kick



video



KATHY QU (4).MPG