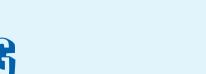# SLSA FOUNDATION SKILLS FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the Foundation Skills Framework is to provide members who are new or early in their surf lifesaving coaching or teaching pathway with a simple set of principles they can use to guide HOW they teach Surf Life Saving skills to members of all ages. Each of the concepts is linked to evidence-based approaches to teaching skills and are meant to give members an idea of the types of skill acquisition activities they can use to help members learn skills. Members such as Age Managers, Coaches and parents are encouraged to use the concepts as a starting point to grow their own activities.

NOTE: the word 'coach' has been used in the below framework to capture the person teaching the skill. The coach may be an Age Manager, Accredited Coach, or even a parent!

CONCEPT	HEADLINE	DESCRIPTION
PREP IT!	**Set the table.** Let members know how the skills they're learning link to lifesaving activities. We call these principles, and they are the foundation of learning we want to build on.	It's important for coaches and members to understand why they're learning skills and how they link to lifesaving protocols or competition. This concept is meant to reinforce the foundations of each skill and get participants thinking about how and what they need to do to bring it to life.
SHOW IT!	**Paint a picture.** Use demonstrations along with cueing to give members an idea of what the skill should look like and zoom in on important details.	Coaches typically start by explaining skills which can make it hard for members to interpret. In this concept, we start with demonstrations to give members a better visual of what needs to be done. Demonstrations can be done by the coach or participant and simple cues are used to direct attention to key technical areas without getting too technical.
EXPLORE IT!	**Have a go!** Let members explore different ways of performing so they can find the way that works best for them.	Because everyone is different, they all have unique ways of performing skills. Rather than using a cookie cutter approach, this concept encourages participants to explore different ways of moving and finding out what works best for them.
GROW IT!	Support skill development by using constraints, asking questions, and giving feedback that helps members figure out how they can get better.	Once all participants have a grasp of what they need to do, coaches can step in and facilitate their learning to help them refine the skill. This concept uses a variety of coaching approaches designed to nudge participants towards more developed and mature skill performances without getting bogged down in the technical details.
TEST IT!	**Pull it together.** Once we've got a good foundation in place, it's time to try the skills in practice, and games to see how well they've been learnt. Refer to the relevant Age Guide lesson plan for activities, game sense approaches and tips.	Skill is the ability to maintain performance levels under pressure (e.g., fatigue, a variety of conditions, competition stress, etc.). This concept uses games and competitions to let members "test" how well their skills adapt to different conditions.

BEACH SPRINTING

PHASE	SKILL		
	STANDING START	**CROUCHING START**	**RUNNING & FINISHING**
PREP IT!	**Principle:** Quick start off the line. **Starter:** What is the best way to stand so that we can start moving really fast?	**Principle:** Quick & powerful start **Starter:** How can we make our standing start even faster and more powerful?	**Principle:** Get through the finish line as fast as you can **Starter:** What's a good way to move our body say that we don't lose any speed?
SHOW IT!	Show the participants what the skill looks like. Use simple cues to draw their attention to your body position: toes (on the line), crouch (down), push (off the front foot).	Show the participants what the skill looks like. Use simple cues to draw their attention to your body position: hands/arms (wide), bum up, head low, explode, and stay low.	Use participants to demonstrate the skills. Pick one or two participants with good body position and tell the rest of the group to watch their: knee (height), arm (swing), body (tall/lean), and head (still).
EXPLORE IT!	Let the participants try lots of different ways of starting: e.g., different feet forward, bend low or high, wide or narrow feet. Ask them to compare different start positions: why do you think you went faster or slower?	Let the participants see how different crouch positions are faster or slower and ask them to compare? Try making blocks with different foot positions.	See how different stride lengths impact speed. Get the participants to see what happens if they keep their arms still, running tall vs small, head steady vs bobbing.
GROW IT!	Watch and identify common mistakes and use questions to help: Which foot should be forward? Where do our arms need to be at the start? Which direction should our body lean? Use analogies to prompt changes: e.g., imagine there is a stick running down your back, drive your knee like you're breaking a board in front of you.	Use external cues to get participants thinking about the effects of their movements: eyes in front of your hands, push/explode through the block. Use constraints to reinforce technique: put a small dot or thong behind the feet to help them 'feel' the push, use pool noodle or kick board to make sure they are keeping low for the first few steps.	**Use analogies like:** "Claw through the sand as quick as you can." "Reel them in if they're in front" to reinforce the principle. Use questions to give participants a chance to work through the problems: How should we be using our arms to help us move quickly? What do you notice if you stand up too fast (or slow) after the start? Why do we want to keep our head steady when we're running?
TEST IT!		See who's fastest: standing start or a crouching start.	Combine running with starts to make it a relay race competition!

SURF SWIMMING

PHASE	SKILL		
	START	**WADING**	**PORPOSING**
PREP IT!	**Principle:** Get to the water as quickly as possible! **Starter:** What can we do to have a quick start and get ourselves to the water as quickly as possible?	**Principle:** Try not to let the water slow you down. **Starter:** When do we need to start wading?	**Principle:** Avoid getting pushed back by the waves. **Starter:** What's the best way to get run through the surf without losing ground?
SHOW IT!	Do a demonstration or pick a participant with good technique to show the others how to do it. While demonstrating, use one- or two-word cues to direct attention to the: toes (on the line), split (legs), knees (bent), push (the sand).	Wading can be tricky so get an adult to show the participants what the skill looks like on land and then in the water. Tell them to watch your: legs swinging, thighs (out of water), and arms (wide).	You'll have to get wet for this one! Get your participants to get their goggles on and watch how you (or another capable adult) porpoise. Demonstrate the skill a few times and on each attempt tell the participants to pay attention to: 1) the angle you enter and leave the water, 2) how you use the sand to pull your feet to your hands, and 3) how you explode out of the water off the sand. Do it without diving under the wave first.
EXPLORE IT!	Let the participants try lots of different ways of starting: e.g., different feet forward, bend low or high, wide or narrow feet. Ask them to compare different start positions: why do you think you went faster or slower?	Let participants wade to different depths to see how the water slows them down. Tell them to stop when they think they should start wading and see if they've picked a good depth (ankle/mid-calf).	Time to play in the waves! Once they've got the hang of it, let participants play with the timing of their dive and angle of their dive. If you can, try different depths and wave conditions.

GROW IT!	Ask questions so that participants can engage with how they are performing. Good questions to ask: Which foot should be forward? Where do our arms need to be at the start? Which direction should our body be learning? Use analogies to explain key points without getting too technical: • Coil up like a spring. • Take off like a race car/jet/rocket!	Practice running along the beach in shallow water before getting deeper. The key is getting the thigh up high so the leg doesn't drag in the water. Use a constraint (e.g., other participants crouching down) and get the participant to slowly move along and 'hurdle' step over the crouched participant. Use analogies to explain key points without getting too technical: • Run through the water like a lizard running on water:	Do some team teaching. Get participants to team up and take turns watching and helping out each other. Before you start, ask everyone what they need to watch out for (this will cue everyone). Use analogies to explain key points without getting too technical: • We want our body to dive into and out of the water like a "V". • Grab on to the sand and crouch down like a frog and then bounce off the sand!
TEST IT!			See who can make it the furthest using 1 dive, 2 dives, or 3 dives.

SURF SWIMMING

PHASE	SKILL		
	SWIMMING	**CATCHING A WAVE**	**EXIT**
PREP IT!	**Principle:** Maintain a steady pace through the water and keep a nice line. **Starter:** What are some things we can do to make sure we swim through the surf at a quick and steady pace.	**Principle:** Use the surf to help get into shore. **Starter:** How can we use the waves to help us to get to shore faster!	**Principle:** Make a quick transition from the surf to the beach and finish strong. **Starter:** When should we put our feet down and start running.
SHOW IT!	Swimming instruction can get very technical, so it is important to use an adult or someone with good technique to demonstrate. Early on, only pick out 2-3 things to cue participants attention towards e.g., body position, elbow, catch, and/or kick.	Seeing everything that's going on in the water can be hard. Demonstrate the hand/arm technique on land or shallow water. Once they've got that show them in the water. Point out what your feet do when the wave starts to lift you and how you stroke with one arm.	Just like wading but in reverse! Get an adult to show the participants what the skill looks like on land and then in the water. Tell them to watch your: legs swinging, thighs (out of water), and arms (wide).
EXPLORE IT!	Start in shallow, calm water or a pool (if possible), get the participants to practice different stroke and kicking rates. Ask them to tell you what feels faster, harder, or uses more energy. This is a great opportunity to watch several participants/ attempts and pick up 1 or 2 key points to address and help grow the skill.	Surf's up! Let your participants catch some waves on their own. Start shallow and off their feet so they can get lots of practice. Once they've got hang of it, gradually get them to start swimming before the wave picks them up.	**Timing is everything.** Get the participants to compare standing at different distances from the shore to see what's quickest.

GROW IT!	Try to avoid getting too technical – it doesn't have to look perfect! Focus on how it feels vs technical details (e.g., feel in the water). Use analogies to explain key points without getting too technical: • Body position: Keep your body straight like an arrow. Swim on top of the water like a surfboard. • Catch: • Kick: Kick your feet like a motorboat. Introduce sighting techniques using questions: How can we make sure we're swimming in a straight line? What should we be looking for?	Use some simple questions to get participants thinking about the key teaching points: • What can we do to make sure we get the most speed from the wave? • How can we keep our balance on the wave? • What do we need to change for different types of surf conditions?	Don't complicate this! Ask simple questions to nudge them in the right direction: • What can we do to make sure we're following a straight path (e.g., find a landmark)? • Is there something that we can use to help tell us when to stand (e.g., the sand)? • When should we switch from wading to running?
TEST IT!		**Set up a mini contest!** Participants are to catch a wave and race into shore. Make it fun by doing knock out rounds or 'best of 3'.	

BOARD PADDLING

PHASE	SKILL		
	START	**ENTRY & BUNNY HOPPING**	**WAVE NEGOTIATION**
PREP IT!	**Principle:** Start quickly and take the speed from the run on to the board. **Starter:** What conditions should we be watching for on the water? What can help us have a quick entry or a slow entry?	**Principle:** Get the board on the water and get on without losing any speed. **Starter:** When should we stop bunny hopping, jump on the board, and start paddling?	**Principle:** Keep your balance on the board and maintain as much forward momentum as possible. **Starter:** What are the different ways we can get over the wave without losing much speed?
SHOW IT!	For the first time, get an adult to demonstrate how to do the skill and tell the participants what to watch for: bent knees, feet forward, how they are holding the board. After that, get another participant to demonstrate. This can help the other participants see how someone their own size and ability hold and manages the board during the start.	Get a capable participant to demonstrate the skill while you point out a few key points using simple cues: hand position (out in front), hopping (with feet together close to board), and the transition.	Make sure your participants have good paddling skills and board balance before moving on to wave negotiation. Focus on one approach to negotiating waves at a time so you don't overload your participants (e.g., paddling through, sitting over, rolling). Draw their attention to your body position (how it moves), what the nose of the board does, and when you start to get ready for the wave.
EXPLORE IT!	Get participants to see what type of hold (e.g., carry or drag) works best for them. Let them explore holding the board in different locations and with different hands to find out the best start for them.	Start simple and build up. Get the participants to practice the bunny hop in shallower water while a partner holds the board in place. Once it looks like they're getting it (it doesn't have to be perfect), let the board go and practice the transition to the board. Finally, put it all together. Start close to the water and get participants to get a little bit of speed before bunny hopping and jumping on the board.	Get your participants to explore their body position and how they maintain balance on the board in gentle surf. Once they're comfortable and able to maintain balance, let them try negotiating small waves. Encourage them to see how they can use their body position, arms, and legs to stay on the board without getting pushed back by the wave.

GROW IT!	**Be direct.** Holding the board can probably be tricky for beginner participants so there's nothing wrong with using direct instruction to make sure they're getting the basics right. Use a combination of verbal instructions and close-up demonstration to zoom in on the details (e.g., specific hand positions).	Use analogies to explain key points without getting too technical: • Put your hands on your board and hop like a kangaroo through the water. Pop out of the water every time you jump and try to keep your feet close to the board.	Ask simple questions to nudge participants in the right direction: • When should we stop paddling (or paddle faster)? • What body position (paddling or sitting) should we use for different waves? • What do we want to the nose of the board to do? • Where do we need to move our body on the board? • How can we use our legs to keep balance?
TEST IT!			

BOARD PADDLING

PHASE	SKILL		
	TURNING	**PADDLING**	**FINISHING**
PREP IT!	**Principle:** Find the best line around the buoys. **Starter:** How can we move on our board to make the turn as smooth as possible?	**Principle:** Move as quickly forward through the water as possible. **Starter:** How can we paddle quickly without getting tired too fast?	**Principle:** Quickly transition from the surf to the beach to finish strong. **Starter:** When do we need to jump off our board and start running?
SHOW IT!	Do a demonstration with a buoy (as opposed to nothing). Direct attention to the key points: watch the buoy, paddle wide with your outside arm, and steer with your foot.	Demonstrate the kneeling and laying position on the beach before moving into the water. Start by drawing attention to body position on the board, the arm movement, and the kick (for the laying position). Then move to the water and get participants to focus on the arm during the stroke (catch, push, pull).	Demonstrate the finish in action on a wave. Make sure everyone has a good view of the transition and walk them through what to look for: the sand or other marker of depth, then the handle of the board so you don't miss and drop it.
EXPLORE IT!	Let your participants explore turning around buoys and finding a good racing line. Start them on their own and then gradually move to groups of 2, 3, etc. so they can try different techniques in a group.	Get participants to try out both positions in calm water (if possible). Try different body positions on the board and different stroke rates and lengths with the goal of trying to recognise what position and stroke work best for them.	Find the Goldilocks's zone! Get the participants to work out what the right depth is for them to make the transition from the board to the run for the finish line. Get them to see how their height and the speed of the wave (vs running) change the timing.

GROW IT!	Ask questions that get the participants thinking about key points: • Why is it important to keep an eye on the buoy? • If we're racing how can get a good line? • What should we do if there are other racers around us? • What should we use to help steer and push us through the turn?	Use the current as a constraint to train stroke length (into current) and stroke rate (with current). Use cues/analogies to explain key points without getting too technical: • Reach (to the front of your board) • Deep (get your hand down) • Pull through the water like a digger. • Push (at the end of the stroke) • Move your arms like a train. • Kick your legs like you're swimming. • Shoot through the water like an arrow Practice balancing on the board using the surf. Paddle along the beach in different surf conditions to change the challenge for participants.	Ask questions that get the participants thinking about key points: • What's going to be faster? Riding the wave or running? • How deep should we be when we make our transition from the board? • Where do we need to look so we don't miss the handle? Use simple cues to reinforce key points: • Look for the bottom • Watch the handle • Claw through the sand to the finish
TEST IT!			Set up a mini contest! Participants are to catch a wave and race into shore. Make it fun by doing knock out rounds or 'best of 3'.