

This is our third **Fitness Friday** covering the topic of **Treading Water**. We've discussed how to tread water as well as the four kick options (breast stroke kick, scissor kick, rotary kick and the most strenuous flutter kick). We introduced the term finning or **sculling** for the upper body arm motion, and now we will take a deeper look at sculling to include exercises to practice and strengthen your sculling.

Sculling is a motion of the arms that creates a force to sustain the body in water or to move the body in any direction, usually horizontally or vertically. The hands move in a figure-eight path that creates a lift force as a result of the flow of the water over the hands.

The sculling motion originates with a rotation in the shoulders combined with a bending of the elbows. Keep your hands flat, with your fingers held lightly together. Be aware of (a) tension in your hands and forearms preventing you from "catching" the water, and (b) "slicing" your hands in and out of the water eliminating the figure-eight path which limit the force or propulsion generated to help keep your head above the surface.

How to Practice a Scull:

1. Stand in shallow water (waist to shoulder is good);
2. Bend your elbows with your hands in front, palms facing down. Your elbows should be ~5-7 inches from your waist.
3. Hold your hands about 6 inches beneath the surface. Keep your hands flat with your fingers loosely held together and your arms relaxed.
4. Rotate your palms between 20 and 50 degrees to press water out and then in. The total distance your hands move is 12 inches (or less).

Continued... How to Scull:

It may appear your palms are flat and facing the bottom of the pool, they rotate from facing out to in with very little time spent facing flat toward the bottom. Keep your upper arms relatively still with a small rotation on each scull. Avoid freezing the upper arms in place. Maintain a continuous movement without stopping or starting at the in and out portions of each scull.

5. Keep your hands moving with an even tempo and pressure. When you get a good "grab", you may see a whirlpool develop over your fingers.

Sculling is not:

- Pressing up and down on the water;
- Slicing the water with flat hands;



- Clawing at the water with open fingers;
- Dog paddling your arms.

After you've practiced the basic sculling motion and understand how it feels, try sculling on your back to further strengthen and improve your sculling which will help you "feel" the water when treading or swimming during some of the other Watermanship Test tasks.

