

**Centennial Edition**



# **Water Safety Instructor's Manual**



**American Red Cross**



**American  
Red Cross**

# American Red Cross Water Safety

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**INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL**



# American Red Cross

This instructor's manual is part of the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program. Visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) to learn more about this program.

The emergency care procedures outlined in this book reflect the standard of knowledge and accepted emergency practices in the United States at the time this book was published. It is the reader's responsibility to stay informed of changes in emergency care procedures.

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# Administration

# GENERAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

**T**he purpose of the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program is two-fold: to teach people how to be safe in, on and around water; and to teach people of all ages and varying abilities how to swim. Using a logical progression, the program covers the knowledge and skills needed for aquatic skill development, which, in turn, leads to safer and better swimmers.

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# SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAM

The Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program teaches people of all ages and varying abilities to swim and be safe in, on and around water. Swimming readiness and swim instruction courses within the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program include Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses. These courses take an inclusive approach that emphasizes skill development in conjunction with water safety and drowning prevention education. The Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program also includes a variety of water safety courses and presentations to help teach all age groups how to enjoy the water safely and how to stay safe in the event of an emergency.

## Program Design

Water safety and drowning prevention are important concepts to emphasize as part of any swimming and water safety program. In the United States, drowning ranks second (behind motor vehicle crashes) as a cause of death from unintentional injury in children ages 1 through 14, with children between the ages of 1 and 4 years having the highest rate for drowning. As a Water Safety instructor, you must give careful attention to the safety of all participants. Remind parents that even if their children have learned to move in the water, they still lack the judgment needed to recognize dangerous situations and the strength, stamina and ability to swim to safety if necessary.

In an effort to address water safety and drowning prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2010) has issued the following policy statement related to swim lessons:

“Children need to learn to swim. The AAP continues to support swimming lessons for most children 4 years old and older. Because children develop at different rates, not all children will be ready to learn to swim at exactly the same age. The evidence no longer supports an advisory against early aquatic experience and swimming lessons for children of any specific age. However, the current evidence is insufficient to support a recommendation that all 1- to 4-year-old children receive swimming lessons. A parent’s decision about starting swimming lessons or water-survival skills training at an early age must be individualized on the basis of the child’s frequency of exposure to water, emotional maturity, physical limitations, and health concerns related to swimming pools. Parents should be reminded that swimming lessons will not provide ‘drown-proofing’ for children of any age.”

Highlights of the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program include:

- An emphasis on water safety and drowning prevention as the basis of swimming and water recreation.
- Distribution of skills throughout the swim instruction program to optimize skill acquisition so that participants can achieve success at regular intervals.
- The most current biomechanics concepts and stroke descriptions.
- Content to help Water Safety instructors improve their teaching skills and better serve participants of varying ages and abilities, including those who may move, behave, learn or communicate differently.

- A mobile application to support the progress that participants make throughout the levels while learning to swim, to encourage continued participation in the program and to help educate parents to be safe in, on and around the water.
- Extensive instructor support resources including the *Water Safety Instructor's Manual*, *Swimming and Water Safety*, *Swimming and Water Safety Program* DVD set and Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).

## Courses and Presentations

The Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program is made up of the following courses and presentations:

- **Water Safety Instructor:** The purpose of the Water Safety Instructor course is to train instructor candidates to teach Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim, Adult Swim courses, and water safety courses and presentations. Water Safety instructor candidates must be 16 years old on or before the last scheduled day of the Water Safety Instructor course.
- **Parent and Child Aquatics (2 levels):** The purpose of Parent and Child Aquatics is to teach safe behaviors in, on and around the water and to develop swimming readiness. Parents and children engage in water exploration activities with the objective of having fun and becoming comfortable in, on and around the water.
- **Preschool Aquatics (3 levels):** Preschool Aquatics aims to promote the developmentally appropriate learning of fundamental water safety and aquatic skills by young children. Red Cross Preschool Aquatics teaches aquatic and safety skills in a logical progression through three levels of courses.
- **Learn-to-Swim (6 levels):** Learn-to-Swim consists of six comprehensive levels that teach people of varying ages and abilities how to swim skillfully and safely. Each level includes training in basic water safety in addition to aquatic and safety skills taught in a logical progression. The objective is to teach people to swim and to be safe in, on and around the water. The six levels include:
  - Level 1—Introduction to Water Skills
  - Level 2—Fundamental Aquatic Skills
  - Level 3—Stroke Development
  - Level 4—Stroke Improvement
  - Level 5—Stroke Refinement
  - Level 6—Swimming and Skill Proficiency
    - Personal Water Safety
    - Fundamentals of Diving
    - Fitness Swimmer
- **Adult Swim:** The Adult Swim courses are intended for teens and adults with differing levels of swimming ability. The following courses are available:
  - Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
  - Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
  - Adult Swim—Swimming for Fitness

- **Longfellow’s WHALE Tales:** This dryland water safety program is intended for children ages 5 through 12 and includes information on the following topics:
  - Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair
  - Be Cool, Follow the Rules
  - Look Before You Leap
  - Think So You Don’t Sink
  - Reach or Throw, Don’t Go
  - Don’t Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
  - Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice
  - Know About Boating Before You Go Floating
  - Too Much Sun Is No Fun
  - In Your House and in Your Yard, Watch for Water, Be on Guard
  - Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide
- **Water safety presentations:** Water safety presentations help people learn to be safe in, on and around the water. Certificates are not issued for these presentations. Topics include:
  - General Water Safety
  - Home Pool Safety
  - Parent Orientation to Swim Lessons
  - Sun Safety
  - Rip Current Safety
- **Water safety courses:** Water Safety instructors are eligible to teach the following water safety courses for which participants receive a certificate of completion:
  - Water Safety Today
  - Basic Water Rescue
  - Personal Water Safety
  - Safety Training for Swim Coaches
- **Online only and digital options:** Water Safety instructors are also encouraged to inform others about online courses and mobile applications, including:
  - Home Pool Essentials: Maintenance and Safety online course
  - Red Cross Swim mobile application
    - Supports and promotes the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program
    - Allows parents to track and share the progress of their children through the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels.
    - Provides adults with information about water safety in general, as well as water safety in specific environments.
    - Helps children learn about water safety through video segments from Longfellow’s WHALE Tales, age-appropriate water safety messaging, and quizzes for the parent and child to complete together.

- Red Cross first aid and preparedness mobile applications
  - Tornado app
  - Hurricane app
  - Wildfire app
  - Earthquake app
  - First aid app
  - Shelter finder app

Before teaching any of the courses or presentations that comprise the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, you should be familiar with *Swimming and Water Safety*, this instructor’s manual, and these additional materials and resources:

- Outlines and leader’s guides provided on Instructor’s Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for instructors intending to teach water safety courses and presentations.
- The *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* and *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales DVD* for instructors who wish to teach Longfellow’s WHALE Tales.
- Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Blended Learning course, *Safety Training for Swim Coaches Supplement* and *American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Blended Learning Instructor’s Manual* for instructors intending to teach the Safety Training for Swim Coaches course.

## Program Participants

The Red Cross has developed age guidelines for the Swimming and Water Safety courses. The recommended ages are only general guidelines. For children, take into consideration readiness, experience and maturity level when determining the course level in which participants should enroll.

The general age guidelines are as follows:

- Parent and Child Aquatics: infants and toddlers from 6 months to approximately 3 years of age
- Preschool Aquatics: children approximately 4 to 5 years of age
- Learn-to-Swim: children from approximately 6 years of age through older youth
- Adult Swim: youth approximately 15 years old through adults

For most water safety courses and presentations, there are no age prerequisites for participation. However, courses and presentations should have participants of similar ages and abilities so you can customize the lessons and conduct appropriate activities, addressing the appropriate knowledge, skills and readiness for each level. Also, keep in mind that some courses and presentations are more suited to older audiences. For more information on these topics, see Part C of this instructor’s manual.

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## INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Water Safety instructor teaching courses in the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, you must be associated with a facility that is enrolled as an Authorized Provider (AP) or Licensed Training Provider (LTP) of the Learn-to-Swim program. An AP or LTP is an organization that has signed a written agreement with the Red Cross to teach our training programs. Annual facility enrollment is required.

As a Red Cross Water Safety instructor, you are responsible for:

- Providing for the health and safety of participants by always ensuring that:
  - All equipment is clean and in good working order.
  - All participants have the physical ability to perform the skills and know to consult you for concerns about their physical ability to do so.
  - All participants are aware of health precautions and guidelines concerning infectious diseases.
  - The classroom, aquatic facility and all practice areas have been checked for any hazards.
- Foreseeing hazards and taking steps to control them before participants arrive or step into the water.
- Ensuring that there are lifeguards on duty with the proper safety equipment during swim lessons.
- Ensuring proper water quality in the swimming area.
- Being familiar with and knowing how to use course materials and training equipment safely and effectively.
- Planning, coordinating and managing training with the Red Cross, including advising the Red Cross in advance of any classes you are scheduled to teach.
- Informing participants about knowledge and skill evaluation procedures and course completion requirements.
- Creating a nonthreatening environment conducive to achieving the learning objectives.
- Preparing participants to meet the course objectives.
- Adapting your teaching approach to match the experience and abilities of the participants, identifying participants who are having difficulty and developing effective strategies to help them meet course objectives.
- Supervising participants while they are practicing course skills and providing timely, positive and corrective feedback as they learn.
- Evaluating participants as they perform skills, focusing on critical performance steps as described in the course outlines, stroke performance charts and/or skill sheets.
- Conducting courses in a manner consistent with course design.
- Administering and scoring any final written exam(s), if applicable.
- Issuing course completion certificates.
- Submitting the required course documents according to current Red Cross procedural guidelines within the specified time frame.
- Being familiar with and informing participants of other Red Cross courses and programs.
- Being prepared to answer participants' questions or knowing where to find the answers.
- Providing a positive example by being neat in appearance and not practicing unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, while conducting Red Cross courses.
- Identifying potential instructor and instructor aid candidates and referring them to the appropriate Red Cross representatives.
- Abiding by the obligations in the *Instructor Agreement and Code of Conduct* and the *Authorized Provider Agreement* or *Licensed Training Provider Agreement*.
- Representing the Red Cross in a positive manner.
- Promoting volunteer opportunities available through the Red Cross.

In addition, Red Cross instructors are expected to regularly access the Learning Center ([classes.redcross.org/instructor/authentication/login](https://classes.redcross.org/instructor/authentication/login)) and to maintain a current instructor profile there, including a current email address. The Red Cross uses the contact information in the instructor profile to communicate important information to instructors (for example, related to maintaining instructor certification, reporting teaching activity or providing certificates to successful course participants).

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## INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTOR TRAINER RESOURCES

Extensive resources are available to support Water Safety instructors and Water Safety instructor trainers.

### Resources for Water Safety Instructors

#### *Water Safety Instructor's Manual*

This instructor's manual is a resource for those certified by the Red Cross as Water Safety instructors to teach Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety courses and presentations. It is available as a free download on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](https://instructorscorner.org)) and can be purchased on Instructor's Corner or [shopstaywell.com](https://shopstaywell.com).

This instructor's manual is the primary resource for Water Safety instructors, explaining and describing the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program. The manual also provides directions for obtaining course materials from the appropriate resource on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](https://instructorscorner.org)). This manual suggests teaching concepts, strategies, best practice steps and progressions, and provides tips for promoting participants' success. In addition, it provides detailed information for planning, preparing and teaching the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program.

The instructor's manual has four parts:

- **Part A: Administration.** This part introduces the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, describes the program design and course organization, and discusses class safety and instructor responsibilities.
- **Part B: Teaching Swimming and Water Safety.** This part covers the teaching and learning process, including the principles of motor learning, some strategies and suggestions to use when teaching the courses, how to prepare block plans and lesson plans, and how to organize classes. In addition, it describes how to integrate water safety knowledge and skills into classes and provides information related to tailoring your teaching to meet the needs of participants of different ages and abilities.
- **Part C: The Courses.** Part C provides detailed information about the courses and presentations that comprise the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program. For each level within the Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses, learning objectives, readiness criteria, skill outlines, and steps and progressions are defined. Part C also provides information about the Water Safety courses and presentations available in the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, identifying target audiences, providing suggestions for offering the courses and presentations in the community, and directing Water Safety instructors to the appropriate resources for specific lesson plans and participant materials.
- **Part D: Course Completion:** This part outlines how Water Safety instructors are able to recognize and reward achievement as participants gain knowledge and skills, including the use of achievement booklets, badges, completion cards and digital certificates.

## **Swimming and Water Safety**

- *Swimming and Water Safety* is the basic resource for Water Safety instructors. It provides information about water safety and drowning prevention; emergency response; hydrodynamic principles; aquatic skills and stroke mechanics; entries, starts and turns; and specialized aquatic interests and activities, such as diving, fitness swimming and competitive swimming. In addition to serving as a resource for Water Safety instructors, *Swimming and Water Safety* can also be a valuable resource for participants in Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety classes. This manual is available as a free download on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) and can be purchased on Instructor's Corner or [shopstaywell.com](http://shopstaywell.com).

## **Longfellow's WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet and Longfellow's WHALE Tales DVD**

Longfellow's WHALE Tales, intended for children ages 5 to 12, teaches safe behavior in, on and around the water. The materials in the *Longfellow's WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet*, including posters, stickers, lesson plans, activity sheets and fact sheets, are designed to promote healthful aquatic recreation by giving children an awareness of how to be safe around the water.

Longfellow's WHALE Tales is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of the participants. Leaders can pick or choose activities from eleven safety topics when developing a presentation. There is no set format and no minimum or maximum time requirements for presenting the information. An optional DVD, *Longfellow's WHALE Tales*, is also available and supports topics covered in the *Longfellow's WHALE Tales K-6 Educational Packet*. The *Longfellow's WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* and streaming versions of the accompanying videos are available for free on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)). The DVD can also be purchased on Instructor's Corner or [shopstaywell.com](http://shopstaywell.com).

## **Instructor's Corner**

The Instructor's Corner website ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) is the primary resource for you to obtain information that supports you in your role as a Red Cross instructor. Register on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) and visit the site regularly to stay informed about processes and procedures, system improvements and resources to support you and your participants. Maintain an up-to-date profile, including your email address, to ensure that you receive important communications from the Red Cross.

Instructor's Corner provides free access to many important resources including:

- Digital materials available for download.
- Links to the Learning Center website and to a retail site for Red Cross health and safety training materials.
- News and information about instructor recertification.
- Teaching tools and resources, such as sample lesson and block plans, lesson and block plan templates, skill checklists and stroke performance charts.
- Participant support materials, such as newsletters.

In addition, outlines and lesson plans for the following Water Safety courses and presentations are available through Instructor's Corner:

- Water Safety Today
- Basic Water Rescue
- Personal Water Safety
- Safety Training for Swim Coaches
- General Water Safety
- Home Pool Safety
- Parent Orientation to Swimming Lessons
- Sun Safety
- Rip Current Safety

## **Resources for Water Safety Instructor Trainers**

A blended learning option for Water Safety Instructor training is now available. With the blended learning delivery method, online learning and in-person sessions alternate throughout the length of the course. Traditional in-person, instructor-led training for the Water Safety Instructor course, during which the instructor trainer delivers all course content, is also available.

### **Water Safety Instructor Course Blended Learning Content**

The blended learning option for the Water Safety Instructor course features simulation learning. The online learning sessions provide 7 hours of custom activities, games and instructional videos set in a vibrant three-dimensional pool environment. Instructor candidates interact with multiple scenarios that require them to use lesson planning and teaching strategies and apply water safety and classroom management concepts. Assessment and corrective feedback are integrated throughout the course.

### ***Swimming and Diving Skills and Teaching Swimming and Water Safety DVDs***

The DVD content is required viewing for the instructor-led course delivery method. For the blended learning delivery method, the DVD content has been incorporated into the online learning sessions.

The *Swimming and Diving Skills* DVD explains and demonstrates proper stroke mechanics for each of the six basic strokes and proper technique for entries, competitive starts, turns and diving from a diving board. In addition to supporting the Water Safety Instructor course, the *Swimming and Diving Skills* DVD can be used by Water Safety instructors as a teaching aid to support the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, and as a resource for participants in Learn-to-Swim Levels 5 and 6, and by adults who are interested in learning to swim, refining their strokes or learning more about aquatics.

The *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety* DVD helps to prepare Water Safety instructors for their teaching responsibilities. The DVD reviews general principles of classroom management, describes teaching strategies and holding and support positions, and helps future instructors practice their observation and assessment skills.

Streaming versions of the videos are available for free on Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)). The DVDs can also be purchased on Instructor's Corner or [shopstaywell.com](http://shopstaywell.com).

## Instructor's Corner

For Water Safety instructor trainers and Swim Program coordinators, Instructor's Corner provides tools to assist in managing a Swimming and Water Safety program and a team of instructors, including:

- Instructor recruitment information.
- Information about managing and promoting Red Cross Learn-to-Swim.
- In-service training outlines.

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## FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS

To help ensure a safe and successful course, be sure your swimming facility has the appropriate dimensions for the types of classes and the ages of the participants. For example, course requirements may need to be modified when the water is too deep for participants to stand or if the water is not deep enough for safely performing headfirst entries (headfirst entries should not be taught when the water is less than 9 feet deep). If you use a waterfront facility, it should be free of surf and large enough to practice skills. The swimming area should be clearly marked, safe and large, and deep enough for the program. Courses for infants, toddlers and preschoolers should not be conducted in untreated water, which is more likely to carry harmful organisms than sanitized pools. If you are unsure whether your swimming area is appropriate, check local and state regulations or with the health department.

Water temperature is a major factor in participant comfort and overall success. Water that is too cold or too warm can lead to discomfort and result in limiting the time spent in the water. The American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council has established guidelines for water temperature based on the age of the participants, the intensity of activity and the amount of time participants spend in the water during the session (see Chapter 2 for more information about recommended water temperatures for swim instruction).

In addition, be sure you know your facility's policies and procedures related to teaching classes. Be clear on the areas designated for classes. Know and understand the facility's rules, teach these rules to participants and enforce them within your classes. **Ensure that certified lifeguards are on duty and conducting patron surveillance whenever swimming classes are being conducted.**

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## STAFFING

Close supervision is necessary for effective practice and to help promote safety.

### Water Safety Instructors

The Red Cross recommends the following minimum instructor-to-participant ratios for group classes:

- Parent and Child Aquatics: 1 instructor for every 10 parent and child pairs.
- Preschool Aquatics Levels 1 through 3, Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 through 3, Adult Swim—Learning the Basics: no less than 1 instructor for every 6 participants.
- Learn-to-Swim Levels 4 through 6, Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes, Adult Swim—Swimming for Fitness: no less than 1 instructor for every 10 participants.

To increase safety and instructional quality, consider having fewer participants per instructor, or providing additional support through the use of a co-instructor or instructor aide.

## **Co-Instructors and Instructor Aides**

Co-instructors and instructor aides can provide additional supervision and attention to individual participants, which leads to enhanced safety, participation and learning.

### **Co-instructors**

Co-instructors are certified Water Safety instructors. Pairing a Water Safety instructor who has limited experience with a seasoned Water Safety instructor is an excellent way to help the novice instructor gain experience and confidence and also allows for additional instructional attention to be given to participants.

### **Instructor aides**

Instructor aides are not certified Water Safety instructors. Rather, they work under the direct supervision of the Water Safety instructor who is teaching the course. Although instructor aides can provide additional attention and supervision to participants, they are not substitutes for Water Safety instructors or lifeguards.

Water Safety instructor aides should be able to:

- Demonstrate the skills being taught.
- Assist participants under the direction of the Water Safety instructor.
- Recognize unsafe conditions and behaviors and respond either by addressing or reporting situations to the Water Safety instructor or the program administrator.

In addition, instructor aides can help with clerical, supervisory and maintenance responsibilities. When instructor aides are used effectively, Water Safety instructors can focus more on the instructional aspects of the classes.

Water Safety instructor aide candidates must be mature and responsible. Instructor aide candidates may be individuals who:

- Do not meet the age requirement or are too inexperienced to become instructors.
- Have expressed an interest in becoming instructors but want or need experience.
- Want to help with a course without actually being an instructor.
- Are precluded from completing an instructor course by lack of qualifying credentials (for example, course prerequisites or state regulations).

Instructor aide training may be completed through a formal instructor aide course or through an apprenticeship program. Water Safety instructors or Water Safety instructor trainers can train instructor aides. Instructor aide training includes, but is not limited to, a discussion of the following:

- Course objectives: both content objectives (what is needed to pass the written test) and, if applicable, the skills objectives (what is needed to pass the skills tests)
- Course materials and their use
- Procedures for the skill practice session

- Responsibilities of the instructor and the instructor aide
- Additional information that the instructor aide candidate needs to know to increase his comfort level with the course material, course delivery or both

Water Safety instructor aides must have successfully completed the level or demonstrated the knowledge and skills for the level for which they are serving as an aide.

## Lifeguards

An adequate number of certified lifeguards should be on duty and conducting patron surveillance during all in-water sessions. Having lifeguards on duty:

- Improves instruction by allowing you to concentrate on teaching.
- Increases the safety of participants.
- Provides trained rescuers who can act in an emergency.

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## CLASS SAFETY

As a Red Cross Water Safety instructor, you are responsible for the safety of your participants and for making the teaching environment as safe as possible. Considering possible risks and managing safety concerns before classes start can improve class safety. Often, you can foresee risks and eliminate or control them long before participants step into the water. General strategies for promoting safety and lowering risk include the following:

- **Make safety your primary concern.** Adopt a “safety-first” attitude and teach this to your participants, using every possible opportunity to convey this message. Explain safe behavior at your facility and other facilities and aquatic environments during your presentations. Be sure participants—and their parents or whoever brings them to the lesson—know and follow the facility’s and program’s rules and regulations. Explain and enforce all rules consistently.
- **Be prepared to respond in an emergency.** Know where emergency equipment (including water rescue equipment, a telephone and first aid supplies) is located and emergency phone numbers (including those for the police, emergency medical services, fire department, poison control center, security and facility management) are posted. Know and practice your facility’s emergency action plan (EAP). All facility policies and procedures, including how to activate the EAP, should be in writing and available to you. Be sure to have your own copy of the EAP because you are responsible for knowing how the plan pertains to you and your classes. To avoid confusion and misunderstandings, be sure your roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and documented. If you have exclusive use of the facility, the standard facility EAP may need to be modified. If the facility is a residential pool or other private pool, you may need to write your own EAP. A key component of the EAP is practice. If you are part of a facility program, practice the EAP by participating in regular in-service trainings. If modifications have been made to accommodate exclusive use or if the teaching occurs in a private pool, practice the EAP with any individuals who will be involved. To learn more about EAPs, refer to *Swimming and Water Safety* and the *Red Cross Lifeguarding Manual*. Information on EAPs is also available in the Red Cross *Lifeguard Management* online course.
- **Provide adequate supervision and staffing.** Consider class size and participant characteristics and enlist help from a co-instructor or instructor aide if necessary. For example, if the class size is

large or if you have participants who move, learn, behave or communicate differently, you might need to provide for more hands-on help and supervision. Plan how you will organize your class to ensure that all participants are adequately supervised. For example, some classes are safe with all participants in the water together, performing either as a group or individually. With other classes, having all the participants in the water together may not be safe. And always remember that a certified lifeguard must be on surveillance duty at all times during swim lessons.

- **Plan classes that are appropriate for your participants' developmental stages and physical and cognitive abilities.** For example, do not have participants attempt skills before they are developmentally ready or present information to children in a manner that might frighten them.
- **Use equipment properly.** Identify the equipment you will need for the lesson. Before your class begins, gather the necessary equipment, make sure it is in good working order and place it within easy reach so you do not have to leave your class unattended to get needed items. Always use the equipment the way it is intended to be used (see Chapter 3, Box 3-2).
- **Take steps to eliminate or minimize potential environmental hazards.** Make sure that appropriate staff is available to conduct routine and regular daily inspections for safety and cleanliness. Consider all areas of the environment, including the pool deck and locker rooms. Some hazards cannot be easily altered, such as blind spots and “slip or trip” areas. Be alert for potential hazards and adjust your class to reduce risk if you cannot completely eliminate the hazard. Document and report your concerns to the facility manager, program coordinator or both, retaining a copy for your records.
- **Lower the risk for the transmission of recreational water illnesses (RWIs).** Communicable diseases can be spread through the water or by direct contact with other participants. Microorganisms that can cause RWIs include “Crypto” (KRIP-toe, short for *Cryptosporidium*), *Giardia* (gee-ARE-dee-uh), *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Shigella* (shi-GE-luh). These microorganisms are spread when a person swallows water that is contaminated with fecal matter. Many microorganisms that cause RWIs are killed by chlorine, but chlorine does not eliminate the microorganisms right away and in some cases the microorganisms are resistant to chlorine and can live in pools for days. Therefore, even the best maintained pools can spread illness. To lower the risk for transmission of RWIs, ensure that correct pool water chemistry is maintained, remind parents of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “six PLEAs” to reduce the transmission of RWIs (Box 1-1), and follow your facility’s policy regarding restricting participation by people with contagious illnesses or symptoms of an infection.
- **Be knowledgeable about medical conditions that may make a participant ineligible to participate in a Learn-to-Swim program because the condition puts the participant or others in the water at risk.** Uncontrolled seizures, communicable disease, diarrhea and an elevated body temperature are absolute contraindications to participating in an aquatics program. Some conditions may limit participation in an aquatic program. These include uncontrolled diabetes, active joint inflammation, severe respiratory compromise, skin infections, bowel incontinence, or a history of fluid aspiration, chlorine sensitivity or latex allergies. Some pediatricians keep children who have had tympanotomy tubes inserted in the ear canal from participating in swim programs. Because medical professionals disagree about swimming, ear infections and tympanotomy tubes, advise parents to follow their health care provider’s instructions.
- **Know health code requirements.** Familiarize yourself with your state and local recreational bathing and health code requirements and standards (for example, concerning lifeguard supervision, child supervision ratios, safety equipment that must be available and water chemistry that must be maintained).

Box 1-1. **Six “PLEAs” for Healthy Swimming: Limiting the Spread of Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)**

1. **PLEASE** don't swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for children in diapers.
2. **PLEASE** avoid getting pool water in your mouth or swallowing pool water.
3. **PLEASE** practice good hygiene.
  - Shower with soap before swimming.
  - Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
4. **PLEASE** take your children on bathroom breaks and check diapers often.
5. **PLEASE** change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area, not poolside.
6. **PLEASE** wash your children thoroughly (especially the buttocks area) with soap and water before swimming.

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Six Steps for Healthy Swimming ([www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/)).

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## RECORDS AND REPORTS

Records and reports provide documentation related to your teaching activity and include:

- Copies of instructor certifications.
- Lesson plans.
- Course records or class rosters.
- Participant attendance records.
- Participant checklists.

You must report your teaching activity by submitting course records through the American Red Cross Learning Center. Instructions for submitting course records are available on Instructor's Corner ([www.instructorscorner.org](http://www.instructorscorner.org)).

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## COURSE EVALUATION

Receiving feedback from participants is important following any course. Participants (and their parents, when participants are children) should have an opportunity to tell you what they thought about the course. This information will provide you with feedback concerning the course and its instruction, which in turn helps your facility and the Red Cross maintain the high quality of the course. Encourage course participants and parents to provide feedback directly to national headquarters by completing the online Service Quality and Effectiveness Survey, available at <http://www.redcross.org/surveys/capss/all>.



# Teaching Swimming and Water Safety

# PROMOTING EFFECTIVE LEARNING

**A**s a Water Safety instructor, you have the opportunity to make a difference in participants' lives by teaching them the concepts and skills they need to enjoy and stay safe around the water. To be most effective as an instructor, you need to understand how people learn new skills and information, what teaching methods you can use to help participants learn and how to create an environment that is conducive to learning. The information in this chapter will help you promote effective learning when you are teaching swimming skills and strokes.

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# DEVELOPMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING MOTOR SKILLS

*Motor skills* are motions carried out when the nervous system (that is, the brain, spinal cord and nerves) and the muscles work together. Learning motor skills, such as those used in swimming, requires the development of limb coordination, strength, posture control, balance and perceptual skills. Even though all humans change the way they move over the course of their lives, researchers do not agree on an explanation for why motor skills change. But they do agree that movements, including those used in swimming, change progressively. These changes are a result of complex interactions between the characteristics the person is born with and his or her individual experiences. These changes can also be understood in terms of several natural patterns, called *developmental principles*. By understanding how developmental principles apply to swimming skills, you can help participants learn to swim or swim more efficiently.

## Predictable Order of Change

Changes in motor skills do not occur randomly, but happen in a predictable order. Participants learn easier skills before more challenging skills. Rudimentary swimming movement patterns appear before more advanced swimming patterns. For example, when swimming on the front, beginners will not swim very far, they tend to keep their arms underwater during recovery and they often use a beginner stroke (sometimes called a “dog paddle”). In contrast, with more experience, strength and coordination, swimmers can travel much farther, recover their arms out of the water and use a rudimentary crawl stroke.

Because swimming skills change over time in predictable, natural sequences, your teaching progressions should always parallel these naturally occurring sequences. You want to help participants move from practicing simpler and easier skills to practicing more complex and difficult ones. Basic forms of any swimming behavior lead to more advanced skills. Early behaviors, such as using underwater arm recovery, are often prerequisites to later, more advanced skills, such as using above-water arm recovery. Knowing the predictable order of change in aquatic skills allows you to anticipate the skills a participant will use next. For example, before asking a participant to submerge his or her entire head, have the participant practice submerging just parts of his or her face to help the participant to become familiar with and ready for the more difficult task of full head submersion. The American Red Cross uses predictable sequences that are based on how swimming skills naturally change to create the progression of skills within and across all levels of the Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses.

## Increasing Integration of Skill Elements

Another principle of learning motor skills is that over time, actions become more closely connected with other related actions. Skilled swimmers doing the front crawl move through the water with apparent ease because they have learned to integrate and time their rotary breathing with their arm stroke and leg kick. In contrast, beginning swimmers often look very different. They may stroke with their arms moving rapidly for a time. Then they either stop moving their arms or paddle using very short, quick motions while they catch a long breath with their face out of the water. Finally they resume their arm stroke.

One key difference between beginner and skilled swimmers is the degree to which they can coordinate their arm stroke, leg kick and breathing.

Participants tend to learn some skills and strokes more easily and effectively when they practice an element of the skill or stroke separately. For example, participants need to learn elements of breath control, such as face and head submersion and rhythmic breathing, before attempting breathing patterns with specific strokes. Similarly, learning the basic patterns of the flutter kick, dolphin kick or breaststroke kick usually is best practiced separately. After this separate practice, you can add other stroke elements, such as the arm action and then the breathing and timing. This method works better in the very early stages of learning skills. At more advanced levels, some skills may be easier to learn as a whole. The teaching method you choose depends on the specific skills being learned.

As soon as the participant is proficient at performing the individual elements of a skill or stroke, put all of the elements together and practice the skill as a whole. It is important to encourage swimmers to practice most aquatic skills as a whole whenever possible. For example, some swimmers may have difficulty developing coordinated stroke movements when they practice stroke elements separately. Practicing a stroke using all elements together—the leg kick, arm stroke and breathing—is important because each element influences the performance of the other elements. For this reason, practicing each element separately until performing it very well does not necessarily result in an improved stroke. Therefore, all the elements should be practiced together as soon as possible to maximize the effectiveness of learning and lead to progressive improvement over time.



**Safety Note:** *Participants may need to use flotation aids, such as kickboards, or other instructional devices, such as fins, to practice a stroke pattern safely and effectively.*

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## Increasing Specialization and Adaptability

As swimmers' skills develop, their skills become more specialized and flexible. Inexperienced swimmers typically move through the water using limited, general patterns such as a combined stroke on the front. Over time and with greater skill, they may become capable of swimming several different strokes on the front, such as front crawl, breaststroke and butterfly. Swimmers use a similar underwater arm stroke pattern for both the front crawl and butterfly. But swimmers use one arm at a time when swimming the crawl and both arms simultaneously for the butterfly. Swimmers at this level have become more specialized. Ultimately, swimmers are able to select whichever specialized strokes they wish to use and modify them for specific conditions. For example, a regular breaststroke includes a glide. But if a lifeguard needs to bring a submerged victim to the surface, it is necessary to eliminate the glide and kick continuously and without hesitation. More skilled swimmers can make this adjustment, while also making adaptations as needed to improve their effectiveness in the water.

It is not a cause for concern when beginning-level participants cannot perform arm strokes and leg kicks like elite swimmers. With practice, experience and feedback, participants' arm and leg patterns will change and become more specialized and effective. These changes may occur gradually over weeks, months or years.

## Observable Change Over Time

The way motor skills change over time can be observed by quantifying outcomes as well as by observing changes in how the skill is performed or the types of skills performed. Outcomes can be quantified in terms of time, repetitions or distances (numeric scores). For example, when beginners first learn to float on their backs, they may only do so for a couple of seconds. But with instruction and practice, they soon can float effortlessly for longer periods of time. When participants gain the coordination and strength to swim a stroke, they may only be able to swim a short distance. But with instruction and practice, they can soon swim longer distances, such as the entire length of a pool one or more times.

You can also observe changes in a participant's motor skill development by observing *how* the participant performs the skill or the *types* of skills performed (outcome or performance scores). In both cases, the participant is capable of doing something new and different. For example, young children or adult beginners first may only be capable of moving around in the water by holding onto the side of the pool or walking in shallow water. Gradually, they can move through the water using a glide or rudimentary swimming skill without touching the side or bottom of the pool, thus learning a new skill. Similarly, when novices first try using their legs to kick in the water, they typically perform a distinct leg action that looks like “running” or “bicycling.” With instruction, time or more experience, the leg kicking actions change to a more fully extended position that becomes a recognizable flutter-like kick. This change is not simply a gradual increase in speed, range of motion or strength—it represents a new and different coordinated muscle action.

You should anticipate that some skills, such as breath control or flotation, might improve very gradually or sometimes not at all for some time. When participants' swimming skills are changing slowly, it is important to use outcome or performance scores to document these small, gradual changes. This helps you and your participants stay motivated to continue practicing. It is also important for you to look for new skills to appear or for changes in the pattern of how a participant performs a particular skill. When you notice that a participant's movement patterns, such as the style of kicking, arm stroke or breathing action, begins to change, you can adjust the feedback you give accordingly so that the swimmer continues to develop and improve the skill. Recognizing these changes in how a participant performs a skill (or the types of skills performed) will also help you recognize when the participant is ready to move on to learning more advanced skills.

## Individual Rates of Motor Skill Development

The development of motor skills depends on physical changes that occur as a person matures. For example, a baby younger than 1 year lacks the muscular coordination needed to do many of the things a toddler does, such as walk, run, jump and climb. Because changes in a child's abilities roughly correlate with chronological age, the child's age is often a convenient marker used to understand and measure motor skill development. However, although all people pass through the stages of growth and development in a series of predictable steps that roughly correlate with chronological age, they do so at different rates. For this reason, it is misleading to assume that an increase in age automatically results in improvement or that all people of a certain age are at a similar level of motor skill development.

As a Water Safety instructor, you should carefully consider a variety of personal characteristics in addition to age when determining a participant's readiness to learn various swimming skills. It is also important to reassure parents who may be comparing their child's performance to that of his or her peers that not all children of the same age develop the same skills at the same time, and an increase in age does not automatically result in improvement.

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## STAGES OF LEARNING MOTOR SKILLS

*Motor learning* is a field of study that examines the processes of learning motor skills, like those used in swimming. The motor learning theory presumes that changes in motor behavior result primarily from practice or experience that is controlled by an instructor or coach. A related theory about how motor skills are learned explains that learners progress through three identifiable stages of learning: early, intermediate and advanced.

The **early stage of learning** is marked by awkward, slow movements that learners consciously try to control. A person in the early stage of learning a new skill has to think before performing the movement. Performance in this stage generally does not look like skilled behavior. For example, think back to when you were learning how to drive a car. Recall the thoughts that raced through your head. "Where is the brake?" "How far before the corner do I put on my turn signal?" Because you had to think through every action, your movements were slow and awkward.

As you gained experience and as your instructor explained things in different ways, your performance improved, but still could vary quite a lot. Your responses were faster and smoother. You developed a general understanding of each movement, but you still did not look like a skilled driver. Once you had the idea of the movement, you progressed to the **intermediate stage**. In this stage, you spent less time thinking about every detail and began to associate the movement you were learning with other movements you already knew. For example, when you reached the intermediate stage of learning how to drive, you did not have to think so consciously about all the separate tasks of driving, such as using the turn signal, applying the brake and looking both ways when you stopped to turn at an intersection. Your behavior was still variable, but it looked and felt routine.

Finally, with a lot of experience, your driving performance reached an acceptable level. Your movements were accurate and rapid. You seemed to know instinctively what to do in almost every situation. When you did something incorrectly, you realized it immediately and found ways to correct it. You did not need to "think" about what you were doing; it was automatic. And you no longer depended on your instructor for feedback on your performance. You had reached the **advanced stage of learning**. In this stage, learning is mostly complete, although the skill can continue to be refined through practice for many years.

These learning stages are easily recognizable, no matter what skill is being learned. When you are teaching swimming skills, you should be able to observe your participants going through these stages, especially as they are learning more complicated skills such as strokes and headfirst entries. Be aware that it is very likely that people in the same class will be in different learning stages. As an instructor, your role will vary depending on the participant's stage of learning (Box 2-1).

## Box 2-1. **Learning Stages**

### **Early Stage**

Characteristics of the early stage of learning include:

- Awkward, slow movements that seem to be consciously controlled by the learner.
- Poor understanding of the task.

At this stage, instructors need to provide:

- Information about the goal of the task.
- Distributed practice (that is, frequent rest periods throughout the practice schedule).
- Corrective feedback, especially knowledge of performance (that is, feedback that helps ensure that the learner's initial attempts at the skill are successful and done properly).

### **Intermediate Stage**

Learners progress to the intermediate stage of learning when they have a general understanding of the goal of the task. Characteristics of the intermediate stage of learning include:

- More rapid movement.
- Inconsistent movements that vary with each try.
- An increased understanding of the task, but a lack of understanding of all of the fine points that are needed to successfully complete the task.

At this stage, instructors need to provide:

- Extensive and varied practice.
- Adequate and accurate feedback (both knowledge of performance and results).

### **Advanced Stage**

In general, people do not reach the advanced stage of learning until they are older and more experienced. Characteristics of the advanced stage of learning include:

- Accurate, rapid movement.
- An understanding of skill technique.
- The ability to assess and evaluate one's own performance.

At this stage, instructors should provide:

- Minor corrections.
- Specialized feedback.
- Positive reinforcement.

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# HELPING PARTICIPANTS LEARN

As a Water Safety instructor, you can make the process of learning swimming skills more effective by:

- Using teaching progressions.
- Recognizing the participant's readiness for learning, and setting specific and achievable goals based on that readiness.
- Giving accurate instruction and demonstrations.
- Encouraging active participation and practice toward the goals.
- Giving positive, corrective and timely feedback in relation to performance.
- Using different types of motivation as part of the feedback process.
- Creating an environment that is conducive to learning.

## Using Teaching Progressions

The teaching progressions used in the Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses have been designed according to the principles of learning discussed so far. When you lead participants through these progressions, you are using a teaching strategy that is:

- **Developmental.** Motor skills are best learned when skills are broken into steps that are taught logically, each leading directly to the next. In addition, since each new detail or refinement of a skill is added incrementally to what the participants already know, they can integrate the new skill with what they have already learned. The result is a change in the quality of their abilities.
- **Familiar.** The teaching progressions are based on the principle that people learn skills more easily when the skills are taught in a standardized way. The familiarity that comes from the teaching progressions that are used in the courses that make up the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program help participants anticipate the next step of a progression even as they improve the skills they know.
- **Measurable.** Since the teaching progressions are divided into small, measurable steps, you and the participants have a useful standard for setting goals. You can use teaching progressions to assess participants' readiness to attempt new skills (or the next step of a complex skill) and to evaluate their performances after they have practiced certain skills.

Using teaching progressions also helps you manage any anxiety participants may have about attempting skills.

## Setting Goals

The first step in the learning process is to present a goal clearly in an age-appropriate way. You can provide a *verbal* explanation of the goal by describing it, discussing it with participants or telling a simple story (Box 2-2). You can provide a *visual* explanation of the goal by demonstrating (or having an instructor aide or a peer demonstrate) the desired outcome or by showing participants an illustration (for example, on a task card), photo (for example, on a poster) or video. The method you will use depends on the participant, the situation and the skill that you are teaching. With young participants, peer demonstrations can be very effective in helping to set goals. These demonstrations not only show effective or possible ways to perform skills but also may lead young participants to think, "If they can do

## Box 2-2. **Communicating Effectively**

**Communicate at the right level.** To be an effective instructor, you need to be able to communicate at a level appropriate to your participants' level of understanding and skill. There are several ways to check whether you are communicating at the right level. The simplest way is to ask the participants if they understand what you just said. Rather than asking the participants "Do you understand?", try having them explain what you said. You will be able to tell right away if there are any misunderstandings and correct them as needed. You can also use your observation skills to gauge the effectiveness of your communication. If your participants seem uninterested or distracted while you are explaining a skill, you may be talking over their heads. If, while practicing the skill, the participants' movements are nothing like what you explained, you should suspect a communication problem. Most likely, the explanation that you provided was not at a level appropriate for your participants, and they did not understand what you were asking them to do.

**Say just enough to communicate what is needed.** It is very easy to give too much information, especially to beginners. The description of even a simple swimming skill involves an enormous amount of information. Avoid over-explaining the skill. Also, consider limiting the amount of information that you provide at one time. If you describe (and ask participants to perform) a simple skill broken down in all its parts, you are giving them a large amount of information to absorb all at once. Since they are more likely to remember only the first and last things you say, your communication will be more effective if you give smaller amounts of information. Communicating a single item at a time often works best with younger or beginning participants.

**Use verbal cues.** When you are verbally describing a motor skill, you are in a sense painting a picture in the minds of your participants. The challenge is to paint a clear picture using as few words as possible. Choose your words carefully. Develop a vocabulary that describes what you want to see in a skill. If you want a flutter kick with the muscles in the lower leg loose and relaxed, you might tell the participants to use "floppy ankles and feet." Making comparisons is also an effective way to convey information to learners. Saying "kick like a dolphin" paints a clear picture because many people are familiar with how a dolphin propels itself through the water. An instruction such as "stretch like you are hanging from a tree," helps participants associate something they already know with something they are learning. Use and reuse those words or phrases so they become part of the participants' vocabulary as well.

Effective teachers consciously develop a vocabulary that suits their needs. These words and phrases become teaching cues you can use over and over. Think about brief, highly descriptive ways to explain what you want to communicate. It takes time and preparation as well as good mentoring from more experienced teachers to come up with effective descriptive phrases and comparisons. Recalling phrases your teachers or coaches used that were meaningful to you may be helpful. But be sure to consider the effectiveness of the terms you choose for your own style of teaching. What works for one instructor may not be effective for another.

**Give precise and concise directions.** When working with older children and adults, it is important to pick words and phrases that are precise and concise. Directions given using vague terms (for example, "Put your hands *in front* of your body when pulling in the front crawl," "Pull *wide* in the breaststroke" and "Pull and glide *long* in the elementary backstroke") lead to questions about where in front, how wide and how long. Instead, try to provide specific references for how movements should be performed, such as:

- "Your hands should enter directly forward of your shoulders and with the elbow bent slightly. Like this ..."
- "Pull to 10 and 2 o'clock before you sweep during the breaststroke pull, from here ... to here ..."
- "Glide for the count of three or until you are almost stopped. One and two and three and four."

it, so can I.” After demonstrating a skill for adults, you might only have to state a learning outcome such as, “By the end of this lesson, you should be able to perform this skill fairly well. We are going to practice it so you can achieve that goal.”

After achieving the initial goal, participants should set goals to change or improve their performance in a particular swimming skill. You may need to set goals for younger participants. As younger participants advance in experience and skill level, they can participate in setting goals for themselves. When setting goals for participants, consider their:

- Age (this applies to children as well as adults).
- Special needs or conditions (for example, a disability).
- Level of cognitive and motor skill development.
- Language comprehension.
- Level of motivation.

## **Encouraging Practice**

Practice is essential for learning and improving motor skills. When planning a lesson, consider the following factors:

- Active practice time
- The ratio of practice time to rest
- Variability of practice
- Structure of practice

### **Active practice time**

When planning, make sure that there is adequate active practice time for all participants during each lesson. Try to minimize the time participants spend receiving explanations and demonstrations of the skill and waiting in line to practice it, and maximize the time they spend engaged in active practice. Depending on the skill being taught and the level of the participants, you may be able to use wave, stagger, circle and scatter class formations to help to minimize waiting time and maximize active practice time. (These formations are described in more detail in Chapter 3.)

### **Ratio of practice time to rest**

Consider how much rest to provide between practice periods. The amount of time spent resting depends on the skill being learned and practiced. Gross motor skills that require strength or endurance, such as swimming strokes, require longer rest periods. Less strenuous skills, such as breath control or floating, may allow more repetitions with shorter rest periods. Learners retain a motor skill longer when instructors provide frequent periods of rest. Rest periods allow the participant to recover from fatigue and reduce boredom from repetition. When possible, keep participants in the water during rest periods, perhaps engaged in practicing other activities. This helps participants from becoming chilled, which can lessen their enthusiasm for, and attention to, the lesson.

### **Variability of practice**

Also consider the ways you will vary the practice. Varying both the skill and the conditions under which participants practice the skill improves the quality and rate of learning. A varied approach is more

effective than practicing the same skill over and over in the same way. For example, learning breath control skills is enhanced when participants practice submersion and rhythmic breathing in a variety of ways (such as while standing at the pool edge, while floating and while swimming with support), rather than by simply repeating breath holding or blowing bubbles. Frequent changes in the tempo of a stroke can help keep participants interested and improve their feel for the water. Practicing kicking in several situations (such as holding onto the gutter, with instructor support and with a kickboard) can lead to more effective learning of kicking skills than simply practicing the flutter kick at the side of the pool.

## Structure of practice

Finally, when you are planning lessons, think about what you will have participants practice, and how you will have them practice it. Tailor practices to the types of skills you are teaching. For example, simple skills, such as breath control and floating, may be practiced without being broken down into separate parts. Skills that are performed slowly and in a step-by-step fashion, such as putting on and fastening a life jacket, doing an approach for a forward dive from a diving board or performing rotary breathing, are often easier for participants to learn when you break them down into their component parts. Generally, this technique is effective for skills that are not refined over time and that have a single appropriate way to be performed. Some more complex skills, such as swimming strokes, may also require having participants practice parts of the skill individually before putting them all together into a stroke pattern. But remember to have participants practice the skill as a whole as soon as they are proficient at the individual parts.

## Giving Feedback

Giving positive and corrective feedback can help participants improve. To provide positive and corrective feedback, give your participants credit for what they have done while providing information about how to improve. This type of corrective feedback enhances learning.

Learning skills without appropriate feedback is like learning by trial and error. Precise feedback is usually more useful to most participants than general feedback. Comments such as “good” or “nice job” are helpful initial responses for motivation, but are not specific enough to provide participants with a basis for making corrections. Accompany phrases such as “good job” with precise feedback, such as “I like how you kept your cheek and ear in the water at the same time” or “That time you kept your knees straighter during the flutter kick.”

When you are correcting participants’ mistakes, it may seem difficult to avoid using negative language. For example, it may seem natural to say: “Don’t bend your knees so much” when a participant uses a kick that comes out of the water. However, negative feedback both reinforces what the participant has done incorrectly and fails to identify what he should be doing, so it is not particularly helpful. Try the following strategies to provide positive and corrective feedback:

- Tell the participant what he has done correctly first, before pointing out what the participant did incorrectly or what he could have done better. For example, you can say: “I really like how hard you are trying. Great effort. Next time try to straighten your knees so you will make a smaller splash.”
- Rephrase negative comments so they are more positive. Instead of saying, “Don’t lift your head” while the participant is trying to learn rotary breathing in the front crawl, you might say: “Can you try turning your chin to the side?” or “If you exhale a little earlier, it will be easier to get your breath while turning your head to the side.”

## Providing Motivation

Motivation is the drive that keeps a person moving toward a goal. This drive can lead people to start, maintain or change a behavior. As an instructor, you will be better able to provide motivation if you understand why your participants want to learn to swim. Sometimes understanding your participants' motivation may simply be a matter of asking each participant, "So why are you here?" Bear in mind that not all of your participants will be self-motivated, or necessarily excited about learning how to swim—they may only be taking the class because a parent signed them up for it, or because they are required to take the class to meet a job requirement. As a result, participants in Swimming and Water Safety classes can range from a fearful beginner (Box 2-3) to the self-directed learner who is excited to learn a new skill or improve existing skills. To be an effective instructor, you should strive to understand and recognize

### Box 2-3. The Anxious Participant

Fear and anxiety can decrease a participant's motivation and ability to learn. These limiting emotions may come from different sources. Some fears result from personal experiences, such as a nonfatal drowning. Other fears may be referred from other sources, such as a family member's frightening experience, media coverage of a frightening event involving the water, or sensationalistic television programs or scary movies.

Anxious or fearful participants often show avoidance behaviors, such as:

- Making excuses (for absences, lateness or not wanting to attempt a skill).
- Huddling (rounding the shoulders too much and making the chest concave, especially when in a prone position).
- Holding the body rigid, particularly the muscles of the shoulders and legs.
- Clenching the fists.
- Pursing or biting the lips.
- Shivering even in warm temperatures (someone who is frightened may shiver no matter how warm the water or air temperatures).
- Clinging to supports when practicing skills, especially floating.
- Gripping the instructor, especially during floating and submersion skills practice.
- Moving unnecessarily (such as kicking when participants should be floating motionless).
- Performing swim strokes with arm actions that are too short, too shallow, too rigid, too fast or a combination of these.
- Making frequent requests to go to the bathroom (most common in young children).
- Being unable to blow air out underwater before returning to the surface.
- Breathing in while the face is still submerged.

For successful learning, participants must develop self-confidence and trust in you, the instructor.

There are many things you can do to help the fearful or anxious participant:

- **Plan practices strategically.** For example, plan drills so that participants work back toward the wall, rather than away from safety. Practice skills that can cause anxiety (for example, submersion, floating) on steps with railings or in areas with zero-depth entries.

*(continued)*

Box 2-3. (continued)

- **Promote self-confidence and maximize opportunities for the participant to succeed.** Allow the participant to practice skills he or she already can perform successfully to help him or her gain the confidence to try the next slightly more challenging task in a skill progression. Help the fearful participant feel in control and gain self-confidence by taking special care to prepare him or her for each new experience. Discuss each new task and the desired outcomes. Use a technique called *imagery* to help the participant to imagine himself or herself successfully completing the task. When the participant feels ready to attempt the new task, encourage and reward each attempt as a success.
- **Provide individualized attention.** Low participant-to-instructor ratios are appropriate for fearful learners of any age. Individual attention allows the anxious participant to advance at his or her own pace rather than fall behind the rest of the class, which can further undermine self-confidence.
- **Maintain the participant's motivation to learn.** Remind the participant of the goals he or she has set and praise the participant for his or her effort and the skills that have already been acquired. This helps to maintain the participant's motivation and desire to learn. Without self-motivation, it is too easy to give up when the task seems difficult or produces anxiety.
- **Be patient and encourage the participant at every step.** Avoid any expressions of exasperation or impatience. (Be careful of body language, as well as what you say!) Allow the participant to own and control his or her fear. Never force the participant to try something he or she perceives as threatening, or criticize a participant for avoiding a fearful situation. Instead, encourage the participant to take small steps toward his or her goals.

the variety of motives your participants may possess. Their motivation can come from inside or be externally reinforced by incentives, rewards or challenges offered by instructors or peers. Motivation that comes from the participant's own desire to learn is the more powerful and enduring of the two types of motivation because it is under the control of the learner. Be careful not to undermine internal motivation by offering unnecessary rewards or challenges!

The most powerful motivator for everyone, regardless of age, ability or skill level, is to experience meaningful success. Success means that the person must overcome some reasonable challenge rather than simply performing an easily accomplished task. The level of the challenge and the criteria for success must always be adapted to each individual learner.

Reinforcement—anything that increases the likelihood that a person will perform a given task as desired—can also help you motivate participants. *Positive reinforcement* is a way of increasing desired behavior by presenting a positive reinforcer after the learner shows the desired behavior. A positive reinforcer is something valued by the learner, such as praise or a fun activity. *Negative reinforcement* is a way of increasing behavior by removing a negative reinforcer after the learner shows the desired behavior. A negative reinforcer is something the learner wants to avoid, like more laps! Negative reinforcers should not be mean-spirited. Also, be careful not to confuse negative reinforcement with punishment. Negative reinforcement involves taking away a negative reinforcer in order to strengthen a desired behavior. Punishment, on the other hand, involves imposing a negative consequence in order to decrease an undesired behavior.

Most psychologists believe that positive reinforcers provided on a timely basis are far more effective than negative reinforcers in shaping behavior. A good form of positive reinforcement is the personal praise you give when participants perform skills in an appropriate or effective manner. The more participants

feel that their efforts are noticed and appreciated, the more likely it is that they will repeat and learn the desired behavior.

Motivation brings this discussion about helping participants learn full circle. Participants' motivations can be translated into goals. To be truly motivating, goals must be realistic for participants. If the goals are set too low, they will not be challenging and your participants will not accomplish much. If the goals are unrealistically high, participants will likely become frustrated and their motivation will diminish. Your participants' motivation will remain strong if goals are realistic, based on prior experience, and are measurable and meaningful to your participants. Goals also give purpose and direction to practice time. Effective practice involves receiving appropriate feedback. Feedback that allows people to reach goals is a great way to boost intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for aquatics.

## Creating an Environment Conducive to Learning

An environment where participants feel comfortable and at ease can help to promote effective learning. Comfort has both physical and psychological elements.

### Physical factors

The physical environment can have a significant impact on participants' comfort, which in turn can affect their ability to focus and learn and their motivation to continue attending lessons.

Water temperature is a major factor in participant comfort and overall success. Water that is too cold or too warm can lead to discomfort and result in limiting the time spent in the water. The American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council has established guidelines for water temperature based on the age of the participants, the intensity of activity and the amount of time participants spend in the water during the session (Table 2-1). Generally speaking, young children and older adults who are participating in swim lessons need warmer water temperatures than older children, teens and young adults. In facilities with varied programming and a wide range of patrons, the water temperature may be too cool for children who are participants in Parent and Child Aquatics or Preschool Aquatics classes or for older adults who are participants in Adult Swim classes. If the water temperature is below the recommended guidelines and you cannot adjust the water temperature to accommodate the needs of your class, you may need to take additional measures to reduce discomfort, such as planning shorter lessons, increasing the intensity of the activity (if appropriate) or having participants wear additional layers (such as a rash guard, T-shirt or swim cap) for warmth. You should also be alert to, and able to provide care for, body temperature issues, whether the person is getting too cold or too overheated.

Table 2-1. **Water Temperature Guidelines for Aquatic Instruction**

Class	Participant Age	Typical Duration	Water Temperature Guidelines
Parent and Child Aquatics Preschool Aquatics	Younger than 5 years	20 to 30 minutes	≥ 89.6° F (32° C)
Learn-to-Swim	6 to 15 years	30 to 45 minutes	≥ 84.2° F (29° C)
Adult Swim	15 to 55 years	1 to 2 hours	84.2° F (29° C) to 89.6° F (32° C)

Air temperature can also have an effect on participant comfort. You may need to take additional measures to ensure that participants do not become too chilled, such as limiting the amount of time in the water encouraging them to wear an extra layer (such as a rash guard, a swim cap or both for warmth) and advising them to bring additional towels to class.

The overall cleanliness and safety of the facility is also an important factor in creating an environment that promotes learning. A facility does not need to be new, but it does need to be clean, safe and well maintained. Dirty locker rooms, cold showers and cluttered swimming areas are unsafe and unappealing and can cause participants to stop attending lessons at the facility. Check locker rooms, the deck and swimming areas regularly for cleanliness and safe conditions, and refer any potential problems to the facility management.

Finally, it is important to take steps to minimize distractions, such as background noise and curious onlookers. Try to schedule classes when there is less activity in the facility, or hold classes in a quiet area of the facility. Minimize interruptions in the learning process by being prepared and having equipment ready before the lesson starts.

## **Psychological factors**

A relaxing, positive environment promotes learning. Participants must feel safe and secure during the swim class. To foster an environment of trust that promotes success:

- Create an atmosphere in which participants feel safe and confident that they will not be ridiculed and are not afraid to make mistakes. Frequently remind participants that few people do everything right the first time. Provide as much privacy as possible so that participants do not feel like their attempts are being judged or evaluated by curious onlookers.
- Build confidence by starting each lesson with a good review that includes some previously learned skills, especially skills that are related to the new skills you will be teaching in that day's lesson. In each lesson, include some skills that participants can do reasonably well. Take breaks from difficult or complex skills before participants become frustrated.
- Be enthusiastic and reward each step toward success. Let participants feel your desire to be there, or you will lose the interest and respect of the group.
- Show a real interest in the participants and their goals.
- Prepare participants for each new experience. Always discuss what comes next and keep your word. For example, if you tell a participant that you will not let go, do not let go.
- Be consistent and patient in your approach.
- Never push a participant into skills that are beyond the participant's comfort level.
- Be prepared. Organize the course effectively so participants do not feel that their time is being wasted.
- Provide a social atmosphere.
- Give participants time to respond to the information you give them. You can help them be more successful by slowing down the presentation of skills and giving them enough freedom to work at their own pace.
- Use vocabulary appropriate for the level of understanding and capabilities of the participants in your class.

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# TEACHING STRATEGIES

As a Water Safety instructor, you will use many different teaching strategies to help your participants enhance their aquatic skills and learn how to be safe in, on and around the water. Before choosing a teaching strategy for a particular concept or skill, you need to consider a number of factors, such as:

- The concept or skill to be learned.
- The current skill level of the participants.
- How the class will be organized.
- How much practice time you will provide.
- How often and what type of feedback you will provide.
- How you will evaluate participants' performance.

When you are teaching, you may use direct teaching strategies, indirect teaching strategies or a combination of the two. *Direct teaching strategies* are very teacher-centered, in that the instructor controls what is being taught, when and how. In contrast, *indirect teaching strategies* are learner-centered in that the focus is on the participants, not the instructor. Rather than controlling all elements of what is taught, the instructor plays the role of learning facilitator. Indirect teaching strategies encourage participants to use exploration, discovery and problem-solving to acquire new information and skills.

## Direct Teaching Strategies

Direct teaching strategies are the most commonly used teaching strategies when teaching motor skills, such as swimming. Direct teaching strategies allow the greatest structure and control of the swim class and are generally very effective; however, they do not take advantage of participants' inherent creativity and problem-solving abilities as indirect teaching strategies do.

Beginning instructors are usually most comfortable using direct teaching strategies because these are the strategies their own instructors probably used when teaching them how to swim. Because direct teaching methods are more traditional and therefore more familiar, beginning instructors may find it easier to work on mastering these methods before trying indirect techniques. Thorough preparation is critical when using direct teaching strategies. Always have a detailed lesson plan that includes more learning activities than you think you will need for the lesson. Some instructors find it useful to practice teaching the lesson to ensure that they are comfortable with the planned activities and the planned order for introducing them.

## Explain, demonstrate and practice

*Explain, demonstrate and practice* is a commonly used teaching strategy in physical education, coaching and swimming instruction. For this teaching strategy to be effective, the instructor must be knowledgeable about the subject and proficient at the skills that are being taught. When using this teaching strategy, the instructor controls all elements of the class:

- **Explain.** The instructor explains the skill.
- **Demonstrate.** The instructor demonstrates how to perform the skill.
- **Practice.** On the instructor's signal, the participants practice the skill as demonstrated.

The participants' roles include being attentive and listening closely to what the instructor says to them and asks them to do.

Good explanations and demonstrations can make it easier and quicker for participants to pick up the skill that is being taught, by increasing their understanding of how to do the skill and what the desired outcome looks like. First describe what participants are about to see. For example, if you want them to see a starting position for a good breaststroke kick, tell them precisely what to look for: knees approximately shoulder-width apart, feet wider than the knees, and the feet pulled up and turned out. Try to give a verbal description and a demonstration of a skill at the same time whenever possible. For example, if you are describing an arm stroke, do the motion while you describe it. Talk with your body as well as your mouth! You can also have an aide or a class member demonstrate while you talk. Learning motor skills is simpler when participants receive information they can see as well as hear.



**Teaching Tip:** *You can reinforce demonstrations by showing a video of the stroke or skill or by having a skilled swimmer demonstrate the stroke or skill while you explain it to the participants. Videos are available on the Swimming and Diving Skills DVD and on Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)).*

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Make sure your demonstrations are at the appropriate level for the participants. If participants are just starting to learn the front crawl, for example, conduct the demonstration with slow and purposeful movements, such as pausing the arms out of the water so participants clearly see the position of the arm during the above water recovery. If participants are just starting to learn the elementary backstroke, demonstrate the stroke with a noticeable hesitation between the recovery phase and the propulsion phase. This way of demonstrating slows down the skill and gives the participants a chance to see all components of the movement.

Concentrate on one aspect of the skill at a time. For example, to show rotary breathing for the front crawl, you may demonstrate it by standing in waist-deep water and leaning over with just your face in the water. You do not have to perform the entire stroke. Another way to simplify a demonstration is to do it on dry land before you demonstrate it in the water. Some participants may need to be taught how to perform elements of a skill separately. Point out relationships between skill elements whenever you present them. This allows participants to get a better grasp of the total process.

Finally, think about which angle is best for viewing the demonstration. For example, when demonstrating the breaststroke kick, you may decide to show a side view and a head-on view. Make sure the participants are in a position to see your skill demonstration clearly. In general, participants can see demonstrations better when they are completely out of the water standing on the edge of the deck. Try to avoid having participants standing in rows because the participants in the back rows will not be able to see as well.

Once you have explained the skill and had participants watch you do it, ask them to picture themselves doing the skill the same way you presented it and duplicate that movement. Then, have participants perform the skill as soon as possible. Give them corrective feedback, if necessary.



**Teaching Tip:** While people generally absorb information better when a skill demonstration is immediately followed by skill practice, environmental factors may influence the order of demonstration and practice. In an outdoor setting, a cool breeze in the early morning or on a cloudy day may cause participants to chill if they are repeatedly asked to get in the water to practice a skill and then get out of the water to watch the next demonstration. Under these conditions, consider adjusting the teaching outline so that participants view all of the demonstrations before they enter the water.

After a skill is explained, demonstrated and practiced, it is important to review the material. Repetition is a key to learning. If the participants are having difficulty with the skill, consider another demonstration. Participants may be more attentive to and better able to follow a demonstration after trying a skill, particularly if you focus on demonstrating the parts of the skill the participants found difficult. When a participant is having difficulty, give the participant reminders of what to think about before practicing the skill a second time. Another way to help participants who are having difficulty understanding the idea is to move the participant's body so that he or she can get a sense of what it feels like to do what you explained and demonstrated. For example, when teaching the front crawl, have the participant perform a front float and then move the arms.

## Task setting

In *task setting*, the instructor assigns the tasks but allows participants to achieve the goals in their own ways within the structure of the class. Participants are empowered to begin, practice and end assigned tasks according to their own needs and levels of performance. A skilled instructor may even allow variations in the task itself.

You can incorporate the task setting strategy into your classes in different ways. For example, you can:

- Assign a single task, allowing participants to achieve the skill in any way. For example, participants are assigned the task of floating on their backs. Some participants may choose to use flotation devices, others may briefly grasp the side of the pool and others may attempt floating without any type of support.
- Set up stations, each involving different tasks. You can verbally describe tasks for each station or use task cards to indicate the task to be performed at each station. Task cards can be downloaded from Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) or you can create your own using words, pictures or a combination of the two. You may want to organize stations around a theme, such as floating or breath control. For example, if you use a floating theme across all stations, the first station can feature front-floating tasks in shallow water, the second station can feature back-floating tasks in shallow water, the third station can feature front-floating tasks in deep water, and the fourth station can feature back-floating tasks in deep water. Or use each station to feature different tasks within a particular swimming level. In this example, the first station can feature breath control tasks, the second station can feature water entry and exit tasks, the third station can feature floating tasks, and the fourth station can focus on arm and leg movements.

## Reciprocal (partner-style) practice

In *reciprocal (partner-style) practice*, participants working in pairs observe each other's performance, help each other and learn together. For this teaching strategy to be effective, the instructor must clearly identify the performance criteria.

To use reciprocal practice:

- Explain and demonstrate a single task for all pairs to practice and observe.
- Clearly define the performance criteria.
- Assign several related tasks using task cards.
- Allow the pairs of participants to practice the tasks. One partner practices the task while the other partner observes and provides feedback. Then the partners switch roles.

### **Small group practice**

*Small group practice* is very similar to reciprocal practice, in that participants work together as a team to motivate and help each other learn. However, in small group practice, rather than simply working in pairs, three or four participants work together. The focus of the small group is on the one participant who is performing the task. The other participants share the role of observer. During each practice session, each participant takes a turn performing the task while the other participants in the group observe. Small group practice is a useful teaching strategy when a task has several elements that must be observed. Each observing peer can be assigned to observe one specific element of the task.

## **Indirect Teaching Strategies**

For some learners, particularly those who struggle with following directions or learning in step-by-step progressions, indirect teaching strategies can be more effective than direct teaching strategies. By the time children take swim lessons, they have already learned, by trial and error, how to walk, talk and interact with their environment. Although older children, teens and adults often suppress their natural curiosity, indirect teaching styles simply take advantage of and structure the method by which people learn best. Swim lessons conducted using indirect teaching strategies often are much noisier and chaotic-appearing affairs than those conducted using direct teaching strategies. Participants may be engaged in a diverse set of activities while the instructor circulates and provides individual guidance and feedback. Often instructors using these techniques are criticized as “not really teaching,” but it is important to realize that as long as participants are actively engaged in practicing and learning, then “real teaching” is occurring, even if what the instructor is doing does not involve traditional descriptions and demonstrations.

Many instructors and participants alike initially experience difficulty with indirect teaching strategies because they are not as commonly used as direct teaching strategies. Using indirect teaching strategies effectively requires a vastly different skill set, a great deal of preparation and the use of both teaching-learning progressions and guiding or facilitating questions. The instructor must be comfortable trading off some control over the participant’s experience in return for the participant accepting more responsibility for his or her own learning. These are not easy techniques to master. But instructors experienced with indirect teaching strategies find that they are rewarding and lead to very effective participant learning, because participants are fully engaged and motivated to continue to learn and master new skills. When done well, indirect teaching strategies produce engaged, active learners who have a strong foundation for creative, independent learning long after structured swim lessons end.

### **Active exploration**

The *active exploration* style of indirect teaching is an open-ended teaching–learning process that draws upon participants’ innate curiosity and creativity to encourage them to investigate ways of using their bodies to accomplish a task or perform a skill (such as breath control, floating or swimming a stroke).

This teaching style is appropriate for beginners as well as more advanced swimmers. Appropriate facilitation of the active exploration technique requires the instructor to be comfortable with allowing participants to truly explore and use a wide variety of techniques to accomplish the task or perform a skill. Instructors who feel strongly that there is “only one right way” to perform skills will likely not feel comfortable using active exploration as a teaching strategy and will not be able to take advantage of its potential.

The active exploration technique can be used very effectively on the first day of class for children enrolled in swim lessons for the first time. They may be excited and anxious about their upcoming experience. Instructors might conduct a pool exploration activity to help reduce the children’s anxiety while teaching them pool rules, how to identify different parts of the pool and how the lessons will be structured. One way to start is to allow children to follow their partners around the perimeter of the pool. You can ask probing questions that elicit a wide variety of answers from the children. For example, at one of the ladders, you may say “I wonder what this is?” When someone correctly identifies it as a ladder, your follow-up question may be “Does anyone know what we use a ladder in the pool for?” You can correct inappropriate answers, such as “jumping from” or “playing on,” and reinforce the right responses, such as “getting out of the pool.” You can develop a similar dialogue and set of questions for pieces of equipment and pool rules. Even young children will show a great capacity for identifying appropriate rules and learning the names for new pieces of equipment such as kickboards, floating toys, rings or life jackets. The key to the learner-centered focus for active exploration is that the participants respond to questions. You do not provide immediate answers.

The power of the active exploration technique is in the “doing” of skills and activities. In the pool ladder example, children tend to learn more effectively when they actually get to explore and experience using the ladder to exit the pool, rather than simply observing it or talking about its function. Participants also learn more when they can take a kickboard and explore different ways to use it in the water, including using it as a pillow, pretending it is a flat boat, holding it traditionally as a kickboard or any number of other creative uses that children may discover with a bit of encouragement from the instructor.



**Safety Note:** *It is not safe to allow anyone to sit or stand on a kickboard (kickboard surfing) in the water!*

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Active exploration can be an effective teaching strategy for participants of any age or skill level, not just children and beginners. For example, older children and adults may find a stroke exploration learning activity to be engaging as well as challenging. You can ask a class of intermediate or advanced swimmers to identify the different ways to use their arms (for example, alternating or simultaneous pulling action or in-water or out-of-water recovery) and legs (for example, flutter, dolphin, whip, scissors or eggbeater). Then, the active exploration challenge question may be “What different kicks can you use with alternating arms recovered underwater?” Your response may be “Show me how you would do that.” Questions can be expanded to show the various arm patterns that fit with each kicking style. This is a truly challenging learning activity that provides an opportunity for active exploration while also encouraging variability of practice.

## Guided discovery

While active exploration is an open-ended process that often produces unexpected results and creative outcomes, the *guided discovery* indirect style of teaching is more structured. It involves providing

learners with a series of tasks and challenges that have several possible, although fairly predictable, solutions. In guided discovery, participants are not expected to perform skills exactly as explained or demonstrated, and not every outcome is always acceptable. Instead, the instructor leads participants step-by-step through a series of tasks, usually using task question “trees,” to help the participants explore a skill. This method challenges participants to use their natural curiosity and excitement to arrive at solutions.

To use guided discovery effectively, instructors must have a solid understanding of how aquatic skills are learned and be able to design tasks with fairly predictable solutions. The tasks must progress naturally from general to more specific.

Guided discovery is a natural teaching strategy to use to help participants learn about hydrodynamic principles. Guided discovery works well with these topics because hydrodynamic principles are so closely related to physical principles and laws. For example, using guided discovery, an instructor can help participants explore buoyancy and floating in a variety of body positions and conditions without telling them exactly how they should perform the skill. Participants are responsible for investigating the various options, and in the process, will start to recognize that the water supports the human body.

Teaching the jellyfish float is another example of how the guided discovery method differs from the direct teaching method. If you use the direct style, you will explain and then demonstrate the right way to perform this skill. Instead, you may want to use guided discovery, which appreciates that floating is a consequence of the density of water in relationship to the human body’s density. You can let participants discover these properties for themselves through a structured set of experiences. You might ask swimmers gathered in the shallow end of the pool along the gutter to see what happens if they take a big breath of air and slowly let themselves “sink.” Then challenge participants by asking, “Who can keep all of their body parts underwater for more than 10 seconds without moving?” Likely none of the participants will be able to do this, since their natural buoyancy will bring them to the surface. Then you might ask subsequent questions, such as “What happens if you take a big breath and make yourself a tight ball?” or “What happens if you just let your arms hang down with your face in the water?” or “What happens if you blow out all your air as bubbles?”



**Teaching Tip:** *You have already learned how to use task cards as part of a direct teaching strategy (see Task Setting). Task cards can also be used to support an indirect teaching style. Instead of being strictly directive, task cards can supplement your exploration and discovery questions. They may be less flexible than the instructor when a particularly unique participant response emerges during the process of exploration and discovery, but they can provide an alternative to requiring all participants in the class to do exactly the same thing. Instead, you can set up stations and provide a series of exploration and discovery task cards that ask participants to investigate different concepts. For example, here is how you might use task cards and an indirect teaching strategy to help participants understand how streamlining the body helps them move through the water. The task card at one station might ask participants to push off the wall from a face-down position using different body shapes to see which shape allows them to get the farthest away from the wall. Another task may challenge them to do the same from a face-up position. A third station may ask them to modify their bodies to see how high they can jump out of the water. Alternatively, truly enterprising instructors might provide individual exploration task cards for each member of the class. Obviously, this would be a lot of work. But it is an innovative way to provide an optimal challenge for individual swimmers based on their level of readiness or skill.*

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## Problem solving

The ultimate and most challenging indirect teaching style, for both instructors and participants, is *problem solving*. The problem solving strategy combines the open-ended possibilities of active exploration with some of the structure associated with guided discovery. Since problem solving requires higher-order thinking, it is most appropriate for older children, teens and adults. When using this approach, instructors create a particular scenario. Participants, either individually or as a group, need to respond appropriately. The best types of scenarios are those that allow a wide range of appropriate solutions and are not too narrowly defined. Problem solving works best with complex or combined sets of skills, including water safety, rescue and other water-related activities.

For example, using the problem solving teaching strategy, you may challenge your class to “swim” across the width of the swimming pool without using their arms, getting their hair wet or touching the bottom. Your participants may come up with a variety of possible solutions. Once the original challenge is met, you can add additional challenges, such as keeping the hair dry and not using either arms or legs. You will need to develop scenarios in advance and be prepared to modify them as needed, depending on participants’ solutions.

# PLANNING AND CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE AND SAFE SWIM LESSONS

One of your responsibilities as an American Red Cross Water Safety instructor is to make class time as safe, effective and rewarding as possible for your participants. This requires careful planning and preparation, especially when you consider what needs to be accomplished in the course session and during each lesson. For example, you need to plan how you will present aquatic skills and water safety information, and what activities you will do with your participants to help them learn new information and master new skills. In addition, you need to consider the variables that can affect each class, making no two classes the same. The information in this chapter will provide you with a framework for course planning, from developing a block plan to translating it into individual lesson plans. Strategies for class organization, support and holding techniques, and flotation devices as teaching aids are also described.

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# PLANNING A COURSE SESSION

A course session consists of several lessons, or classes. When planning a course session, you can first create a block plan (a plan for the course session from beginning to end) and then use the block plan to create individual lesson plans for each class during the course session.

## Factors to Consider When Planning a Course Session

Whether you are preparing a block plan or converting that block plan into a daily lesson plan, there are several factors you need to take into account. Considering these factors in advance can help you to develop and conduct a safe and effective course session.

First and foremost is safety, for you and your participants. You must make every effort to prevent injuries. Be familiar with the facility's emergency action plan, and your role in implementing it. Always make sure that a lifeguard is on duty and providing surveillance during any instructional periods. Be sure to explain, emphasize and enforce safety rules, and never leave the teaching area until all participants are accounted for and have left the area.

After you have considered the strategies you will use to help promote safety, consider factors related to the course session that you will be teaching. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the requirements for the course session?
- How many classes are there per session?
- How long is each class?
- How many participants are enrolled in the course session?
- What equipment needs to be available?
- Are there any program-specific procedures and requirements that must be followed?

Next, consider variables related to the participants. Ask yourself:

- Who are the participants and what are their goals for the course?
- How do the participants enrolled in the course session differ in terms of age, size, developmental level, skill level and learning style?
- How can I communicate most effectively with each participant, taking into account the participant's age, developmental level, language or cultural differences, differences in ability and preferred learning style?

## Class size

The number of participants in the class affects how long it takes to organize drills, practice the skills and give feedback to the group and to individuals. For example, you may need less time for each activity when the class size is small. When this is the case, you can plan for more activities per lesson. Small classes also allow for greater flexibility to include optional skills and other activities.

Larger classes often require more planning to maximize participants' safety and participation. When the class size is large, consider using additional instructors or aides. Employing instructional methods such as station teaching or organizing drills using wave or stagger formations can help you to use class time more efficiently and effectively.



**Teaching Tip:** Using co-instructors and instructor aides (see Chapter 1) can be an effective way to increase the amount of individual attention each participant receives. When using co-instructors and instructor aides, be sure to define their roles and responsibilities clearly before the class meets. This helps eliminate confusion and lapses in supervision. Remember, you are ultimately responsible for the safety of all of your participants.

## Participant ability and readiness

Developing block plans and lesson plans is easiest when all of the participants entering the course session have achieved the same level of prerequisite skills. However, this may not always be the case. If participants have a wide range of skills at the beginning of the course, you will need to develop a plan that challenges stronger swimmers while also offering opportunities for success for less advanced swimmers. A similar approach is needed when you have a participant with a disability or other health condition.

The skills you will plan to teach depend on your initial evaluation of your participants' abilities and readiness. Keep in mind that each skill prepares participants for more advanced skills. As participants gain ease and confidence with a skill, you can introduce the next skill in the progression.

COLA (Check–Organize–Lead–Assess) is an approach that can help you plan effective lessons that meet the needs of your participants and help them to achieve their goals. Use the COLA approach (Box 3-1) at the beginning of a course session to establish a baseline and throughout the course session to track progress.

### Box 3-1. COLA (Check–Organize–Lead–Assess) Approach

Use the COLA approach to establish a baseline for each participant at the beginning of the course session and to assess each participant's progress throughout the session. Using the COLA approach will help you plan lessons that help the participant build on existing skills and learn new ones.

**Check** to see what the participant is able to do, as well as the participant's willingness to try new skills. Is the participant able to perform a few skills in the level you are teaching? If not, can she perform any skills from a previous level? Use the following questions and statements to guide this initial evaluation, which should take 1 to 2 minutes per participant:

- Can you do \_\_\_?
- Can you try to \_\_\_?
- Show me how to \_\_\_.
- Show me how you \_\_\_.
- Watch me and then let me know when you are ready to try.
- Watch me and then you try.

**Organize** your lesson plan based on the skills the participant has shown or expressed she is willing to try.

**Lead** the participant by presenting skills that encourage participation, build confidence and foster a willingness to try new skills.

**Assess** the participant's level of progress to help you plan the next lesson. You can conduct these assessments as part of a group activity or individually, depending on the make-up of the class.

## Course completion requirements

When planning a course session, you need to consider what participants are expected to achieve by the end of the course, as well as the methods you will use to help them achieve those goals. Strive to reinforce skills that participants have already been learned, in addition to introducing new skills.

All of the courses in the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program progress from level to level, building upon previously learned knowledge and skills. Teaching from the known to the related unknown is a logical teaching method that helps to promote success. Reviewing previously learned skills helps to reinforce learning and ease the transition to learning new skills.

In addition, you need to plan to address all required skills for the course session in some manner. Required skills for the various courses in the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program are listed in Chapters 7 through 10 of this instructor’s manual. After you have introduced a skill, participants need to be given the opportunity to review and practice it in subsequent lessons until they are able to achieve the course completion requirements. Time spent practicing and receiving immediate feedback following practice can increase proficiency.




**Teaching Tip:** To help track participants’ progress toward meeting the completion requirements for the course, download the appropriate skills checklist from Instructor’s Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for each course that you teach prior to the first lesson.

## Developing a Block Plan

A block plan (Figure 3-1) gives you a day-by-day overview of the course session across all lessons. By planning the main parts of your course from beginning to end, you set up logical learning sequences and ensure that all required safety information and skills are included.

One of the easiest ways to develop a block plan is to use a calendar approach. Each block is one day in the course. Include the following basic information in your block plan:

- Class level
- Day and time
- Number of participants
- Safety topic
- Review skills
- New skills
- Learning activities, including drills and games
- Equipment

 <b>American Red Cross</b>			
Learn-to-Swim Level 3—Stroke Development			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<b>Safety Topic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair</li> </ul>	<b>Safety Topic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think So You Don’t Sink</li> </ul>	<b>Safety Topic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too Much Sun Is No Fun</li> </ul>	<b>Safety Topic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look Before You Leap</li> </ul>
<b>Review Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exit skills assessment Level 2</li> <li>Front crawl arm stroke and kicking drills</li> </ul>	<b>Review Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bobs while moving toward safety</li> <li>Jellyfish float</li> <li>Front crawl stroke drills</li> </ul>	<b>Review Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jump into deep water, return to surface, move onto back and float</li> <li>Push off streamlined, flutter kicking then swim front crawl</li> </ul>	<b>Review Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off on front, flutter kick and rhythmic breathing with kickboard</li> <li>Push off on back and kick with elementary backstroke using kickboard</li> <li>Push off on front and dolphin kick</li> </ul>
<b>New Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bobs in chest-deep water</li> <li>Flutter kick with rhythmic breathing</li> <li>Push off on front then begin flutter kicking with kickboard</li> <li>Tread water using arm and leg actions</li> </ul>	<b>New Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flutter kick drills</li> <li>Survival float</li> <li>Jump into deep water, return to surface then swim back to wall</li> <li>Tread water and move into back float</li> </ul>	<b>New Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off and glide on front in deep water then move to a vertical position and tread water</li> <li>Elementary backstroke kick drills</li> <li>Push off on back and swim elementary backstroke then recover to vertical position</li> <li>Dolphin kick drills</li> <li>Push off on front and dolphin kick</li> </ul>	<b>New Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotary breathing drills</li> <li>Push off streamlined with flutter kicking then swim front crawl</li> <li>Elementary backstroke arm drills</li> <li>Elementary backstroke coordination</li> <li>Jump into deep water, surface, rotate one turn, and swim front crawl to side</li> <li>Headfirst entry from the side in a sitting position</li> </ul>
<b>Game</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Ball, Green Ball</li> </ul>	<b>Game</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ultimate Ring-Around-the-Rosy</li> </ul>	<b>Game</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Straw Hat Race</li> </ul>	<b>Game</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharks and Minnows</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim Lesson Achievement Booklets</li> <li>Level 3 newsletters</li> <li>Foam noodles</li> <li>Swim bar floats</li> <li>Kickboards</li> <li>Different colored balls</li> <li>Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair poster</li> </ul>	<b>Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water toys</li> <li>Foam noodles</li> <li>Swim bar floats</li> <li>Kickboards</li> <li>Think So You Don’t Sink poster</li> </ul>	<b>Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water toys</li> <li>Foam noodles</li> <li>Swim bar floats</li> <li>Kickboards</li> <li>Straw hats</li> <li>Too Much Sun Is No Fun poster</li> </ul>	<b>Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foam noodles</li> <li>Swim bar floats</li> <li>Kickboards</li> <li>Look Before You Leap poster</li> </ul>

**Figure 3-1** Sample block plan, showing the first 4 lessons of an 8-lesson session.

The first time you create a block plan, you may have difficulty determining which skills to review, how to sequence the order for introducing new skills and how much time you will need to introduce a skill. Using the COLA approach (see Box 3-1) at the beginning of the course session can help you determine your starting point. Once you know your starting point, distribute the skills across the lessons, allowing several lessons for difficult skills and integrating safety skills and water safety topics throughout the plan. Remember to include time for participant practice and feedback. Always plan more activities than you think you will need for a lesson. This will keep participants engaged and help to avoid large gaps in time with nothing planned.

Keep in mind that plans are just that, plans. You need to be flexible and adjust the plan as necessary. For example, you may realize that after a few lessons, the participants have taken longer to learn a skill than you had expected. This is not unusual and it does not mean that the plan failed. It is just an indication that you need to readjust the plan. As you gain experience as an instructor, you will also become more confident and effective in organizing your block plans.



**Teaching Tip:** A block plan template and sample block plans for each level of the American Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses are available on Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)). You can use these sample block plans as guides for creating block plans that meet your own specific needs.


## Developing a Lesson Plan

Once your block plan is created, use it as a guide to develop your daily lesson plan.

### Parts of a lesson plan

A lesson plan is composed of the following parts (Figure 3-2):

- **Equipment.** All required equipment needs to be available and in good repair. Note who is responsible for getting it ready.
- **Housekeeping.** Allow time at the beginning of each lesson to greet participants and their parents, take attendance, make announcements and review general safety rules with participants.
- **Safety topic.** When possible, try to relate the water safety topic to a skill that is being introduced or practiced in the lesson. Refer to Longfellow's WHALE Tales and Chapters 2 and 3 of *Swimming and Water Safety* for detailed information about water safety topics. Include key words and phrases in your lesson plan to remind you of the safety concept you want to emphasize in the day's lesson.

 <b>American Red Cross</b>			
Learn-to-Swim Level 3—Stroke Development			
Day 1			
Equipment	Reminders		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swim Lesson Achievement Booklets</li> <li>• Level 3 newsletters</li> <li>• Foam noodles</li> <li>• Swim bar floats</li> <li>• Kickboards</li> <li>• Different colored balls</li> <li>• Swim As a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair poster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute one <i>Swim Lesson Achievement Booklet</i> to each participant.</li> <li>• Distribute newsletters to participants and/or their parents.</li> <li>• Review "Teaching Activities, Drills and Games" on Instructor's Corner.</li> <li>• Review "Red Ball, Green Ball" for setup and directions.</li> </ul>		
Time	Activity	Key Words/Phrases	Class Organization
<b>Housekeeping</b>			
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet participants and parents, introductions</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Announcements</li> <li>• Policies and procedures</li> </ul>		• Circle, on deck
<b>Safety Topic</b>			
4 minutes	• Swim As a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair		• Circle, on deck
<b>Review Skills</b>			
10 minutes	• Exit skills assessment Level 2	• "Show me your swimming skills"	• Wave
6 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front crawl                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Arm stroke drills</li> <li>○ Kicking drills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Long arms"</li> <li>• "Motorboat kicks"</li> </ul>	• Line, stagger or wave
<b>New Skills</b>			
2 minutes	• Bob (15 times) in chest-deep water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Take a breath and hold it"</li> <li>• "Blow bubbles and hum as you come up"</li> <li>• "Sweep arms down"</li> <li>• "Push off of the bottom with your feet"</li> <li>• "Hop up and down"</li> </ul>	• Line away from wall
5 minutes	• Flutter kick with rhythmic breathing (head up or to the side)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Kick, kick, kick"</li> <li>• "Blow bubbles and hum, lift to take a breath, breathe, head back down and hum again"</li> </ul>	• Bracketed on wall
5 minutes	• Push off on front then begin flutter kicking with kick board (15 yards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Kick, kick, kick"</li> <li>• "Blow bubbles and hum, lift to take a breath, breathe, head back down and hum again"</li> </ul>	• Two lines
2 minutes	• Tread water using arm and leg actions (60 seconds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Hands back and forth"</li> <li>• "Soft and easy"</li> </ul>	• Semi-circle
<b>Game</b>			
4 minutes	• Red Ball, Green Ball		• Line
<b>Closing</b>			
2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank participants for their attention and participation</li> <li>• Offer positive reinforcement of what they did well</li> <li>• Review lesson</li> <li>• Announcements for next lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Good job"</li> <li>• "Safe"</li> <li>• "Great job, you all are great swimmers"</li> </ul>	• Circle, seated on deck

**Figure 3-2** Sample lesson plan, showing the first lesson of an 8-lesson session.

- **Opening activity.** Lessons usually have a formal opening activity, such as a land drill for a swimming skill, stretch exercises, a water adjustment drill (such as bobbing or rhythmic breathing) or a drill to review a previously learned skill. Make sure the opening activity is appropriate for the course and the participants, and keep it brief (no more than 5 minutes, depending on the length of the lesson and the participants' ages). Suggestions for teaching activities, drills and games are available on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).
- **Review skills.** You can review previously introduced skills in several ways. Consider demonstrating the skill again, using statements or guided questions to verbally review the skill or conducting a drill. Choose an appropriate method for the review based on the complexity of the skill and participants' previous success performing the skill. Always allow time for the participants to practice the previously learned skills, including enough time for individual and group feedback.
- **New skill introduction.** You may introduce a new skill in several ways. One way is to ask the participants to try something (see the "check" step in COLA; Box 3-1). This approach lets you see what participants can already do and may help apprehensive participants feel less pressure to perform at the same pace as their peers. Another way is to verbally explain the skill, and then demonstrate it (see Chapter 2 for more information on the *explain, demonstrate and practice* technique). Alternatively, you could have the class read appropriate parts of *Swimming and Water Safety* or view a video demonstration of the skill. Video demonstrations are available on the *Swimming and Diving Skills* DVD and on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).
- **New skill practice.** After introducing the skill, you need to allow time for participants to practice. Participant age and ability and the difficulty of the skill will help you determine how long to spend on each skill or part of a skill in each lesson. Some new skills can be learned by trying all steps of the entire skill at once. Other, more complex skills need to be broken down into smaller steps that are practiced one at a time. Allow enough time to arrange the class into an appropriate practice pattern and to give positive corrective feedback to each participant. Keep the participants motivated by varying the activities and including some fun drills or games.
- **Closing.** The closing is the "winding down" phase of the lesson. During this time, you should verbally review with the participants what they learned during the lesson and let them know what is coming up in the next lesson. In some courses, you may consider giving the participants a homework assignment. This part of the lesson is also a great time for individual practice. Let participants practice something they enjoy doing so they leave the lesson remembering the pleasure of the last activity. Alternatively, end with a game that is related to the skills the class just learned. When participants are reluctant to get out of the water at the end of the lesson, they will remember the experience as a fun activity and will be motivated and excited to attend the next lesson.

## Writing the lesson plan

From your block plan, you have a high-level view of what water safety topics, review skills and new skills you plan to cover in the lesson. To complete your lesson plan, you need to fill in the following details:

- The assessment criteria you will use to check participants' readiness and skill level.
- The teaching strategies you will use to help participants learn information and skills (see Chapter 2).
- The amount of time you will spend on each activity.
- The key cue words, phrases or question trees you want to use.
- The pattern of organization you will use for participants' practice.

- The methods you will use to lead participants’ practice.
- The evaluation criteria you will use to assess participants’ progress.

As you plan your lesson, consider the following points:

- Each lesson needs to ensure that all participants are successful as well as challenged. Plan to make the lesson fun for everyone.
- For every activity, consider how you will safely engage as many participants as possible.
- The majority of the lesson time should be devoted to practicing previously learned skills and the new skills that are being introduced in the lesson, so plan for practice time with every skill you want to cover. Use your creativity and that of others to keep the practice fun.
- Plan multiple ways to practice each skill. For example, when you introduce a kick, you may use a drill having all of the participants holding onto the wall and then move to a wave drill using kickboards. Variation in practice helps to keep participants engaged and also gives you the opportunity to change activities if participants are struggling with a certain activity.
- Consider how you will transition from one activity to the next. Think about how long it takes to reorganize your class to begin the next part of the lesson. Also keep in mind the number of times participants will have to get in and out of the water. If they become chilled, they are not likely to make as much progress, nor will the lessons be a positive experience.

To complete your lesson plan, use a systematic approach such as this one:

1. List the safety topic, review skills, new skills and game you have identified on your block plan in the appropriate rows of the lesson plan in the “Activity” column. Complete the “Activity” column of the lesson plan by filling in the activities that will take place during the housekeeping and closing portions of the lesson.
2. Decide what teaching style and practice method you will use for each activity.
3. Arrange the planned activities in a logical sequence. For example, if you intend to use the *explain, demonstrate and practice* teaching strategy, be sure that a review skill appears before the new skill and that the demonstration occurs before the practice.
4. Keeping in mind the total class time, determine how much time you will spend on each activity and note this in the “Time” column on the lesson plan. Remember to allow time for transitioning from one activity or area to another. American Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics classes usually last 20 to 30 minutes. Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim classes typically last 30 to 45 minutes. Table 3-1 gives sample times for each major component of a lesson plan to help you budget your time.

Table 3-1. **Sample Time Assignments for Lesson Planning**

	Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics	Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim
Opening/Safety Topic	5 minutes	5 minutes
Review and Practice Previous Skill(s)	10 minutes	15 minutes
Teach and Practice New Skill	10 minutes	20 minutes
Closing/Games and Play	5 minutes	5 minutes

Classes in Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics last 20 to 30 minutes. Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim classes typically last 30 to 45 minutes. Private lessons typically last 30 minutes.

5. Review your planned activities and list any equipment that will be needed in the “Equipment” section.
6. For each activity, identify key phrases you will use to cue participants as they learn new skills or the questions you will use for indirect teaching methods (such as guided discovery). Try to think of different ways to say the same thing and write one- or two-word descriptions in the “Key Words/Phrases” column on the lesson plan. For questions, longer descriptions may be needed. Make sure the words, phrases or questions you intend to use are appropriate for the participants’ ages and level of understanding.
7. For each activity, decide how you will organize the participants and make a note in the “Class Organization” column on the lesson plan. Describe the pattern of organization or draw a small diagram of the the way you want the practice to flow.
8. If applicable, decide how to best divide tasks among yourself and any co-instructors or aides.
9. Add any additional reminders to yourself in the “Reminders” section of the lesson plan. These may include notes about things you need to do to prepare for the class (such as downloading materials from Instructor’s Corner), reminders to complete administrative tasks or reminders to follow-up with participants or their parents.



**Teaching Tip:** *A lesson plan template and sample lesson plans for each level of the Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses are available on Instructor’s Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)). You can use these sample lesson plans as guides for creating lesson plans that meet your own specific needs.*

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## Adjusting the lesson plan

It is rare that a class follows a lesson plan *exactly* as written. You need to be prepared to adjust your plan for unexpected circumstances. For example, you may discover that participants need more practice with previous steps in the teaching progression, and as a result they are not ready for the steps you had planned to introduce today. Some participants may achieve a skill quickly, while others may have trouble and need more time. A drill you have planned may be too complicated or advanced for the participants’ skill level, or it may inhibit instead of promote the learning of a skill. For example, some participants can perform the entire skill but may have difficulty practicing the elements of the skill separately. In this situation, adjust the plan to allow those participants to do a variation of the drill to stay with the group rather than risk frustration or failure.

Pay attention to how your participants are responding to your lessons. If participants appear confused, show a regression in skills or exhibit negative behavior, this may be a sign that you need to adjust your lesson plan or your demeanor. You may need to modify the plan to better meet the needs of the participants (for example, by planning a wide range of skills to accommodate varying abilities). Or you may just need to appear more enthusiastic and excited about the activity and the class.



**Teaching Tip:** *One of the best ways to be prepared to adjust the lesson plan is to write down several methods for practicing the same skill or skill sequence. You may want to include an activity that keeps participants in one place, a drill that requires participants to move around and a game. If a certain method of practice is not working, you can easily switch to another.*

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## Evaluating the Success of the Lesson Plan

Taking the time to evaluate the lesson after it is over is important. This type of analysis helps you to improve as an instructor and to plan more effective lessons in the future. Ask yourself these questions immediately after the class ends:

- Did I follow my plan?
- Did the participants have enough time to practice?
- Did I choose the right activities? Were the drills too difficult, time-consuming or easy?
- Did I use my teaching area effectively?
- Did the drills I used match the ages and abilities of the participants?
- Did I use a variety of methods and equipment to enhance learning?
- Did I include a variety of skills in the plan so everyone had some success?
- Did the participants improve?
- Were my keywords or phrases appropriate and effective?
- Did I use co-instructors or aides effectively?

Use the answers to these questions to improve the next lesson plan. Analyze all parts of the lesson plan and decide what changes would have made it more successful.



**Teaching Tip:** You can download a *Water Safety Instructor Self-Assessment Form* from *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)).

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You may find it easier to write the next lesson plan immediately after a lesson ends, while it is still fresh in your mind. Know your group, how much practice they need, and which skills will need only brief review and which need more time in the next lesson. If you see that you are falling behind, rework your block plan and, if necessary, get additional help for your class.

Organizing the class effectively, choosing the best activities and knowing what approach to use in a given situation all take experience. Learning from trial and error, in addition to good planning, can make you a more effective instructor.

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## ORGANIZING THE CLASS

To organize a class for effective teaching and learning experiences, always arrange the class so that:

- Everyone's safety is considered and you can see all participants at all times.
- Everyone can be successful and challenged.
- Everyone can hear and see instructions or hear your questions.
- Everyone can hear and see demonstrations.
- Everyone has an opportunity for enough active and effective practice.
- Everyone has an opportunity to be evaluated for skill improvement.

## Formations

There are several ways to arrange participants for observation and practice. The arrangement you choose depends on the task, the number of participants, the number of instructors, the size and depth of the swimming area and whether others are using the facility.

Some of the same formations can be used with participants in the water or at the edge of the teaching area, depending on whether they are observing or practicing. In an outdoor setting, arrange participants so that the sun is behind or partially behind them, if at all possible.

- **Line formation.** In this formation, participants are arranged in a single line along the edge of the teaching area, either in a single line or in two parallel lines (Figure 3-3A). Pay attention to the water depth when using a line formation. Is the line along an equivalent water depth or is the line along descending depth? If the depth is descending, place the more inexperienced and shorter participants in the shallowest water. You may want to use two parallel lines if the class is large and the teaching area is limited. If participants are on the deck, those in the front may sit on the edge to allow better visibility for those behind.
- **“L” formation.** Another option is to arrange the class in an “L” on both sides of a corner (Figure 3-3B). This type of formation condenses the group for better visibility and hearing and is well suited for practicing stationary skills, such as bobbing or floating. The corner is also an ideal place to conduct classes for participants who are just beginning to swim independently because you can individualize the distance participants are asked to swim. For example, weaker swimmers can swim halfway across the corner to where you can assist them with the rest of the distance. Stronger swimmers can be encouraged to swim the entire distance across the corner. You can adjust the distance by moving the participants along the pool edge to a position that is farther from the corner.
- **Perpendicular formation.** A third option is to arrange the class into lines perpendicular to the side (Figure 3-3C). The first person in line performs a skill, swims to the side and then moves to the end of the line. This pattern is useful for observing individual entries or when the equipment for a task is in limited supply, such as reaching poles for extension assists.

For skill demonstration, be sure all participants are close enough and positioned so everyone can see. Different formations may be necessary depending on whether the demonstration is stationary (for example, kicking while bracketed to the side) or moving (for example, kicking with a kickboard). Some skills should be viewed from the front and back, as well as from the side. If you arrange the class in a line, consider whether it is better to swim up and down the line, across and back perpendicular to the line, or both. When using the “L” formation, moving demonstrations may be along each side or diagonally away from and back to the corner.

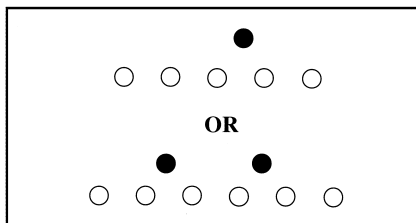


Figure 3-3A Line formation.

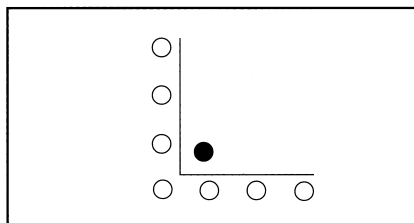


Figure 3-3B “L” formation.

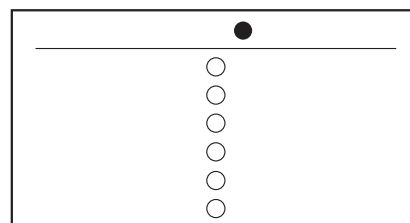


Figure 3-3C Perpendicular formation.



**Teaching Tip:** The “buddy system” is often advocated for swimming activities, including instruction. Depending on the formation, “buddies” may be next to, behind or across from one another.

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## Drills

Drills are used to help participants practice and improve their skills and increase their physical endurance. Drills may be static or fluid.

### Static drills

Static drills—when participants practice in one place—are appropriate for certain skills such as kicking on the wall, treading water and practicing a specific skill component without movement. Any safe arrangement along the sides of the pool, standing in lines or randomly scattered based on the shape, size and depth of the teaching area, is appropriate as long as you are positioned appropriately to see all participants at all times. Remaining in the water for most of the time allows you to readily provide hands-on feedback as well as encouragement and corrections.

### Fluid drills

Fluid drills—when participants are required to travel—help participants improve their skills and increase their physical endurance, and are useful for evaluating participant performance. Vary the type and formation of fluid drills to keep the practice interesting and help participants meet the course requirements. When choosing a fluid drill, consider the following factors:

- The participants’ skill proficiency
- The participants’ physical condition
- The intensity level of the drill
- The frequency and length of rest periods
- The distance needed for effective practice

Any drill pattern that starts as a line at the edge of the pool may also begin with participants away from the side in shallow water. For beginner swimmers, try standing a short distance away from the side and have the participants wade out to you to form a line parallel to and facing the side. Then, participants practice the skill as they go back toward the side. Position yourself a bit further out for each subsequent drill until the participants are comfortable going all the way across the pool. For more advanced swimmers, try using a fluid drill so participants can cover a greater distance, such as across the pool for one or more lengths, in a linear or circular pattern. However, this may not be possible for a beginning activity, or if the pool is very large.

Think about your participants when deciding if you want to start the drill away from the side or at the side. Starting away from the side has several advantages over starting at the side:

- Participants have a defined distance to cover that is set by you and within their abilities.
- Anxious participants are not facing an open area.
- The drill concludes with everyone at the side ready for the next exercise.

## Individual Instruction

Individual instruction is appropriate when you need to give participants one-on-one attention (for example, for safety reasons or because the participant is fearful or anxious). Entering deep water for the first time and practicing headfirst entries are examples of skills that might require individual instruction. If possible, try to have extra instructors available to help. Because other participants will have to wait their turn, plan another activity that is related to the skill you are observing individually or one that leads up to it for the rest of the group to do.

## Wave formation

Wave formation allows you to divide a large group into smaller units for maximum supervised practice (Figure 3-4). Each group performs as a unit. This method lets you watch smaller groups and give constructive feedback. It also makes better use of a small practice area. If you use the buddy system, have participants count off by number to form groups with one buddy in each pair. For example, “1” buddies go first while “2” buddies observe.

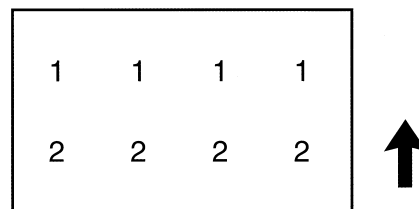


Figure 3-4 Wave formation.

## Stagger formation

In the stagger formation, participants are positioned in a single line. Signal the first person in line to start swimming. The next person in line starts when the person ahead reaches a certain spot (Figure 3-5). This allows you to follow the progress of each participant for a few body lengths. In addition, you can speak to participants individually as they finish the swim while still having time to focus on the next swimmer. The stagger formation provides swimmers with a large amount of practice time and individual feedback, and gives them the opportunity to rest for a short time while they await their turns. When using the buddy system, structure the stagger in pairs. Then you can track two people at once and still provide individual feedback.

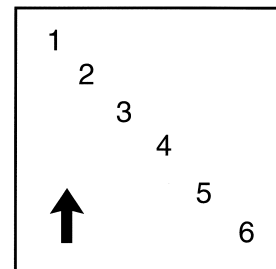


Figure 3-5 Stagger formation.

## Circle swimming

For longer-distance swims to build endurance, participants may use the pool lanes. One option has swimmers keeping to the right side of one lane, swimming in a counterclockwise fashion (Figure 3-6). Another option is circuit swimming in which participants first swim in one lane and then move over another lane to swim in the other direction (always keeping to the right side of the lane). Continue this pattern so participants use all available lanes.

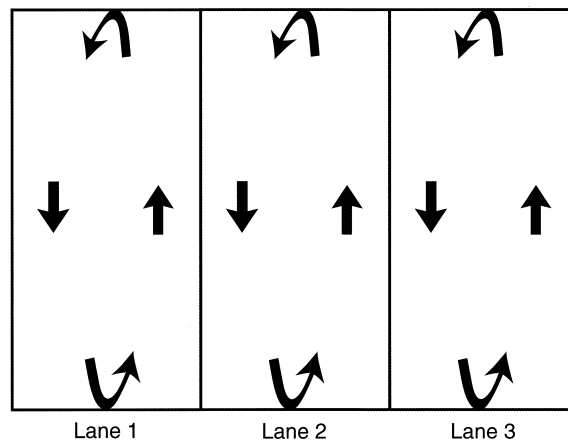


Figure 3-6 Circle swimming.

## Perimeter swimming

For smaller pools or pools without lane lines, you can ask participants to swim a circle around the perimeter of the entire pool (Figure 3-7). This works well with reciprocal practice (see Chapter 2) since the coaching buddy can walk alongside the swimmer.

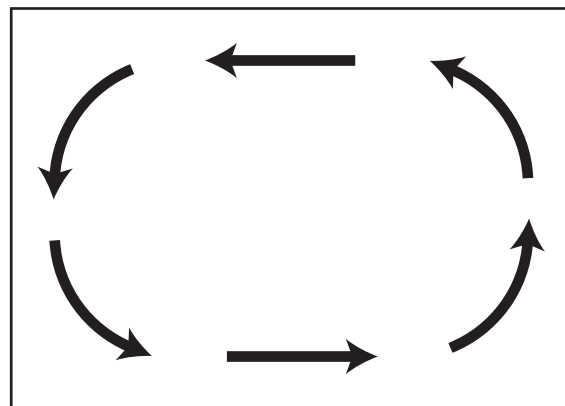


Figure 3-7 Perimeter swimming.

## Assembly Lines and Stations

Assembly line teaching is a method of class organization that uses multiple instructors efficiently to provide greater assistance to participants. Each instructor conducts a particular drill or teaches a specific skill. There are many variations on assembly line and station teaching, depending on the numbers of participants, instructors and aides. When planning, consider the skills you want to teach, the participants' ages and experience, and the goals of the lesson.

### Assembly line within one level

One way to use assembly line teaching is to teach the same skill at all the stations, but with different styles, techniques and drills. Another variation is to assign each instructor a different skill. As participants rotate from station to station, they receive a full and varied lesson in groups small enough for individualized attention. When using this approach, be sure that the activities at the different stations are compatible and that instructors are teaching the skills they are most proficient in.

### Assembly line with more than one level

The assembly line method may also be used when several classes of participants at different, but consecutive, Learn-to-Swim levels are scheduled concurrently. This works best if participants are of similar ages. One instructor is assigned to each station. Participants remain with the same instructor until they perform the required skills well enough to advance. Some participants may move from one level to the next after only one lesson, while others may need to remain in the same level for a full series of lessons. This method allows maximum flexibility for participants to proceed at their own speeds. Participants also have the chance to experience a variety of instructors and the opportunity to meet new people as they move through the program.

In addition to providing flexibility for participants, this approach provides flexibility with programming. Co-instructors and aides can help with large groups or they may alter their positions as group structure changes. For example, they can be reassigned if a large group needs to be divided or combined into two small groups.

## Station teaching

Station teaching promotes a high level of participant involvement and is most effective when participants take some responsibility for their own progress. In the most common use of station teaching, participants form a single group to receive information about the day's lesson. Then they are directed to stations at various parts of the facility, each with the appropriate equipment and written instructions for practice. The participants perform the skills at that station until they are signaled to rotate to the next station. The instructor moves from station to station, giving participants feedback. Having

a co-instructor at each station enhances the effectiveness of this method. After all participants have completed each station, review the material with the whole group and lead group drills to reinforce or check skills. Rotating through stations is also an efficient way to review previous skills, prepare for new skills and teach safety skills.

When using station teaching, you need to maintain the recommended instructor-to-participant ratios. In addition, ensure that enough lifeguards are on surveillance duty to effectively see all activities and respond quickly to any emergencies that may arise.

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## HOLDING AND SUPPORT TECHNIQUES

You can use a variety of holding and support techniques to help participants learn skills. Holding provides support and reassurance to participants while they explore the water and learn and practice new skills. With support, participants can assume the correct position for learning and practicing a skill. This helps participants develop confidence. When they know they will not submerge accidentally, they can relax and focus on practicing the skill they are learning. Because parents primarily provide support to their children during Parent and Child Aquatics classes, you will need to teach parents these holding and support techniques.

Different holding and support techniques are effective at different stages of learning. Factors such as the participant's age, weight and skill level as well as your personal preference determine which positions to use. Some techniques are more suited for participants who need individual assistance and practice while other techniques are more effective for group activities and drills.

Using support and holding techniques can be a delicate balancing act. You want participants to do as much as possible without support, while also giving them the help they need to learn skills in a developmentally appropriate and safe manner. As participants begin to relax and perform the skill, you should gradually reduce the support that you provide. Follow these guidelines when using holding and support techniques:

- Establish a relationship based on trust. When providing support, never take that support away unless the participant is expecting it and has been cued that he or she is performing on his or her own.
- Hold the participant lightly, not tightly. The participant should get the impression from you that this is a good experience, rather than something to fear. Let the participant experience as much natural buoyancy as possible while also providing enough support to promote confidence.
- Once the participant adjusts to the water, keep the participant at the appropriate level for performing the skill to prevent repeated uncomfortable temperature changes between the water and air. For example, when practicing the back float, squat down so that your shoulders are beneath the surface of the water. This allows the participant to rest the back of his or her head on your shoulder in a horizontal position.
- When movement is called for, smoothly move the participant in the appropriate direction of travel to help him or her get used to the sensation of moving forward in a horizontal position. When the participant is relaxed, the momentum that you generate by moving will help his or her body float up to a natural horizontal position. Make your movements smooth and expected rather than jerky and without warning.

- Whenever a participant feels fear or anxiety, hold or support the participant in a position he or she finds comforting and secure.
- Make eye contact with the participant whenever you are interacting with him or her. This helps keep the participant focused on what you are asking of him or her, and it helps to keep you focused on the participant. Remember to be sensitive to cultural differences; in some cultures, making direct eye contact is not appropriate.
- Focus on the safety of the entire class even if you are providing support to an individual. Always position yourself so that you can see the other participants. Never turn your back on the other participants in class.



**Instructor's Note:** Teaching swimming skills is very hands-on. As a water safety instructor, you will use holding and support techniques to increase participants' sense of security in the water and to support them while they practice new skills. You will also help participants get used to new or unfamiliar movements by physically moving their arms, legs or other body parts so that they get a sense of how the movement is supposed to feel. Whenever you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance, take care to follow the guidelines for positioning your hands carefully so that you avoid touching the participant in an inappropriate way. In addition, try to keep your hands as visible as possible when you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance to minimize the chance that your handling of the participant could be construed as inappropriate.

## Face-to-Face Positions

Face-to-face positions are most effective for children, especially those enrolled in Parent and Child Aquatics and the beginning levels of Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim. Use these positions to help introduce participants to skills on their front.

- **Hug position.** Use the hug position (Figure 3-8) for water adjustment and to practice kicking on the front. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's upper chest. Have the participant rest his head on your shoulder and place his arms loosely around your neck or over your shoulders. While supporting the participant's legs from underneath, have the participant extend the legs. You can use this position to manipulate the kick.
- **Chin support position.** Use the chin support position (Figure 3-9) to practice kicking on the front and bubble blowing. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's chin.



Figure 3-8 Hug position.



Figure 3-9 Chin support position.

Hold the participant under the upper chest and shoulders with your fingers and palms. Make sure the participant's chin rests on the heels of your palms so her chin does not accidentally submerge.

- **Hip support on front position.**

Use the hip support on front position (Figure 3-10) for water adjustment; to practice kicking on the front, the front glide, the front float and bubble blowing; and in preparation for kicking with the face down unsupported. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's chest. With your hands, support the participant in a horizontal position at the hips and abdomen from below. The participant's arms should be nearly fully extended and rest on top of your arms.



Figure 3-10 Hip support on front position.

- **Shoulder support on front position.**

Use the shoulder support on front position (Figure 3-11) for water adjustment and to practice kicking on the front, the front glide, bubble blowing, underwater exploration and rolling over. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's chin. Hold the participant under the armpits with your arms nearly fully extended. Grasp a heavier or fearful participant underneath the arms and upper chest with your thumbs up.



Figure 3-11 Shoulder support on front position.

## Back-to-Chest Positions

Back-to-chest positions are used to introduce participants to skills on their backs. Participants often feel less confident on their backs, so introduce these positions gradually and provide firm support initially. Positioning the participant so that the ears are above the surface initially may help the participant get comfortable with being on his or her back. Do not continue any holding position if the participant becomes distressed.

- **Cuddle position.** The cuddle position (Figure 3-12) is used for back float, back glide readiness, kicking on the back and rolling over. Position yourself so that the water comes up to your neck and the participant's ears. The back of the participant's head rests on your



Figure 3-12 Cuddle position.

shoulder, with her cheek or the side of her head touching or right next to your cheek. Place one hand on the participant's lower back and the other on her chest. The participant's legs point away from you. Hold the participant horizontal by "sandwiching" her between your hands.

- **Hip support on back position.** The hip support on back position (Figure 3-13A) is used for back float and back glide readiness and for kicking on the back. Position yourself so that the water comes up to your neck and the participant's ears. The back of the participant's head rests on your shoulder, with his cheek or the side of his head touching or right next to your cheek. Hold the participant with both hands on the back to bring the body horizontal. Your exact hand position on the participant's back depends on the participant's ability to relax. Placing your hands on the participant's lower back provides the most support, whereas placing your hands on the participant's upper back gives less support but allows greater freedom of movement. As the participant becomes more comfortable, his legs will relax and he will lay his head back and allow his ears to submerge. Once the participant relaxes, you may reach down to the participant's legs and manipulate the kick (Figure 3-13B).

- **Back support position.** The back support position (Figure 3-14A) is used when the participant is comfortable on his or her back and maximum freedom of movement is



**Figure 3-13** Hip support on back position. (A) Supporting the back. (B) Manipulating the kick.



**Figure 3-14** Back support position. (A) Holding the participant away from the body so that the legs float up into a horizontal position. (B) Variation with participant held close for more support.

desired, but the participant still needs some support. Position yourself behind the participant so that your shoulders and the participant's ears are in the water. Support the base of the participant's head near the neck with one hand. Place your other hand in the middle of the participant's back to lift and stabilize him or her in a horizontal position. Tilt the participant's head back. Extend your arms to hold the participant perpendicular to and away from your body, smoothly moving backward to help the participant float to a horizontal position. If the participant has trouble relaxing and tilting his or her head, try using a variation of this position. Pull the participant close to you and position his or her head on your chest or shoulder for more support. Place one hand in the middle of the participant's back and the other hand around the chin or lower jaw and gently tilt the head back (Figure 3-14B). Resume the back support position when the participant relaxes.



**Safety Note:** Do not push on the fleshy part of the participant's throat.

- **Arm stroke position.** The arm stroke position (Figure 3-15A) is used to help young participants explore arm movements in the water. Brace your back against the side of the pool, sit on the steps or kneel on one knee in shallow water. The water should be up to your shoulders and the participant's upper chest or armpits. Sit the participant on your knee, facing away from you. Use one of your arms to circle the participant's chest and keep him upright. With your other hand, hold the participant's wrist from underneath and place your hand on top of the participant's hand. Move the participant's arm in a paddling motion and encourage the participant to imitate the movement with his other arm. If necessary, switch the arm you are using to support the participant and move the participant's other arm in the paddling motion. Balance a more secure participant on your knee and guide both arms in an alternating or simultaneous paddling motion (Figure 3-15B).



**Figure 3-15** Arm stroke position. (A) Manipulating one arm. (B) Manipulating both arms.

## Side-to-Side Positions

Side-to-side positions are used for water adjustment and for bubble blowing, kicking on the front, front glide, front float, beginning stroking, passing and practicing combined skills.

- **Hip straddle position.** The hip straddle position (Figure 3-16) is used for water adjustment, bubble blowing, and water entry and exit. This position is most appropriate for young participants and can be used in various depths of water depending on the skill the participant is learning. Have the participant face you and straddle your hip. Support the participant by reaching around the participant's back and placing your hand on the participant's upper thigh. You can hold the participant's hand with your other hand. Position yourself so the water level is appropriate for the participant. If the participant is cold or afraid of the water, begin by immersing the lower part of the participant's body. As the participant becomes more comfortable, gradually immerse yourself and the participant until the water reaches the participant's chest.
- **Shoulder support on the side position.** The shoulder support on the side position (Figure 3-17A) is used for water adjustment, bubble blowing, kicking on the front, front glide, front float, beginning stroking, passing and for practicing combined skills. Position yourself comfortably so the water line is between your waist or shoulders and the participant's chin or neck. This position gives maximum mobility in a support position. With you and the participant facing the same direction, hold the participant to your side by wrapping your hands around the participant's torso at about the armpits. Keep the participant's head up; you should be able to see his face. You can gently rest your arm or elbow against the participant's buttocks and legs to keep them underwater. To provide more support, encircle the participant's torso with your arms, wrapping one arm underneath the participant and the other over top and placing your palms on the participant's chest (Figure 3-17B). As the participant becomes more confident and skilled, hold him with both hands on the waist.



Figure 3-16 Hip straddle position.



Figure 3-17 Shoulder support on the side position. (A) Supporting the participant by wrapping your hands around the participant's torso at the armpits. (B) Variation to provide more support: place one arm underneath the participant and the other over top, with both hands on the participant's chest.

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# FLOTATION DEVICES

Flotation devices may be used for safety, or as teaching aids. There are many different types of flotation devices with different uses. Be knowledgeable about the uses, benefits and potential risks associated with any type of flotation device that you intend to use in your classes. This section describes flotation devices that are recommended for use in Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim classes. Box 3-2 describes precautions you should take if you intend to use attached flotation devices as teaching aids in your classes.

## Box 3-2. Precautions to Take If Using Flotation Devices

An attached flotation device (such as inflatable arm bands or Styrofoam floats) is never a substitute for close adult supervision. All children up to about the age of 5 or 6 years, no matter how well they can swim on their own or swim with or without flotation devices, should always remain within arm's reach of an adult.

If you choose to use attached floating devices as instructional aids, strictly limit their use with nonswimmers. Nonswimmers should stay in shallow areas and should not be allowed to become dependent on these aids. Also, teach nonswimmers and their parents about the potential hazards when these aids are used for recreational swimming or practicing skills without supervision from a qualified instructor. Children and parents may develop a false sense of security. Drowning is possible if the child goes into the water without the aid or if the aid comes loose or slips off when the child enters or paddles in the water. Always emphasize that these aids do not take the place of U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets. Remember, nonswimmers and swimmers alike should wear U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in any situation in which there is a chance of falling into the water.

Ask yourself the following questions when considering the use of attached flotation devices for teaching:

- Does the device support the body in the proper position for the skill to be learned?
- Can the device be placed on the part of the body requiring support without interfering with movement of other body parts?
- Can the device be secured so it does not come loose or slip off?
- Is the device constructed so it cannot deflate accidentally?

Even if you are able to answer “yes” to all of these questions, attached flotation devices should still be used with caution.

### Inflatable Arm Bands

Inflatable arm bands, sometimes called “muscles,” “wings” or “swimmies,” are used primarily for very small children but may also be used for some older, less confident participants. These devices keep the participant’s head above water and permit the participant to move independently as you assist with manipulating the participant’s limbs. Keep in mind, however, that arm bands restrict proper arm movement. Although they may be useful for participants learning to adjust to the water, they tend to promote a false sense of security in children who often do not realize that the device is providing the flotation. They raise the center of buoyancy and impair progress if participants become accustomed to kicking in a vertical position. Additionally, these devices often develop leaks and tend to slip off, placing the participant at risk for drowning.

*(continued)*

Box 3-2. (continued)

### **Styrofoam Floats**

Styrofoam floats, also called float belts, come in a variety of shapes and provide enough buoyancy to support small children. They can help build strength and endurance because they enable the child to practice longer in water over his head. Styrofoam floats can be useful when practicing combined skills. For example, placing these devices on the back can help the child float on the stomach, or the child can float on her back when the device is placed on the stomach.

However, the disadvantages of Styrofoam floats often outweigh any advantages. Parents and children alike may become overconfident when these devices are used, putting the child's safety at risk. If the device is poorly positioned, the child's face can submerge. Always warn parents that they should not depend on any artificial devices for their child's safety other than a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.



**Safety Note:** *A flotation device is never a substitute for close adult supervision. All children up to about the age of 5 or 6 years, regardless of their swimming ability, should always remain within arm's reach of an adult.*

### **Life Jackets**

Life jackets have limited usefulness as teaching aids because their bulk makes it difficult to perform skills effectively. They also can promote poor body position and can slip or slide off if not fitted correctly, potentially turning the participant face down and placing him or her in danger. While life jackets should not be used to teach participants to swim, Red Cross aquatics programs strongly advocate that all participants, including parents, know how to choose, use, wear and swim in properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets (Figure 3-18). Therefore, you should teach participants how to enter the water and swim while wearing a life jacket.



**Figure 3-18** All participants and their parents should know how to choose, use, wear and swim in a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.

### **Free-Floating Supports**

Free-floating supports can prop up the body to help participants practice skills such as breathing, kicking and arm strokes. The participants can hold the support with one or both hands or arms, or between the thighs or lower legs. Common free-floating supports include kickboards, swim bar (barbell) floats, foam noodles and pull buoys.

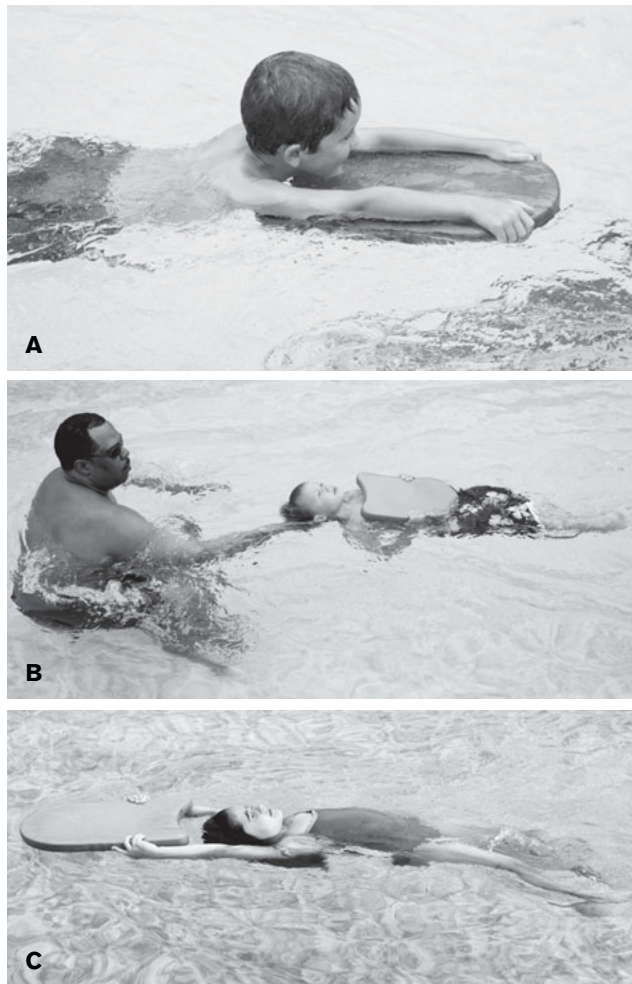
## Kickboards

Kickboards are one of the most commonly used, and one of the most useful, teaching aids.

Kickboards are available in different sizes and can be used at all levels with varying degrees of assistance. Make sure to use the appropriate size for each participant. Kickboards are not safe or appropriate if the participant is too small, lacks enough coordination to maintain a stable body position or is at risk for unintentional submersion during use.

As participants mature and develop size and strength, they can hold the kickboard while they practice kicking. The kickboard helps to simulate proper body position so the participant can concentrate on kicking only or kicking in the streamlined position, and rhythmic breathing. To practice kicking only on the front, the participant holds the kickboard on the sides near the top with the arms extended. This allows the arms to rest on the kickboard and keeps the participant's head up to breathe normally (Figure 3-19A). To add rhythmic breathing, the participant holds the kickboard on the sides near the bottom with the arms extended. The face is down in the water. The participant lifts the head to breathe, and then returns to the streamlined position.

To practice floating and kicking on the back, the participant holds the kickboard in the middle on both sides. Squeezing the kickboard against the chest and stomach helps the participant to float up to a horizontal position (Figure 3-19B). It may be easier for beginners to hug the kickboard while pressing it against the chest and stomach. More skilled swimmers can manipulate the kickboard in the water overhead in the streamlined position on the back (Figure 3-19C). If the kickboard alters body position or is too cumbersome, discontinue use.



**Figure 3-19** Kickboards can be used to practice (A) kicking on the front, (B) floating on the back and (C) the streamlined position on the back.



**Instructor's Note:** *Smaller kickboards are available that are easier for young participants to use. Also, some kickboards are available in shapes that are attractive to children, such as teddy bears and fish.*

## Swim bar floats

Swim bar floats (a bar with floats on each end similar to a barbell) are also available in different sizes. Use the appropriate size for each participant. The participant holds the swim bar float in front with



**Figure 3-20** Swim bar floats can be (A) held out in front and used like a kickboard or (B) placed under the armpits for support.

the arms stretched straight and uses it much like a kickboard (Figure 3-20A). Because the bar is easier to grasp than a kickboard, these aids are most useful with smaller children or participants who have problems with kickboards. You can place the swim bar float under the participant's armpits for support (Figure 3-20B) so that the participant can kick and stroke without fear of sinking. These aids can also be used to practice on the back by holding the swim bar float against the chest or over the head. When using swim bar floats, face the participant, offer encouragement and stay close enough to catch the participant if the swim bar float slips away.

### Foam noodles

Foam noodles, available in different sizes and widely sold as toys, are useful instructional aids. The participant can hold the noodle in front with the arms stretched straight and use it in much the same way as a kickboard or swim bar float would be used (Figure 3-21). The foam noodle can also be placed under the armpits for support so the participant can kick and stroke without fear of sinking. A foam noodle can also be used to practice on the back by holding it under the armpits against the chest or over the head. Because foam noodles are less stable than kickboards and swim bar floats, always provide close supervision when participants are using them.



**Figure 3-21** Foam noodle.

### Pull buoys

Pull buoys are commonly used in the upper levels of Learn-to-Swim, Adult Swim and in competitive training. The pull buoy can be placed between the thighs or knees to provide buoyancy and allow the participant to concentrate on arm strokes (Figure 3-22). The placement of the device depends on how much buoyancy the participant needs. Good body position is essential when using a pull buoy. Maintaining correct body position using a pull buoy can be difficult, so only advanced swimmers should use these devices.



**Figure 3-22** Pull buoy.



**Safety Note:** Never allow participants to tie pull buoys to their legs.

## Stationary Supports

Stationary supports include the deck, the side of a pool or a dock, ladders or steps leading into the water, and the bottom of shallow water. Stationary supports can be used to support the body as the participant practices leg movements. Bracketing is a technique in which the participant balances and controls her body position while holding onto the side of the pool or the dock. Practicing leg movements in the proper body position helps the participant develop correct form. Two methods of bracketing are described here. Participants may find other ways to bracket themselves.

### Bracketing in the front position

When bracketing in the front position, the participant grasps the gutter with one hand, bending the elbow slightly. With the other hand, the participant presses against the pool wall below the water line with the fingers pointing down and the elbow straight (Figure 3-23A). The submerged hand should be deep enough to support good body position. If this hand position is too difficult, the participant may try holding the gutter with both hands while keeping both elbows locked into a straight position (Figure 3-23B).

The participant keeps his head in the water, submerged to the ears, and breathes rhythmically, letting the hips and legs rise toward the surface naturally. The participant may wish to keep his head up, which will allow him to breathe normally. However, when the participant keeps his head up, the hips and legs will sink so the participant will need to work harder with his legs to keep his body near the surface.

### Bracketing in the side-lying position

Bracketing in the side-lying position provides stable support while practicing the scissors kick.

When bracketing in the side-lying position, the participant grasps the gutter with the hand of the upper arm, keeping the elbow slightly bent. He places the palm of the lower hand against the wall directly



**Figure 3-23** Bracketing in the front position. **(A)** Holding the gutter with one hand. **(B)** Holding the gutter with two hands.

under the top hand, with the fingers pointing toward the bottom and at a comfortable distance beneath the surface. The elbow of the lower arm should be straight and the body straight, stretched and perpendicular to the wall with the lower part of the ear in the water (Figure 3-24). The lower hand provides most of the support and control for the body. If the participant sways forward or backward, sliding the lower hand in the direction of the sway while exerting pressure against the wall can help to push the body back into the proper position.

## Fins

Fins can help swimmers move faster and kick with less effort. Wearing fins can be especially helpful for developing a fluid flutter kick and dolphin kick. They also allow the participant to concentrate on arm stroking patterns, timing and breathing. Fins come in a variety of sizes. Be sure to have different sizes available so participants can use fins that fit correctly. The fins should fit snugly enough to stay on the participant's feet but they should not be so snug that they cause cramping.



**Figure 3-24** Bracketing in the side-lying position.



**Safety Note:** Do not allow participants to walk on the deck in fins. Have participants sit on the edge of the pool while they put on and take off the fins.

# INTEGRATING WATER SAFETY INTO THE COURSES

**D**rowning, which can occur in depths as little as 1 inch, is a risk whenever water is present. In the United States, drowning ranks second, behind motor vehicle crashes, as a cause of death from unintentional injury in children ages 1 through 14 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Water safety education plays a key role in decreasing the number of drowning incidents.

It is the mission of the Red Cross to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Swimming and Water Safety program helps fulfill that mission by teaching people to be safe in, on and around the water. Water safety is an integral part of the Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses.

Water safety is a combination of attitude, knowledge, practice and skills. As a Water Safety instructor, you have a responsibility to teach participants of all ages what it takes to be safe in, on and around the water, and to always promote a “safety-first” attitude.

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## PUTTING WATER SAFETY INTO PRACTICE

Water safety must be a central theme for any aquatics program, readily evident at all levels of the program. Anyone walking into a facility should be able to see a well-supervised program as evidenced by an adequate number of lifeguards providing patron surveillance during all in-water sessions, adequate signage and rescue equipment that is clean and in working order. All facility staff, including instructors, should consistently model safe behavior, always following the rules and doing the right thing.

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## WATER SAFETY AS PART OF LEARNING TO SWIM

Water safety must be a major focus for participants when they are learning how to swim. Throughout all levels, and especially at the early levels, nearly every skill participants learn is a safety skill. Entering the water, controlling breathing, floating for extended periods, making forward progress and exiting the water are skills that can make a life-and-death difference when participants are in, on and around the water.

Certain safety topics also need to be addressed at each level. When planning courses, be sure to set aside some time during each class to teach water safety knowledge and skills. Teach participants how to have fun and stay safe in the water by encouraging them to be prepared and think “safety first.” Water safety topics should include:

- Looking out for themselves and others.
- Knowing what to think about before entering the water.
- Knowing what hazards to look for and how to be safe in different aquatic environments, such as oceans, lakes, rivers, home pools and waterparks.
- Knowing general safety guidelines.
- Knowing how to stay healthy in the sun and the water.
- Knowing how to help themselves in an emergency.
- Knowing how to help others in an emergency, such as calling 9-1-1 or the local emergency number and performing nonswimming rescues.
- Knowing how to choose, properly put on and swim in a life jacket.

Teaching safety information is extremely important to parents enrolled in Parent and Child Aquatics programs and to parents of children enrolled in Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim programs. This information is beneficial because:

- Parents educated about water safety can more safely supervise children around aquatic environments.
- Parents knowledgeable about what safety information their children are learning can reinforce the lessons with their children.
- Parents exposed to a “safety-first” attitude will have confidence that your classes are safe and their children are learning good safety habits.

Although lesson planning is important, it is also important to take advantage of “teachable moments,” spontaneous situations that arise and give you the opportunity to teach or reinforce safety practices. Use this time to present your safety messages, making sure not to embarrass anyone or create fear. Also gear your safety messages to the participants’ developmental age and maturity level to promote understanding. Check their understanding by having them clearly repeat the messages back to you or demonstrate the skill or behavior. Also encourage parents and participants to teach others about safe aquatic behaviors.

## Water Safety Resources

The Red Cross has many safety resources available that can be used in class or as take-home materials to reinforce safety messages. Be sure to choose materials designed for the ages you are targeting.

### Red Cross Swim mobile application

The Red Cross Swim mobile application (app) supports and promotes the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, focusing on the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim courses. This app provides adults and children with water safety information and links them to Red Cross Authorized Providers that deliver Red Cross Learn-to-Swim programs. Major goals of the app are to:

- Support and promote the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program.
- Allow parents to track and share the progress of their children through the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels.
- Provide adults with information about water safety in general, as well as water safety in specific environments.
- Help children learn about water safety through video segments from Longfellow's WHALE Tales, age-appropriate water safety messaging and quizzes for the parent and child to complete together.

As a Water Safety instructor, you should encourage parents to download the Red Cross Swim mobile application as soon as they enter a child in your swim lesson program. The app can be found at [redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps](http://redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps) and downloaded directly from the iTunes or Google Play app stores.

### Longfellow's WHALE Tales

*Longfellow's WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* provides easy-to-follow information to help children learn safe behavior in, on and around the water. Longfellow's WHALE Tales, designed for participants in kindergarten through the sixth grade, is intended to be taught in a classroom. However, the information and resources can also be included as part of your classes on the pool deck. *Longfellow's WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* includes the following lessons:

1. Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair—the importance of swimming in an area protected by lifeguards and never swimming alone
2. Be Cool, Follow the Rules—the reasons behind water safety rules
3. Look Before You Leap—safe places to swim and dive
4. Think So You Don't Sink—actions for when things go wrong
5. Reach or Throw, Don't Go—safe ways to help a swimmer in trouble
6. Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket—the importance of wearing a life jacket
7. Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice—the hazards of cold water
8. Know About Boating Before You Go Floating—the importance of knowing safe boating practices
9. Too Much Sun Is No Fun—how to protect yourself from sun exposure

10. In Your House and in Your Yard, Watch for Water, Be on Guard—ways to minimize water hazards around the home
11. Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide—how to be prepared for different aquatic experiences, such as a waterpark

Longfellow’s WHALE Tales can be used in various ways, such as for teaching the required safety topics or for including additional safety information and/or topics. For example, consider beginning each class throughout the session using a different topic, or expand on one or more of the topics already introduced in the level. Whatever method you choose, try incorporating the color posters to facilitate the discussions. Consider how to relate what the participants learned at the start of the class to any safety skills included in the teaching for that day. As they leave class, provide the participants with take-home activity sheets so they can talk about safety topics with their families. You may be surprised at how many children bring back their completed activity sheets for your approval and praise! Also, point out to parents that several Longfellow’s WHALE Tales topics are included in the Red Cross Swim app where children can view the video segments and complete the quizzes to reinforce what they have learned. You can find more detailed information on the *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* in Chapter 11.

### **Swimming and Water Safety**

This comprehensive reference is the complete guide to swimming, diving and water safety. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of *Swimming and Water Safety* include information about the attraction of water and the associated dangers. They also provide details about safety issues to consider when swimming or participating in aquatic activities that take place in, on and around water and ice. In addition, these chapters discuss the procedures for responding to an aquatic emergency, including information about self-rescue and how to help others.

*Swimming and Water Safety* helps to strengthen your understanding about being safe in, on and around the water. The more you know, the more you can pass on to participants. You can also use the information in this resource to customize your safety messages to meet regional and local needs. Older participants or parents of participants may be interested in owning a copy of *Swimming and Water Safety* as they explore different types of aquatic activities and become more aware of water safety. Let participants know this manual is available as a digital download and for purchase on the Red Cross Store at [redcrossstore.org](http://redcrossstore.org).

### **Safety Equipment During Lessons**

Learning about safety equipment and use is an important component for successful completion of the Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses. From the earliest levels, teach participants, including their parents, the importance of life jackets. Train all participants how to enter and exit the water and swim while wearing a life jacket. Parents in Parent and Child Aquatics and participants in Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim also learn how to choose and put on life jackets and when they should wear them.

Another important safety equipment concept to teach is “reach or throw, don’t go.” Participants need to know how to use reaching and throwing equipment to help a person who is in trouble in the water. Provide instructions about what items to throw to a person in trouble that he or she could hold on to until qualified rescuers can reach the person. For example, teach participants how to use safety equipment, such as reaching poles, shepherd’s crooks, ropes and ring buoys with lines attached to reach out and pull someone of a similar size to safety. Also, teach them the skills for reaching and throwing assists using improvised equipment.

Participants also need to know how to be rescued. Teach them that if they are in trouble and someone is assisting them, they should reach out to, grab hold of, and hang on to equipment or an extended arm or leg, and, if possible, kick to help move to safety. Emphasize the importance of never placing themselves in danger.

## Water Safety and Aquatic Skills

When enrolling their children in swim lessons, parents expect that their children will be learning aquatic skills in the water. Although this is true, some observers may not understand why time is spent out of the water while you are teaching water safety. Be creative, especially when the water safety topic does not involve active participation. Try these steps to help integrate safety topics into your teaching to minimize concerns about spending time out of the water:

- Remind parents daily that water safety is a part of the routine. When greeting participants and parents, inform them about the day's safety topic.
- Limit the amount of time spent out of the water just talking to participants. For example, gather the participants in a circle around you and use a visual aid, such as a poster from *Longfellow's WHALE Tales K-6 Educational Packet*, to briefly highlight relevant safety messages in terms they can understand. Spend only a few minutes with participants on the deck.
- Engage participants in an activity as soon as possible. For example, prior to entering the water, have participants simulate putting on sunscreen. Have them "rub lotion" onto their arms and legs while they stretch and bend.
- Consider other ways to relay the information or get participants thinking about the topic. For example, ask questions, such as "What can you do to prevent a sunburn?" or "Why is it important to wear a life jacket when you are boating?" Then reward appropriate responses by letting them go first.
- At the end of the lesson, distribute any take-home information on the safety topic addressed. For example, give participants copies of any activity sheets from the *Longfellow's WHALE Tales K-6 Educational Packet* that support the safety topic. Make sure the activity sheets are age-appropriate. Also let participants and parents know about the Longfellow's WHALE Tales safety topics that are on the Red Cross Swim app.
- Speak with parents at the end of the lesson, updating them briefly about what participants are learning, including new skills as well as the safety topic. Point out that you have given their children some safety information to take home or relate it to content in the Red Cross Swim app.

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## KEY WATER SAFETY TOPICS

Table 4-1 identifies the specific water safety topics to be addressed at each level. Arranged by topic and recommended level, use this section to integrate water safety into your classes.

Because this information is extremely important, many of the topics are repeated through several levels. The repetition also helps ensure that all participants, including those who are new to Red Cross swim lessons or who are absent from class, still learn this critical information. A safety topic, tailored to the needs of the participants, facility or region, should be addressed every time the class meets.

Make the learning as active as possible, using new and different ways to present the information throughout the program. Try using open-ended questions or scenarios to keep the information fresh and increase participants' understanding. For example, ask younger participants, "Why is it important to swim as a pair,

near a lifeguard’s chair?” or “What should you do first if you see someone in the water who is having trouble?” For the higher levels, simulate different types of behaviors in the water, such as a distressed swimmer or a drowning victim, and have participants say if help is needed or not. Also, consider using resources from *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* to reinforce those specific topics.

Table 4-1. **Water Safety Topics**

<b>Safety Topics</b>	<b>Required Levels*</b>
<b>Accident Prevention Topics</b>	
Basic water safety rules	Parent and Child Aquatics Levels 1 and 2
Recognizing the lifeguards	Preschool Aquatics Levels 1 and 2 Learn-to-Swim Level 1
Staying safe around water	Preschool Aquatics Levels 1 and 2 Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2
Staying smart around the water	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
General water safety	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
Circle of Drowning Prevention	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
General water safety around the home	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1
Safety at the beach and the waterpark	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2
The importance of wearing a life jacket	Parent and Child Aquatics Levels 1 and 2
Selecting and fitting an appropriate life jacket	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
Use of life jackets	Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
The danger of drains	Preschool Aquatics Level 3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2
Recreational water illnesses	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1 Learn-to-Swim Levels 4 and 5
Sun safety	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1
Water toys and their limitations	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2
Developing breath control safely	Learn-to-Swim Level 3
The dangers of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding	Learn-to-Swim Level 6
Making good choices for where to swim	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
Making good decisions—choosing an exit point	Learn-to-Swim Level 3
<b>Emergency Response Topics</b>	
Chain of Drowning Survival	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
Recognizing an Emergency	Preschool Aquatics Levels 1–3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2 Adult Swim—Learning the Basics

Table 4-1. (continued)

Safety Topics	Required Levels*
How to call for help	Preschool Aquatics Levels 1–3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2 Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1 Learn-to-Swim Level 5
Identify the steps of CPR	Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
Reaching assists	Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2 Learn-to-Swim Level 4 Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
Throwing assists	Adult Swim—Learning the Basics
HELP position	Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
Huddle position	Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes
Longfellow's WHALE Tales Topics	
Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair	Learn-to-Swim Level 6
Look Before You Leap	Preschool Aquatics Level 3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 2–6
Think So You Don't Sink	Preschool Aquatics Level 3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 2 and 4–6
Reach or Throw, Don't Go	Preschool Aquatics Level 3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 2–5
Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket	Preschool Aquatics Levels 1–3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2
Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice	Learn-to-Swim Levels 3 and 5
Know About Boating Before You Go Floating	Learn-to-Swim Level 6
Too Much Sun Is No Fun	Preschool Aquatics Levels 1–3 Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2
Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide	Learn-to-Swim Level 5

\*This table lists the course and level where these water safety topics are required to be taught. However, you are encouraged to incorporate water safety topics from this table into other courses and levels as well.



**Instructor's Note:** *The lesson plans that follow highlight the key concepts to address when teaching the water safety topic. Use the appropriate information for the appropriate audience. Avoid using lectures to present the information. Ask questions to engage the participants and facilitate discussion, which will help you to evaluate their understanding.*

## TOPIC: BASIC WATER SAFETY RULES

### Key Points to Cover (for Parents)

- A great number of aquatic emergencies involving young children occur from a lapse in supervision, which is why it is paramount to keep your eyes on your child at all times.
- You and your family should only swim in designated areas and whenever possible, under the supervision of a qualified lifeguard.
- A responsible individual(s) should be designated to watch over children whenever they are in, on or around any body of water, even if a lifeguard is present. This individual should not be distracted or drinking alcohol and should know how to respond to an aquatic emergency.
- An adult should stay within arm's reach of weak swimmers and young children regardless of their swimming ability.
- Have young children or inexperienced swimmers take extra precautions by wearing a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.
  - Substitutes such as water wings, swim rings, inflatable toys and other items designed for water recreation cannot replace responsible adult supervision, nor should they be counted on as lifesaving devices.
  - These devices can suddenly shift position, lose air or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation.
- Children should only enter the water after they have received permission. Teach them to ask first.
- Knowing and enforcing what is safe and unsafe behavior in and around aquatic environments is a part of good supervision.
  - Facilities should have their rules posted in clear view. Read and follow the rules and teach them to your children.
  - Each child's swimming ability is different. Know his or her ability level and set specific rules based on the swimming ability.
  - If you have a home pool, you need to set rules for the pool and enforce them without exception.
- Other basic rules and tips to teach your children for all aquatic environments include the following:
  - Always swim with a partner or as a pair. Never swim alone.
  - Swim only in supervised areas.
  - Always walk, never run or skip.
  - Check the depth of the water before jumping or diving in the water.
  - Look for potential hazards and make sure no one is in front of you before jumping or diving.
  - Do not engage in rough horseplay, such as dunking.
  - Stay away from pool drains, pipes and other openings to avoid entrapments.
  - Do not eat or chew gum while swimming.
  - Shower before and after swimming in a pool, river, lake or ocean.
  - Watch out for the “dangerous too’s”: too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun and too much strenuous activity.
- Children must always enter the water feetfirst in shallow or unknown water.
- Preparation is key.
  - Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies.
  - Whenever possible, have a telephone (land line or mobile phone) nearby.
  - Check to see if there is a note or sign stating the full name and address of the facility attached or posted in a prominent place, such as near a phone. This information is needed when an emergency call is placed.

<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What items in a pool should you stay away from?</li> <li>■ Why must children enter the water feetfirst in shallow or unknown water?</li> <li>■ What could you see that would alert you that there is an emergency?</li> <li>■ What are some rules you can set for the home pool or aquatic environment? (Other aquatic environments in outdoor residential areas can include ponds, lakes, canals and rivers.)</li> <li>■ Why is it important for a supervising adult to be in the water with a weak or nonswimmer?</li> </ul>
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**TOPIC: RECOGNIZING THE LIFEGUARDS**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is the lifeguards' job to watch all of the swimmers in and around the water.</li> <li>■ If the lifeguards see someone who is hurt or who is in trouble (drowning), they will help.</li> <li>■ You can tell who the lifeguards are by looking for the people wearing uniforms and holding rescue equipment (rescue tube).</li> <li>■ You should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Swim only in areas where the lifeguard can see you. If you can see the lifeguard, then the lifeguard can see you.</li> <li>○ Let a lifeguard know if you are having trouble or if you see something you think is dangerous.</li> <li>○ Not try to play with or try to have a conversation with lifeguards when they are on duty. Avoid playing around the lifeguard's chair but make sure that you are near the chair so that the lifeguard can see you.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What does the lifeguard do?</li> <li>■ How can you tell if someone is the lifeguard?</li> <li>■ Why should you not play or talk with the lifeguard when he or she is on duty?</li> </ul>

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**TOPIC: STAYING SAFE AROUND WATER**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Staying safe around the water involves supervision around the water, which differs from supervision in most other settings. Around water, supervision can make the difference between life and death.</li> <li>■ Most drowning incidents often result from a lack of good supervision.</li> <li>■ Supervising children around the water is not the sole responsibility of lifeguards. Even with lifeguards on duty, parents or another responsible individual should provide supervision.</li> <li>■ Supervision around the water requires total and constant attention to those in the water or at risk for getting in the water. The supervisor needs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have the developmental maturity to assess the situation.</li> <li>○ Be able to establish and enforce rules.</li> <li>○ Have the knowledge and skills to respond to problems, including how to perform a water rescue without getting in the water and putting himself or herself at risk for drowning, too!</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make sure everyone being supervised knows who is in charge.</li> <li>○ Remain free from distraction, such as by cell phones, socializing or engaging in other activities.</li> <li>○ Avoid alcohol use before or while supervising water activities.</li> <li>■ On arriving at the water environment, the person in charge of supervision should evaluate the area, identifying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where lifeguards are stationed.</li> <li>○ The boundaries of the designated swim area.</li> <li>○ How to call for emergency help, including if there is cell phone reception for calling 9-1-1 or the local emergency number, if necessary.</li> <li>○ Potential hazards, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Currents</li> <li>● Drop-offs, uneven bottoms or objects in or under the water that pose a hazard or would surprise a swimmer</li> <li>● Other activities occurring that could be a hazard, such as motorboats</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>■ To learn more, take a Red Cross Water Safety course ... supervision around the water is a real job.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Playing in, on and around the water can be a lot of fun, but it also can be dangerous.</li> <li>■ Stay safe by following these special rules whenever you are near water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Always ask permission before going anywhere near water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If your home has a pool or there is one nearby, stay away unless you have permission and a grown-up is with you.</li> <li>● Stay away from any other water like a pond, a fountain or even a bucket of water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Only go in or near water when a grown-up has given you permission to go in and when a grown-up is watching you. A grown-up should know where you are and what you are doing at all times.</li> <li>○ Only swim in areas where swimming is allowed and only when a lifeguard or other grown-up is watching you.</li> <li>○ Stay within an arm's reach of the grown-up who is watching you, even if you are playing with an inflatable toy. If you fall off or the toy loses air, you could get into trouble.</li> <li>○ Follow all the rules for the swimming area. If you do not know the rules, ask your parents, the grown-up watching you or the lifeguards to explain them to you.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What should you do before you go near any water?</li> <li>■ What are some rules that are in place to help you stay safe?</li> </ul>

## TOPIC: CIRCLE OF DROWNING PREVENTION

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A circle of safety is essential for drowning prevention. Multiple layers of protection work together.</li> <li>■ This starts before you even get to the water by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing close and constant attention to children you are supervising in or near water.</li> <li>○ Fencing pools and spas with adequate barriers, including 4-sided fencing.</li> <li>○ Learning swimming and water safety survival skills.</li> <li>○ Always wearing a life jacket when on a boat, and when swimming if you are a poor swimmer.</li> <li>○ Swimming in a lifeguarded area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How would you describe close and constant supervision?</li> <li>■ What are some qualifications of a person who is supervising children in or near the water?</li> <li>■ What other barriers besides 4-sided fencing can you name?</li> <li>■ When is it important to wear a life jacket? Why is it important to wear a life jacket?</li> <li>■ What layers of protection can you describe that help keep children safe around a pool or spa?</li> </ul>

## TOPIC: GENERAL WATER SAFETY AROUND THE HOME

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Water safety and steps to prevent drowning are needed around any body of water, not just the swimming pool or spa.</li> <li>■ Any water deep enough to cover the mouth and nose can cause drowning.</li> <li>■ Drowning can occur in the home in a bathtub, toilet or any other container of water.</li> <li>■ General rules for water safety include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using physical barriers and preventing unsupervised children from entering any source of water.</li> <li>○ Providing constant and vigilant supervision whenever children are around any source of water (such as pools, rivers, lakes, bathtubs, toilets and even buckets of water) no matter how well the child can swim and no matter how shallow the water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ For anyone who has the responsibility of a home pool, the best way to keep children safe from drowning is to provide layers of protection, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Placing barriers around your pool to prevent access.</li> <li>○ Installing alarms on the doors of the house that provide access to the pool, and alarms on the pool.</li> <li>○ Making sure everyone in the home knows how to swim.</li> <li>○ Closely supervising your child.</li> <li>○ Knowing how to respond to an aquatic emergency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ The following tips can help reduce the risk of drowning in and around the home:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Never leave a young child unattended in a bathtub. Do not trust a child's life to bathtub aids that help a child sit upright in the tub—they do not replace constant supervision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep bathroom doors closed, use safety locks on toilets and keep toilet bowl covers down to prevent toddlers from reaching the toilet.</li> <li>○ Empty buckets, kiddie pools, bathtubs and any other container of water immediately after use.</li> <li>■ It is also important to identify potential water hazards within the community and make certain that children stay away from them. For example, prevent access to community and landscape water features, such as small ponds and waterfalls.</li> <li>■ When visiting another home, you should check the site for potential water hazards and always supervise children.</li> </ul>
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TOPIC: **SAFETY AT THE BEACH AND AT THE WATERPARK**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whether it is a community pool, lakefront beach or a waterpark, children should only be allowed to swim in clean, supervised and designated aquatic environments.</li> <li>■ Many of the same basic water safety rules for pools apply to beaches, waterparks and other designated aquatic environments, but these environments also require some additional considerations.</li> <li>■ Even when a lifeguard is present, swimming at a designated swimming area that is part of a natural body of water requires more caution. Swimmers may encounter potentially dangerous conditions, such as aquatic life or inclement weather, which do not exist in a pool. Also remember, conditions in these areas can change quickly.</li> <li>■ If you are at a natural body of water, make sure you know about the water environment so you can avoid any potential hazards, such as cold water, deep and shallow areas, currents, depth changes, obstructions and the locations of entry and exit points.</li> <li>■ Waterparks are exciting places and it is easy for children to forget the rules, running up stairs and between attractions. Remind children not to run.</li> <li>■ Many waterpark attractions have special rules. Read and follow all posted rules.</li> <li>■ Young children or inexperienced swimmers should wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket whenever they are in, on or around water, although some waterparks may prohibit the use of life jackets on some attractions.</li> <li>■ As is true whenever children are in, on or around water, a responsible individual must maintain constant supervision.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Waterparks are great places to swim and play.</li> <li>■ A waterpark is a lot different than a pool. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some waterpark attractions have big waves and others have currents.</li> <li>○ The water at the bottom of a slide can be deep and have a current as well.</li> <li>○ You have to know what to expect before you get in the water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Whenever you are at a waterpark, you should follow these guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow all posted rules. Be sure to ask the waterpark staff if you are unsure about any rules or procedures.</li> <li>○ Remember that water depth is different for different attractions. Also, what you may or may not do likely changes, too. Read the posted rules for the attraction.</li> <li>○ Get into the correct position before starting down a water slide—face-up and feetfirst. On speed slides, cross your legs to help prevent injuries.</li> <li>○ Shower before entering a waterpark attraction and do not go in the water if you have diarrhea.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Sample Questions</b>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What are some dangers that may be in or around natural bodies of water?</li> <li>■ What is a rip current?</li> <li>■ What do you do if caught in a rip current?</li> <li>■ What is different at a waterpark versus the pool?</li> <li>■ What is the correct position to go down a water slide?</li> </ul>
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**TOPIC: THE IMPORTANCE OF WEARING A LIFE JACKET**

<b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Young children and anyone who cannot swim well should wear a life jacket whenever they are in, on or around the water.</li> <li>■ Even in public pools or waterparks, people who cannot swim well should wear a life jacket.</li> <li>■ Everyone should wear a life jacket when they are on a boat.</li> <li>■ Life jackets are not a substitute for close supervision. Young children and poor swimmers need close supervision at all times.</li> <li>■ Whenever children are in, on or around the water, a responsible individual should be designated to provide constant supervision and stay within arm’s reach if the child is young or a poor swimmer, even if the child is wearing a life jacket.</li> <li>■ Life jackets are available in several types and many styles. They are rated for their buoyancy and purpose. You should check the label to ensure that you’re using the correct life jacket for the right purpose.</li> <li>■ The type of activity and water conditions help determine which type to use.</li> <li>■ For any type, be sure it is U.S. Coast Guard–approved and in good condition.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	<p><b><i>Instructor’s Notes:</i></b> Provide U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in various styles and sizes. Also ask anyone who has a life jacket at home to bring it to class so the child can practice in his or her own life jacket. Not all will have them, so have life jackets available. Children can take turns if your supply is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Point out the U.S. Coast Guard marking on the life jacket and highlight the weight guidelines in the label.</li> <li>■ Emphasize the importance of selecting the appropriately sized life jacket and wearing it properly, including fastening all zippers, ties or snaps.</li> <li>■ Guide parents in selecting and putting appropriately-sized U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets on themselves and their child.</li> <li>■ Have parents enter the water first, then help the child enter the water and move around the teaching area. Give light support as needed.</li> <li>■ Have the parent hold the child in a face-to-face position, then cue him or her to roll over onto the back and float for a brief period. Cue the child again to roll over onto the front, then return to the wall.</li> <li>■ Cue the child to jump into the water and then return to the wall using the combined stroke on front.</li> <li>■ Working with one parent and child pair at a time, hold the child while the parent experiences buoyancy, such as by lifting his or her feet off the bottom or floating on the back.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity (Optional)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have the child wear lightweight clothes under the life jacket (for example, T-shirt and shorts; no jeans or sweatshirts or pants) and float on his or her back in the water.</li> <li>■ Start in shallow water then move to deeper water. Limit this activity to a few minutes.</li> </ul>

<b>Sample Questions</b>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How can a life jacket help when in a boat?</li> <li>■ If you are in cold water, what position can help you stay warm?</li> <li>■ Who should wear a life jacket in the pool or at the waterpark?</li> <li>■ How do you put on a life jacket properly?</li> </ul>
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**TOPIC: THE DANGER OF DRAINS**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Entrapment or entanglement hazards can occur with pools and spas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A part of a person’s body, hair or clothing gets stuck to a drain, possibly resulting in severe injury or death.</li> <li>○ Drain entrapment and entanglement typically result from inadequately designed drainage systems and/or the use of ineffective drain covers.</li> <li>○ Pipes, suction fittings and other openings are also entrapment hazards that should be avoided.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ A federal law, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (known as VGBA) requires public pools to have anti-entrapment drain covers and protection from dangerous drain suction.</li> <li>■ Any pool or spa should have VGBA-compliant drain covers. If you have a pool or spa, ask your pool service provider if your drain covers are VGBA-compliant.</li> <li>■ Other measures to reduce the risk for entrapment or entanglement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Always maintaining pool and spa covers in good working order.</li> <li>○ Always making sure that you, your children or anyone using the spa or pool, stays away from pool drains, pipes and other openings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One of the rules of a pool or spa is to stay away from any drains, pipes or other openings.</li> <li>■ Drains, pipes and other openings are very dangerous and can cause you to get stuck.</li> <li>■ You should always stay away from pool drains, pipes and other openings to avoid entrapments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> (for Children, Parents, Teens and Adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Point out (or have children point out) the drains, pipes and other openings in the pool to be certain that everyone knows what and where these items are.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is an entrapment hazard? What makes an entrapment hazard dangerous?</li> <li>■ What are pool drains?</li> <li>■ What are items in a pool that you should stay away from?</li> <li>■ Where will the drains or suction areas of the pool or spa be found?</li> </ul>

## TOPIC: RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESSES

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A recreational water illness (RWI) is an illness that comes from contact with contaminated water.</li> <li>■ RWIs can be transmitted in waterparks, swimming pools, hot tubs and spas, rivers, lakes and oceans.</li> <li>■ These illnesses are most commonly spread through swallowing or by breathing in water particles containing germs.</li> <li>■ Diarrhea is the most common symptom of an RWI, but RWIs also can cause infections in the skin, ears, eyes, chest and lungs.</li> <li>■ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all swimmers follow the “PLEAs” that promote safe healthy swimming:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Please do not swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick. This is especially important for kids in diapers.</li> <li>○ Please do not swallow the pool water. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth altogether.</li> <li>○ Please practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.</li> <li>○ Please take frequent bathroom breaks. Waiting until you have to go may mean that it is too late.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ The CDC recommends additional “PLEAs” to promote healthy swimming for children in diapers:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Please take kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean that it is too late.</li> <li>○ Please change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and cause illness.</li> <li>○ Please wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. Everyone has invisible amounts of fecal matter on their bottoms that ends up in the pool.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is an RWI?</li> <li>■ What is the most common symptom of a recreational water illness?</li> <li>■ How can you help prevent an RWI?</li> </ul>

## TOPIC: SUN SAFETY

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Overexposure to the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays is a problem for everyone, regardless of age, location or skin color.</li> <li>■ Sunburns in childhood can result in health problems later on in life, so children are especially at risk.</li> <li>■ The consequences of overexposure are severe. Too much sun can lead to eye damage, cataracts, immune system suppression, premature aging of the skin and, most seriously, skin cancer.</li> <li>■ Protect your and your children’s skin in the following ways:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seek shade and limit the amount of time in direct sunlight between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. This is the time of day when UV rays are most harmful.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Generously apply sunscreen about 15 minutes before going out into the sun. Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin using a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 that provides broad-spectrum protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply every 2 hours (or more if the directions on the sunscreen say to do so), even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.</li> <li>○ Wear protective clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, whenever you or your children are exposed to UV rays.</li> <li>○ Watch for the UV Index. The UV Index provides a daily forecast of the expected risk of overexposure to the sun, using a scale of 1 to 11+. On a day with an intensity level of 1, there is a low risk of overexposure and on an 11+ day there is an extreme risk.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Learn-to-Swim Levels 1–3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some of the light that comes from the sun is bad for you. So you need to protect your skin whenever you go outside in the sun. If you stay in sun without protecting your skin, you can get a sunburn.</li> <li>■ Every time you go outside, you need to protect your skin. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Try to stay in the shade. Play in the shade or stay inside between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. This is when light from the sun is most dangerous.</li> <li>○ Put on sunscreen before you go outside. Put it on again every 2 hours and put it on again after you go swimming or if you are sweating.</li> <li>○ Wear clothes, like a long-sleeved shirt and pants, to protect your skin from sunlight. You also should wear a hat with a wide brim and sunglasses. These things will help protect your skin from getting burned.</li> <li>○ Be extra careful when you are by water, sand or snow. When sunlight shines on water, sand or snow, it bounces off and can burn your skin.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Children, Learn-to-Swim Levels 4–6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Energy from the sun is called solar radiation. Ultraviolet (UV) rays are a type of solar radiation. Overexposure to UV rays can cause sunburns and lead to serious illness later on in life.</li> <li>■ UV rays are invisible, so you need to take steps to protect your skin whenever you go outside in the sun. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seek shade if possible. Remember that the sun’s UV rays are strongest between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. Follow the shadow rule when in the sun: No shadow, seek shade!</li> <li>○ Pay attention to the UV Index. The UV Index provides important information to help you plan your outdoor activities in ways that prevent overexposure to the sun. Stay inside when the UV Index is high.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What can we do to prevent sunburn and protect ourselves from serious illness?</li> <li>■ How should you apply sunscreen?</li> <li>■ At what times of day is the sun the strongest?</li> <li>■ What should you do when the sun is the strongest?</li> </ul>

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## TOPIC: WATER TOYS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is important to know the difference between a toy and a lifesaving device.</li> <li>■ Inflatables, such as water wings, swim rings and other flotation devices, are not substitutes for U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets. Some of the materials used in many of these devices deteriorate in the sun and through contact with rough pool surfaces, resulting in leaks.</li> <li>■ These devices enable swimmers to go beyond their ability and may lead to a drowning situation, if the device fails or slips off.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A flotation device or a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket is never a substitute for close supervision.</li> <li>■ When using inflatables, it is important to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inspect the child’s toys to make sure they are safe and working properly.</li> <li>○ Read the manufacturer’s instructions and make sure that children follow the instructions.</li> <li>○ Be sure that children do not play with toys that have parts or strings that may lead to entanglement.</li> <li>○ Use common sense. If a toy seems unsafe, it probably is unsafe.</li> <li>○ Make sure that children play with toys that are age appropriate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Water wings and inflatable toys are great fun but they are just that, toys. These items may provide a false sense of security and should not be relied upon for safety. It is vital that parents and caregivers know the difference between toys and proper safety gear.</li> <li>■ The only truly safe water accessory is a personal flotation device (PFD) approved by the U.S. Coast Guard (check for the Coast Guard stamp).</li> <li>■ Kids—and adults—who are weak swimmers or who appear to rely on inflatable toys for safety should wear U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket whenever they are in or around the water. Each person should have the appropriate life jacket for his or her weight, which is found clearly marked on the U.S. Coast Guard stamp.</li> <li>■ Children may not like to wear life jackets. Try taking them on a shopping trip where they can pick out their own life jacket. Including them in the decision will allow for a better fit and help promote wearing of the life jacket at all times in or on the water.</li> <li>■ No matter what a child is wearing and no matter what flotation items are at hand, he or she should never be left unattended in or around the water. Always practice “reach supervision” which means that you are within arm’s length of the child at all times.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How are water toys different from lifesaving devices?</li> <li>■ What is another name for a life jacket?</li> <li>■ How do you know if the life jacket is the appropriate size?</li> <li>■ How should you properly supervise a child who is wearing a life jacket?</li> </ul>

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**TOPIC: DEVELOPING BREATH CONTROL SAFELY**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learning breath control is an important part of learning to swim.</li> <li>■ In the courses that make up the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program, you learn skills such as bobbing, rotary breathing and swimming underwater for certain distances. You also learn to breathe in certain patterns while swimming strokes.</li> <li>■ When your Water Safety instructor gives directions related to breath control or breath-holding activities, the instructor sets limits. For example, you are asked to bob 5 times. Or, you are asked to swim underwater 3 to 5 body lengths.</li> <li>■ Your instructor does not tell you to “see how long you can hold your breath” or “see who can swim underwater the farthest.”</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Teens and Adult Participants) <i>(Continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In developing breath control safely, the instructor is working to develop your abilities without causing a dangerous situation.</li> <li>■ Your instructor will limit you to one breath before any underwater or breath control activities. He or she will stop you if you try to hyperventilate—take multiple rapid, deep breaths—before working on any underwater or breath control activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Dangers of Hyperventilation and Extended Breath-Holding</b></p>	
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Voluntarily hyperventilation—extremely rapid or deep breathing—followed by swimming underwater or extended breath-holding is dangerous and can cause a person to suddenly lose consciousness and die.</li> <li>■ A rule at all pools should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prolonged breath-holding or hyperventilation is not allowed. In fact, lifeguards are taught to stop any games, contests or activities that encourage this dangerous behavior.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ You should never hyperventilate before swimming underwater.</li> <li>■ Underwater activities that involve breath-holding should never be competitive or repetitive.</li> <li>■ Prolonged breath-holding while swimming underwater can cause even an accomplished swimmer to blackout underwater and possibly drown.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is hyperventilation?</li> <li>■ Why is it a dangerous practice?</li> <li>■ What should a lifeguard do if he or she sees someone having breath-holding contests?</li> </ul>

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**TOPIC: CHAIN OF DROWNING SURVIVAL**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A person who is drowning has the greatest chance of survival if these links in the Chain of Drowning Survival are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recognize the signs of someone in trouble and call for help.</li> <li>○ Rescue and remove the person from the water (without putting yourself in danger).</li> <li>○ Call emergency medical services (EMS).</li> <li>○ Begin ventilations and CPR, if necessary.</li> <li>○ Transfer care to advanced life support.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What do you think a person may look like when in trouble in the water?</li> <li>■ What can you use to help rescue a person in the water?</li> <li>■ What number can you call for emergencies?</li> </ul>

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## TOPIC: RECOGNIZING AN EMERGENCY

<b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Anyone who falls into water and cannot get back to shore or the side of the pool is in trouble and needs help.</li><li>■ A person who is face-down and has not moved or is on the bottom of the pool and not moving is in trouble and also needs help.</li><li>■ Tell the lifeguard or a grown-up right away.</li><li>■ Never try to go into the water and help someone who is in trouble. They could grab onto you and pull you into the water.</li><li>■ Sometimes a person who is in trouble cannot call for help, which is why you should tell the lifeguard or a grown-up right away if you think someone is in trouble.</li></ul>
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How do you know if a person in the water is in trouble and needs help?</li><li>■ What would you do if you see a person in trouble in the water?</li></ul>

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## TOPIC: HOW TO CALL FOR HELP

<b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ When you see someone who is in trouble, stay calm and tell the lifeguard or a grown-up right away.</li><li>■ If a lifeguard or a grown-up is not nearby, use a phone and call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.</li><li>■ Tell the person who answers the phone what happened. Do not hang up. The person who answers the phone might be able to tell you how you can help. The person who answers the phone might want to know:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Your name.</li><li>○ The telephone number from where you are calling.</li><li>○ What happened.</li><li>○ Where you are.</li><li>○ How many people are hurt or in trouble.</li><li>○ What is wrong with the person.</li><li>○ What help (first aid) is being given.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b><i>Instructor's Note:</i></b> When dealing with young children, concentrate on the first five sub-bullets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Only call 9-1-1 or the local emergency if there really is an emergency. Never call this number unless emergency help is really needed.</li></ul>
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ If someone is in trouble and needs help, what should you do first?</li><li>■ If no lifeguard or grown-up is nearby, what phone number should you call?</li><li>■ When should you call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number?</li></ul>

<b>Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use a toy or nonworking telephone and have participants simulate calling for help. Do not have them actually place the call!</li> </ul> <p><i><b>Instructor’s Note:</b> Take appropriate measures to ensure that 9-1-1 or the local emergency number is not accidentally called. Do not let participants actually place the call. If using a mobile phone, ensure that it is turned off or the battery is removed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tell participants to memorize the phone number “9-1-1,” their address and telephone number, the color of their house or the car in the driveway.</li> <li>■ After class, speak to parents and remind them to help their children practice this task.</li> </ul>
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**TOPIC: HOW TO CALL FOR HELP AND THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING FIRST AID AND CPR**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14, with the highest rates of drowning occurring in children between the ages of 1 and 4 years.</li> <li>■ Anyone watching children who are in, on or around a pool or any other body of water must understand that drowning happens quickly and suddenly. And you need to respond immediately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When you recognize an emergency, stay calm and call or have someone call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. Every second counts.</li> <li>○ If the child is unconscious, send someone else to call emergency medical services (EMS) personnel while you care for the child.</li> <li>○ If the child is conscious, first try to safely get the child out of the water and then determine the help and care needed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ You should call EMS personnel for the following conditions and situations, which are considered serious: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any drowning or nonfatal submersion situation</li> <li>○ Injury to the head, neck or spine</li> <li>○ Difficulty breathing</li> <li>○ Persistent chest or abdominal pain or pressure</li> <li>○ Unconsciousness</li> <li>○ Severe bleeding, vomiting blood or passing blood</li> <li>○ Seizure, severe headache or slurred speech</li> <li>○ Poisoning</li> <li>○ Possible broken bones</li> <li>○ Multiple injuries</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ You need to stay on the line when calling for help. In many cases, the dispatcher may need more information or may be able to help by giving first aid directions.</li> <li>■ The American Red Cross recommends that at least one person in every household be trained in lifesaving first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) skills.</li> <li>■ Anyone who has a home pool or lives near a body of water, such as a canal, pond, river or ocean, should ensure that anyone who cares for their children knows first aid and CPR and how to use an AED.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ As soon as you recognize an emergency, who do you call?</li> <li>■ Should you remove a child from the water?</li> <li>■ If the child is not conscious and someone is with you, what steps do you follow for the emergency?</li> <li>■ Who should know first aid and CPR?</li> </ul>
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## TOPIC: REACHING ASSISTS

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Parents, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sometimes parents and others watching children around water fail to recognize that a swimmer is in trouble.</li> <li>■ Most people who are in trouble in the water cannot or do not call for help. They spend their energy just trying to keep their heads above water to get a breath.</li> <li>■ A swimmer in distress may be too tired to get to the side of the pool or may be trying to swim but making little or no forward progress. If not helped, a swimmer in distress may soon become a drowning victim.</li> <li>■ If you notice a swimmer in trouble, the first step is to tell a lifeguard. If no lifeguards are present, the next step is to help get the swimmer out of the water, if it can be done safely.</li> <li>■ If the distressed swimmer is close enough, you can use a reaching assist to help him or her out of the water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Perform a reaching assist simply by extending your arm or any object to the victim.</li> <li>○ If you are already in the water, hold onto something secure and extend your free hand or one of your legs to the victim.</li> <li>○ If any object is available, such as a foam noodle, kickboard, shirt, belt, stick or towel, use it to extend your reach.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Community pools, recreational areas, and many hotel and motel pools have reaching equipment, such as a reaching pole or shepherd's crook, near the water.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lead parents through the reaching assist with equipment and the reaching assist without equipment.</li> <li>■ Demonstrate the steps yourself first and then let the parents try (if they are able to do so while keeping the children safe.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For the reaching assist with equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brace yourself on the pool deck, pier surface or shoreline.</li> <li>● Extend the object to the victim.</li> <li>● When the victim grasps the object, slowly and carefully pull him or her to safety. Keep your body low and lean back to avoid being pulled into the water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ For the reaching assist without equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brace yourself on the pool deck, pier surface or shoreline.</li> <li>● Reach with your arm and grasp the victim.</li> <li>● Pull the victim to safety.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Learn-to-Swim Levels 1–3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If you see that someone needs help, call an adult and/or the lifeguard.</li> <li>■ If no adult or lifeguard is present or capable to help and the victim is close enough, without going into the water yourself, use a reaching assist to help him or her out of the water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Perform a reaching assist simply by extending your reach to the victim.</li> <li>○ If any object is available, such as a foam noodle, kickboard, shirt, belt, stick or towel, use it to extend your reach.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Community pools, recreational areas, and many hotel and motel pools have reaching equipment, such as a reaching pole or shepherd’s crook, near the water.</li> <li>■ If you cannot help quickly, you should call or have someone else call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Look around the area and tell me what objects you could use to reach out to someone in trouble in the water.</li> <li>■ What is important to remember when reaching out to someone to help them?</li> <li>■ If you are in trouble in the water and someone is reaching something out to you, what should you do?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> (for Children, Learn-to-Swim Levels 1–3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lead children through the reaching assist with equipment that the children can handle and the reaching assist without equipment.</li> <li>■ Demonstrate the steps yourself first and then let the children try. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For the reaching assist with equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brace yourself on the pool deck, pier surface or shoreline.</li> <li>● Extend the object to the victim.</li> <li>● When the victim grasps the object, slowly and carefully pull him or her to safety. Keep your body low, and lean back to avoid being pulled into the water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ For the reaching assist without equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brace yourself on the pool deck, pier surface or shoreline.</li> <li>● Reach with your arm and grasp the victim.</li> <li>● Pull the victim to safety.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>■ During this practice, be sure to tell the children how to be rescued, that is, that they should reach out to, grab hold of, and hang on to equipment or an extended arm or leg, and, if possible, kick to help move to safety. If it is safe to do so based on the depth of the water or by using instructor aides, let them try being rescued.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Levels 4–6, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<p>Lead participants through the throwing assist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lead participants through the throwing assist.</li> <li>■ Demonstrate the steps yourself first, then have participants practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brace yourself on the pool deck to ensure you cannot be pulled or fall into the water.</li> <li>○ Hold the coil of the line in the open palm of the nonthrowing hand and grasp the side of the object (ring buoy) with the throwing hand.</li> <li>○ Step on the nonthrowing end of the line.</li> <li>○ Hold the object vertically, step back with the leg on the throwing side, swing the object backwards and then forward for an underhand toss. Let go of the coiled line and keep your foot on the end.</li> <li>○ Aim the throw so that the object lands just beyond the victim. Tell the person to grab the object.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Activity</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Levels 4–6, Teens and Adult Participants) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After the person has a firm grasp on the object or line, drop any remaining coil and pull him or her to safety. Keep the body low and lean back to avoid being pulled into the water.</li> <li>○ Slowly pull the person to safety by reaching out and grasping the line with the thumb inward. Pull the line into the side with that hand while reaching out with the other hand. Continue the alternate pulling and reaching action until the person is at the side or is able to stand in shallow water.</li> <li>■ During this practice, be sure that participants also practice how to be rescued. (They should reach out to, grab hold of, and hang on to equipment or an extended arm or leg, and, if possible, kick to help move to safety.)</li> </ul>
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**Instructor's Note:** The next six topics are also addressed in the Longfellow's WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet. Consider using the lesson plans provided there to teach these topics. The supporting materials, including the posters, activity sheets and video segments, are excellent tools to help strengthen what they are learning. You can also use the shortened messages that are provided below when time is short or as a review.

## TOPIC: SWIM AS A PAIR NEAR A LIFEGUARD'S CHAIR

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No matter how old you are or how strong of a swimmer you are, always swim as a pair near a lifeguard chair.</li> <li>■ Even if you are at a pool or waterpark where there is a lifeguard, never swim alone.</li> <li>■ Swim with another person, a buddy, like a friend or a brother or sister who can get help if you get in trouble.</li> <li>■ Make sure that you and your buddy can both see each other at all times.</li> <li>■ Stay close enough to hear one another at all times.</li> <li>■ Never leave the swimming area without your buddy.</li> <li>■ Remember: always ask for permission before you go near any source of water and only swim if a lifeguard or an adult is watching.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Level 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Many people enjoy swimming in natural bodies of water, including lakes, rivers and oceans.</li> <li>■ Such environments can be safe when a lifeguard is supervising the area or the area is designated as a swimming area by the proper authorities.</li> <li>■ However, if these elements are not in place, you must always assume that these areas are too dangerous for swimming.</li> <li>■ The water in rivers, streams and creeks is constantly flowing downstream. Currents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are often unpredictable and fast moving.</li> <li>○ Can abruptly change in direction and intensity due to changes below the surface.</li> <li>○ May not be visible on the water surface even though it may be strong below the surface.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Because the water is moving, anyone caught in a current may have a difficult time getting to shore, be carried downstream or get caught between the force of the water and an immovable object. You or anyone accidentally caught in a current should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Roll onto your back and float downstream feetfirst.</li> <li>○ Back paddle with the arms and try to steer away from the main current.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Once out of the main current, the goal is to swim or wade directly toward shore. Because of the force of the current, this will result in a slightly downstream path.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Level 6) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lakes and ponds are common features of many communities. Because lake and pond water is murky, it may be difficult to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ See below the surface. In such murky conditions, it may be hard to notice a distressed swimmer or a person who is drowning.</li> <li>○ Determine the depth of the water or safety of the bottom surface.</li> <li>○ Spot hidden hazards, such as rocks, plants or weeds, sunken logs or broken glass on the bottom that can cause serious injury and/or entrapment.</li> <li>○ Notice the constantly changing conditions occurring in these bodies of water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Ocean waves and currents are always a safety concern. Even at beaches with lifeguards, wave activity can be dangerous. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Breaking waves are tremendously powerful, capable of moving large objects and can knock anyone down.</li> <li>○ Differences in bottom conditions and wave height create changes in how waves break. In some situations, the weight of the wave and power of the crashing water can hold a person underwater.</li> <li>○ Breaking waves near rocky shores are especially dangerous. Slippery conditions nearby can make it easy to fall into the water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ When at a beach or ocean area, you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Swim only at ocean beaches that are protected by lifeguards or in areas specifically designated for swimming.</li> <li>○ Be aware of the various actions of the waves and currents and how to remain safe in the ocean.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What does it mean to “swim as a pair?”</li> <li>■ Should you separate from your partner or pair, even if you have to go to the bathroom?</li> <li>■ Why should you swim where there is a lifeguard?</li> </ul>

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TOPIC: **LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Swimming in a safe place is very important. That is why you should swim only in areas where swimming is allowed and only when a lifeguard or grown-up is watching you.</li> <li>■ When swimming, you should always: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Check with a lifeguard to see if it is okay to jump in the water. If it is allowed, make sure that you can see what is in front of you before you enter the water. If you cannot see the bottom and you are not sure what is under the water, do not jump or dive in.</li> <li>○ Stand at the edge and curl your toes over the edge when you are ready to go in. Do not run and jump or dive. Do not jump or dive on people or objects.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Jumping into a pool can be great fun, but it is important to make sure the area is safe before you jump in.</li> <li>■ It might be hard to see the bottom at some swimming areas, like a beach at the ocean or a lake.</li> <li>■ To stay safe, you should always: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jump only into the water at a designated swimming area and only do so if it is allowed.</li> <li>○ Never jump into the water unless you are at a designated swimming area because you cannot tell what is on the bottom or how deep it is. There may be rocks, weeds, sunken logs, broken glass or other things that could cause injuries.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Levels 3 and 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whenever entering the water in a headfirst position, follow safety rules at all times—never make exceptions. This includes when learning how to enter from different positions, including the sitting, kneeling, compact and stride positions.</li> <li>■ Be sure the water is at least 9 feet deep (when entering from a pool deck or no less than 11.5 feet when the height is one meter above the surface of the water) and ensure that nothing is in the way in the water every time you enter the water in a headfirst position.</li> <li>■ Never dive or enter the water headfirst into an aboveground pool, the shallow end of any inground pool or at a beach.</li> <li>■ Never dive or enter the water headfirst into cloudy or murky water.</li> <li>■ Check the shape of the pool bottom to be sure it is safe for diving or a headfirst entry.</li> <li>■ Remember that pools at homes, motels and hotels might not be safe for diving or headfirst entry.</li> <li>■ When performing a headfirst entry from a deck, make sure the area of entry is free of obstructions (such as lane lines, kickboards and other pool users) for at least 4 feet on both sides and a clear, safe distance in front.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Levels 5 and 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The following are rules to keep in mind when diving from a diving board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the ladder to climb onto the diving board or tower. Climbing in any other way is not allowed.</li> <li>○ Only one bounce on the end of the diving board, unless supervised by a coach.</li> <li>○ Only one person on the diving board at a time.</li> <li>○ Make sure that no other swimmers are in the diving area when the diving board or tower is in use.</li> <li>○ Only dive or jump straight out from the end of the diving board or tower.</li> <li>○ Look before diving or jumping to make sure no one is in the diving area.</li> <li>○ Swim to the closest ladder or wall immediately after diving or jumping.</li> <li>○ When performing a headfirst entry, make sure the hands enter the water first.</li> <li>○ Use the tower only with supervision from a qualified instructor or coach.</li> <li>○ Learn or practice twisting, somersaulting, and inward and reverse dives only under the close supervision of a qualified instructor or coach.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How should you enter the water when you do not know what is on the bottom?</li> <li>■ When entering water that is shallow, how should you enter?</li> <li>■ If you are diving in deep water, why is it important to keep your arms above your head?</li> </ul>

**TOPIC: THINK SO YOU DON'T SINK**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Even if you are following the rules, accidents and emergencies can still happen.</li> <li>■ If you are swimming and an emergency happens, you need to remember to think so you don't sink. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If you get tired and cannot make it to safety, do not panic; think about what you can do.</li> <li>○ Try leaning back or rolling over on your back and floating. That way you can rest.</li> <li>○ Stay on your back and wait for help or start swimming when you have had enough rest.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Activity</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Level 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have participants swim 3 body lengths on their front, then roll onto their back and float on the back for 5 seconds.</li> <li>■ Have participants swim 3 body lengths on their front, then roll onto their back and float on the back for at least 5 seconds. Then have participants roll to their front and swim another 3 body lengths, then roll to their back and float on the back again. Have participants repeat these steps until they reach the side of the pool.</li> <li>■ Have participants swim 5 body lengths on their front, then roll onto their back and float on the back for 10 seconds. Then have participants swim to the side on their back.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Level 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ You can bob toward safety if you get into water that is a little over your head. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take a breath and submerge to the bottom.</li> <li>○ Then push off toward the shallow water or the side of the pool.</li> <li>○ Just keep bobbing until you reach safety.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ You should be able to combine several of the skills that you have been learning in swim lessons so far. These combined basic skills will help you be safe in the pool—and so you can swim in the deep end of the pool. These skills include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jumping into deep water from the side and coming back to the surface.</li> <li>○ Staying in one position by treading water or floating.</li> <li>○ Being able to find a safe place to get out of the water and then turning in that direction.</li> <li>○ Swimming to the exit.</li> <li>○ Getting out of the water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ In this level, you will learn to put all of these skills together.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Level 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ You can use survival swimming to reach safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take a breath, bend forward at the waist and bring the hands up alongside the head.</li> <li>○ Separate the legs into the stride position and extend the arms forward, then bring the legs together again and propel diagonally toward the surface.</li> <li>○ Sweep the arms out and back to the thighs and glide near and almost parallel to the surface.</li> <li>○ Bend the legs and draw them toward the torso and bring the hands up alongside the head once again when a breath is needed.</li> <li>○ Extend the arms forward and separate the legs in the stride position once again. Tilt the head back and prepare to breathe out, as in survival floating.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Survival swimming helps you to save energy.</li> <li>■ You can stay on your front and make forward progress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Levels 5 and 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ For many people, waves are part of what makes swimming in an ocean fun. But even at designated beaches, waves can be dangerous.</li> <li>■ Waves crashing onto the shore create currents. One type is called a rip current, sometimes referred to as a <i>rip tide</i>.</li> <li>■ Rip currents often form narrow strips of choppy water that move differently than the water on the other sides of the rip current.</li> <li>■ Rip currents move very fast, and if you get caught in one, they can take you away from shore.</li> <li>■ If you get caught in a rip current, it is important to remember to think, so you don't sink. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Try swimming parallel to the shore until you are free of the current.</li> <li>○ Also, just let the current take you away from shore.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Rip currents weaken a little way from shore. Once the current weakens, you can begin swimming back to shore. If you are too exhausted to swim to shore, signal a lifeguard by calling and waving for help.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Activity</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Level 6, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tell participants that they will be learning self-rescue techniques while clothed, using items such as a shirt, jacket or pants.</li> <li>■ Have participants practice inflating a shirt or jacket by blowing air into it in the following way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tuck the shirt in or tie the shirrtail ends together around the waist.</li> <li>○ Unbutton the collar button, take a deep breath, bend your head forward into the water, pull the shirt or jacket up to the face and blow into the shirt.</li> <li>○ Keep the front of the shirt or jacket underwater and hold the collar closed.</li> <li>○ Repeat the steps above to reinflate the shirt or jacket if necessary.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Have participants practice inflating a shirt or jacket by striking air into it in the following way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fasten the buttons or close the zipper up to the neck.</li> <li>○ Hold the bottom of the shirt or jacket out with one hand, keeping it just under the surface of the water and lean back slightly.</li> <li>○ From above the surface of the water, strike the water with the free hand (palm down) and drive it down, pulling air to a point below the shirrtail or jacket.</li> <li>○ Keep the front of the shirt or jacket underwater and hold the collar and the shirrtail closed.</li> <li>○ Repeat the steps above to reinflate the shirt or jacket if necessary.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Have participants practice inflating pants in the following way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take a deep breath, lean forward into the water, and reach down and remove your shoes.</li> <li>○ Loosen the waistband and belt.</li> <li>○ Take another deep breath, lean forward, and reach down and take off your pants one leg at a time without turning them inside out. Bring your face to the water and take a breath whenever necessary.</li> <li>○ Once the pants are off, tie both legs together at the cuff or tie a knot in each leg as close as possible to the bottom of the leg. Then zip or button the pants to the waist.</li> <li>○ Hold the back of the waistband underwater with one hand and, while keeping the pants on the surface of the water, strike the water to force air into to the open waistband with the other hand. Strike the water with the palm of the free hand and follow through into the open waistband below the surface. You can also inflate the pants by submerging them and then blowing air into the open waistband below the surface of the water.</li> <li>○ Once the pants are inflated, gather the waistband together with your hands or by tightening the belt and then slip your head in between the pant legs where they are tied together. If the pant legs are tied separately, reach one arm over and between the two pant legs for support.</li> <li>○ Repeat the steps above to reinflate the pants if necessary.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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TOPIC: **DON'T JUST PACK IT, WEAR YOUR JACKET**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A life jacket helps you stay afloat if you fall into the water.</li> <li>■ You should always wear a life jacket whenever you go boating. Put on your life jacket before going out on the dock and do not take it off until you return.</li> <li>■ Life jackets are not just for boats. You should wear a life jacket whenever you are in, on or around the water. The only time you should be near the water without a life jacket is when you are at a swimming area and a grown-up is watching you.</li> <li>■ Even if you are at a swimming pool or a waterpark, if you cannot swim well, then you should wear a life jacket and stay near the person who is watching you.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (Add-on for Learn-to-Swim Levels 3–6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Even if you are a strong swimmer, you should wear a life jacket whenever you are in, on and around water if it is cold.</li> <li>■ You should always wear a life jacket in any situation where there is a chance of falling or being thrown into the water, such as being towed on water skis or tubes or while riding personal watercraft.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Engage the participants in answering questions, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ When should you wear a life jacket?</li> <li>■ What is important when putting on the life jacket?</li> <li>■ When is it okay to take off the life jacket?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> (for All Levels)</p>	<p><b>Instructor’s Notes:</b> <i>Provide U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets in various styles and sizes. Ask anyone who has a life jacket at home to bring it to class so the child can practice in his or her own life jacket. Not all will have them, so have life jackets available. Children can take turns if your supply is limited.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Point out the U.S. Coast Guard marking on the life jacket and highlight the weight guidelines in the label.</li> <li>■ Emphasize the importance of selecting the appropriately sized life jacket and wearing it properly, including fastening all zippers, ties or snaps.</li> <li>■ Guide the participant in selecting and putting on an appropriately sized U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.</li> <li>■ Help participants enter the water then move around the teaching area. Give light support as needed.</li> <li>■ Working with one participant at a time, have the participant in a face-to-face position, then cue him or her to roll over onto the back then float for a brief period. Cue the participant again to roll over onto the front then return to the wall.</li> <li>■ Cue the participant to jump into the water then return to the wall using the combined stroke on front.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> (Optional)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have the participant wear lightweight clothes (T-shirt and shorts; no jeans, sweatshirts or pants) under the life jacket and back float in water.</li> <li>■ Start in shallow water then move to deeper water. Limit this activity to a few minutes.</li> </ul>

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TOPIC: **THINK TWICE BEFORE GOING NEAR COLD WATER OR ICE**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Being around cold water is dangerous, even if you do not intend to go in. Whenever you are in, on or around cold water, you should wear a life jacket.</li> <li>■ People cannot swim as far in cold water as they can swim in warm water. That is why it is very important to decide if you should try to swim toward safety or float in place and wait for help in a cold-water emergency.</li> <li>■ Anyone who falls into cold water should try to swim to safety if it is possible to do so with only a few strokes.</li> <li>■ Strokes with an underwater arm recovery can help maintain heat when swimming in cold water.</li> <li>■ Floating in place until help arrives is the best way to survive a cold-water emergency in open water or when you are a great distance from the shore.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Children, Teens and Adult Participants) (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If you fall into the water while wearing a life jacket: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep your face and head above the surface. In the event of a boating accident, try to climb onto the capsized boat to get more of your body out of the water.</li> <li>○ Keep all your clothes on, especially a hat. Even wet clothes help retain body heat.</li> <li>○ If you are caught in a current, float on your back and go downstream feetfirst until your breathing slows. Breathe normally for a few seconds before starting to swim to shore. Immediately try to swim to safety if the current is carrying you toward danger.</li> <li>○ Stay still and let the life jacket provide support until help arrives if you are not in immediate danger but far from shore. To stay warmer, assume the heat escape lessening posture (HELP).</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ The body cools faster when treading water than when staying still while wearing a life jacket. In cold water, tread water only if it is necessary.</li> <li>■ If you are going to be by water in cold weather, you should wear rain gear, a warm hat and layers of clothing or insulated clothing to help you stay warm in an emergency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Levels 3 to 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tell participants that they will be learning two positions to help stay warm in cold water: the heat escape lessening posture (HELP) and the huddle position.</li> <li>■ When teaching HELP, have participants get in the water wearing life jackets and then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Draw the knees up to the chest.</li> <li>○ Keep the face forward and out of the water.</li> <li>○ Hold the upper arms at the sides and fold the lower arms against or across the chest.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i><b>Instructor’s Note:</b> Tell participants that they should not use the HELP position in swift river currents or whitewater.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ When teaching the huddle position, have participants get in the water wearing life jackets and then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have two people put their arms around each other so that their chests are together.</li> <li>○ Have three or more people put their arms over each other’s shoulders so that the sides of their chests are together.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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TOPIC: **KNOW ABOUT BOATING BEFORE YOU GO FLOATING**

<p><b>Key Points to Cover</b> (for Learn-to-Swim Levels 5 and 6, Teens and Adult Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Recreational boating includes, but is not limited to, the following types of vessels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Open motorboats</li> <li>○ Personal watercraft</li> <li>○ Cabin motorboats</li> <li>○ Sailboats</li> <li>○ Canoes/kayaks</li> <li>○ Stand-up paddle boards</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Boating can be a safe and enjoyable pastime, but it is important to know the dangers. Follow the basic rules of boating safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Always wear a life jacket.</li> <li>○ Take a boating safety course.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Key Points to Cover** (for Learn-to-Swim Levels 5 and 6, Teens and Adult Participants)  
(Continued)

- Do not drink alcohol.
- Make a float plan and have a way to communicate.
- Pay attention to weather forecasts and understand local water conditions and hazards. If you are caught in severe weather:
  - Slow down and maintain enough speed to steadily move forward and still stay in control.
  - Make sure everyone onboard is adequately dressed and wearing a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.
  - Turn on the boat’s navigation lights.
  - Head into waves at a 45-degree angle. Personal watercraft should approach waves at a 90-degree angle.
  - Have passengers sit low in the boat or on the floor of the boat near the centerline.
  - Anchor the boat, if necessary, and if it is safe to do so.
- Prevent yourself or your passengers from falling overboard by following these guidelines:
  - Do not lean out. Stay centered in the boat with a low center of gravity. Always keep your shoulders between the gunwales on small boats.
  - Do not move about the boat. If you must move, maintain three points of contact.
  - Sit only where appropriate. Do not sit on the gunwales, bow, seatbacks or any other area not designed for seating.
  - Do not stand up in small boats.
- A personal watercraft is a type of boat. When using a personal watercraft, follow these guidelines:
  - Always wear U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets.
  - Know the local laws and regulations. Some states have special laws governing the use of personal watercraft that address operation, life jacket use, registration and licensing requirements, education, environmental restrictions, required safety equipment and minimum ages.
  - Operate personal watercraft with courtesy and common sense. Pay attention to surroundings and follow the traffic pattern of the waterway. Obey no-wake and speed zones.
  - Use extreme caution around swimmers, surfers and other boaters.
  - Run personal watercraft at a slow speed until the craft is away from shore, swimming areas and docks. Avoid passing close to other boats and jumping wakes. This behavior is dangerous and often illegal.
  - Ride with a buddy. Always ride in groups of two or three. You never know when an emergency might occur.
  - Always attach the engine cut-off lanyard to yourself and the personal watercraft during operation.
  - Develop a float plan before leaving the shore.

# TEACHING PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT AGES

**B**road age categories, such as preschool-age, school-age and adult, are often used to organize swim lessons. Among these broad age groups, there are significant differences in how people learn and what teaching methods work best, including differences in communication, developmental readiness and physical capabilities. As a Water Safety instructor, a basic understanding of differences among different age groups will allow you to customize your teaching approach to meet the needs of your general audience.

# INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

## Developmental Considerations

From the time they are born through the age of 5 years, children undergo rapid changes in growth and development, including changes in how they move, think, play and relate to others (Table 5-1). These changes are influenced by the child's age, heredity and experiences, as well as other individual characteristics. As they mature, children develop enhanced coordination that allows them to improve basic skills and start to learn more advanced skills. Understanding the general sequence of changes that occur during early childhood allows you to anticipate the next task or motor pattern and tailor your teaching accordingly.

Table 5-1. **Developmental Changes in Early Childhood**

Age	6 to 18 months	18 months to 3 years	4 and 5 years
<b>MOVEMENT</b>			
Posture and Equilibrium Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gradual appearance from 4 to 8 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awkward rudimentary skills that gradually become smooth</li> <li>Improvement in patterns (blow bubbles, kick, walk, bounce, gallop and run)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement in walking, running, jumping and galloping</li> <li>Rudimentary hopping, skipping and sliding</li> </ul>
Voluntary Motor Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquisition during the first 2 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to grasp items such as railing for balance, fork for feeding or crayon for scribbling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaining competence in throwing, striking and kicking</li> <li>Beginning catching, swinging and climbing</li> </ul>
Fine Motor Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequentially able to reach, grasp and splash water with the hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rudimentary, awkward and unskilled with little control over force or accuracy (throw, strike and kick)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement in drawing and coloring (pictures now recognizable)</li> <li>Ability to use scissors</li> <li>Beginning ability to write letters of the alphabet</li> </ul>
Toy Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toys that make noise and grab attention of infant in pool or toys that are bright</li> <li>Infant working on grasping skills possibly able to hold onto some objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of several toys to throw, squirt water or hold</li> <li>Pretend play with objects such as a kickboard as a spaceship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of both small and large toys</li> <li>Ability to lie on a boogie board with or without support, kick and ride tricycle</li> <li>Possible beginning ability to ride two-wheeler after 5th year</li> </ul>

Table 5-1. (continued)

Age	6 to 18 months	18 months to 3 years	4 and 5 years
<b>THINKING</b>			
Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gradual shifting from immediate events to some recent occurrences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion beyond infancy with beginning ability to remember past</li> <li>Dependency on oral memory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sense of past and future but less established from adult memory</li> <li>Memory through oral means; recitation of jingles and rhyme</li> </ul>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow linking of events together without action</li> <li>Beginning understanding of one event causing another</li> <li>Object permanence (understanding of existence of object when out of sight); stranger/separation anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of abstract concepts</li> <li>Egocentric (self-centered) and animistic (thinking that all things are alive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased active and relevant intelligence</li> <li>Primitive thinking patterns as basis for fears and worries</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sounds and babbles evolving into monosyllabic words</li> <li>Own name and names of family and common objects known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to say more than 20 words by age 2 but often difficult to understand</li> <li>Use of two or more words in a sequence</li> <li>Enjoyment with repetition of stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All commonly used words, sentences and questions in vocabulary</li> <li>Ability to count</li> <li>Letter and word recognition</li> <li>Practical and literal; possible difficulty understanding humor or sarcasm</li> </ul>
<b>FEELINGS and PERCEPTIONS</b>			
Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global, general and without specific stimulus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rudimentary; linked to increased language skills</li> <li>Movement to communicate some feeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Egocentric</li> <li>Some empathy with others</li> <li>Some expression of feelings vocally</li> </ul>
Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct linkage to action and stimulus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimuli discrimination limited</li> <li>Poor selective attention</li> <li>Inability to integrate different senses</li> <li>Some integration by age 3: touch with smell; touch with hearing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing discrimination of stimuli levels</li> <li>Limited ability to attend to adult-specified tasks</li> <li>Beginning to associate relationships across senses</li> </ul>

Table 5-1. (continued)

Age	6 to 18 months	18 months to 3 years	4 and 5 years
Expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Crying</li> <li>■ Smiling</li> <li>■ Laughing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Empathetic as young as age 2</li> <li>■ Embarrassment occurring between 2 and 3 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Highly empathetic by age 4 or 5</li> <li>■ Ability to attend to adult instructions; possible frustration, embarrassment when unable to live up to standards</li> </ul>
<b>PLAY and SOCIALIZATION</b>			
Socialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Limited to smiling and vocalizing (up to 6 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase in language development</li> <li>■ Slow decline in self-centered behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Very good at socialization most of time</li> <li>■ Preference for being with other children rather than adults</li> <li>■ Ability to learn basic rules for interacting with peers and adults</li> </ul>
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to manipulate objects</li> <li>■ Solitary exploration</li> <li>■ Soothe by singing</li> <li>■ Social feedback and reciprocal play by age 12 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Solitary or parallel play with children</li> <li>■ Difficulty in sharing toys with others</li> <li>■ Simple drills enjoyable</li> <li>■ “Games” (in strict sense) beyond child’s ability</li> <li>■ Enjoyment with songs and rhymes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Major avenue for learning and development</li> <li>■ Dramatic and expressive play with small groups</li> <li>■ Simple games effective for learning and practice</li> </ul>
<b>SWIMMING BEHAVIOR</b>			
Breath Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reflexive breath holding</li> <li>■ Change to imitation of breathing and submerging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Active submersion</li> <li>■ Bubble blowing possible</li> <li>■ Dislike of adult control of submersion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to submerge for several seconds, swim underwater and open eyes to recover objects (experienced preschoolers)</li> <li>■ Raising of head straight up out of water to get breath (most children)</li> <li>■ Fear and dislike for water in face (inexperienced preschoolers)</li> </ul>
Leg Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Few spontaneous leg movements (such as pushing both legs straight back)</li> <li>■ “Pedaling” or “running” actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pedaling action shifting to rudimentary alternating flutter kick or frog kick action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Alternating kick varies in effectiveness depending on body position; individual differences between rudimentary flutter and frog kick actions are often evident</li> </ul>

Table 5-1. (continued)

Age	6 to 18 months	18 months to 3 years	4 and 5 years
Arm Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Passive arm holding at side or overhead</li> <li>■ Splashing or weak paddling movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Paddling movements becoming alternating pulling actions; majority of force downward and ineffective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased proficiency of arm actions is evident; experienced children are capable of using over-water recovery for rudimentary crawl, but the beginner stroke may be preferred</li> </ul>
Body Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Control of body position by adults as children learning to walk on land</li> <li>■ Body held vertically in the water</li> <li>■ Ability to learn to enjoy floating on back with support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Largely vertical position in water</li> <li>■ Dislike of back position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use of semi-horizontal position when head submerged (experienced preschoolers)</li> <li>■ More vertical position when head raised</li> </ul>



**Instructor's Note:** The age groupings are only guidelines. Participants in American Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics classes are placed based on experience, maturity and ability, in addition to age. For the sake of simplicity, we use age groupings with the understanding that numerous factors may alter the developmental time lines of children.

## Promoting Learning

Many factors influencing early childhood learning are largely under the control of the child's parents in the home and instructors in the teaching environment. During swim lessons, learning is more effective when the focus is on the child's learning rather than on the teacher's instruction. However, instruction is just one way to improve learning in young children. Other methods you can use to help young children learn include goal setting, encouraging practice, having participants observe and imitate others, and providing feedback and motivation. These and other methods are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. You may need to make some adjustments when using these teaching methods with young children. For example, to help a young child accomplish a goal, you may need to provide physical assistance and reinforce the child's movements.

When teaching children younger than 5 years, keep the following points in mind:

- Infants and young children may respond better to demonstrations or physical manipulation than to verbal descriptions and commands.
- Preschool-age children often respond best to simple choices rather than firm directions or commands.
- Young children who are crying or fearful may require soothing yet playful verbal descriptions that attract their interest.
- Young children who are shy may respond better to a more enthusiastic and challenging presentation of skills along with regular praise of what they do correctly.

## Encouraging practice

Practice is essential for improving both the learning and performance of motor skills. (See Chapter 2 for more information about different types of practice.) In general, infants and young children seem to benefit most from distributed practice, one in which they get frequent rest periods throughout the practice schedule. A distributed practice schedule prevents fatigue, allows more time for assimilation of learning, and helps to maintain the child's motivation and interest in the learning activity.

## Providing feedback and motivation

Use feedback as positive reinforcement to motivate and encourage the repetition of desired responses. Positive feedback is crucial to help motivate young children to try and do their best, which is important for improvement in swimming and other motor skills. Chapter 2 provides more detail about how to give feedback and provide motivation.

## Working with fearful infants and young children

Young children may be reluctant to approach the pool, work with instructors or any adults other than their parents, go into the water itself or submerge. By understanding the developmental and learning processes of early childhood, you will be better equipped to teach young children who may be fearful.

During early childhood, some fears are related to the child's developmental level. For example, at approximately 8 months of age, infants start to express stranger or separation anxiety as they begin to recognize the difference between their parents and others. They may react by crying, screaming or becoming withdrawn. Some infants react with anger often marked by stiffening of their bodies. Being consistent in your lessons is one approach to reducing this fear. Starting, organizing and ending each lesson in the same way allows young children to become familiar with the routine, which helps to foster greater ease in participation.

After about 2 years of age, a child's active imagination may trigger a fear of the unknown. For example, the child may imagine monsters, scary animals or other frightening images, which may make the child afraid to enter the water or try new skills.

Other fears come from experience. For instance, children who previously had unpleasant experiences with the water may react with fear when adults encourage them to enter the water or try new aquatic skills. Encourage parents to be patient and avoid forcing their child to progress before the child is ready. Also, remind parents that if they are fearful or hesitant, their child may pick up on these feelings and respond in a similar manner. Conversely, when parents maintain a positive attitude toward swimming, the child is less likely to be afraid.

Children enjoy the water more when they can take their time, experience success, have the opportunity to practice repeatedly and receive praise for their efforts. To help minimize or eliminate a young child's fear of the water:

- Be aware of those developmental stages when children are most likely to have fears and what these fears may be. For example, if you anticipate infant separation anxiety, avoid activities that separate the infants from their parents.
- Plan your lessons carefully and provide plenty of positive reinforcement.
- Present progressions carefully. For example, when young children go underwater for the first time, make sure they understand what is going to happen and that they are ready and willing to go underwater.

- Allow time during the lesson to play.
- Pay attention to each child’s individual needs.

## SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

School-age children differ widely from one another in areas such as:

- Thinking abilities, ranging from concrete to abstract thinking.
- Relationships with adults, which may be important to some but not to others.
- Communication, decision making and critical thinking.
- Peer relationships, in which some children find peer approval extremely important, while others have no difficulty making individual decisions.

### Developmental Considerations

As in early childhood, numerous developmental changes occur as the school-age child grows and develops (Table 5-2).

Table 5-2. **Developmental Changes in School-Age Children**

Age Group	Ages 6 to 9	Ages 8 to 13	Ages 12 to 17
Common Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Highly imaginative; activity important</li> <li>■ Enjoyment with working, learning and accomplishing</li> <li>■ Ability to follow instructor as a leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interest in developing skills and looking good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Peer group opinion more important than the opinion of the instructor</li> <li>■ Self-conscious in front of peers</li> <li>■ Desire to “look good”</li> </ul>
Social Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Individualistic</li> <li>■ Growing interest in the group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interest in the group</li> <li>■ Best pals with only a few friends</li> <li>■ Challenge of authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development of more personal relationships</li> <li>■ Greater independence and responsibility</li> </ul>
Physical Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improved coordination of large muscle activity (such as kicking)</li> <li>■ Improved endurance</li> <li>■ Short-distance swimmers primarily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Growth spurts possibly affecting coordination and endurance</li> <li>■ Overall good coordination and better endurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interest in perfecting each skill</li> <li>■ Continued growth spurts</li> <li>■ Excellent coordination and endurance</li> </ul>
Learning Emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ready to follow instructions to learn basic skills</li> <li>■ Good reaction to praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to think more abstractly with some benefit from concrete examples</li> <li>■ Longer attention span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adult-like thinking</li> </ul>
Teaching Water Safety Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rules necessary</li> <li>■ Reasons and examples needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reasons needed</li> <li>■ Interest in “exceptions”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Challenge to authority</li> <li>■ Requirement that rules are reasonable</li> </ul>

## Promoting Learning

Children of this age are accustomed to the structure that comes with organized activities, such as attending school, participating in scouting groups or playing a team sport. Swim lessons represent another organized activity. Your school-age participants will expect you to be prepared and knowledgeable, just as their teachers in school, scout leaders and coaches are. To promote learning:

- Be thoroughly prepared for each lesson (see Chapter 3).
- Let participants and their parents know the goals of the lesson at the start of each class.
- Make sure participants and their parents are aware of the rules for behavior.
- Communicate clearly in an age-appropriate way. Use terms that are familiar to participants and verify that they understand what you are asking of them.
- Keep the group active and working toward their goals. Remember that this age group likes activity.
  - Plan all parts of the lesson to prevent unoccupied time.
  - Avoid down time between participants' turns to practice, big gaps between activities or a wait while you organize equipment; otherwise you could be setting yourself up for behavioral problems.

Understanding your audience will help you build a rapport with your participants and engage them in what they are learning. When working with school-age children:

- Avoid assumptions based on appearance.
- Respect their opinions and maintain an atmosphere of openness to differing points of view.
- Stay current with youth culture. By staying informed of popular cultural trends among this age group (for example, in the worlds of entertainment, sports and fashion), you demonstrate a connectedness to your participants' world, which facilitates communication with them.
- Model effective decision-making skills. Ask questions that focus on decision making and problem solving, allowing participants the opportunity to think critically, whenever possible.
- Be insightful when organizing skill practices and activities. For example, participants may feel more comfortable when paired with a friend or with a member of the same gender.

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## ADULTS

Adults participate in aquatics programs for numerous reasons. Many adults take swim lessons because they did not have the time or opportunity to learn to swim earlier in life. Other adults may want to improve on existing skills, for example, to participate in a competitive event or on a team; to take up a new hobby or sport that takes place in, on or around the water; to engage in fitness swimming or other aquatic activities as a way of improving or maintaining their health and fitness levels; or to meet a job requirement. Finally, aquatics programs also provide a source of enjoyment and the opportunity to meet new friends and engage in social contact. Regardless of the reasons adults participate in aquatics, nearly all adults involved in aquatic programs participate because they want to do so. Adults are determined to learn. Understanding their motivation helps you establish objectives and plan lessons that address their needs.



**Safety Note:** Adults who want to learn to swim or who want to resume swimming again after not exercising for some time should talk to a health care provider before starting any exercise program.

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## Developmental Considerations

Growth and development does not stop once a person reaches adulthood (Table 5-3). As a person ages, the body undergoes physiological and psychological changes that can affect the person's ability to function and learn.

Each person ages differently, making aging a highly individualized process. As a person journeys through life, chronological age, or the number of years lived, is used to denote aging. However, this progression in years by itself rarely produces a dramatic physical change. Most of what affects the ability to learn results from changes in physiological function. The extent of these changes depends greatly on how active people stay throughout adulthood. Current research suggests that about 50 percent of the physiological changes attributed to the aging process actually result from inactive lifestyles. When assessing the needs of adults, avoid using chronological age as the primary factor. Instead, classify both younger and older adults in terms of physiological function, making adjustments in your teaching approach to customize your course.

Table 5-3. **Developmental Changes in Adults**

Age Group	Young Adult (18 to 25)	Adult (21 to 50)	Older Adult (50 plus)
Common Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Motivated and independent</li> <li>■ Usually prepared to take a leadership role</li> <li>■ Possibly many with deep-rooted fears</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Often motivated by watching their children learn to swim or desire for fitness</li> <li>■ Possibly many with deep-rooted fears</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Often interested in fitness</li> <li>■ Possibly many with deep-rooted fears</li> </ul>
Social Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Self-reliant</li> <li>■ Ability to readily adjust to groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Initially, possible discomfort with joining a group</li> <li>■ Participation often for social benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Often self-conscious</li> <li>■ Social interest as a possible motivation</li> </ul>
Physical Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tapering off of growth</li> <li>■ Rapid increase in endurance</li> <li>■ Coordination dependent on previous experiences leading to wide range of abilities and speeds of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Slow declining in endurance</li> <li>■ Flexibility declining; ability to develop flexibility possible through practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Diminishing endurance</li> <li>■ Possible decline in coordination and flexibility</li> <li>■ Possible slowed reaction time</li> </ul>
Learning Emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High motivation and attention span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Possible hesitancy for attempting new skills and strokes</li> <li>■ Preference for private feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Great deal of reassurance and positive feedback necessary</li> </ul>
Teaching Water Safety Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adventurous and active</li> <li>■ Need for emphasis on precautions in water sports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Emphasis on children's safety and injury prevention (for swimmers who are parents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Common sense approach</li> </ul>

With aging, adults often become more vulnerable to chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis, diabetes, hypertension, asthma, cancer, osteoporosis and obesity. These conditions may seem to accelerate the aging process, limit functional ability and reduce the ability to learn motor skills. It may be difficult to determine if the person's status is the result of normal aging or a chronic condition. Do not keep adults from a program just because of their age.

## **Physiological changes**

Physiological changes occur in everyone at various rates over time. Most people reach physical maturity by age 18, when many physiological functions, such as strength, physical ability, motor control and reaction time, are near peak levels. By age 30, physical capacity is beginning to slowly decline and this decline continues throughout the rest of the person's life.

### ***Musculoskeletal changes***

During most of adulthood, but especially for adults who are inactive, the percentage of body fat gradually increases and lean body mass decreases. Middle-aged adults may be quite buoyant because of their percentages of body fat, but those of advancing age may be less buoyant because of the tendency to be thinner. In addition, bone density changes may affect buoyancy and balance in the water. Overall strength declines little throughout life, especially in muscle groups used in daily activities. Therefore, most people have enough strength for aquatic skills. However, people who are of advanced age and inactive may have much less strength, especially in the legs. With aging comes the gradual loss of flexibility, especially in joints and muscle groups not used regularly. The saying "move it or lose it" has great meaning for those who are growing older. Stretching and range of motion are important for maintaining flexibility.

Most adults are affected by gradual degeneration in the joints to some extent. Healthy, active adults at any age also may have injuries from athletic activities or other causes that affect their mobility. Joint pain and swelling may limit the ability to swim certain strokes. For example, the breaststroke kick might not be possible or desirable for people who have undergone knee surgery.

### ***Neurologic and sensory changes***

Nerve impulse conduction slows with age, leading to slower response or reaction times. As a result, an older person may need more time to plan and start actions.

Body temperature regulation may also become impaired as people age. Older adults are particularly susceptible to heat- and cold-related illnesses. They may chill easily in average water temperatures and be unable to generate enough heat to stay comfortable through an entire lesson.

Hearing and vision also decrease with age.

## **Psychological changes**

Adults have psychological needs just as younger people do. They need security, recognition, a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of belonging. However, self-confidence and self-perceptions may change as a person ages. Some adults want to succeed in new tasks but lack the self-confidence to do so. A positive environment that promotes trust and a sense of accomplishment and self-worth is optimal.



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**Teaching Tip:** When working with participants who are older adults, especially those with functional limitations brought on by age, a health condition or both, you can help bolster self-esteem by:

- Communicating directly with the participant, not through a third person.
  - Offering assistance, and if the offer is accepted, asking how you can best assist the person.
  - Avoiding using the word “elderly” because it implies frailty and helplessness.
  - Being patient.
- 

## Promoting Learning

Adults differ from children in their approach to learning. For example, when children learn a skill, they are also learning *how* to learn the skill. Adults already have many strategies they rely on when learning new things. They enter the learning environment with extensive learning histories—a combination of experiences, what they have already learned and how they acquire information and skills. Thus, although children and teens may learn motor skills faster because of their physical abilities, adults have the advantage of having more developed learning strategies to rely on when they are trying to master a new skill.

### Involving participants in lesson planning

When teaching adults, remember that they are attending the course because they want to participate and learn. Help to promote learning by engaging your participants in the planning process, individualizing your approach and adapting your teaching methods when necessary.

Adult learners have diverse interests, motivations and needs. When teaching a class of adult participants, enlisting them in the planning process is effective because you are planning *with* them rather than *for* them. Adults like to pursue their own interests and make their own decisions about what they want to learn or accomplish. Taking into account each participant’s interests, motivations and needs, and involving the participants in your lesson planning increases their motivation to follow the mutually designed plan of learning and therefore promotes success.

Consider your participants’ experiences, current goals and physical characteristics. Ask them the following questions:

- “What are you comfortable with in the water and what would you like help with?” Answers to this question help you to better understand your participants’ past experience and current goals.
  - Participants with experience may want just a few “coaching” tips to help them improve. In this case, it is easy to analyze their existing skills and work toward more efficient movement.
  - Some participants may have no experience in the water and may share the same fears and anxieties as younger participants. For these participants, consider reordering the usual progressions for teaching strokes. For example, teaching the sidestroke, elementary backstroke or a modified breaststroke lets the participant keep the face out of the water, and then you can work up to introducing submersion and rhythmic breathing.

- “What do you want to know?” Answers to this question help you understand your participants’ current goals.
  - When working with adults, avoid rigid plans or expectations. Consider participants’ individual needs and desires. Stroke choices should reflect participants’ wants. If adults want to learn only the front crawl, plan an approach that sets up gradual successes and builds endurance along the way. Encourage participants to try all strokes to learn which they do best, but remember that personal desires provide strong motivation to learn.
  - Never underestimate the ability of older adults to learn skills and accomplish goals. Be flexible in your lesson plans regardless of the course being taught. Plan to introduce all the required skills, but customize them to meet the goals of your participants as well as the objectives of the course.
- “Do you have any limitations that I should know about?”
  - Concentrate on what the participant is able to do well and use these strengths as the basis for improving the participant’s swimming abilities.
  - At first, teach the strokes without modifying them unless there are obvious limitations, such as very limited or no use of a joint. Help participants adapt strokes to their physical capabilities. Be aware that physical limitations may affect a participant’s ability to learn certain strokes.
  - Begin gradually and divide practice periods into smaller chunks with frequent breaks in between.



**Instructor’s Note.** *Be sure to make water safety education an integral part of each class. Adults who own a home pool and plan aquatic activities with family and friends, especially those with children at home, want safety information on preventing and responding to aquatic emergencies.*

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## Taking an individualized approach

Ideally, when teaching a group, you would want the group members to be completely alike in interests, previous experience, physical characteristics, goals and motivation to learn. However, this is rarely the case. Individualized plans for each participant can help you meet the needs of all of the participants in the class. In some cases, all participants may attempt the same skills, but expectations may differ from person to person. Learning characteristics of adults support this individualized approach:

- **Adults want a lot of freedom.** They like to practice on their own with minimal interruption. A combination of a carefully chosen, logical teaching progression and a less formal approach in organizing and conducting the class can make learning as self-directed as possible.
- **Adults, regardless of age, can learn new motor skills.** However, the pace at which they learn may be faster or slower than that of a younger person. Some adults use their past learning strategies to master new skills quickly. Others need more trials for mastery, showing improvement at a slower rate than their younger counterparts. Allow participants the freedom to try new skills their own ways first.
- **Most adults in aquatics classes are eager to be there.** However, some may have serious doubts about their abilities to succeed at new tasks. Some may also suffer from perfectionism and be impatient to learn. They have a tendency to worry more about the accuracy of a skill than the speed with which it is performed. While young participants may work quickly through drills just to finish, adults may take time to do each part correctly. Be sure to allow adequate practice time and give positive and corrective feedback.

Participants may respond better when you give more individual practice time and less guided group practice. When incorporating more individualized practice in your lesson plan, follow these guidelines:

- Plan for frequent rest periods throughout the lesson.
- Watch for signs of fatigue.
- Assess whether participants are making more, rather than fewer, mistakes in a new skill.
- Look to see if participants have difficulty with a skill that had been mastered. (This means that it is time to rest or change to a different skill.)
- Include skills that need additional work for mastery when you plan for individualized practice. People often practice only those skills at which they are successful.
- Prepare more material than you think you will need for each lesson. This helps you to accommodate differences in the speed of learning.

### **Adapting teaching methods**

Consider the following guidelines to help you adapt teaching methods for adult participants:

- The *whole approach* works well with skills that are simple and for which participants can transfer past experience (relate existing skills to the new learning). Even though adults may need to practice skills in parts, they are interested in the end result. They often want to try the whole skill on their own first.
- The *part-whole approach* may be better when you want to focus participants' attention on key concepts rather than entire skills. It gives an opportunity for many small successes. In the early stages of learning, people often forget some information. Therefore, learning key concepts in parts might help when learning strokes, later combining the parts to make the whole.
- The *progressive-part approach* limits some of the forgetfulness that can occur in the part-whole approach. More trials from the start to finish of the skill are provided, which may minimize the frustration of trying to master a more complex stroke or activity.

Other teaching methods are reviewed in Chapter 2 of this manual. Remember always to give positive, corrective feedback to your adult participants. People can improve a skill only with feedback. Adults need to know how they are doing and benefit just as much by receiving feedback in the learning process as younger participants do.

### **Working with fearful adults**

Adults in your courses may have avoided learning to swim for some reason. The most common reasons are fear of drowning, anxiety about not being able to breathe and fear of not being able to get back to safety. Adult beginners may fear deep water or being forced to do something that they perceive to be personally threatening. They may simply be afraid of failure and humiliation. Adults who have witnessed or experienced a fatal or nonfatal drowning may have a very deep fear of the water.

The following strategies can help you promote learning when an adult participant is fearful or anxious:

- Plan carefully and be consistent in your lessons, starting, ending and organizing each lesson in the same way.
- Encourage the participant to let you know if he starts to feel uncomfortable, anxious or lightheaded at any point during the lesson.

- Provide positive reinforcement. Encourage the participant to try and reward every attempt.
- Use good communication skills to avoid surprises, help the participant feel secure and promote success. Tell the participant about activities as the lesson progresses (for example, “We’re going to work on floating on your back”). Let the participant know what to expect (“You will sink a little bit, but I will support you with my hands between your shoulder blades so you don’t submerge”). Explain what the participant should do, using descriptive language to create a mental picture (“Lay your head back as if on a pillow and take a big breath to fill your lungs like a balloon”).
- Provide hands-on support and make eye contact to help the participant to feel more secure. For example, when a participant is just beginning to use a free-floating device, support the participant and the device while talking to the participant.
- Be aware that some participants may feel more comfortable if they wear a swim cap, goggles or both.

## **Factors to Consider When Scheduling Adult Classes**

### **Program orientation**

A program orientation that lets participants know where to go, how to find the swimming area, what the first-day procedures are and who to ask for help can help participants relax and enjoy the experience of attending swimming lessons. Many adult participants may be rushing from other responsibilities in order to attend class. Knowing where to go and what to expect can help reduce stress. Apprehensive beginners may also feel more at ease following a program orientation. Schedule the orientation at a separate time and publicize it well. Make the orientation meaningful. If possible, invite former or current participants to share success stories. Treat it as an important part of the program rather than a mundane task.

### **Lesson length**

Typically, a lesson lasts about 45 minutes, but this depends on the participants’ needs and comfort. For example, if the water temperature is too cold, you may need to shorten the lesson because older participants chill more easily than younger participants. For some adult participants, there never seems to be enough practice time. When this is the case, try scheduling lessons before a recreational swim time so that participants can stay as long as they want after the lessons.

### **Number of lessons**

The number of lessons to be included in a course also needs to be considered. It may be useful to have an “ongoing” program or offer private lessons and let adults participate until their needs are satisfied. If a course offers a set number of lessons, individual planning and goal setting in the first lesson can help you determine what you need to cover in each lesson in order to meet the needs of the group and each individual participant. Capitalize on the learning characteristics of adults to help you plan your lessons.

# TEACHING PEOPLE WHO MOVE, LEARN, COMMUNICATE OR BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY

**A**s a water safety instructor, you will have the opportunity to teach many people with a wide range of skills and abilities, and a typical swim class might include participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently. You have a responsibility to help each of your participants to succeed. In this chapter, you will learn strategies for helping participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently have safe, positive experiences in your classes.

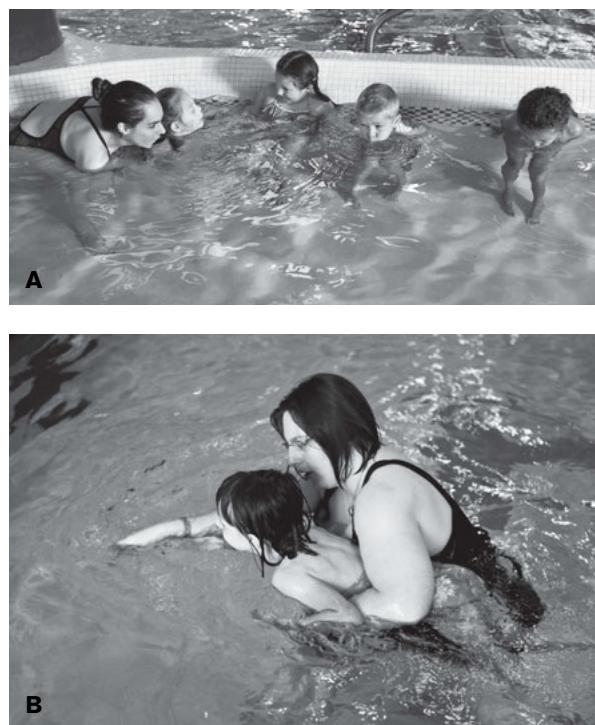
## AQUATICS PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

For people who move, learn, communicate or behave differently, aquatics programming options range from participation in regular programming (mainstreaming, integration or inclusive programming) to one-on-one instruction in an adapted aquatics program given by a water safety instructor specifically trained to teach people with disabilities (Figure 6-1). Between these extremes are many possibilities. Although there will always be a need for a variety of programming options, you can prepare to include people of all abilities in your group or private swim lesson program. If you are interested in working with people with severe disabilities who may require an adapted aquatics program, you should seek additional, specialized training through a college, university or professional organization that offers this type of training.

The American Red Cross strives to integrate participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently into conventional swim lessons whenever possible. Accommodations or modifications may need to be made to help these participants participate in regular programming. Accommodation means adjusting the way a program or class is run, without changing the objectives, in order to help a participant succeed. For example, you may need to use more visual cues in class or a program may need to create a smaller class so that you can spend more time with the participant who has special needs. Modification means adjusting the way the person participates in a class or program. Making accommodations for the individual, modifications to the learning environment or both can allow many people who move, learn, communicate or behave differently to participate in most aquatics programs.

In fact, few people with disabilities or other health conditions want or need adapted aquatics courses. Mainstreaming people who move, learn, communicate or behave differently into your classes can be tremendously rewarding for both you and your students. For you, helping your participants of all abilities experience the joy and freedom of being in the water, learn and improve skills, maintain and increase their physical fitness, achieve success and experience self-actualization (the sense of developing one's full potential) in an aquatic environment can be very rewarding. For your participants with disabilities, mainstreaming has both emotional and social benefits. For example, mainstreaming helps to foster self-esteem, lessen feelings of being "different" and gives the participant an opportunity to socialize with peers. Mainstreaming also benefits other participants by helping them to appreciate individual differences.

Mainstreaming is usually possible and not difficult. Sometimes it simply requires a bit more time, creativity or both. For example, you may need to allow the participant a little more time to catch on to a new skill or to build the strength or kinesthetic awareness needed to perform a skill with



**Figure 6-1** Options for people with disabilities or health conditions who wish to learn how to swim range from (A) inclusion in a regular class (mainstreaming) to (B) specialized one-on-one instruction in an adapted aquatics program.

proficiency. Similarly, you may need to experiment with different ways of teaching or practicing the skill to discover the way that works best for the participant. Keeping the class size small, adding an additional instructor or instructor aide, or including the participant's parent or caregiver in the class are other steps that can be taken to modify regular programming to accommodate a person with disabilities.

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## HELPING PARTICIPANTS TO SUCCEED

As a water safety instructor, your goal is to help all of your participants have a successful, rewarding experience. Understanding each participant's needs, creating a safe environment that is conducive to learning, planning lessons that meet your participants' needs and continuously evaluating your participants' progress are steps you will take to achieve this goal. But when a participant moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, there are additional considerations that you need to be aware of.

### Matching the Participant to a Program

Many factors affect a participant's readiness to participate in a swim instruction program. Evaluating these factors and matching the participant to the right class has a direct impact on the participant's ability to be successful. All potential participants in Red Cross Parent and Child, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses should be fairly and consistently screened. Any age or skill requirements should apply to all participants.

When a person with a disability is interested in a Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim or Adult Swim course, you have a responsibility to provide information about the swim instruction program and guidance regarding which class is most appropriate for the person. First, gather basic information from the participant and the parents or caregivers that will help you understand the participant's specific needs. Ask about the participant's capabilities, range of movement, ways of doing motor tasks and ways of communicating. You can use the questionnaire in Figure 6-2 to guide this conversation. This questionnaire can also be downloaded from Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)).



**Instructor's Note:** Always make an effort to protect the person's privacy and right to keep information about his or her medical conditions and health status confidential. When you are discussing a participant's health status or specific needs related to a disability or health condition, conduct the conversation in a location that affords privacy, such as an office. Similarly, keep documentation related to a person's medical condition or health status (such as medical clearance sheets) secure.

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Be sure to gather information that will help you evaluate what is needed to help maintain the safety of the participant, as well as others in the class. For example, ask:

- The specific nature of the disability.
- Whether the person has seizures.
- Whether the person has head control.

This information is to be used for the sole purpose of the [insert program name] to meet the needs of the participant in swim lessons.

Participant Name (Last)		(First)		
Parent Name (Last)		(First)		
Address		City	State	Zip Code
Day Phone Number	Evening Phone Number Best Time to Call	Emergency Contact Name: Phone Number:		
E-mail Address		<input type="checkbox"/> Resident	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-resident	

1. What is the participant's disability and the extent of the disability?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Please describe the participant's abilities and limitations regarding fine motor skills (such as grasping or manipulating objects).  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Please describe the participant's abilities and limitations regarding gross motor skills (such as walking, throwing or jumping).  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Does the participant have any special medical condition that we should be aware of (such as a seizure disorder or allergies)? If seizures are part of the health condition, please complete the last section of this questionnaire.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How does the participant communicate?  
 Verbally    Nonverbally    Sign Language    Communication Board
6. If the participant has difficulty communicating, what is the degree of difficulty?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Is the participant usually able to listen to and follow directions appropriately?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Does the participant exhibit any behaviors that might interfere with programming (noncompliance, hitting self or others, or tantrums)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Is the participant currently on a behavior management program? If yes, please describe:  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What type of reinforcement and/or rewards work best to keep the participant motivated and focused?  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the participant's attention span?  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Is there any other information you would like to share that may be helpful?  
\_\_\_\_\_

{Many facilities require that the signature block include a medical release, hold harmless agreement, liability waiver, photography release and refund/cancellation policy. Consult your facility's legal counsel for this information.}

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's signature required for all participants less than 18 years of age.**

For participants with a seizure disorder:

Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Receiving treatment? Yes No

Type of disorder: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the likelihood and frequency of seizures during program hours?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Describe any limitations specified by a health care provider:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Describe a typical seizure pattern, including typical length of seizure:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In the event of a seizure, what would you like us to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 6-2** Questionnaire for participants with disabilities or health conditions.

- Whether the person can sit or stand independently.
- Whether the person can wait his or her turn if the instructor has several participants in the group.
- Whether the person is continent of feces (that is, whether the participant has control over bowel movements).
- Whether the person has any neurologic conditions (for example, tonic neck reflex) that might be exacerbated by immersion or may affect the person's safety in the water.
- Whether the person is taking medication and how the medication might affect the person's ability to participate in the program.

In addition, request a health care provider's statement indicating that the person has the necessary health and fitness level to participate in the program.

If there is any question about whether the person can handle the physical, emotional and social demands of the program, you can conduct a skills screening. At minimum (and depending on the level the participant would be entering), assess the participant's ability to balance in waist- or chest-deep water (or both) and to move around independently in shallow water.

The environment, the participants and the instructor all interact in the learning process. When considering program placement for a person who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, consider the participant's individual characteristics, as well as programming and environmental factors, that may affect the participant's ability to succeed in class. These include:

- The degree to which the disability or health condition inhibits intellectual, motor or sensory function, or a combination of these.
- The degree to which the disability or health condition inhibits attention, verbal processing or memory.
- The degree to which the participant has adjusted to the disability or health condition.
- The participant's prior experience with the water.
- The class size.
- The instructor-to-participant ratio.
- The instructor's training, background and experience.
- The instructor's acceptance of the participant.
- The group's acceptance of the participant.
- The accessibility of the environment.
- The size and depth of the swimming area.
- The air and water temperature.

Consider steps that can be taken to help reduce obstacles to inclusion programming. For example, you might consider increasing the instructor-to-participant ratio for that class by bringing in an assistant instructor, a therapist (such as a certified therapeutic recreation therapist) or even the participant's parent or caregiver.

Remember that even after you decide on an appropriate class placement, it can always be changed. Placement should be flexible, allowing the participant access to the aquatic program most appropriate to his or her needs at the time. As needs change, placement should change as well. If admission to the program or a particular class must be denied, give the participant and caregivers specific reasons for the decision and offer assistance in finding an aquatics program that is more suited to the participant's needs, if possible.

Sometimes, participants or their parents or caregivers may not initially share information about disabilities and other health conditions. You may only become aware that a participant might have a disability or a health condition through observing the participant in class. After consulting with your swim program coordinator, ask the participant and his or her parents or caregivers questions to help you better understand what is going on. Asking questions such as “How can I help Anthony follow my instructions more easily?” or “How can I help Linda interact with the other students in the class?” helps to reassure the participant’s parents or caregivers that you are not judging or making assumptions, but that you simply want to do the best you can for the participant. It is important for you to be aware of disabilities or health conditions that a participant may have that may affect your ability to teach or the methods that you use to teach, but remember to be tactful and discrete in your conversations with parents or caregivers.

## **Creating an Environment That Is Conducive to Learning**

As a water safety instructor, you are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning for all of the participants in your classes. Remember what you read in Chapter 2 about the physical and psychological factors that contribute to a positive learning environment for your participants. In addition, when you have a participant who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, you may need to take additional steps to promote positive and effective learning.

### **Developing the teacher–participant relationship**

Learning is enhanced when participants feel comfortable with their instructors.

One way you can help your participants feel comfortable with you is to be sensitive to individual differences. When a participant has a disability or health condition, be careful not to make assumptions about the person’s abilities or limitations, or about how the person feels about the disability or health condition. For example, many people who have lived with a disability or health condition for a long time may no longer view the condition as limiting or disabling. However, other people who have acquired a disability or health condition more recently (for example, as a result of stroke or accident) may still be adjusting, physically and emotionally, to the changes to their body and capabilities. Similarly, some participants may have progressively deteriorating (degenerative) health conditions, and their needs will change as their disease progresses. As a water safety instructor, it is important for you to get to know each participant as an individual so that you can best understand (and help to meet) the person’s physical as well as emotional needs.

Another way you can help to promote comfort in your classes is by being courteous and respectful. Treat participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently just as you would treat any other participant. Offer assistance only if it appears to be needed. If your offer is declined, do not insist, and if your offer is accepted, ask how you can best help. When communicating with a participant with a disability, communicate directly with the participant. Although parents, caregivers or interpreters may need to be involved in conversations, take care to speak directly to the person with the disability, unless your question or comment is intended for someone else.

### **Environmental considerations and adaptations**

As you learned in Chapter 2, the environment can have a positive or negative impact on a participant’s ability to learn. When a participant moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, there may be

additional environmental factors that you need to take into account, such as those related to accessibility, safety and the person’s physical and psychological comfort.

- First, you must provide safe access to the water. People with physical disabilities cannot participate in a program if they cannot safely enter and exit the buildings or swimming area. Know how to use any access equipment in your facility.
- A clean, uncluttered deck is important for everyone’s safety; however, when you have a participant with a disability such as visual impairment or impaired mobility, keeping the deck clear of obstacles is especially important. In addition, for some participants with disabilities, objects on the deck (such as equipment) may be distracting. For these reasons, keep equipment covered or out of sight, and out of the way.
- Keep the deck as dry as possible. Squeegee it regularly to reduce the risk for slips and falls. Offer wet wheelchair access for people who use a cane or crutches, because the rubber tips can slip and slide on the deck.
- Be aware that a person with a disability or health condition may become chilled more easily than other participants. If possible, adjust the air and water temperatures to address user comfort. If it is not possible to adjust the air temperature, water temperature or both, recommend warm neoprene cover-ups (such as a vest, shirt, wet suit, or ear wraps) to help keep the participant comfortable during lessons. If necessary, have warm towels available as the participant exits the water. If you notice that the participant seems chilled or uncomfortable, end the lesson promptly.
- Use appropriate equipment for maintaining a good working position and improving confidence and safety. Customized personal flotation devices may be appropriate for some participants.
- For some participants with disabilities, a large activity area may cause anxiety. If necessary, reduce the size of the activity area to help the participant feel more comfortable.

## Service animals

Some people with disabilities use service animals. Service animals are individually trained to protect and perform tasks for people with a wide range of disabilities, ranging from vision or hearing impairment to seizure disorders to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Service animals are working animals, not pets. For a person with a service animal, the service animal is indispensable to the person’s well-being and functioning. For this reason, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go.

The most commonly recognized assistance animals are dogs. Canine companions are very comfortable in aquatic environments. Many of them are “water dogs” who love to swim. However, when they are on duty, they will remain alert, out of the water and ready to assist their master as needed.

The following are some important things to consider when a participant has a service animal:

- Be sure that the participant and the service animal have a clear line of sight to each other.
- Do not let anyone pet, tease, feed or play with the service animal.
- Offer fresh water for the service animal.
- Make sure that other employees and patrons of the facility are aware of the service animal’s presence and that they know not to distract the service animal while the animal is on duty.
- Post one or more signs in your facility that clearly state that service animals are welcome.

## Planning Lessons

As you know, when you are planning lessons, you must be aware of every participant's needs as they relate to health, fitness, cognitive ability and mobility so that you can provide opportunities for success. When you have a participant who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently in one of your classes, sometimes you will need to modify the program itself, but often you will only have to slightly modify your lesson plan to meet the person's needs. Specific recommendations for such changes are discussed later in this chapter.

If you are aware that a person may move, learn, communicate or behave differently, it is a good idea, when possible, to conduct the Check–Organize–Lead–Assess (COLA) evaluation prior to the start of the session. (Recall from Chapter 3 that the COLA evaluation can be used to help you plan successful classes at the start of a swim session and throughout the lessons.)

When planning lessons, make sure you and any assisting staff read any medical clearance sheets for participants, if they exist, and note any special conditions. Be careful not to make assumptions about what a person with a certain disability or medical condition can or cannot do. For example, for one person, the disability or condition may result in severely restricted functioning. For another, the same disability or condition may only be a minor impairment. Also, because of the effects of buoyancy, a person who has a limited ability to move on land may be much more mobile in the water. Rather than making assumptions, have a conversation with the participant and his or her parents or caregivers about the participant's abilities and limitations.

From your COLA evaluation and your conversations with the participant and his or her parents or caregivers, you may discover that the participant will not be able to learn and perform swimming skills as traditionally described, or that the participant will need certain skills broken down into more manageable steps. Use this information when building your lesson plan. For example, if a participant will not be able to learn and perform a particular swimming skill, plan to teach a skill the participant will be able to perform instead.

Not all participants will perform skills exactly the same way. Physical characteristics, such as a person's center of buoyancy, percentage of body fat and muscle mass, lung capacity, range of joint motion, strength, coordination, and height and weight, vary according to the individual. No two bodies float or move identically in water. It is up to you to help participants develop the most efficient stroke possible. There is no one method that is always successful in teaching people to swim, but keeping the following principles in mind can help both you and your participants to be successful:

- Individualize your approach for all participants by focusing on their level of readiness and their abilities.
- At first, teach strokes without modifying them. See what the participant is able to do and then capitalize on the participant's strengths.
- Modify the course as needed to improve the success and safety of the individual.

## Conducting Lessons

When teaching a participant who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, give the participant as much independence as possible. Do not do anything for the person that he or she is able

to do for himself or herself. Often, giving the person just a few extra minutes allows him or her to do the skill independently. Do not make general assumptions about the person's abilities or limitations. Present the task or skill and let the participant decide what he or she can do or is willing to try. Let the participant try the skill or stroke several times in several different ways before you consider modifying it. (For example, swimming on each side in the sidestroke may help identify which side is more efficient.) This gives the participant time to get a feel for the activity, and it gives you an opportunity to identify particular problem areas. Once you see how the participant performs the task or skill, you can provide coaching, make corrections and try modifications if necessary to capitalize on the participant's strengths. Throughout Part C of this instructor's manual, you will find specific suggestions for modifications for different abilities.

If you do decide to modify a skill or stroke, change only one part at a time. Making too many changes at one time may be confusing. Also, discuss your proposed modifications with the participant. The participant might have ideas about how to modify the skill or stroke as well. After all, the participant knows best how his or her body feels and moves. Do not make assumptions about what modification is or is not possible for the participant. Try everything and allow for practice time before deciding that something does not work.



**Safety Note:** Do not let participants become chilled or fatigued during the lesson. Let the participants' comfort guide their participation.

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## Evaluating Progress

As a water safety instructor, you are continuously evaluating your participants' progress and making adjustments to your lesson plans as needed. If you see that a participant is struggling to keep up with the class, there are several things you can do:

- Give additional instruction time. Extra practice, more feedback and individual attention often increase learning. Consider scheduling additional practice time outside of lessons.
- Adjust the instructor-to-participant ratio. This is a good first step if you find that you are not able to give the participant the attention needed during class, or if you find that other participants are not receiving enough attention during class.
- Change class placement. Some class groupings are more conducive to learning than others. For example, a participant who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently may struggle in a large class, a class with several participants with special needs or a class with participants at a higher or lower skill level. Sometimes simply finding a more appropriate class setting is enough to help the participant succeed.
- Change instructors. Some instructors let their own fears, insecurities or inexperience interfere with their teaching, and sometimes participants and instructors are simply not compatible. Moving the participant to a class taught by an instructor with more experience working with participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently or an instructor who has had additional training in adapted aquatics may be effective in these situations.

If placement in a regular aquatics program does not seem to be working, you have several alternatives. You should explore these alternatives to find an appropriate solution. Simply removing the participant from the course is not an appropriate solution. A participant should be excluded only on the basis of

medical advice or when there are no alternatives to an exceptionally bad situation. The following may be signs that the class placement is not appropriate:

- The participant expresses unhappiness, frustration or anger toward himself or herself or others.
- The participant is not making progress in learning skills, even with extra time, help, practice and skill modification.
- The participant is in conflict with other participants in class.
- The participant is unable to follow rules and may injure himself or herself or others.
- The participant is frequently absent.
- The participant has frequent illnesses, injuries or both during the course.
- There is a large gap between the participant's functional ability and that of the rest of the participants.
- The participant requests to leave the class early or often.

When placement in a regular aquatics program does not seem to be working for the participant, seeking advice from water safety instructors trained to teach aquatics to individuals with disabilities can be very helpful. Physical therapists, recreation therapists, special education teachers and other water safety instructors who have experience teaching participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently are excellent resources. It is also important to talk to the participant and to the participant's parents or caregivers for insight into possible solutions.

## **Conducting Exit Skills Assessments**

Some participants who move, learn, communicate or behave differently may not be able to meet the requirements established in the exit skills assessment. However, a participant's inability to meet the requirements established in the exit skills assessment does not necessarily mean that the participant cannot continue to progress through the levels. To assess the participant's readiness to move on, consider the set of questions in Figure 6-3.

You must recognize and accept that some participants will get "stuck" in traditional swim instruction progressions. As an instructor, you should always think "safe and successful," rather than focusing on completing a level. While it may be tempting to indicate that a participant has completed a level in recognition of the participant's effort, this will only set the participant up for disappointment. Moreover, moving a participant into a level that he or she is not ready for can put the participant's safety at risk. Encourage these participants to continue to enjoy the water, to develop their endurance levels and to explore other aquatic activities (such as aqua fitness or snorkeling), if appropriate, as alternatives or in addition to swim lessons.

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# **TEACHING PEOPLE WITH SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS**

People with impairment of one sense do most of their sensory learning through the other senses. Try to capitalize on the senses that give the most information to them.

## **Hearing Impairment**

Hearing impairments vary greatly from mild hearing loss to profound deafness. A person with mild hearing loss is able to hear everything except high-pitched sounds. A person with moderate hearing loss is unable to hear a conversation without amplification. A person who is deaf has severe to profound hearing loss and is unable to hear anything but the loudest sounds, such as a jet airplane.

1. Has the participant met the performance criteria for each skill in the level?

If YES, the participant has completed the level and can proceed to the next level.	If NO, ask yourself:
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2. Will more practice enable the swimmer to complete the skill?

If YES, the participant has not completed the skill and should repeat the level.	If NO, no matter how much the participant practices, he will never complete the skill, ask yourself:
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3. Will moving the participant to the next level jeopardize his or her safety or the safety of others in the class?

If YES, the participant may harm himself or herself or others, the participant should NOT be moved to the next level.	If NO, the skill is marked "not applicable." Now consider the following:
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4. Is the participant able to complete the distance requirements for the level?

If NO, there is no benefit to moving the participant into a level where he or she is expected to swim even greater distances. Therefore, the swimmer should NOT be moved to the next level.	If YES, the participant may proceed to the next level.
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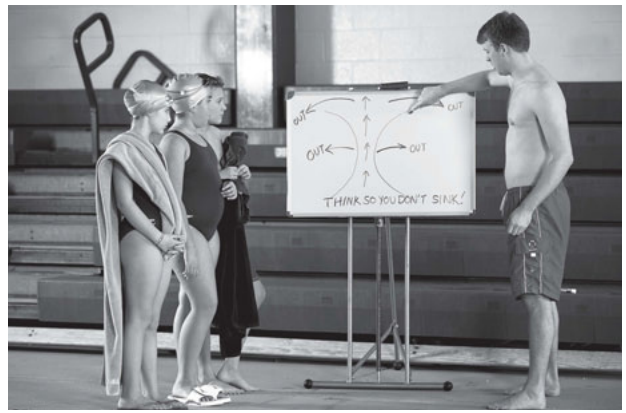
**Figure 6-3** Water safety instructors can use this set of questions to determine a participant's readiness to advance to the next level of the swim instruction program.

Some people with hearing impairments may also have impaired speech. Impaired speech does not indicate impaired intelligence. In fact, participants with hearing impairments usually have normal intelligence. A participant with hearing loss may seem inattentive; however, usually these participants are very attentive, especially visually.

Because the ear also contains the sensory receptors that allow us to maintain our balance, some participants with impaired hearing may also have difficulty with balance, coordination or both, which can affect their adjustment to the water.

In an aquatic environment, adjustments in communication techniques are often needed to accommodate the needs of participants with hearing impairments. A participant with a hearing impairment can benefit

when information is conveyed visually, for example, through demonstrations, pictures, or writing on a whiteboard (Figure 6-4). Some participants with hearing impairments may also be able to speech-read (lip-read), so make sure you position yourself so that the participant can clearly see your face. If a participant uses American Sign Language, consider learning to sign the terms used in aquatics instruction so you can communicate more effectively with the person. Consistent, clear gestures also aid communication. Although some people with hearing impairment may use hearing aids, these devices cannot be worn in the water, so visual communication techniques will be important for these participants, too.



**Figure 6-4** Participants with hearing impairment rely heavily on visual forms of communication.

Most participants with hearing impairments are quite successful in a regular aquatics program. For a participant with a hearing impairment, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Minimize background noise by holding classes during times when the facility is less busy or in quieter areas of the facility.
- Be sure the area is well lit. Minimize glare on the water by repositioning the participants or blocking direct light.
- Give most information visually through demonstrations. Supplement your demonstrations with posters or video demonstrations. The *American Red Cross Swimming and Diving Skills* and *Longfellow's WHALE Tales* DVDs are closed-captioned.
- Give clear verbal directions, but avoid exaggerating your speech. Speak slowly, naturally and clearly. Be sure the participant can see your face when you are speaking.
- If necessary, keep items to write with nearby (for example, a white board and markers) to help communicate.
- For classes that require extensive verbal information (such as lessons on safety), consider using an interpreter. Just remember to address the participant directly, not the interpreter.
- Use printed material to supplement verbal information, particularly information related to safety.
- Review your lesson plan and be sure to give important “up front” information (such as reminders about rules) before a participant with hearing aids removes the aids.
- Make sure you have the participant’s attention before you speak. You may need to lightly tap the person on the shoulder or wave to get his or her attention.
- Some participants may wear swim caps. Ask the participant to keep the cap above the ears when you are introducing a new skill or stroke to better facilitate hearing.
- Listen attentively to participants with hearing impairments who can speak. The more you listen, the more easily you will be able to understand the person’s speech. Do not pretend to understand the person if you do not. Instead, let the person know that you did not understand and look for another way for him or her to get his or her message across (for example, by writing it down so you can read it).
- Move the participant’s arms or legs in the desired pattern of movement. This enhances kinesthetic awareness.

- Recommend the use of goggles as part of the water adjustment phase so that the participant can keep his or her eyes open underwater. The use of goggles can help improve kinesthetic awareness. As comfort increases, the participant can practice opening his or her eyes underwater without goggles.



**Safety Note:** Establish clear gestures for emergencies. Provide safety information in a printed format.

Some participants with hearing impairments may need additional specialized instruction. For example, those with a profound hearing impairment combined with severe communication impairment may need instruction from someone skilled in American Sign Language. A participant with multiple disabilities (such as a person who is deaf and blind) may need specialized one-on-one instruction.

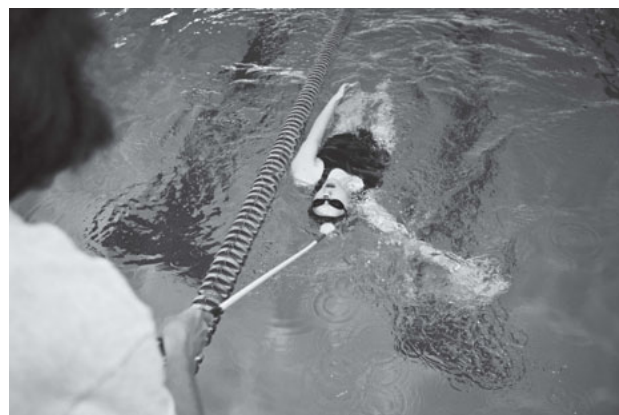
## Visual Impairment

Visual impairment can range from an uncorrectable vision deficit that interferes with a person's ability to perform everyday activities (low vision) to a complete absence of vision and light perception (total blindness). People who are visually impaired often have some functionally useful sight, such as having 20/70 acuity in the best eye with correction. (A person with 20/70 acuity can see at 20 feet what a sighted person sees at 70 feet.) Legal blindness is a level of vision loss that has been legally defined to determine eligibility for benefits. A person who is "legally blind" has acuity of 20/200 or less in the best eye with correction, a visual field of 20 degrees or less, or both. (A person with 20/200 vision sees at 20 feet what a sighted person sees at 200 feet.)

Participants who have some degree of functional vision may wear glasses while swimming to take advantage of the vision that they have. Glasses with plastic frames and lenses are best for the water. An elastic strap or swim cap can help to keep glasses in place. Participants who wear glasses should not be permitted to jump or dive into the water with the glasses on. Participants with contact lenses should not wear them in the water. As an alternative to glasses or contact lenses, goggles and masks with correction are available.

Most people with visual impairment are quite successful in a regular aquatics program. For a participant with a visual impairment, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Make sure the area is well lit.
- In an aquatic environment, a participant with vision impairment needs to be able to listen to and hear others. Decrease auditory distractions when possible. Learning and using strokes that keep the ears out of the water allows the participant to stay in communication with others and be aware of the environment.
- Use audible signals (such as a whistle) and touch to promote clear communication (Figure 6-5).



**Figure 6-5** A tapping device is a long pole with a soft end (such as a long white cane with a tennis ball at the end) that is used to tap a swimmer with vision impairment on the head or shoulder to let her know that she is approaching the wall. Follow the swimmer's preference regarding whether to tap on the head or shoulder.

- Speak in a normal voice. It is not necessary to shout.
- Look directly at the participant when you are speaking because the sound of your voice provides orientation and tells the participant where you are located. If you must redirect your voice to others in the class, maintain physical touch with the participant to keep him or her from being disoriented.
- When giving directions, be clear and specific and use cues that make sense to the individual.
- Position the participant directly in front of you when you demonstrate skills.
- Use tactile teaching. Guide the participant's movements or have him or her touch your body while you demonstrate the skill.
- Let the participant keep his or her face out of the water in the early phases of learning a new skill or stroke so that he or she can hear better and ask questions.
- Before the lesson, give the participant an orientation to the environment. Do not rearrange items on the deck because this can impact the participant's ability to navigate successfully.

Some participants with vision impairments may request your help navigating around the facility. If a participant asks to be guided:

- Touch the participant's forearm with the back of your hand to let the participant know where you are located. Have the participant walk beside you and slightly behind you as he or she rests a hand on your elbow or forearm. Walk at a normal pace. Let the participant know when you are approaching a corner or step, and whether you will be stepping up or down. Maintain contact until the final destination is reached or your assistance is no longer needed.
- When assisting a participant with a service animal, offer your left arm so that you will be to the right of the person. The service animal is trained to stay on his or her master's left side. The service animal is still "on duty" and acts as a safety officer.
- When assisting a participant who uses a cane, offer your arm on the participant's free side.



**Safety Note:** *Keep decks free of clutter. Be sure safety lines are in place. Have an auditory signal that means "stop, stand still, danger." Have large-print copies of facility rules available.*

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Some people with impaired vision may need specialized instruction. Those with severe visual impairments may need instruction from someone skilled in mobility training. People with multiple disabilities may need specialized one-on-one instruction.

## Tactile Impairment

*Tactile impairment* is the partial or total loss of the sense of touch. Lack of sensation should not keep anyone out of the water. However, because a person with tactile impairment will not feel pain, he may not notice injuries such as abrasions or burns. Special care must be taken to prevent these types of injuries:

- Plan activities to avoid scraping the skin, especially the skin on the feet and legs.
- Have the participant wear water shoes, socks or both to lower the risk for abrasions.
- Control the temperature of shower water. People who do not have feeling in the arms or legs can burn themselves without knowing it.

## Proprioception impairment

*Proprioception*, also known as kinesthetic awareness, is the conscious sense of where the body is, where its parts are positioned and how they are moving at any given moment. If this function is impaired, the person may not sense his or her body's position in relation to space and other objects. For example, the person may not be able to determine (or remember) the position of his or her arm or the trajectory of an arm movement without using vision. In an aquatic environment, the person may have problems with balance in the water, swimming in a straight line, and learning to float and recover.

For a participant with a proprioception impairment, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Teach sculling and independent balance with the support of the wall or a flotation device to increase confidence.
- Use tactile teaching techniques. For example, manipulate the participant's arms and legs through the skill or stroke.
- Encourage the participant to focus on what he or she sees his or her body doing. To facilitate the participant's ability to see what his or her body is doing, encourage him or her to wear goggles if necessary.
- Speak in terms of the positions on the face of a clock to help the participant identify where to reach during the recovery phase of a stroke.
- Have the participant wear ankle weights if he or she struggles to get his or her feet on the bottom.
- Have the participant wear gloves or use paddles to help him or her better feel where he or she is in the water. Use different colored gloves if the participant cannot distinguish between right and left.
- Consider videotaping the participant so that he or she can watch himself or herself perform the skill or stroke, and then give corrective feedback (for example, suggestions for improving streamlining or achieving appropriate reach for propulsion).

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## TEACHING PEOPLE WITH IMPAIRED MOBILITY

*Impaired mobility* is a limited ability to move the body or one or more limbs. Many different health conditions can result in impaired mobility, including obesity, orthopedic conditions (such as arthritis) and neurologic conditions (such as stroke, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [Lou Gehrig's disease], Parkinson's disease and cerebral palsy). Trauma, such as that leading to a spinal cord injury or amputation, can also lead to impaired mobility. In some cases, a congenital condition (for example, being born without a limb) can impair mobility. Just as impaired mobility has a wide range of causes, it results in a wide range of limitations.

In the water, buoyancy reduces gravity and weight bearing and can make mobility easier than on land. Because of the effects of buoyancy, participants with limited movement may be more comfortable and more mobile in the water than anywhere else, and people with progressive degenerative conditions can still function in water long after motor function on land is severely diminished. For many people with impaired mobility, especially those with progressive degenerative conditions and those with temporary conditions that affect mobility, aquatics can play an important part in rehabilitation.

Because participants with mobility impairments may not be able to move as easily on dry land, their fitness levels may be decreased. Keep this in mind when you are planning lessons. Start slowly, provide

frequent breaks and gradually increase effort over time. You may need to remind the participant not to overdo it. The effects of buoyancy can cause the participant to feel energized and to want to do more, but the participant needs to have enough energy to return to a gravity-based environment. Chapter 10 in *Swimming and Water Safety* has more information about enhancing fitness through aquatics.

A participant with impaired mobility may use a wheelchair. Remember that many people who use wheelchairs consider the wheelchair to be an extension of their bodies, so do not lean on the person's wheelchair for support. Also, when speaking for more than a few minutes with a person in a wheelchair, consider kneeling or sitting down so the person does not have to look up at you. A participant who uses a wheelchair may need to transfer to a water chair or a lift to access the pool (Figure 6-6). For your own safety as well as that of the participant, do not help in transferring the participant from the wheelchair to the water chair or lift unless you have received additional training in how to do so.



**Figure 6-6** A water chair and a ramp or a zero-slope entry can facilitate entering and exiting the pool for a person with impaired mobility.

Some participants with impaired mobility may have a prosthesis (that is, an artificial limb). Most prostheses cannot be worn in the water, so the participant may need assistance in the locker room, moving to and from the pool, and entering and exiting the water. Other participants with impaired mobility may use an assistive device for walking (such as a cane, walker, crutches or braces). Allow the person to keep any assistive devices that he normally uses for walking close at hand. Because crutches, braces and canes may slip, even on decks that are kept as dry as possible, consider providing a water chair or walker for participants who normally use crutches or a cane.

Paralysis (the loss of voluntary movement, sensation or both) may affect the legs (paraplegia) or the arms and legs (quadriplegia). Paraplegia and quadriplegia are often the result of a spinal cord injury. Hemiplegia is paralysis on one side of the body. Hemiplegia and hemiparesis (weakness on one side of the body) are often caused by a stroke (cerebrovascular accident). A person with hemiparesis may have a decreased sense of pain, touch and temperature on the affected side. Special considerations for participants with paralysis include the following:

- Take steps to avoid cuts or abrasions caused by scraping the hands and feet, especially if sensation is reduced. For example, use transfer mats to reduce the risk for abrasions caused by dragging body parts across the deck, and encourage the participant to wear water shoes to reduce abrasions from the bottom of the pool.
- Be aware that these participants may be more prone to chilling. Offer thermal gear to participants who may chill quickly. Watch for signs of hypothermia and end the session in favor of re-warming.

- A participant with paralysis is prone to developing pressure ulcers as a complication of immobility. If a participant has a pressure ulcer, he should not participate in aquatic activities until the pressure ulcer has healed.
- If the paralysis affects the person's ability to control the bowel or bladder, the person should wear containment briefs that are especially designed for swimmers with incontinence. These briefs are meant to be worn under a regular bathing suit. If the person has a colostomy or urostomy make sure that the person empties the ostomy bag immediately prior to the lesson.

Participants with mobility impairments who are able to walk unaided and have good communication and breathing skills should have little difficulty in a regular aquatics program. Participants who use a wheelchair or an assistive device for walking can also enjoy success in a regular aquatics program. For a participant with a mobility impairment, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Help the participant find a good working position in the water. This may require using flotation rings or other devices to support the desired body position.
- Once in a horizontal position, some participants with impaired mobility may have difficulty getting their feet back down. Practice recovery skills as part of water orientation and readiness.
- Emphasize stroke pull along the midline of the body to decrease body roll for participants with balance problems.
- Encourage the participant to use the full range of motion in all joints.
- Use a hands-on approach to move the participant's limbs through the desired motor patterns. Be careful not to force any movement against joint resistance.
- Stop the activity when the participant becomes tired. This is particularly important for participants with degenerative conditions.



**Safety Note:** Participants with lower back instability (for example, as a result of paralysis or spina bifida) should not dive or engage in activities that can twist the spine.

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Some people with severely impaired motor function may need specialized instruction. For example, a person limited in all four extremities will need specialized, one-on-one instruction to be successful or to receive rehabilitative benefit.

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## TEACHING PEOPLE WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Many participants in your classes are likely to have one or more chronic health conditions. The effect of the health condition on the person's function depends on both the individual and the condition.

### Seizure Disorders

A person who has recurring seizures has a condition known as *seizure disorder*. Seizures are the result of sudden, abnormal electrical activity in the brain lasting from several seconds to several minutes. One very common seizure disorder is epilepsy, but a person can also develop a seizure disorder following a stroke or head injury, or as a result of a brain tumor.

When a person is having a seizure, the body may become suddenly rigid, sometimes after a high-pitched cry. The person may lose consciousness and experience convulsions (uncontrolled body movements caused by contraction of the muscles). You may notice that the person is salivating, holding his or her breath or clenching

his or her jaw. Some people lose control of the bladder, bowels or both during the seizure. After the seizure, the person gradually regains consciousness. In the period after the seizure, the person may seem drowsy and confused and may complain of a headache. Not all seizures involve convulsions and loss of consciousness. Someone having a less serious seizure may suddenly stare off into space for a few seconds and then become fully alert again. Some people with seizure disorders experience an unusual sensation (called an *aura*) before the onset of a seizure. The aura sensation may take the form of a peculiar sound, sight, smell, taste or feeling.

Anyone with a seizure disorder is at a higher risk for drowning and must take care when near the water. No one should ever swim alone, but this is especially true for people with a seizure disorder. A seizure that occurs in the water is a medical emergency and should be treated as a nonfatal drowning. The person may go under the water without warning or a call for help. A person who is having (or just had) a seizure may not be breathing or may try to breathe while underwater. Both conditions can cause life-threatening problems.

Most people with a seizure disorder can join an aquatics program, as long as they are closely supervised. People with poorly controlled seizures need close supervision and should wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved Type I life jacket or a specially designed head float to help support the head in the event of a seizure. For some people with poorly controlled seizures, an adapted aquatics program staffed by specially trained personnel is recommended.

When one of your participants has a seizure disorder, you can help keep the person safe by taking the following measures:

- Know what the seizure the participant is prone to have looks like.
- Know how to recognize a seizure and how to respond quickly and appropriately if a participant does have a seizure. Know your role in, and practice, emergency action plans for land- and water-based seizures. There should also be someone else who knows what to do in the event of this type of emergency (such as a lifeguard or the participant’s parent or caregiver) present at all times.
- If a participant in your class has a seizure disorder, be sure to inform the lifeguards.
- Keep the participant from getting over-tired or too cold while in the water.
- Some seizures can be brought on by flashing light. If a participant with a seizure disorder is affected by flashing light, recommend the participant wear polarized sunglasses or dark goggles to reduce the flicker effect of sunlight on the water and other reflective surfaces.

If a participant has a seizure while in the water, quick action is needed. Support the person to keep the head and face above the water so that the person can breathe. Call the lifeguard for help and make sure that emergency medical services (EMS) personnel are called. Do not remove the person from the water until the seizure is over. When the seizure is over, place the person on his or her side on a padded area of the deck and keep the person warm (for example, by covering the person with towels) until EMS personnel arrive. Monitor the person’s airway to make sure that the person is breathing.



**Safety Note:** *Participants who have seizures and who are not under medical control need close supervision, should wear an offshore life jacket (Type I) and should swim only in an adapted program with specially trained personnel.*

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## Respiratory Conditions

Aquatic activities are extremely beneficial for people with respiratory conditions. For example, the breath control learned with aquatic skills often helps relieve the symptoms of asthma. Some people

may have weak respiratory muscles due to a neurologic or developmental disorder. The hydrostatic pressure of the water as it increases with depth creates resistance to breathing and provides an overload to improve the muscles of respiration. Practicing blowing bubbles in increasingly deeper water helps improve oral motor control.

For a participant with a respiratory condition, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Start in shallow, waist-deep water so as not to overwhelm the respiratory system.
- Practice deep breathing (pulling down with the diaphragm and extending the stomach).
- Practice blowing hard through a piece of foam noodle with a hole in the middle to push exhalation and improve oral motor control.
- Practice partner sit-ups to improve abdominal strength and recover to a stand.
- Teach rhythmic breathing in shallow water.
- Gradually move to chest-deep water to add additional resistance.
- Add side rolls and breathing with flutter kick to improve body balance, stroke mechanics, breath control and to strengthen the abdominal muscles.
- If the participant aspirates the water, encourage coughing to improve respiratory muscle strength.
- Watch for respiratory insufficiency during active participation. You may notice that the participant has shortness of breath, is wheezing or has a blue tinge to the lips. Slow down and allow rest breaks.
- If a participant has asthma, make sure he or she keeps his or her inhaler at poolside. Know how to help the participant to use the inhaler if he or she experiences an asthma attack. If a participant does experience an asthma attack, assist with the inhaler and call EMS personnel if symptoms do not dramatically improve.

## Neurological Disorders

*Neurological disorders*, such as cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, Parkinson’s disease and multiple sclerosis, are those that result from damage to some area of the brain or spinal cord. The damage most often results in loss of motor control. People with neurological disorders may have limited range of motion; muscle weakness; spasticity; random, involuntary movements; or seizures. They may have impaired speech and difficulty communicating their needs.

For participants with neurologic conditions, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Be sure the participant can safely access the aquatic area.
- Be aware that the degree of spasticity can change from day to day. Plan alternative activities if the participant struggles with activities already mastered.
- Evaluate the participant’s balance, tendency to tip over and ability to recover to a standing position. If necessary, take additional measures to help keep the participant safe such as extra supervision, having the participant wear a life jacket or both.
- If the participant has tonic neck reflex, it may be appropriate to have the participant wear a collar or other buoyancy support around the neck (Figure 6-7).



**Figure 6-7** A participant with tonic neck reflex may need to wear a buoyancy collar around the neck.

- Teach strokes on the back first.
- Stand behind the participant when teaching strokes on the back to protect the participant from inadvertently submerging the face.
- Encourage the participant to use the full range of motion in all joints, but never force a joint beyond its functional range of motion. Avoid any sudden changes in hand position while supporting a participant during a skill because a sudden release may cause a tonic reflex action.
- Use caution when teaching entries. Decreased coordination of leg muscles can result in an ineffective “push” from the pool edge.

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## TEACHING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

A *developmental disability* is a permanent condition that affects a person before 22 years of age. A developmental disability may be congenital (the person was born with it) or acquired after birth. Developmental disabilities may affect intellectual, social or physical development. As a result, people with developmental disabilities may have difficulties with language, social skills, mobility, learning, cognition or a combination of these. Developmental delay is common in people with developmental disabilities (that is, a person with a developmental disability may take longer to achieve certain developmental stages or milestones, or may not achieve them at all).

Some, but not all, developmental disabilities are accompanied by varying degrees of intellectual disability (below average intellectual function and limitations in the skills needed for daily independent living). Intellectual disability can be categorized as mild, moderate, severe or profound. A person with mild intellectual disability can develop the intellectual and communication skills needed for independent living. A person with moderate intellectual disability has more difficulty developing the skills needed for independent living and may or may not live on his or her own. A person with severe to profound intellectual disability has very limited self-care and communication skills and usually needs assistance for day-to-day living. Many people with mild to moderate intellectual disability can participate in a regular aquatics program with little or no accommodation. People with severe to profound intellectual disabilities, however, require specialized instruction.

For a participant with a developmental disability, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Do not assume that the participant cannot perform a specific skill or cannot participate in class. Always try to include all participants in activities.
- Be sensitive to the extra time it may take to learn information and master skills.
- Develop short one- and two-word cues to give directions. Speak clearly and slow the pace as necessary to help with understanding. Use rhymes and rhythmic sayings to reinforce learning.
- Address and treat adults with an intellectual disability as adults.
- Communicate directly with the participant with an intellectual disability, not through a third person.
- Some participants with intellectual disabilities may have speech impairments. If you cannot understand what the participant is saying, do not be afraid to ask the participant to repeat himself or herself.
- Break skills down into their smallest component parts.



**Safety Note:** More staff may be needed to supervise the safety of participants with disabilities. Participants with developmental disabilities may also need to wear life jackets to help keep them safe.

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## Down Syndrome

*Down syndrome* is a genetic developmental disability that usually causes delays in physical and cognitive development. People with Down syndrome vary widely in their cognitive abilities and physical development. All have some degree of intellectual disability and muscle weakness.

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**Safety Note:** Headfirst entries and performing the butterfly stroke are prohibited for participants with atlantoaxial instability, a weakness in the ligaments between the first two vertebrae that causes vertebral instability. Atlantoaxial instability affects some people with Down syndrome. If you have a participant with Down syndrome, do not permit the participant to do headfirst entries or the butterfly stroke unless you have a medical release from the participant's health care provider stating that the participant does not have atlantoaxial instability and that these activities are acceptable. The National Down Syndrome Congress recommends cervical x-rays to determine whether this condition exists.

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## Cerebral Palsy

*Cerebral palsy* is caused by damage to the cerebrum, the part of the brain involved with motor control. As a result, a person with cerebral palsy has limited control over voluntary movement of affected limbs and may make random, involuntary movements. There may be an absence of normal muscle tone or an overabundance of muscle tone. Some people with cerebral palsy develop spasms and shortening of the muscles. The person's speech may be impaired as well, if the muscles used for speech are affected.

The limitations caused by cerebral palsy range from mild to severe. One person with cerebral palsy may walk unassisted while another may lack the ability to control most body movements. Some people with cerebral palsy may have varying degrees of intellectual impairment, or none at all. Other conditions that may be associated with cerebral palsy include seizure disorders, hearing impairment or vision impairment.

People with cerebral palsy whose symptoms are mild can participate successfully in aquatics programs. The water gives the person with cerebral palsy a safe environment for physical activity. In addition, the buoyancy of water and the warmth of a heated pool help to relieve body stiffness and joint stress, and swimming is very good for increasing and maintaining joint range of motion and muscle flexibility. For people with cerebral palsy who have more severe impairments, specialized aquatics instruction may be needed.

Because cerebral palsy is a neurologic disorder that causes difficulty controlling movement, follow the suggestions for facilitating learning for participants with neurologic disorders, as well as the suggestions for facilitating learning for participants with mobility issues that were described earlier in this chapter.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism spectrum disorder, commonly referred to *autism*, is usually first diagnosed in early childhood.

Autism affects how a person communicates, interacts with others socially and participates in many activities. In social interactions, some people with autism may not make eye contact or be able to

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appreciate others' perspective. These social impairments may lead people with autism to make statements or interact with others in ways outside of what is considered typical social behavior. Communication impairments associated with autism often result in slower processing of information and delayed, atypical or nonexistent speech.

Many people who have autism may engage in ritualized or repetitive behavior (also known as stereotypical movements or “stimming”) and may not adjust well to changes in routine or environment. They also have varied responses to stimuli. Many people with autism have sensory challenges that may make things such as loud noises, physical contact and bright lights upsetting or confusing. These participants may overreact (may be hyperreactive) and need strategies to calm down in response to stimuli. Other people with autism may not react at all and need stimulation to interact and initiate movement. In an aquatic environment, this means that some people with autism may need significantly more time to adjust to being around water, while others need vigilant supervision because they may be unable to fully appreciate the dangers associated with water.

A person with autism may have difficulty with fine or gross motor skills and sensory perception. Some people with autism may have difficulty distinguishing between right and left sides and up from down. As a result of these difficulties, a person with autism may be hesitant to try new skills because he or she has failed at physical tasks in the past.

Autism encompasses many different manifestations of behavior. As a water safety instructor, you must work with parents and caregivers to determine if there is a place in your group or private swim lesson program for each individual. Participants with severe impairments may require specialized aquatic programming.

For a participant with autism, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Learn the participant's preferred method of communication.
- Talk with the participant's parents or caregivers about strategies that have worked in the past to help the participant maintain or improve focus.
- Have clear expectations for the participant's behavior. Keep the rules simple and be ready to redirect the participant's behavior in positive ways. Enforce policies uniformly and consistently.
- Model appropriate behaviors and be ready to redirect the participant's behaviors in positive ways. Focus on what you want the participant to do, rather than what you do not want him or her to do. (For example, say, “Please walk” instead of “Don't run.”)
  - Many people with autism will not understand what actions or behavior you are trying to achieve if you simply tell them what you do not want them to do.
  - Focusing on the desired result creates a much more positive atmosphere for your participants and for you.
- Maintain routines.
- Include perceptual motor activities to help with balance.
- Keep verbal messages short and clear. Support verbal instructions with visual ones whenever possible.
- Use picture boards to help communicate upcoming changes in the activity schedule and give advanced notice about a change in activity.

- Establish short one- or two-word meaningful cues to facilitate initiation of an activity.
- Give the participant opportunities to choose safe activities (for example, use a “my turn, your turn” approach).
- Use “First, then,” which can be a very effective strategy (for example, “*First* a front float, *then* you can have the toy”).
- Use age-appropriate games to stimulate social interaction with others in the class.
- Respect the participant’s need to return to a safe activity before moving to something new.
- Respect the participant’s functional needs. The needs of participants with lower functioning are often more apparent than those of participants with higher functioning. As a result, the needs of those with higher functioning are overlooked because the participant does not possess the social skills, communication skills or both to express his or her needs.

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## TEACHING PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

*Learning disabilities* affect how a person understands, remembers and responds to new information. These problems can make it difficult for participants with learning disabilities to learn as quickly as those who do not have learning disabilities. Although some people with learning disabilities also have intellectual disabilities, many do not. Most learning disabilities become apparent when a child reaches school age, and it is noted that the child has difficulties staying focused, reading, writing, speaking or doing math.

Many people affected by learning disabilities have more than one type. In addition, learning disabilities may accompany attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Box 6-1).

### Box 6-1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Although attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is not considered a learning disability, it can affect a person’s ability to learn. People with ADHD have an especially hard time paying attention or controlling their behavior. Hyperactivity, inattention and impulsivity are the major categories of behaviors associated with ADHD.

- Hyperactive behaviors include fidgeting, frequently moving around between locations or activities, and difficulty staying still.
- Inattention behaviors include forgetfulness, difficulties with paying close attention, and difficulties with organizing tasks and activities.
- Impulsivity behaviors include blurting out comments inappropriately, interrupting others and difficulties with taking turns.

In an aquatic environment, it may be necessary to limit distractions and provide one-on-one instruction whenever possible for participants with ADHD.

People with learning disabilities may exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- Hyperactivity
- Perceptual deficits

- Distractibility
- Selective attention
- Agitation and/or aggressive behavior
- Compulsiveness
- Memory disturbances
- An inability to bond with a group

Certain kinds of learning disabilities can interfere with the participant’s ability to concentrate or focus and can cause the participant’s mind to wander. Characteristics such as hyperactivity, distractibility and emotional instability may interfere with the participant’s ability to understand and follow directions and to learn motor skills.

There are a number of adaptive strategies that people with learning disabilities can use to succeed while in a learning environment. For a participant with a learning disability, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Minimize distractions.
- Try to keep the same general format and organization for each lesson.
- Provide structure for skill learning and practice.
- Be ready to change activities frequently because the participant’s attention span may be short.
- Use music and songs as tools to signal the beginning and end of a lesson and to signal a transition from one activity to another.
- Establish a simple swimming movement vocabulary and teach the participant to verbalize actions before practicing skills.
- Experiment with guided discovery as a teaching strategy, using phrases such as “who can show me how you would ... ?”
- Stage and divide practice into smaller chunks with frequent breaks.
- Develop, with the help of the participant and his or her parents or caregivers, an inconspicuous method, such as a physical cue, to remind the participant to refocus when you feel that the participant is tuning you out.
- Use multisensory strategies, including written material, when giving directions and presenting skills. Demonstrate often.
- Emphasize common elements between skills already learned and new skills you are introducing. This includes using land-based activities to help make a connection between what the participant knows and what he is learning, such as:
  - Climbing a ladder with rungs to mimic the arm movements in the front crawl.
  - Using the hands as paint brushes to paint the sky to mimic the back crawl arm recovery.
- Use tools such as checklists, kitchen timers and note cards to help the participant stay on task.
- Have clear expectations for the participant’s behavior. Keep the rules simple and be ready to redirect the participant’s behavior in positive ways. Enforce policies uniformly and consistently.

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# TEACHING PEOPLE WITH EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIORAL DISABILITIES

People with an emotional or behavioral disability may have difficulty relating to the aquatic environment. Many terms are used to describe emotional or behavioral disorders. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) categorizes students with emotional or behavioral disabilities as having an *emotional disturbance*. As defined by the IDEA, an emotional disturbance is “a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.”  
[Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Section 300.7(c)(4)(ii)]

For a participant with an emotional disturbance, you can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Be sure you clearly state and discuss the rules with the participant, as well as the participant’s parents or caregivers.
- Focus on what you want the participant to do, rather than what you do not want him or her to do. (For example, say, “Please walk” instead of “Don’t run.”)
- Be sure the participant and his or her parents or caregivers clearly understand the consequences for inappropriate behaviors and displays of emotion.
- Ask the participant’s parents or caregivers what consequences they apply when the participant displays inappropriate behaviors, and try to use similar techniques.
- Consistently enforce all rules and safety procedures.
- Praise appropriate behavior.
- Plan all parts of the lesson to prevent unoccupied time.



**Safety Note:** *Do not hesitate to use time-out procedures or to stop the class for the day if the participant cannot control his or her behavior. However, take note of whether or not the “time-out” causes the participant’s behavior to improve. If it does, it is possible that a time-out (a break) was what the participant was seeking in the first place. If this is the case, try incorporating breaks into your schedule, or give the participant a way of communicating that he or she needs a break.*

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Most people with emotional disturbances can be successful in a regular aquatic program. However, if the participant does not progress in learning aquatic skills, if his or her behavior jeopardizes the safety of the other participants, or if instruction of the whole class is negatively affected, the participant may need a more specialized adapted aquatics program.

# The Courses

# PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS

**A**merican Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics is designed for children between the ages of 6 months and approximately 3 years, and their parents. The purpose of the course is to familiarize children with the water and teach swimming readiness skills. In addition, Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics provides safety information for parents and teaches parents techniques they can use to help orient their children to the water.

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# ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

## Prerequisites

Although there are no skill prerequisites for this course, children must be at least 6 months old to participate in the course and a parent must accompany each child in the water and participate in the classes. (Guardians, child care providers, other adult relatives and older siblings may participate with the child in the Parent and Child Aquatics courses. However, for simplicity and consistency, the term “parent” is used here.)

Parent and Child Aquatics consists of two levels. Participants begin in Level 1. Once infants or young children are able to comfortably perform the skills in Level 1, they progress to Level 2, which builds on the skills learned in Level 1. If a child completes Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1 and is at least 3 years old, he or she may be ready to enroll in Preschool Aquatics Level 1. If a child completes Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2, is at least 3 years old and can demonstrate the exit skills assessment of Preschool Aquatics Level 1, he or she may be ready to enroll in Preschool Aquatics Level 2.

## Course Length

Generally, Parent and Child Aquatics works well in sessions of 7 to 10 lessons. Lessons typically last no longer than 30 minutes and are commonly held at least twice a week. There is no required minimum or maximum course length.

## Class Size

It is recommended that Parent and Child Aquatics classes maintain an instructor-to-parent–child ratio of at least one instructor to no more than 10 parent–child pairs. When a participant has special needs, co-instructors may be needed or the class size may need to be smaller. Work with the child’s parents to determine what will work best in that circumstance.

## Facility

Parent and Child Aquatics courses should be taught only in well-maintained swimming pools. Whenever possible, the facility for the Parent and Child Aquatics classes should also have the following features:

- Family changing rooms equipped with:
  - Dry, comfortable changing tables.
  - Sanitary crawling areas.
  - Adequate garbage disposal, especially for soiled diapers.
  - Working showers, with warm water and soap available.
- Adequate air circulation and warm air temperatures.
- Secured pool entrances, especially when classes are not in session.
- A storage space for instructional aids and toys.

## Temperature

Infants and young children are more susceptible to hypothermia than older children, even at relatively warm temperatures. Typically, infants and preschool-aged children are most comfortable in water that is at least 89° F ( $\geq 32^{\circ}$  C) during a 20- to 30-minute swim lesson. If you cannot control the water temperature, consider decreasing lesson duration and increasing the number of lessons. Other measures you can take to prevent participants from becoming chilled include increasing the intensity of the activity, encouraging participants to wear warm neoprene cover-ups (such as a vest, shirt, wet suit or ear wraps), and advising parents to bring an extra dry towel to wrap around the child when exiting the water, especially if the air temperature and humidity levels are low.

As a water safety instructor, you need to be able to recognize when a participant may be too chilled. If you notice that a participant seems chilled or uncomfortable, end the lesson promptly. Signals of hypothermia include shivering, numbness, glassy stare, apathy, weakness, impaired judgment and loss of consciousness.

## Depth

Most activities in Parent and Child Aquatics require the parent to hold and support the child. For most of the lesson, the water should be deep enough for parents to comfortably position themselves so they can walk forward and backward in shoulder-deep water while supporting the child at the surface of the water.

Infants and young children can also learn a great deal when actively exploring the aquatic environment under their own power. During some parts of the lesson, if possible, allow opportunities for independent exploration for children who can sit up independently, crawl or walk. A gradually sloping shallow area, ramp or steps are areas of the facility where a small child can stand alone in waist-deep or chest-deep water. Alternatively, consider using teaching platforms on which children can stand safely. Close supervision is necessary when using platforms, just as it is in other areas of the pool.



**Safety Note:** *Parents should stay within arm's reach of their children while allowing them to explore without support. Direct parental supervision is necessary at all times during Parent and Child Aquatics lessons.*

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## Noise and distractions

Infants and young children may be easily distracted. Seek to control the sights and sounds in the environment by:

- Limiting loud, distorted sounds as much as possible.
- Holding the class in an isolated area of the pool to limit distractions from other patrons who are moving about and shouting or crying.
- Encouraging participants to talk in normal voices and not shout over the noise.
- Storing unused toys and equipment out of sight.
- Taking any child who is over-stimulated to a quieter area of the pool to calm down and adjust to the environment, if possible.

## Resources

This chapter outlines the completion goals and descriptions for each skill in each level. The following additional Red Cross materials are available as resources:

- *Swimming and Water Safety*
- Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety pages on Instructor’s Corner (access tools and resources you can share with parents to reinforce the information and skills they are learning in class and to promote ongoing participation in the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program)
- *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet*
- *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety DVD*
- *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales DVD*

## Recognizing Achievement

Upon successful course completion, participants may be issued Learn-to-Swim course completion cards, which are included in the annual Learn-to-Swim Authorized Provider promotional package.

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# SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Keep the following safety considerations in mind when conducting Parent and Child Aquatics classes:

- Maintain a safety-first mindset.
  - Be sure that parents maintain constant supervision by staying within arm’s reach of their children, both on the deck and in the water.
  - Do not let children hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit children to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.
- Parent and Child Aquatics classes are unique because participants come in pairs, with possibly as many as 10 pairs (20 people) in one class. Plan your class well to help maintain safety for all participants.
  - Maintain good spacing, with parents spreading out to avoid collisions with other parents.
  - Move in wide circle or line patterns, either together or staggered depending on the activity, size of the pool, size of the class and the comfort level of participants. (See Chapter 3 for more information on patterns for class organization.)
  - Always be clear and concise when giving directions to avoid collisions. Make sure parents understand where you want them to go and the direction you want them to move.
- Explain to parents that recreational water illnesses (RWIs) can be passed when children who have had loose stools return to the water too soon. Pediatricians recommend that children with fevers, rashes, diarrhea or any symptoms of an infection not participate in an aquatics program. Let parents know that they should not bring children to class who do not feel well, who have diarrhea or who are just recovering from a diarrheal illness. See Chapter 1 for more information on RWIs.
- Many state and local codes require that children use swim diapers if they are not toilet trained. Although swim diapers may hold in some feces, they are not leak-proof. Facilities may require a second layer of protection over the swim diaper, such as a swim suit that is tight fitting. In addition,

remind parents to change the child's diaper or give the child the opportunity to use the restroom before class. Give parents permission to take their child to the restroom as needed.

- Know when enough is enough.

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## WORKING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

### Developmental Considerations

From birth through age 5, a young child's ability to think, feel, move, play and communicate all change rapidly and dramatically. Although children learn new motor skills at different ages and rates, development progresses logically, as the child learns one skill and then becomes ready to learn the next skill. For example, an infant will learn to creep before she learns to crawl and, except in very rare cases, she will learn to crawl before she learns to walk. These same principles apply to learning aquatic skills.

Aquatic readiness is based on developmental age, maturity and on previous aquatic experience. In addition, a child's developmental readiness to learn aquatic skills parallels land-based readiness. For example, a child gains postural control of the head and neck, then control of the upper body and finally control of the lower body. Swimming skills develop in much the same way. As muscular control improves, the child will be ready for paddling skills and then kicking skills.

### Promoting Learning

Learning styles differ among children and their parents. Some learners want to be shown how to do something, others want to hear how to do it, while others prefer to discover things on their own with some guidance. Adjust your teaching to the parent-child learning style when planning skill presentations for classes. Keep explanations short and age appropriate. Demonstrate skills accurately, and repeat the demonstrations. Because most young children will imitate what they see adults doing, skill demonstration can be a very effective teaching method for this age group. Children are often more willing to try a skill when it is demonstrated by the parent.

Instruction is only one of many influences on learning in young children. Effective practice also is essential for learning motor skills. Young children usually benefit most from a distributed practice schedule and short practice segments with frequent rest periods throughout the lesson. For example, five 20-minute lessons per week may be more effective than two 30-minute lessons. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion about practice.)

As a water safety instructor, you influence the learning process by setting goals, encouraging practice, and providing feedback and motivation. However, the focus must be on the children's learning rather than on your teaching. Observe what movements come naturally for the child, incorporating appropriate teaching methods to help the child develop swimming abilities based on his or her natural abilities. Keep the basic objectives of breath control, relaxing and body position in mind as you help parents understand what their children are doing as it relates to propelling themselves through the water.

The Parent and Child Aquatics course requires a parent to participate in the water with each child. In your role as a water safety instructor, you are more of a facilitator of the parent-child interaction than

the child's instructor. Your job is to guide, instruct and provide positive, corrective feedback to help parents as their children explore the aquatic world. The best learning takes place when the environment is relaxed and comfortable, and the instructor, parent and child have developed an environment of trust for learning.

Keep the following in mind and encourage the parents to do the same:

- Make sure the child is calm and happy before entering the water.
- Do not be afraid to take a step back and work on skills that have already been introduced with some measure of success.
- Demonstrate basic skills accurately and often.
- Limit the amount of time spent discussing skills. Help parents to keep their children on task by giving them short one- and two-word cues to use.
- Since children learn by playing games, use songs and rhymes to teach a concept.
- Provide frequent breaks to allow the child to absorb what he or she is learning.
- Observe the movements that come naturally to the child and allow him or her to develop skills based on his or her own natural preferences (e.g., breaststroke kick as opposed to flutter kick, or a simultaneous arm stroke as opposed to an alternating one).
- Observe the depth of water that the child is willing to explore. A willingness to explore deeper water can be an indication of the child's confidence level and readiness to try something new.
- Never force a child to perform a skill; this only delays the child's readiness to try additional skills. Allow the child to progress at his or her own pace through the skills. If a child resists trying a new skill, let the child return to what he or she perceives as being a safe activity for the time being.
- Praise effort regardless of the level of success.
- Maintain appropriate eye contact as much as possible. For example, maintain eye contact with the parent when giving directions. In addition, the parent should gain and maintain eye contact with the child before working on the skills.
- Always end the lesson with a game or activity that is enjoyable, and make sure the child is calm and happy before leaving the pool.
- Remind parents to practice at home (for example, splashing and blowing nose bubbles in the tub or sink). Children who are allowed to play at bath time often have less trouble with a new water experience.

Be alert to signs that a child may not be ready to try the skills you are presenting (such as asking for restroom breaks repeatedly). Always be ready to return to an activity that is less stressful for the child and to come back later when the child is calm again. If the child is not ready to progress to the next skill or if the child moves, behaves, learns or communicates differently than his peers, try these suggestions:

- Take a step back to a "safer" skill that the child enjoys.
- Try a "me first, then you" approach where you or the parent performs the skill, then the child mimics the action.

- Try a “my turn, your turn” approach, where the child gets to choose what he wants to do, then you get to choose the next task. Sometimes alternating comfortable with challenging skills will allow the child to progress without as much anxiety.
- Use picture boards to show the progression so the child sees and understands what is coming next.
- Use a favorite toy, superhero character or song to enhance motivation to learn the skill. For example, demonstrate the skill using a favorite doll or superhero character, or have the child demonstrate the skill using the toy.
- Turn the skills into games or sing songs and recite rhymes.

## Working with Fearful Participants

Young children may be reluctant to approach the pool or go into the water. Parents can take steps to familiarize the child with the pool environment before the lessons begin, increasing the child’s comfort level and confidence. Advise parents to use the following strategies, and repeat them on the first day of the session as needed:

- Visit the pool for a playdate before taking lessons.
- Allow the child to observe other children playing from a safe distance.
- Walk around the deck and look at the steps, ramp, and ladders and play equipment, and talk about how much fun it might be to get in and play.
- If there are pool toys, let the child dip them in the water to see what happens.
- If the child will allow it, sit at the edge of the pool with the child between your legs and let the child dangle his or her feet in the water.
- Define the limits of the activity area using language the child can understand and relate to, such as “We will get to do lessons right over here. See the steps and railings? We get to hang on or sit down any time we want to.”

The level of comfort displayed by the parent around the water can affect the child. For example, when a parent is fearful, the child may perceive that fear and adopt similar fearful behavior. A parent who cannot blow bubbles with the mouth and nose, cannot submerge fully with the eyes open or who struggles with floating, gliding and recovering to a standing position may not be the best candidate for teaching a child to do the same. You may be able to assist the fearful parent so the child still receives the full benefits of the class (see Chapter 2, Box 2-3 for tips on assisting participants who are fearful around water). In some cases, you may need to recommend that another caregiver who is more comfortable and confident in the water attend the class with the child.

When a child is fearful, you need to help reduce that fear. Being consistent in your lessons—such as by starting and ending each lesson in the same way—helps the child become familiar with the routine. Familiarity is comforting and can promote willingness to participate. To reduce the impact of learned fears, plan carefully and give a lot of positive reinforcement. Children enjoy the water more when they can learn at their own pace, experience success, practice repeatedly and receive praise for their efforts. For more information about understanding and working with fearful children, see Chapter 5.

## Helping Participants Achieve the Major Goals of the Course

### Adjusting to the water

Water is wet, colder than the shower or bath water and can get into the eyes. It can also be difficult to walk in (buoyancy affects balance). Some may think that adjusting to the water for swim lessons is purely physical. However, adjusting to the water also includes an emotional adjustment with a readiness to participate in skill development.

Children who move, learn, communicate or behave differently may be overwhelmed with even the simplest progressions, such as entering the water. For these children, break down water adjustment skills to help reduce fear and resistance and increase independence and perceived control over the new experience:

- Fill a small wash tub half full with water and place it on the deck as close to the pool as the child will allow. Use favorite toys to splash, paddle and move the water around in the wash tub. Experiment with washing the face and hands and using kitchen utensils to scoop water and pour it out or pour it on body parts.
- Gradually move the wash tub closer to the pool water (a distance that the child can tolerate without anxiety) and let the child play in the tub.
- If possible, get a small plastic pool and fill it with a few inches of water. Let the parent sit in the pool, inviting the child to sit on the parent's lap or play in the water. If there is a sloped entry, gradually move the plastic pool closer to the ramp or slope and invite the child to come out and sit on the slope or deck with the parent.
- If the child has weak trunk muscles, have the parent place the child between his or her legs, allowing the child to play in the comfort and safety of the support.
- Invite the child to walk around the play area, to sit and kick the legs (with or without assistance), all with the support of the parent.
- Alternatively, place a flow-through mat on the deck at a safe distance from the pool. Place toys on the mat that will allow the child to explore the water (such as balls, sponges, watering cans, cup measures and spoons). Move the mat closer to the water until the child can reach into the pool to fill the toys with water.

When the child can work through these activities without too much trouble, he or she will be ready to enter the water (with or without assistance).

### Entering the water

Before participants enter the water, point out the characteristics of the pool and the teaching area (such as water depth and temperature, and methods for entering and exiting the pool, such as steps, ladders and ramps). This helps to increase participants' comfort level and confidence.

Some children need to be introduced to the water slowly. Advise parents to take their time and not force their children to progress faster than they are comfortable. If necessary, repeat each water adjustment skill several times at the start of several lessons until children are used to getting wet and are ready to enter the water.

Every pool is different and has different entries. Encourage participants to practice walking up and down step or ramp entries rather than ladders. For children who are not ambulatory, show parents

how to simulate walking the steps to help improve lower body strength and balance. Also have parents and children try different ways of entering the pool, such as zero-depth entries. This allows skills to be transferred to other venues that may not have the same entry options that are available at the current facility.

When practicing entry skills, avoid submersion until the child is ready. Infants and young children should enter the water only on the parent's cue. The parent should hold the child to prevent him from slipping, falling backward or fully submerging.

## **Experiencing buoyancy**

Water's buoyancy affects the ability to balance. Parents and children, when able, should practice walking from knee-deep water to chest-deep water and learn to manage balance independently. Practicing vertical balance with or without assistance lays the foundation for swimming, which requires a change from a standing position to a prone or supine floating position. When the child begins to relax in chest-deep water (with or without assistance), he is likely ready to try floating in a horizontal position on the front and on the back.

## **Preparing for submersions**

Breath control is a vital skill that prepares the child for submersion. Teaching a child how to avoid swallowing water or inhaling it through the nose greatly increases the chances of successful submersions. A variety of activities can be used to help teach breath control and increase readiness for submersion. Developmentally, children between the ages of 9 and 12 months should be capable of learning to blow bubbles and hold their breath. A child demonstrates readiness for this skill progression when he or she accepts water being splashed on his or her face or poured over his or her head. Blowing through the mouth helps improve oral motor control and keeps the child from swallowing the water. Children should also be taught to blow bubbles through their nose, which helps prepare them to learn bobbing and rhythmic breathing without getting water in the nose. If the child does not learn this critical skill, he or she will experience "nose burn" and cough as water goes from the nose into the throat.

## **Learning submersions**

All submersions must be voluntary on the part of the child. Crying, sputtering, coughing, choking or vomiting are indications that the child is not ready to submerge. Advise parents that each child's readiness to try submersion is different and they should not worry if their child is "behind" others in the class. Caution parents never to force children to perform a skill because this only delays their readiness to try additional skills.

When a child is ready to learn submersions, teach the parent how to prepare the child for the submersion and how to avoid letting water enter the child's mouth and nose. Have the parent take a breath with the child and exaggerate loudly when inhaling. Watch the child closely. At this level, children should not submerge more than 3 times per lesson.

## **Exiting the water**

When the child exits the water, emphasize the need for the parent to always maintain supervision and be in a position to assist the child if he or she starts to slip on the steps, stairs or ladder. Also, be sure that the child does not run away from the parent, which could result in a slip, fall or injury.

If the pool has ladders, teach children how to exit from the ladder. Exiting using the ladder helps improve strength, balance and coordination and is an important skill to learn because there may be situations where a ladder is the only form of safe exit from a pool or body of water. Keep in mind that this skill requires mobility, upper body strength and motor planning. Use the following as a guide for teaching how to exit using the ladder:

- Have the parent stand behind the child and provide enough assistance to allow maximum independence.
- Encourage the parent to ascend one rung behind the child to support any effort and to prevent the child from falling.
- If the child has upper body strength to pull but lacks leg strength, suggest the parent provide support to assist the upward climb.
- If the child has a weaker side (for example, due to cerebral palsy or amputation), have the parent support or assist the child's grip and leg extension on the weaker side.

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## THE PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS COURSE

The foundation of the Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics is a set of basic skills that help prepare infants and young children to become comfortable in the water so they are willing and ready to learn to swim. In addition to orienting young children to the water, Parent and Child Aquatics provides parents with information and techniques to create safer aquatic experiences for their children.

### Skills to Be Taught to Children

In Parent and Child Aquatics, children learn basic skills, including adjusting to the water environment; showing comfort maintaining a front or back position in the water (assisted or unassisted); and demonstrating breath control (i.e., blowing bubbles or voluntarily fully submerging underwater).

Level 1 and Level 2 skills and activities are highlighted in the Parent and Child Course Outlines and detailed in the pages that follow. These skills should be repeated throughout the lessons. Organize each lesson similarly to create a familiar environment for children. You can find a sample block plan and sample lesson plan for each level on the Learn-to-Swim page of Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)).

Not every level includes skills in all of the categories, nor is it necessary to introduce the skills in the specific order of categories. Young children do not learn skills in a single linear progression. When helping children acquire skills at more advanced levels, you may need to let them practice the skills at lower levels until they are more proficient and comfortable. Be sure, however, to integrate water safety skills in each lesson of each level, so parents learn what they can do to be safe in, on and around the water.

Terms used in this instructor's manual to explain the completion requirements for each level are summarized in Box 7-1. In Parent and Child Aquatics, the term "explore" is used frequently in the level outlines. This is because the intent is for children to experiment and to try different approaches to accomplishing skills, building on what comes naturally. At this point, specific performance criteria are not important. However, what is important in Parent and Child Aquatics is that children become

### Box 7-1. Terms Used to Describe Completion Requirements at Each Level

- **Explore**—the participant attempts various ways to perform the skill; the skill may or may not be done with support but is always done with close supervision
- **Support**—the participant performs a skill with support provided by a parent, an instructor or a flotation device
- **Assistance**—the participant performs a skill unsupported, but may begin and end the skill with support from a parent or instructor
- **Demonstrate**—the participant performs a skill
- **Independently**—the participant demonstrates a skill without support or assistance, but still with close supervision
- **Show and tell**—the instructor provides information using push, pull and balance techniques with the expectation that participants are engaged, answering questions or providing responses that indicate that they understand the concepts presented

comfortable in the water and acquire a foundation for learning how to swim. As children attempt new skills, praise them for even the slightest accomplishments.

When a child is comfortable performing the skills in Level 1, he or she can move to Level 2.

### Level 1

The goals of Level 1 are to provide experiences and activities for children so they:

- Learn to ask for permission before entering the water.
- Learn how to enter and exit the water safely.
- Feel comfortable in the water.
- Practice blowing bubbles.
- Explore submerging to the mouth, nose, eyes and completely.
- Explore buoyancy on the front and back position.
- Change body position in the water.
- Learn how to play safely in the water.
- Experience wearing a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.

### Level 2

Level 2 skills build on the skills learned in Level 1. The goals of Level 2 are to provide experiences and activities for children so they:

- Understand the need for adult supervision around water.
- Learn more ways to enter and exit the water safely.
- Explore submerging in a rhythmic pattern.
- Glide on the front and back with assistance.
- Perform a rudimentary stroke using combined arm and leg actions on the front and back with assistance.

- Change body position in the water.
- Experience wearing a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket in the water.

## **Skills to Be Taught to Parents**

Start each lesson with a parent orientation. During this time, describe the goals of the lesson and what parents can expect. Ensure that parents learn and practice the following skills throughout the lessons:

- How to properly supervise children and maintain safe behavior in and around the water
- How to enter and exit the water, with strict enforcement of the rule that a child must get adult permission before entering any body of water
- How and when to use holding and support techniques
- How to determine the child’s readiness to try basic skills
- Proper submersion techniques (supported and unsupported)
- How to use cues, and the importance of consistency in delivering cues
- How to help the child learn and practice skills appropriate for the child’s age, current developmental level and ability
- How to play and the importance of playing as a way to learn
- How to select, properly fit and use a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket
- Basic water safety information, such as the dangers of playing around suction fittings and drains
- Basic rescue skills, such as reaching and throwing assists



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## PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS LEVEL 1

Level 1 introduces basic skills to parents and children. Parents learn how to safely work with their child in the water, including how to appropriately support and hold their child in the water and how to prepare and encourage their child to participate fully and try the skills. Children receive an introduction to basic skills that lay a foundation for learning to swim. In addition, parents are introduced to several water safety topics.

# PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS LEVEL 1 OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pool toys, such as floating rubber animals</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for parents and children</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Goals	References
Holding and Support Techniques		
Face-to-face positions		
■ Hug position	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 3
■ Chin support	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 3
■ Shoulder support on front	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 3
Back-to-chest positions		
■ Cuddle position	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 3
Side-to-side positions		
■ Hip straddle	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 3
■ Shoulder support on side	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 3
Working with the Child		
Cueing	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit		
Getting wet		
■ Getting wet with toys	Explore	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
■ Getting wet kicking	Explore	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Water entry		
■ Enter water by lifting in	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
■ Enter water by walking in	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Exploring the pool		
■ Out-of-water exploration	Explore	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
■ In-water exploration	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Water exit		
■ Exit water by lifting out	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
■ Exit water by walking out	Demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
■ Exit water using a ladder	Demonstrate (child)	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1

Skills	Completion Goals	References
<b>Breath Control</b>		
Blow bubbles on the surface	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Blow bubbles with mouth and nose submerged	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Underwater exploration	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Submerge mouth, nose and eyes	Explore, with support or independently	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
<b>Buoyancy on Front</b>		
Front glide	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
<b>Buoyancy on Back</b>		
Back glide	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Back float	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
<b>Changing Direction</b>		
Roll from front to back	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Roll from back to front	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Passing from instructor to parent	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Leg action on front	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Leg action on back	Explore, with support	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
<b>Water Safety</b>		
The importance of wearing a life jacket	Discuss (parent) and Demonstrate (parent and child)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR	Discuss (parent) and Demonstrate (parent and child)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Basic water safety rules	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
General water safety around the home	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Recreational water illnesses	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Sun safety	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2

LWT, Longfellow’s WHALE Tales; PCA, Parent and Child Aquatics; SWS, *Swimming and Water Safety*; WSIM, *Water Safety Instructor’s Manual*.

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# PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS LEVEL 1 SKILLS

## Holding and Support Techniques

When teaching parents holding and support techniques, also teach the parent to move so that the child gets used to the sensation of moving through the water.

### Face-to-Face Positions

Use these positions to introduce participants to skills on their front.

#### Hug position

Use this position for water adjustment and for teaching and practicing kicking on the front.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes up to the shoulders and the upper part of the child's chest.
2. The child rests his or her head on the parent's shoulder and places the arms loosely around the parent's neck or over the shoulders.
3. The child extends the legs while the parent supports the legs from underneath. The parent may manipulate the kick in this position.

#### Chin support

Use this position to practice kicking on the front and bubble blowing.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes up to the shoulders and the child's chin.
2. The parent holds the child under the upper part of the chest and shoulders with his or her fingers and palms. Make sure the child's chin rests on the heels of the parent's palms so the child's face does not accidentally submerge.

#### Shoulder support on front

Use this position for water adjustment, practicing kicking on the front, the front glide, bubble blowing, underwater exploration and rolling over.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes up to the shoulders and the child's chin.
2. With arms nearly fully extended, the parent holds the child under the armpits. If the child is fearful, the parent should grasp the child underneath the arms and upper part of the chest with the thumbs up.

### Back-to-Chest Positions

Use the back-to-chest holding positions to introduce participants to skills on the back. Most children feel less confident on their backs, so introduce these positions gradually and explain to parents that they should be sure to give firm support initially. Stress to parents that they should not continue any holding position if a child becomes distressed. Letting the child keep the ears above the surface initially can help the child adjust to the position.

## Cuddle position

Use this position for back float, back glide readiness, kicking on the back and rolling over.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes up to his or her neck and the child's ears. The back of the child's head rests on the parent's shoulder, with the child's cheek or side of the head touching or right next to the parent's cheek.
2. The parent places one hand on the child's lower back and the other on the chest. The child's legs point away from the parent. The parent holds the child in a horizontal position by "sandwiching" the child between his or her hands.

## Side-to-Side Positions

Use these positions for water adjustment, bubble blowing, kicking on the front, front glide, front float and passing skills.

### Hip straddle

Use this position for water adjustment, bubble blowing, and entry and exit.

1. Have the child face the parent and straddle the parent's hip. The parent supports the child's back with his or her arm by reaching around to hold the child's upper thigh. With the other hand, the parent may hold the child's hand.
2. The parent positions him- or herself so the water level is appropriate for the child. If the child is cold or afraid of the water, have the parent begin by immersing the lower part of the child's body. As the child becomes comfortable, the parent gradually immerses him- or herself and the child until the water reaches the child's chest.

### Shoulder support on side

Use this position for water adjustment, bubble blowing, kicking on the front, front glide, front float and passing.

1. The parent positions him- or herself comfortably so the water line is between his or her waist or shoulders and the child's chin or neck. This position gives maximum mobility in a support position.
2. The parent and the child face the same direction. The parent holds the child at the armpits, keeping the child's head up. The parent should be able to see the child's face. The parent can gently rest an arm or elbow against the child's buttocks and legs to keep them underwater.
3. For more support, the parent can use this same arm to encircle the child by placing his or her palm on the child's chest. The parent's other arm should support the child from the back near the armpit. As the child becomes more confident and skilled, the parent can hold the child with both hands on the waist.



**Teaching Tips:** *When using holding and support techniques with a child who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, keep the following in mind:*

- *Changes in muscle tone and/or spasticity may change the way the child needs to be held or positioned for a skill. It is best to defer to the parent and child to establish modified positions that still provide safety and security and maintain trust.*
- *Try to use modifications that allow for freedom of movement, especially of limbs with better functional movements.*

- *Have the parent maintain eye contact with the child to optimize communication and help reduce anxiety.*
  - *Have the parent provide more support in the beginning and then slowly and gradually disengage from support, if possible.*
  - *Whenever you teach a new skill, have the parent return to providing maximum support and safe positioning until the child begins to relax and attempt the skill without much prompting.*
  - *Keep the child moving and add swinging and swaying movements to help develop the anti-gravity muscles essential for posture and trunk control.*
- 

## Working with the Child

### Cueing

Cueing is used to prepare children for upcoming skills. Teach parents to use cue words, such as “ready, set, go” or “1, 2, 3,” as each skill is learned and to repeat them each time the skill is practiced. Teach children to enter the water only with permission from the parent and when cued to do so. Cue the children the same way each time.

1. Explain and/or demonstrate the expectation. Say, “We’re going to blow bubbles” or “Show me how you blow bubbles,” then blow bubbles.
2. Say the cue words. Say, “ready, set, go” or “1, 2, 3.” Be consistent with the cadence each time. If it is a breath-control skill, follow the cue words with an exaggerated breath to encourage the child to do the same.
3. Have the child perform the skill.
4. Always praise the child for even the slightest effort or accomplishment.



**Teaching Tip:** *Children who move, learn, communicate or behave differently may benefit from being given a consistent short period of time (for example, 3 to 4 seconds) to respond to cues. Give praise for any positive response. If there is no response from the child, repeat the demonstration and keep the response time constant. If, after several attempts, there is no response, consider trying a different cueing style.*

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## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

### Getting Wet



**Instructor's Note:** *Some children need to go through the process of getting wet at the start of several lessons until they are used to the water temperature and getting wet. Advise parents to take their time and not to force a child to get in the water before he or she is used to it.*

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## Getting wet with toys

1. The parent sits next to the child at the edge of the pool, providing support as needed.
2. The parent and child dip toys, washcloths, watering cans or cupped hands into the pool and sprinkle water onto each other's legs, arms and trunk.
3. The parent dips a hand into the pool and sprinkles water onto the child's head and face.



### **Teaching Tips:**

- *Make it fun by singing a familiar song, but change the words to match the actions, such as "This is the way we wash our ..."*
- *Make use of the child's imagination and have the child create different types of rain patterns while pouring water, such as making it rain softly, like a sprinkle, or hard, like in a thunderstorm.*
- *If the child struggles to play imaginary games, use toys that have personal meaning for the child and give suggestions to get the child involved in imaginary play.*
- *Always have at least two alternate activities ready, just in case the primary activity does not fully engage participants.*
  - *Children with autism spectrum disorder often do not engage with others. Providing social interaction through games gives them the opportunity to learn to share, take turns and be part of a group.*
- *A child with a disability that affects the abdominal or spinal muscles may need extra support. Have the parent sit the child on his or her lap and let the child reach for toys sitting to the side. This improves the muscles that contribute to core stability and helps the child develop control over reaching.*

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## Getting wet kicking

1. The parent sits next to the child at the edge of the pool, providing support as needed.
2. The parent kicks the water and encourages the child to imitate the behavior.



**Instructor's Note:** *Some children may not be able to reach the water with their legs from the side of the pool. If this is the case, skip this activity.*

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### **Teaching Tips:**

- *Have the parent make use of the child's imagination by encouraging the child to create waves of differing heights by kicking softer and harder.*
    - *If the child does not have the strength or motor ability to imitate the kicking, have the parent reach behind the child's knees and gently manipulate the kick. Remind the parent to praise any attempt the child makes to help his or her efforts.*
-

## Water Entry



**Safety Note:** A child should enter the water only on the parent's cue. The parent must keep a careful grip on the child to prevent the child from slipping, falling backward or submerging the head.



**Instructor's Note:** Remind parents to practice entry skills without allowing the child to fully submerge until the child is ready.

### Enter water by lifting in

1. Either the parent or instructor maintains contact with the child while the parent enters the water in one of the following ways:
  - Using the steps
  - From a sitting position on the deck
  - Rolling over onto the stomach and sliding into the water
2. The parent stands in the water in front of the child, holding the child under the armpits (Figure 7-1).
3. The parent cues the child, lifts the child into the water to chin level and then holds the child in the hip straddle position.



**Figure 7-1** Lifting in.

### Enter water by walking in

1. The parent holds the child using the hip straddle position and enters the pool using the steps or ramp. The parent talks calmly or sings to the child as they enter the pool.
2. The parent walks or bends down to a depth that is appropriate for the child and the skill to be learned.

## Exploring the Pool

### Out-of-water exploration

1. The parent and child walk around the deck area (before getting wet) to familiarize the child with the pool area.
2. The child observes different depths and parts of the pool, such as steps and ladders, with close parental supervision.

### In-water exploration

1. The parent uses a holding position that is comfortable for the child, such as a face-to-face or side-to-side position.
2. The parent and child travel around the teaching area. The parent talks calmly or sings to the child as they travel.



**Instructor's Note:** During in-water exploration, have the parent keep the child's shoulders in the water as much as possible to keep the child from getting chilled.

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## Water Exit

### Exit water by lifting out

1. The parent cues the child, then lifts the child from the pool and sits him or her on the deck next to the ladder.
2. The instructor maintains contact with the child while the parent exits the water using the ladder or by lifting him- or herself onto the deck.



**Instructor's Note:** A child with a disability that affects the abdominal or spinal muscles may not have the core strength to sit upright on the deck. If the child is not comfortable being supported by you while the parent exits the pool, have the parent walk out of the pool while holding the child in the hip straddle position instead.

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### Exit water by walking out

The parent holds the child using the hip straddle position and exits the pool using steps or a ramp.

### Exit water using a ladder—independently

1. The child is near the ladder, either supported by the parent or with the parent within arm's reach.
2. The instructor demonstrates how to exit the pool using the ladder.
3. The parent stands behind the child as he or she exits the pool using the ladder. The parent encourages and praises the child for imitating the instructor's behavior.

## Breath Control

### Blow bubbles on the surface—with support

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face position, with the child's chin level to the surface of the water.
2. Making direct eye contact with the child, the parent cues the child, then blows bubbles, encouraging the child to imitate the behavior.



**Instructor's Note:** As an alternative to having the parent hold the child in a face-to-face position, have the child lie down on the steps or entry ramp on a flow-through mat and practice blowing bubbles through the mouth without getting the nose in the water.

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### **Teaching Tips:**

*Note: All of the following suggestions also work well for children who move, learn, communicate or behave differently. The main difference will be how much physical (manual) support the parent will need to provide to help the child feel safe during the activity.*

- *Have the parent place a lightweight object (such as a colorful toy or small ball) in front of the child and encourage the child to move the object along the surface of the water by blowing it.*
- *If the child is having trouble understanding what he or she is supposed to do:*
  - *Have the parent take a breath, hold it for about 1 second and then blow gently on the child's cheek.*
  - *Next, have the parent take a breath, hold it for about 1 second and then blow bubbles or blow on the object to cause it to move along the surface of the water.*
  - *Have the parent repeat this pattern several times until the child understands.*
- *The following activities can be done at the pool during lessons, as well as at home:*
  - *Cut up a foam noodle that has a hole through the middle and let the child practice using it like a straw to blow bubbles on the surface of the water. Send the foam noodle piece home with the parent so the child can practice during playtime in the tub.*
  - *Pretend that your fingers are candles and blow each one out individually.*
  - *Scoop water into your hands and blow the water out of your hands. Next, have the child blow the water out of your hands.*

## **Blow bubbles with mouth and nose submerged—with support**

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face or side-to-side position.
2. The parent blows bubbles through the nose, with the mouth and nose submerged, then encourages the child to imitate the behavior.



**Safety Note:** *Make sure the parent keeps the child from swallowing water and takes care to avoid fully submerging the child.*



### **Teaching Tips:**

- *Have the parent blow bubbles slowly and gently through the nose and hum when exhaling, as an example to the child. The air moves out through the nose when humming and prevents water from entering the nose.*
- *If the child is having trouble understanding what he or she is supposed to do, try the following:*
  - *Have the parent demonstrate how to close the lips (as when making the m, b or p sound) and have the child imitate the action.*
  - *Have the parent ask the child to pretend that his or her hands are an imaginary tissue. Demonstrating close to the water so that bubbles are created by blowing through the nose, the parent blows into his or her “tissue” and encourages the child to do the*

same. Next, the parent submerges and demonstrates blowing nose bubbles, and then challenges the child to do the same.

- Have the parent demonstrate humming (starting with one of the letters) near the surface of the water, and then challenge the child to submerge the nose by either humming or blowing into an imaginary tissue with the lips closed.



**Instructor's Note:** When the child is able to blow nose bubbles 3 to 5 times without swallowing or sniffing in water, he or she may be ready to practice submersion.

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### Underwater exploration—with support

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face or side-to-side position.
2. The parent submerges an object, such as a toy.
3. The parent begins humming or blowing nose bubbles and then submerges the mouth, nose and eyes while looking toward the toy. The parent encourages the child to imitate the behavior and look for the toy.



**Teaching Tip:** Put different color objects on the bottom of the pool. Encourage the child to look at a particular object. If the pool is shallow and the child can walk around independently, challenge him or her to blow nose bubbles and reach to recover the toy.

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### Submerge mouth, nose and eyes—with support

1. The parent holds the child using the shoulder support and moves backward slowly so the child is gliding forward on the front.
2. The parent makes eye contact with the child to ensure the child is focused and ready.
3. The parent says the cue words, inhales loudly, begins humming or blowing nose bubbles and then submerges the face to finish exhaling in the water. The parent repeats this action 2 or 3 times to provide an example to the child.
4. The parent tells the child it is his or her turn to try.
5. The parent cues the child, gently pulls the child closer to his or her body along the surface of the water while inhaling loudly and then holds a breath.
6. As the child draws near, the parent quickly and gently blows on the child's face about a half second before the child submerges. This will make most children flinch and hold their breath.
7. The parent slightly loosens his or her grip (while still keeping his or her hands on the child) and allows the child to submerge to the eyes or just below the surface of the water for about 2 seconds.
8. The parent brings the child up gently and provides encouragement and praise. (Remind the parent to keep the child's shoulders in the water after the submersion.)



**Safety Note:** Do not let children submerge more than 3 times per lesson.

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### **Instructor's Notes:**

- *Be alert to signals such as crying, sputtering or coughing. These signals indicate the child may not be ready to submerge. Warn parents never to force a child to do a skill; this only delays the child's readiness and willingness to try additional skills.*
- *If the pool has a ramp or zero-depth entry, the following progression can be used to introduce children to submersion. This progression involves more parent–child contact and therefore is useful for children who need extra security.*
  - *Have the parent lie down on his or her back on the ramp or zero-depth entry where the water covers the torso.*
  - *Place the child on the parent's chest so they are face-to-face. Have the child try to submerge with the parent.*
  - *Have the parent slowly move into deeper water and/or move his or her arms down under the child's body and extend the hold away from the body.*
  - *When the child can tolerate this position and willingly attempts eye submersion, have the parent try submersion using the shoulder support position.*
- *A “my turn, your turn” approach can help children with developmental disabilities or autism spectrum disorder progress to practicing submersions. You may need to let the child choose a “safe” activity, and then you or the parent chooses the submersion skill.*

## **Buoyancy on Front**

Teach parents to hold the child gently. This allows the child to experience his or her own buoyancy as much as possible.

### **Front glide—with support**

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face position. The child's face may be in or out of the water.
2. The parent travels backward and talks calmly or sings to the child as they move around the teaching area (Figure 7-2).



**Figure 7-2** Front glide—with support.



**Teaching Tip:** *Have the parent take an exaggerated breath, put his or her face in the water and then blow bubbles. It is not necessary to tell the child to do the same. Eventually the child will try to imitate the parent. Be sure the child does not take repeated exaggerated breaths.*

## **Buoyancy on Back**

Positioning a child on his or her back in the water often causes the child to become anxious because the child loses sight of the parent. Even though the parent is still in contact with the child, the child may feel anxious. Additionally, cold water in the ears can lead to an “out of control” feeling due to the cold

water's effects on the vestibular system. Encourage the parent to begin slowly, using a vertical back-to-chest position and making sure that the child is comfortable with being unable to see the parent before continuing. The parent can also help to maintain eye contact by resting his or her chin on the child's forehead. Have the parent gradually lean back to bring the child more supine while continuing to hold the child snugly to communicate continued support.

Children who have disorders that affect the vestibular system may never feel comfortable on their backs. However, several things may help to promote readiness. Ask parents to discuss the use of ear plugs with their health care provider or suggest using a thermal ear wrap to warm the water near the ears.

When the child begins to relax, the parent should loosen his or her grip on the child while still maintaining contact. This allows the child to experience his or her own buoyancy as much as possible.



### **Teaching Tips:**

- *Allow participants to practice for as long as they feel comfortable. If the child is only able to tolerate practicing for 2 seconds, then start with 2 seconds and build on that time.*
- *If losing sight of the parent causes continued anxiety for the child, use an alternative approach. Have the child straddle the parent's hips and practice leaning back as if on a seesaw or teeter-totter. Challenge the child to get his or her ears near the water. This position is also a lead-up skill to develop the ability to recover to a standing position from a back float.*

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## **Back glide—with support**

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back or back support position. The child's ears may be in or out of the water.
2. The parent moves backward, gliding the child on his or her back.



**Teaching Tip:** *If the child has abnormal muscle tone, add a swaying motion with a bit of rotation (right and left) to help reduce spasticity. Keep in mind that muscle tone can change from day to day. A child may not be able to perform the skills that he or she seemed to have mastered with the same proficiency in a previous lesson. Do not force a child with higher muscle tone through a greater range of motion than that which can be performed with ease.*

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## **Back float—with support**

1. The parent holds the child in the cuddle or the hip support on back position. The child's ears may be in or out of the water.
2. The parent talks calmly or sings to the child as they stand or move slowly around the teaching area.



**Teaching Tip:** *Have the parent ask the child to look back toward the parent's eyes while performing the back float.*

## Changing Direction

The ability to change positions and reorient oneself is a safety skill that is repeated through most of the courses of the Learn-to-Swim program. This skill requires core strength, torso control and use of the arms to provide a propulsive force. Parents begin by manipulating the child through the change of position and encouraging any attempts the child makes to assist the effort.



**Teaching Tips:** For children who have not developed core control, try these approaches to improve core strength and control:

- Have the parent practice with the child on a bed at home, placing a toy to the right or left, just out of reach and asking the child to retrieve it with the opposite hand. Encourage and assist any attempt to reach across the body to roll toward the toy.
- Have the parent bring the toy to the pool and place the child on a mat in the water to repeat the challenge.
- If there are shallow steps, have the child lie on the step and imagine that he or she is a log, rolling down to the next step. Have the parent catch the child in his or her arms as the child attempts to roll.
- Have the child practice rolling in both directions to improve core stability and body balance.

### Roll from front to back—with support

1. The parent holds the child in a support position on the front (Figure 7-3A) while moving to generate some momentum.
2. The parent cues the child, then rotates the child onto his or her back with the child's ears in or out of the water (Figure 7-3B).
3. The parent moves his or her hands to hold the child in a support position on the back (Figure 7-3C).



**Figure 7-3** Roll from front to back—with support. (A) The parent holds the child in a support position on the front, (B) rotates the child onto his or her back, (C) then holds the child in a support position on the back.

## Roll from back to front—with support

Teaching a child to roll from back to front is typically easier than teaching a child to roll from front to back because the child will willingly look over his or her shoulder and reach for a face-to-face position with the parent.

1. The parent holds the child in a support position on the back (Figure 7-4A) while moving to generate some momentum.
2. The parent cues the child, then rotates the child onto his or her stomach with the child's face out of the water (Figure 7-4B).
3. The parent moves his or her hands to hold the child in a support position on the front (Figure 7-4C).



**Figure 7-4** Roll from back to front—with support. (A) The parent holds the child in a support position on the back, (B) rotates the child onto his or her stomach, (C) then holds the child in a support position on the front.

## Swim on Front

When practicing swim on front skills, it is important for the child to enjoy the aquatic experience without fear. Incorporate talking, singing, laughing and playing into the lesson for fun. Swallowing and breathing in water can be uncomfortable and frightening, so introducing breath control skills early and practicing these skills until the child is proficient can also help make the aquatic experience more enjoyable for the child.

## Passing from instructor to parent—with support

1. The instructor holds the child in the side support position with the child's head out of water, moving forward to gain momentum (Figure 7-5A).
2. The instructor cues the child, then gently glides and releases the child to his or her parent's arms (Figure 7-5B).
  - The pass should be smooth and gentle, with the child staying at the same level in the water.

- Do not lose contact with the child; make sure the parent has made contact before letting go.
3. As the parent gains control of the child in the chest support position, the parent pulls the child to his or her chest and gives a hug and praise (Figure 7-5C).



**Figure 7-5** Passing from instructor to parent—with support. (A) The instructor holds the child in the side support position and moves forward to gain momentum. (B) The instructor releases the child to the parent's arms. (C) The parent pulls the child in to his or her chest.

### Leg action on front—with support

Have the parent place his or her hands under the child's knees with his or her thumbs on the child's calves to move the child's legs, keeping them just under the surface of the water. The parent can keep the child's legs close together and move them up and down in the flutter kicking motion, or bend the knees forward, move them apart slightly and then straight together, similar to a breaststroke kick motion. Initially, the child will choose a motion that he or she feels comfortable performing. (Watching the child's natural leg movement can offer clues as to which movement the child prefers.) The idea is to get the legs to move in any direction. Specific kicks will be taught as the child develops.

1. The parent holds the child in the hug position and moves backward.
2. The parent moves the legs in a way that is natural and comfortable for the child, either in an alternating action (such as a flutter kick) or a simultaneous action (such as a dolphin kick or breaststroke kick).
3. As the child is able to kick on his or her own, the parent moves into a face-to-face or side support position. The child's face may be in or out of the water.
4. The parent walks backward and cues the child to move the legs (Figure 7-6). As they move around the teaching area, the parent talks calmly or sings to the child.



**Figure 7-6** Leg action on front—with support.



**Instructor's Note:** If needed, the parent can move back to the hug position to help move the child's legs, and then return to the shoulder or hip support position to try again.

## Swim on Back

Encourage parents to talk, sing, laugh, play and have fun when they are practicing swim on back skills with their children. It is important for the child to enjoy the aquatic experience without fear.

### Leg action on back—with support

Have the parent place his or her hands under the child's knees with his or her thumbs on the child's shins to move the child's legs, keeping them just under the surface of the water.

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back position, adjusting the child so his or her head rests on the parent's shoulder.
2. The parent moves backward, gliding the child on his or her back while moving the child's legs in the direction that is natural and comfortable for the child.
3. The parent moves the child to the hip support on back position with the child's head in front of the parent's chest.
4. The parent moves backward, gliding the child on his or her back, and cues the child to kick his or her legs (Figure 7-7).



**Figure 7-7** Leg action on back—with support.



**Teaching Tip:** Have the child place his or hands on the stomach or hold a small flotation device or toy on the stomach until the child is comfortable with relaxing the arms to the side.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1:

- The importance of wearing a life jacket
- How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR
- Basic water safety rules
- General water safety around the home
- Recreational water illnesses
- Sun safety

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.



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## **PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS LEVEL 2**

Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2 builds on the skills introduced in Level 1. Participants improve on these skills and learn more advanced skills in Level 2. As with Level 1, water safety topics are also included in this level.

# PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS LEVEL 2 OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pool toys, such as floating rubber animals and weighted diving objects</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for parents and children</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> <li>■ Reaching equipment</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Goals	References
Holding and Support Techniques		
Face-to-face positions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hip support on front</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 3
Back-to-chest positions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hip support on back</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Back support</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Arm stroke position</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 3
Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit		
Water entry		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enter water from a seated position</li> </ul>	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enter water from a seated position—rolling over and sliding in</li> </ul>	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enter water by stepping or jumping in</li> </ul>	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enter water using steps or ramp</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Exploring the pool		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In-water exploration</li> </ul>	Explore, independently, in shallow water	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Water exit		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Exit water using side of pool</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Exit water using steps or ramp</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Exit water using a ladder</li> </ul>	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 1
Breath Control		
Underwater exploration		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Open eyes and retrieve objects below the surface</li> </ul>	Explore, with support, in shallow water	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Open eyes and retrieve submerged objects</li> </ul>	Explore, with assistance, in shallow water	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Bobbing	Explore, independently	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Goals</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Buoyancy on Front</b>		
Front glide	Demonstrate, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA2
Front glide to the wall	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA2
Front float	Demonstrate, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA2
<b>Buoyancy on Back</b>		
Back glide	Demonstrate, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Back float	Demonstrate, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<b>Changing Direction</b>		
Roll from front to back	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Roll from back to front	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Passing from instructor to parent	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Drafting with breathing	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Leg action on front—alternating or simultaneous movements	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Arm action on front—alternating or simultaneous movements	Demonstrate, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Combined arm and leg actions on front with breathing	Explore, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Leg action on back—alternating or simultaneous movements	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Arm action on back—alternating or simultaneous movements	Demonstrate, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
Combined arm and leg actions on back	Explore, with support or assistance	WSIM, Ch 7, PCA 2
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Wearing a life jacket in the water	Discuss (parent) and Demonstrate (child)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Reaching assists	Discuss/demonstrate (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Basic water safety rules review	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Safety at the beach and at the waterpark	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Water toys and their limitations	Discuss (parent)	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2

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# PARENT AND CHILD AQUATICS LEVEL 2 SKILLS

## Holding and Support Techniques

When teaching parents holding and support techniques, also teach the parent to move so the child gets used to the sensation of moving through the water.

### Face-to-Face Positions

#### Hip support on front

Use this position for back float and back glide readiness and for kicking on the back.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes to shoulder level and the child's chest.
2. The parent supports the child in a horizontal position at the hips and abdomen with both hands.

### Back-to-Chest Positions

Use these positions to introduce participants to skills on their back.

#### Hip support on back

Use this position for back float and back glide readiness and for kicking on the back.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes to neck level and the child's ears. The back of the child's head rests on the parent's shoulder, with the child's cheek or side of the head touching the parent's cheek.
2. The parent holds the child with both hands on the back to bring the child's body horizontal. The parent's exact hand position on the child's back depends on the child's ability to relax.
  - Placing the hands on the child's lower back lends the most support; placing the hands on the upper back give less support but more freedom of movement.
  - As the child becomes more comfortable, his or her legs will relax, and the child will lay his or her head back and let the ears submerge.
3. Once the child relaxes, the parent may reach down to the child's legs and manipulate the kick.

#### Back support

Use this position when the child is comfortable on his or her back and maximum freedom of movement is desired, yet support is still necessary.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so that his or her shoulders and the child's ears are in the water. The parent is positioned behind the child.
2. The parent supports the base of the child's head near the neck with one hand, placing the other hand in the middle of the child's back to lift and stabilize the child in a horizontal position, and tilts the child's head back.
3. The parent extends his or her arms to hold the child perpendicular to and away from his or her body, smoothly moving backward to help the child float to a horizontal position.

- If the child is having trouble relaxing and lifting his or her head, have the parent pull the child close and position the child's head on his or her chest or shoulder for more support. The parent places one hand in the middle of the child's back and the other hand around the child's chin or lower jaw, then gently tilts the child's head back.
- Have the parent resume the back support position when the child relaxes.



**Safety Note:** Remind parents that they should not push on the fleshy part of the child's throat.

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## Arm stroke position

Use this position to help the child explore arm movements in the water.

1. The parent braces his or her back against the side of the pool and sits on the steps or kneels on one knee in shallow water. The water comes up to shoulder level on the parent and the upper chest or armpits of the child.
2. The child sits on the parent's knee, facing away from the parent. The parent uses one arm to circle the child's chest to keep him or her upright.
3. With the other hand, the parent holds the child's wrist from underneath, with his or her hand on top of the child's hand.
4. The parent moves the child's arm in a paddling motion and encourages the child to imitate the motion with his or her other arm.
  - If necessary, the parent switches the arm he or she is using to support the child and moves the child's other arm in the paddling motion.
  - The parent can balance a more secure child on his or her knee and guide both arms in an alternating or simultaneous paddling motion.

## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

### Water Entry

Water entry can be accomplished from a seated position, by stepping or jumping in, or by using the steps or a ramp. Entering the water from a seated position can be performed with assistance or by rolling over and sliding in with assistance.

### Enter water from a seated position—with assistance

1. The child sits on the edge of the pool, with the parent standing in the water facing the child.
2. The parent grasps the child's hands, wrists, forearms or armpits.
3. The parent cues the child to push off the pool edge and then lifts the child into the water.
4. If the child is strong and coordinated enough to hold onto the wall, the parent returns the child to the side of the pool and places the child's hands on the edge of the pool wall.


## Enter water from a seated position—rolling over and sliding in—with assistance

1. The parent sits next to the child at the edge of the pool.
2. The parent rolls over onto his or her stomach, slides into the pool, then holds on to the wall.
3. The parent encourages the child to imitate the behavior (Figure 7-8).



Figure 7-8 Rolling over and sliding in—with assistance.

## Enter water by stepping or jumping in—with assistance

 **Instructor's Note:** The stepping or jumping in with assistance skill should only be taught after the child is comfortable fully submerging.


1. The parent stands in the water. The child stands with the feet at the edge of the pool. The parent stands to the side of the child.
2. The parent grasps one of the child's hands, takes an exaggerated breath to encourage the child to hold his or her breath and cues the child to step or jump straight out into the water (Figure 7-9).
3. As the child steps or jumps in, the parent allows the child to submerge.
4. The parent assists the child to the surface using the shoulder support and then helps the child return to the side of the pool.



Figure 7-9 Stepping or jumping in—with assistance.

 **Safety Note:** The child should jump straight out from the wall without turning.

- The parent should not let the child jump directly into his or her arms.
- The parent should not try to catch the child in mid-air.

 **Teaching Tips:** For children who are fearful or move, learn, communicate or behave differently, try breaking the skill down further in the following manner:

- Have the child practice jumps (e.g., frog hops) in shallow water or down a ramp.
- If steps into shallow water are available, have the child practice jumping down one step at a time.
- Let the child jump with a noodle wrapped around his or her chest into chest-deep water.

## Enter water using steps or ramp—independently

1. The child stands next to the steps or ramp.
2. The parent holds the railing, walks down the steps or ramp and then encourages the child to imitate the behavior.
3. The parent stands within arm's reach of the child to ensure his or her safety.

## Exploring the Pool

### In-water exploration—independently

Refer to Chapter 7, Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. You can vary this skill for Level 2 by having the child travel in shallow water (e.g., 1 to 3 feet, if available) by moving his or her feet along the bottom while using the pool wall for support. At the same time, the parent stands in the water within arm's reach of the child.



**Instructor's Note:** Point out the limits of the teaching area. These limits will depend on the age, height and comfort level of the children, the height and confidence level of the parents and the characteristics of the pool. If the child lacks adequate strength or coordination, provide flotation support to the child. The parent should always remain within arm's reach of the child.

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## Water Exit



**Safety Note:** Watch for children slipping on the steps, ramp or ladder or running away from their parents.

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### Exit water using side of pool—with assistance



**Instructor's Note:** Help the child as little as possible, but provide enough assistance for the child to be successful.

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1. The child grasps the edge of the pool wall.
2. The child pulls up to the elbows.
3. The child pulls up to the stomach and leans forward.
4. The child puts one knee up on the deck and uses one arm to pull him- or herself up. Then the child places the other knee on the deck and pulls him- or herself completely onto the deck.
5. The child safely stands up or sits down on the pool deck.

### Exit water using steps or a ramp—independently

1. The child grasps the railing of the steps or ramp, with the parent within arm's reach.
2. The parent moves with the child as he or she exits the pool using the steps or ramp.

### Exit water using a ladder—independently

Refer to Chapter 7, Parent and Child Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## Breath Control

### Underwater Exploration

#### Open eyes and retrieve objects below the surface—with support

1. The parent holds the child in the hip straddle position, then stoops down so the child's face is at chin level with the surface of the water.
2. The parent submerges an object, such as a toy, to a depth that allows the child to get his or her face wet while grabbing for the toy.
3. The parent encourages the child to grab for the toy.

#### Open eyes and retrieve submerged objects—with assistance

1. The child stands in chest-deep water with the parent at his or her side. If the child cannot stand, the parent holds the child, using the shoulder support on the side.
2. The parent or instructor submerges an object to a depth that requires the child to get his or her face wet while grabbing for the toy.
3. The child attempts to pick up the object while submerging.



**Teaching Tip:** Put different color objects on the bottom of the pool. Encourage the child to pick up a particular object.

### Bobbing—independently

This drill can be practiced with children who are old enough to understand and follow directions. Practice by bobbing to the mouth, then to the nose, then to the eyes and finally the entire head.

1. The child holds onto the edge of the pool wall while the parent stands in the water within arm's reach of the child (Figure 7-10).
2. On the parent's cue, the child takes a breath, submerges the mouth, nose and eyes, and blows bubbles.
3. The child returns to the surface, takes a breath and submerges again.
4. The child repeats this action and bobs rhythmically, 1 breath about every 2 or 3 seconds. Start with 2 bobs and build on the number of bobs.



Figure 7-10 Bobbing—independently.

### Buoyancy on Front

Buoyancy impacts balance in horizontal (floating or swimming) as well as vertical (standing) positions. To help manage balance independently, the child can practice walking from knee-deep to chest-deep water. Once the child begins to accept and relax in chest-deep water (with or without assistance), he or she is likely ready to try floating in a horizontal position on the front and on the back.



### **Teaching Tips:**

- *A gradual sloped entry is ideal for experiencing buoyancy in an upright position. If the facility does not have a gradual sloped entry, you can facilitate vertical balance in the water by using a foam noodle to support vertical posture. For a larger child, use two noodles to set up a modified walker.*
  - *For children who have developmental disabilities, walking in shallow water (with or without assistance) helps develop leg strength and core balance that will provide the foundation for learning to swim. Spend time each lesson walking through shallow water, climbing steps, reaching for objects and changing direction to facilitate overall body balance.*
- 

## **Front glide—with support or assistance**

### ***With support***

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face position.
2. The parent positions a flotation device (a swim bar or foam noodle) under the child's armpits so it supports the child.
3. The parent maintains a secure hold on the flotation device and walks backward.
4. The parent cues the child, then releases the flotation device, allowing the child to glide between the parent's outstretched arms using the flotation device.
5. The parent resumes support by grasping the flotation device, the child's shoulders or armpits, or both.

### ***With assistance***



**Safety Note:** *Because the parent will be releasing the support, introduce this skill and the ones that follow only after the child is comfortable submerging his or face in the water.*

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1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face position and moves backward to generate some momentum. The child extends the arms to the front.
  2. The parent makes eye contact with the child, makes sure that the child is focused and ready, cues the child, then gently pulls the child closer on the surface.
  3. The parent releases support for about 2 seconds while continuing to move backward so the child moves forward, gliding freely between the parent's outstretched arms.
  4. The parent resumes assistance by grasping the child's shoulders or armpits.
- 



**Teaching Tip:** *For a child who is fearful or moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, use a flotation device, such as a flow-through mat, to practice the prone position.*

- *Have the child stretch out on the mat in a prone position. Have the parent gently pull the mat around the play area.*
  - *Once the child can stretch out without flexing the hips during this activity, move to a face-to-face position using a swim bar or noodle.*
  - *If the child reverts back to flexing the hips into a ball, return to the mat for more security and control. Repeat the progression until the child is able to maintain a prone position.*
-

## Front glide to the wall—with assistance

Children need to know how to get to the wall and hold on for safety. Practice this activity with children who have enough strength and coordination to hold on to the wall unassisted and glide unassisted. If the child cannot glide unassisted, the parent should not release support.

1. The parent holds the child in the shoulder support position on the side (Figure 7-11A). The parent and child stand in the water about 2 to 3 body lengths away from the pool wall, facing the pool wall. The parent should be in a position to see the child's face.
2. The parent cues the child, then moves the child forward on the surface to gain momentum.
3. The parent gently releases the child and allows him or her to glide in the prone position unassisted to the pool wall (Figure 7-11B).
4. The parent secures the child's hand to the edge of the pool wall (Figure 7-11C).



**Figure 7-11** Front glide to the wall—with assistance. (A) The parent holds the child in the shoulder support position on the side, (B) releases the child toward the pool wall, and (C) secures the child's hand to the edge of the pool.



### **Safety Notes:**

- *Be sure the child is able to hold onto the wall for a few seconds at a time unassisted before practicing this skill.*
- *Watch for the child swallowing water or getting water up the nose. If the child cries, coughs or shows discomfort, he or she is not ready to practice this skill.*
- *If the parent is providing support, remind the parent to push the child toward the wall, not into the wall.*

**Teaching Tips:**

- *If the child needs assistance on the approach to the wall, have the parent put one hand under the child's stomach and gently push the child toward the wall. (If the parent helps with two hands, the child will likely continue to depend on the parent for help. By using one hand, the parent helps the child make it to the wall without the child realizing that he or she is being helped.) Once the child reaches the wall, the parent can remove his or her hand and allow the child to submerge naturally. Most children will instinctively reach up and grab the wall. If the child does not reach up to grab the wall after submerging, have the parent help by gently bringing the child up and securing the hands to the wall.*
  - *For a child who lacks core and grip strength, have the child practice monkey walking on the wall to establish a good grip.*
- 

**Front float—with support or assistance****With support**

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face position with the child's face close enough to almost touch the water, but not in the water.
  2. The parent walks backward slowly just enough to allow the child's legs to float up to the surface. The parent talks calmly or hums while supporting the child.
- 



**Instructor's Note:** *If the child is relaxed, the legs will float up to the surface. If the child is not relaxed, the child will try to stand and rest the feet on the parent's legs or torso.*

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**Teaching Tip:** *If there is a zero-depth entry or shallow steps, practice the prone position on the slope where the child can experience an extended torso. Or try placing the child on a floating mat and pulling the mat around the practice area.*

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**Safety Note:** *Head and neck control are needed to protect the airway. If a child lacks the necessary head and neck control, it is not safe to practice this skill.*

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**With assistance**

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on front or shoulder support position with the child's face in or out of the water.
  2. The parent walks backward just enough to let the child's legs float up.
  3. The parent makes eye contact with the child, cues the child and briefly releases support so the child moves forward slightly, free-floating between the parent's outstretched arms with the face in the water.
  4. The parent resumes support by grasping the child's shoulders or armpits.
-

## Buoyancy on Back

### Back glide—with support or assistance

#### ***With support***

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back or back support position.
2. The parent places a flotation device on the child's torso and tells the child to grasp it so it supports the child.
3. The parent cues the child, walks backward and glides the child on his or her back.

#### ***With assistance***

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back or back support position. The child relaxes the arms to the side or places the hands on the stomach.
2. The parent walks backward with the child.
3. On gaining momentum, the parent cues the child and briefly releases support so the child glides freely between the parent's outstretched arms.
  - When releasing support, the parent removes the hand from under the child's back.
  - When the child becomes comfortable and kicks while on his or her back, the parent can remove the hand from under the child's head for a few moments at a time.
4. The parent resumes support by placing his or her hands underneath the child's back.



***Instructor's Note:*** Vary this skill by having the child hold onto the side of the pool, place his or her feet against the wall, then release his or her hands from the wall and gently glide backward with the parent supporting the child's head and back.

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***Teaching Tip:*** For a child who is fearful or moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently, the child can start to become comfortable in a back position by lying on a ramp or a shallow step with the ears in the water. Also consider using a flotation device, such as a flow-through mat, to help the child gain comfort on his or her back.

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### Back float—with support or assistance

#### ***With support***

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back or back support position.
2. The parent places a flotation device on the child's torso and tells the child to grasp the device.
3. The parent walks backward with the child just enough to allow the child's legs to float up.
4. The parent cues the child and briefly releases support so the child floats between the parent's outstretched arms using the flotation device.
5. The parent resumes assistance by placing his or her hands underneath the child's back or hips.

### ***With assistance***

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back or back support position with the child relaxing the arms to the side.
2. The parent walks backward with the child just enough to allow the child's legs to float up (Figure 7-12).
3. The parent cues the child and briefly releases support so the child floats freely between the parent's outstretched arms.
4. The parent resumes assistance by placing his or her hands underneath the child's back or hips.



**Figure 7-12** Back float—with assistance.

## **Changing Direction**

### **Roll from front to back—with assistance**

1. The parent places the child in a face-to-face position.
2. The parent gains forward momentum to move the child into a front glide, then cues the child by tapping the back of the child's head.
3. The parent grasps the child's wrist on the same side (i.e., right hand to right wrist, left hand to left wrist) and pulls the wrist under. This causes the child's shoulder to dip, helping to turn the child over onto his or her back.
4. As the child turns, the parent supports the back of the child's head. At the end of the turn, the child should be in a back float position with the parent's support.

### **Roll from back to front—with assistance**

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on back or back support position while the child relaxes the arms to the side.
2. The parent walks backward with the child into a back glide, then reaches across the child's body to grasp the child's wrist, supporting the back of the child's head with the other hand.
3. The parent cues the child and pulls the child's arm across the child's body to assist with the roll. At the end of the turn, the child should be in a front float position with the parent's support.

## **Swim on Front**

### **Passing from instructor to parent—with assistance**

When the child becomes comfortable with his or her face in the water, the instructor can pass the child to the parent.

1. The instructor and parent stand about 2 to 3 body lengths apart.
2. The instructor holds the child in a shoulder support on side position and leans forward to make eye contact.
3. The instructor cues the child, pushes the child toward the parent in a gliding motion on the surface of the water for about 2 feet and then releases the child.

4. The child glides and kicks unassisted for about 2 seconds.
5. The parent catches the child and helps him or her up with a light touch using the shoulder support.

### Drafting with breathing—with assistance

Introduce this skill only after the child is comfortable holding a breath with his or her face in the water for at least 2 to 4 seconds at a time. While practicing this skill, the parent releases the child and continues to move backward, creating a current between the parent and child. The child will remain close to the parent.



#### Safety Notes:

- *The parent must maintain eye contact and pay very close attention to know when the child is ready to put his or her face in the water and draft. Any sputtering, coughing or crying indicates that the child is not ready for this skill. Remind parents never to force a child to do a skill because this only delays the child's readiness to try additional skills.*
- *Children should be unsupported with their faces in the water for no more than 2 to 4 seconds.*
- *Teach parents to watch for bubbles as a sign that the child needs a breath. The parent should immediately lift the child so the child's face clears the water to ensure that the child does not inhale while still underwater. Do not use drafting with a child who cries, chokes or shows discomfort.*

1. The parent holds the child in the shoulder support or hip support on front position.
2. The parent drafts the child with the face in the water for about 3 seconds (Figure 7-13).
3. The parent regains support under the child's shoulder or chest and cues the child to breathe.
4. The parent drafts the child again for about 2 or 3 seconds.
5. The parent repeats steps 2 and 3 again if the child is comfortable and happy.
6. The parent resumes support by grasping the child's shoulders or armpits and then gives a hug and praise.



Figure 7-13 Drafting with breathing—with assistance.



**Instructor's Note:** *As the child gets comfortable, encourage the child to kick and pull with the arms.*

### Leg action on front—alternating or simultaneous movements—with assistance

Add leg action to the gliding skills previously described. Whether using a flotation device (Figure 7-14) or assistance from the parent (Figure 7-15), encourage the parent to cue and encourage the child to move the legs in a way that is natural and comfortable for the child, either in an alternating action (such as a rudimentary flutter kick) or a simultaneous action (such as a rudimentary dolphin kick or breaststroke kick).



**Figure 7-14** Leg action on front using a flotation device.



**Figure 7-15** Leg action on front using a holding or support technique.

### **Arm action on front—alternating or simultaneous movements— with support or assistance**

Add arm action to the gliding skills previously described. Have the parent encourage the child to move the arms in a way that is natural and comfortable for the child, either in an alternating action (such as a rudimentary front crawl arm action) or a simultaneous action (such as a rudimentary butterfly or breaststroke arm action).

#### ***With support—stationary***

1. The parent holds the child in the arm stroke position.
2. The parent encourages the child to try different alternating or simultaneous arm movements (rudimentary front crawl, butterfly or breaststroke arm action) with underwater recovery, guiding the child's arm movements.

#### ***With support***

1. The parent holds the child in a side support position. The child's face may be in or out of the water.
2. The parent walks forward with the child while the child moves the arms in an alternating or simultaneous arm movement (Figure 7-16).



**Figure 7-16** Arm action on front— with support.



**Instructor's Note:** *The child may use a flotation device, such as a swim bar or foam noodle, for support. The parent must remain within arm's reach of the child whenever a flotation device is used.*

### ***With assistance***

1. The parent holds the child in the hip support on front or shoulder support position.
2. The parent walks backward with the child. When the parent and child gain momentum, the parent cues the child and briefly releases support so the child moves forward, moving his or her arms between the parent's outstretched arms.
3. The parent resumes support by grasping the child's shoulders or hips.

### **Combined arm and leg actions on front with breathing—with assistance**

1. The parent holds the child in a face-to-face position.
2. The parent prepares the child to do a front glide with the face in the water.
3. The parent drafts the child and encourages the child to combine any type of arm and leg movement.
4. The parent cues the child to take breaths every few strokes. The parent places his or her hands under the child's chest and lifts the child to raise the face out of the water for a breath. This is necessary until the child is strong enough to lift the head unassisted.
5. The parent resumes support.



**Safety Note:** *Remind the parent to watch for bubbles as a sign that the child needs a breath. The parent should immediately lift the child so the child's face clears the water to ensure the child does not inhale while still underwater.*

## **Swim on Back**

### **Leg action on back—alternating or simultaneous movements—with assistance**

Add leg action to the gliding skills previously described. Whether using a flotation device or assistance from the parent (Figure 7-17), have the parent cue and encourage the child to move the legs in a way that is natural and comfortable for the child, either in an alternating action (such as a rudimentary flutter kick) or a simultaneous action (such as a rudimentary breaststroke kick).



**Figure 7-17** Leg action on back—with assistance.

### **Arm action on back—alternating or simultaneous movements—with support or assistance**

Add arm action to the gliding skills previously described. Have the parent encourage the child to move the arms in a way that is natural and comfortable for the child, either in an alternating action (such as a rudimentary back crawl arm action) or a simultaneous action (such as finning or a rudimentary elementary backstroke arm action).

### ***With support***

1. The parent places the child in the hip support on back or back support position.
2. The parent cues the child to move his or her arms in an alternating or simultaneous movement.
3. The parent assists the child to a standing position or back to the pool wall.



**Teaching Tip:** Starting from the hip support on back position with the child's head on the parent's shoulder, have the parent move his or her arms to a position on the outside of the child's arms. Have the parent grasp the top of the child's hand and wrist then guide the arms in an alternating or simultaneous movement.

### **With assistance**

1. The parent places the child in the hip support on back or back support position.
2. The parent walks backward with the child. When the parent and child gain momentum, the parent cues the child and briefly releases support so the child moves between the parent's outstretched arms.
3. The parent resumes support by placing his or her hands underneath the child's back.

### **Combined arm and leg actions on back—with support or assistance**

#### **With support**

1. The parent places the child in the hip support on back or back support position.
2. The parent walks backward with the child and cues the child to combine any type of arm and leg movement (Figure 7-18).



**Figure 7-18** Combined arm and leg actions on back—with support.

#### **With assistance**

1. The parent places the child in the hip support on back or back support position.
2. The parent walks backward with the child. When the parent and child gain momentum, the parent cues the child and briefly releases support so the child moves forward, moving his or her arms and legs between the parent's outstretched arms.
3. The parent resumes support by placing his or her hands underneath the child's back.

## **Water Safety**

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2:

- Wearing a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket in the water
- Reaching assists
- Basic water safety rules review
- Safety at the beach and the waterpark
- Water toys and their limitations

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS

**A**merican Red Cross Preschool Aquatics is designed for children approximately 4 and 5 years of age. The purpose of the course is to facilitate developmentally appropriate learning of fundamental water safety and aquatic skills.

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# ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

## Prerequisites

Preschool Aquatics is recommended for children who are approximately 4 and 5 years of age. However, participation should not be determined by age alone. Consider a child's developmental readiness, maturity and experience in the water. For some preschool children, Parent and Child Aquatics still may be appropriate, while a few may be able to go directly into the Learn-to-Swim courses.

Preschool Aquatics consists of three levels. No skill prerequisites are required for Preschool Aquatics Level 1. For Preschool Aquatics Levels 2 and 3, children must be able to demonstrate the exit skills assessment of the previous level. All children should be evaluated prior to the start of a session or during the first lesson, regardless of level, to determine the appropriate starting point for each child.

On completion of Preschool Aquatics, children may enroll in American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim. A child who completes Preschool Aquatics Levels 1 or 2 and is 6 years old may enroll in the next level of Preschool Aquatics or move on to Learn-to-Swim Level 2. A child who completes Preschool Aquatics Level 3 may enroll in Learn-to-Swim Level 3.

## Course Length

Generally, Preschool Aquatics works well in sessions of 8 to 10 lessons. Lessons typically last about 30 minutes. There is no required minimum or maximum course length.

## Class Size

Class sizes may range from one-on-one instruction to the American Red Cross recommendation of at least one instructor for every four to six children in a Preschool Aquatics class. Close supervision is necessary for effective practice and safety (especially with this age group). To increase safety and instructional quality, consider using a co-instructor or instructor aide when certain factors are present, such as a participant who needs special attention, a participant who is fearful or anxious, or a water depth that is relatively deep for children.



**Instructor's Note:** Remember, although water safety instructor aides may assist in classes, only certified water safety instructors should be co-instructors. See Chapter 1 for more detailed information about co-instructors and instructor aides.

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## Facility

It is recommended that Preschool Aquatics classes be taught only in well-maintained swimming pools. If conducting classes in an open body of water, such as a lake, remember that open bodies of water are more likely to carry harmful organisms and are subject to wide variations in temperature, clarity and weather conditions. Always check with facility management to ensure that open bodies of water have been checked for safety.

Optimal conditions at the facility can make your program more successful. Whenever possible, a facility for Preschool Aquatics classes should have:

- Working showers, with warm water and soap available.
- Adequate air circulation and sufficiently warm air temperatures.
- Secured pool entrances, especially when classes are not in session.
- A storage space for instructional aids and toys.

## Temperature

Young children are more susceptible to hypothermia than older children, even at relatively warm temperatures. Typically, preschool children are most comfortable in water that is at least 89° F ( $\geq 32^{\circ}$  C) during a 20- to 30-minute swim lesson. If you cannot control the water temperature, consider decreasing lesson duration and increasing the number of lessons. Other measures you can take to prevent participants from becoming chilled include increasing the intensity of the activity, encouraging participants to wear warm neoprene cover-ups (such as a vest, shirt, wet suit or ear wraps) and advising parents to bring an extra dry towel to wrap around the child when exiting the water, especially if the air temperature and humidity levels are low.

As a water safety instructor, you need to be able to recognize when a participant may be too chilled. If you notice that a participant seems chilled or uncomfortable, end the lesson promptly. Signals of hypothermia include shivering, numbness, glassy stare, apathy, weakness, impaired judgment and loss of consciousness.

## Depth

Many young children learn best when they actively explore the aquatic environment under their own power. Keep in mind that course requirements are based on the assumption that the facility has water shallow enough for children to stand independently. A gradually sloping shallow area, ramp or steps are areas of the facility where a small child can stand alone in waist-deep or chest-deep water. Alternatively, consider using teaching platforms on which children can stand safely. Close supervision is necessary when using platforms, just as it is in other areas of the pool.

When the depth cannot be controlled, many activities will require you to support each child while the other children remain on the side. If necessary, allow children to hold the wall or use flotation devices between individual skill practices. Having children sit and take turns is not an optimal learning strategy; however, initially, practicing activities as a group may not be possible. Safety is always the first priority.



**Instructor's Note:** *When the water is too deep to allow children to stand, a smaller instructor-to-participant ratio will be necessary.*

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## Noise and distractions

Young children may be easily distracted. Seek to control the sights and sounds in the environment by:

- Limiting loud, distorted sounds as much as possible.
- Holding the class in an isolated area of the pool to limit distractions from other patrons who are moving about and shouting or crying.

- Encouraging children to talk in normal voices and not shout over the noise.
- Storing unused toys and equipment out of sight.
- Asking another available instructor, instructor aide or parent, if available, to take any child who is overstimulated to a quieter area of the pool to calm down and adjust to the environment. If no one else is available to help, be creative and find a way to calm the child down without compromising the safety of the other participants.

## Course Requirements

For each of the three Preschool Aquatics levels, completion requirements are provided in the outlines in this chapter. Refer to Box 8-1 for definitions of the terms used to describe completion requirements throughout this instructor’s manual. As your class proceeds, use the applicable skills checklist (available on Instructor’s Corner; [instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) to chart participants’ progress as they satisfy the requirements.

To receive a completion card for a given level, the participant must meet the requirements for the level. This includes demonstrating the completion requirement for all of the skills listed on the outline, as well as performing the exit skills assessment. To ensure that your participants are truly achieving success, review and practice the skills throughout the lessons until participants have reached the required performance criteria. Participants should be able to perform each skill successfully at least a couple of times to complete the level. To help participants prepare for the exit skills assessment, combine skills as participants begin achieving success with each individual skill. For example, once participants are able to step into the water repeatedly, front glide for a couple of body lengths and recover to a vertical position, have them put these skills together. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion about practice.)

A badge system provides additional opportunities to recognize and reward achievement outside of the levels. The badges can be effective for motivating participants to strive toward developing specific skills and for recognizing participants for something that they are doing well, especially when they are struggling with a specific skill or set of skills needed to successfully complete the level. Chapter 12 describes the badge system in more detail.

### Box 8-1. Terms Used to Describe Completion Requirements at Each Level

- **Explore**—the participant attempts various ways to perform the skill; the skill may or may not be done with support but is always done with close supervision
- **Support**—the participant performs a skill with support provided by a parent, an instructor or a flotation device
- **Assistance**—the participant performs a skill unsupported, but may begin and end the skill with support from a parent or instructor
- **Demonstrate**—the participant performs a skill
- **Independently**—the participant demonstrates a skill without support or assistance, but still with close supervision
- **Show and tell**—the instructor provides information using push, pull and balance techniques with the expectation that participants are engaged, answering questions or providing responses that indicate that they understand the concepts presented

Customize safety and swimming skills to match the individual participant’s capabilities. Be flexible in applying performance standards, but remember, the participant must be able to meet the objectives of the exit skills assessment to receive a completion card for the course level. A child who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently may not be able to meet the performance standards. For example, a child may be unable to move a joint in a particular way, but can still move through the water in a modified way. In such cases, use your judgment as to whether the child performs the skill as close to the standard as his or her condition allows. See Chapter 6 for more information about modifying skills.

## Resources

This chapter outlines the completion requirements and descriptions for each skill in each level, as well as the exit skills assessment for each level. The following additional Red Cross materials are available as resources:

- *Swimming and Water Safety*
- Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety pages on Instructor’s Corner (access tools and resources you can share with parents to reinforce the information and skills participants are learning in class and to promote ongoing participation in the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program)
- *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet*
- *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety DVD*
- *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales DVD*

## Support Materials

Keeping children and their parents informed of progress is one of the most important things you can do to ensure optimal learning and customer satisfaction in your classes. Support materials are available to help you fulfill this responsibility.

### ***Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet***

The *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* is a convenient way for you to provide participants and their parents with progress reports as the participant progresses through the lessons.

The *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* provides a way of tracking what skills the child has achieved and what skills still need work. Multiple panels track with the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels. Skills and exit skills assessments are listed by level in a checklist format. Once the participant has successfully completed all of the requirements for a level, the instructor acknowledges that accomplishment by signing and dating the page in the *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* and by checking a box indicating the participant’s readiness to enroll in the next level. These multiple opportunities for an instructor to acknowledge progress allow for the possibility that a participant will not successfully achieve all of the skills in a single session.

It is recommended that achievement booklets be provided to all participants in the Preschool Aquatics levels. Participants can use the same achievement booklet to track their achievements as they progress through the levels of Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim.

## Completion cards

Upon successful course completion, participants may be issued Learn-to-Swim course completion cards, which are included in the annual Learn-to-Swim Authorized Provider promotional package. To receive a completion card, Preschool Aquatics participants must be able to demonstrate all of the skills listed in the skills charts at the level of performance identified as well as complete the exit skills assessments.

## American Red Cross Swim mobile application

The American Red Cross Swim mobile application (app) supports and promotes the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, focusing on the courses in the Preschool Aquatics program and Learn-to-Swim program. This app provides parents and children with water safety information and links them to Red Cross Authorized Providers that deliver the Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program. The app:

- Supports and promotes the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program.
- Allows parents to track and share the progress of their children through the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels.
- Provides adults with information about water safety in general, as well as water safety in specific environments.
- Helps children learn about water safety through video segments from Longfellow’s WHALE Tales, age-appropriate water safety messaging, and quizzes for the parent and child to complete together.

Encourage parents to download the Red Cross Swim mobile app as soon as they enter a child in your swim lesson program. The app can be found at [www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps) or downloaded directly from the iTunes or Google Play app stores.

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# SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Keep the following safety considerations in mind when conducting Preschool Aquatics classes:

- Maintain a safety-first mindset.
  - Be sure that parents maintain constant supervision by staying within arm’s reach of their children whenever they leave the class area.
  - Teach children to ask for permission to enter the water.
  - Teach children to know who is supervising them.
  - Explain the safety rules for your facility and quiz children on what each rule means to be sure they understand.
  - Do not let children hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit children to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.
- Explain to parents that recreational water illnesses (RWIs) can be passed when children who have had loose stools return to the water too soon. Pediatricians recommend that children with fevers, rashes, diarrhea or any symptoms of an infection not participate in an aquatics program. Let parents

know that they should not bring children to class who do not feel well, who have diarrhea or who are just recovering from a diarrheal illness. See Chapter 1 for more information on RWIs.

- Discourage children from swallowing water.
- Remind parents to have children use the toilet before entering the pool.
- Make sure children shower before entering the pool.
- To maintain safety when working with one child at a time:
  - Do not turn your back to the rest of the class. Instead, move in a direction that is parallel to the rest of the class.
  - Stay within quick reach of the rest of the class.
  - Work efficiently and try to give equal time to each child. If absolutely necessary for safety, have the other children sit on the side while waiting their turns, but realize that this is a poor teaching technique that limits active practice time.



**Instructor's Note:** *Teaching swimming skills is very hands-on. As a water safety instructor, you will use holding and support techniques to increase participants' sense of security in the water and to support them while they practice new skills. You will also help participants get used to new or unfamiliar movements by physically moving their arms, legs or other body parts so that they get a sense of how the movement is supposed to feel. Whenever you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance, take care to follow the guidelines for positioning your hands carefully so that you avoid touching the participant in an inappropriate way. In addition, try to keep your hands as visible as possible when you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance to minimize the chance that your handling of the participant could be construed as inappropriate.*

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## WORKING WITH PRESCHOOLERS

### Developmental Considerations

During the preschool years, a child's physical, language and cognitive skills continue to advance. Physically, the fitness levels of young children vary widely, just as with other segments of the population. Generally, preschoolers have less body fat than older children, making them more prone to chilling. In addition, their strength and endurance are less than that of older children.

Children in this age group are more likely to agree to rules and are beginning to show a greater level of independence. They want to please others and be like their friends. As their cognitive skills expand, preschoolers may begin to understand the risks associated with water better than they did when they were younger.

When planning your lessons, consider each child's developmental age, attitude, ability to understand and general coordination levels. (For more information on planning lessons, see Chapter 3.) Keep in mind that for this age group, you should plan for classes that will meet more often, but for shorter periods

of time. Other developmentally appropriate strategies for working with this age group include the following:

- Talk to your participants, not at them, and make eye contact.
- Keep activities short. Unless the activity is very engaging, preschoolers may pay attention for only a few minutes before they need a new activity to keep them interested. Take cues from the children. If they seem bored, disinterested or tired of the activity, switch to another approach or skill that is more fun and interesting to them.
- Make learning fun and creative.
  - Preschoolers like to sing songs, use silly words and play simple games. Keep the learning activity fun by incorporating rhymes, songs and games.
  - Integrate pretend play into learning. Children this age are interested in playing pretend and may even have imaginary friends. Encourage pretend play in the lessons by creating games where children act as mythical characters, animals or superheroes.
  - Use games to engage children in learning. Games such as Follow the Leader or Simon Says encourage children to mimic your movements and try new skills they might not try otherwise.
- Move around a lot. Preschoolers are full of energy and do not like to sit around. While they may stay in their own space, they may not sit or stand still.
- Avoid having preschoolers sit or stand in lines unless safety is an issue. If you must work with one child at a time, work quickly and effectively with each one. Encourage children who are waiting their turn to watch their classmate so that they stay engaged in the activity.
- Use the buddy system. This allows children to learn from one another and provides added safety.



**Teaching Tips:** *Some children, including those who move, learn, communicate or behave differently, may not have learned to play or how to take turns. They may not be as independent or able to move as efficiently in the water as other children. As result, these children may not become involved in the chosen game or may withdraw from the game to avoid social contact. Strategies you can use in this situation include:*

- *Being a partner with the child as you play the game.*
- *Letting the child choose the first game.*
- *Moving or assisting with moving the child physically through the game activity, if the child will allow it.*
- *Allowing the child to use a support device to participate.*



**Safety Note:** *With any activity, always be certain to address the safety of the entire class.*

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## Promoting Learning

At the beginning of each session, tell parents and children what to expect. Before children enter the water the first time, show them the area in which they will be swimming. Use simple, age-appropriate language to explain the facility's safety rules and the objectives of the class. Stress the importance of following your

directions, trying new things and practicing. Do not promise that they will learn to swim right away, but explain that it will take time. Ask parents to help their children understand that you are there to help them learn.

Learning styles differ among children. Some children want to be shown how to do something, others want to hear how to do it, while others prefer to discover things on their own with some guidance. Many children often do better trying to discover things on their own with some guidance. However, you should strive to incorporate strategies to address all learning styles when planning your lessons. Whether you use direct teaching strategies (explain, demonstrate and practice; task setting; reciprocal practice) or indirect teaching strategies (active exploration; guided discovery; using task cards for active exploration and guided discovery), the skills are presented in a step-by-step approach that you can adjust to your chosen teaching style. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of teaching strategies.)

Instruction is only one of many influences on learning in young children. Effective practice also is essential for learning motor skills. Practice needs to be developmentally appropriate. Children at this age need to mix fun and frequent rest periods with practice. Play games that allow children to achieve the learning objectives while providing sufficient amounts of goal-oriented practice. Playing appropriate types of learning games helps children stay motivated and interested, minimizes fatigue, and allows them to practice and improve their skills. For more information about incorporating practice into lessons, see Chapter 2.

Keep in mind that children acquire motor skills gradually. For example, the way that a child performs a skill such as leg kicking or arm pulling the first few times will look very different from how the child performs the same skill after much practice and experience. In the water, young children start with awkward ineffective motions, but with sufficient practice over time, aquatic skill proficiency improves. Remember, each beginner-level skill prepares children for the next more-advanced skill. As children become comfortable and confident practicing a skill, introduce the next level of complexity of that skill or the next skill in the learning progression.

Sufficient time and practice is essential for children to acquire skills. Both children and instructors must be patient. For more information about preschool children, learning and skills, see Chapter 5.

In your role as a water safety instructor, your job is to guide, instruct and provide positive, corrective feedback to help your participants gain fundamental water safety and aquatic skills. The best learning takes place when the environment is relaxed and comfortable and the instructor and child have developed an environment of trust for learning. Keep the following in mind:

- Make sure the child is calm and happy before entering the water.
- Do not be afraid to take a step back and work on skills that have already been introduced with some measure of success.
- Demonstrate basic skills accurately and often, but do not expect children to copy them exactly.
- Limit the amount of time spent discussing skills. Keep children on task by using short one- and two-word cues.
- Since children learn by playing, use games, songs and rhymes to teach a concept.
- Provide frequent breaks to allow children to absorb what they are learning.

- Consider first letting children show you how they perform the various skills as you introduce them. This is a good way to ease the fear of the unknown (the first days of swim class or the first attempt at trying a new skill) in some beginners. It also helps you evaluate what they already know, what they are willing to try and determine a good pace for introducing the skills.
- Encourage children to explore different movements in the water. Observe what comes naturally to them and build on their strengths. As the session progresses, provide a wide variety of experiences to help students master the skills of the level.
- Never force a child to perform a skill; this only delays the child’s readiness to try additional skills. Allow the child to progress at his or her own pace through the skills. If a child resists trying a new skill, let the child return to what he or she perceives as being a safe activity for the time being.
- Praise effort regardless of the level of success.
- Increase or decrease the difficulty of tasks depending on the child’s success. This allows the child to be successful more often than not. Know when enough is enough.
- Remember that the skills and requirements are not cast in stone; be ready to modify them as necessary to meet the needs of individual children.
- Always end the lesson with a game or activity that is enjoyable, and make sure the child is calm and happy before leaving the pool.

Be alert to signs that a child may not be ready to try the skills you are presenting (such as asking for restroom breaks repeatedly). Always be ready to return to an activity that is less stressful for the child and to come back later when the child is calm again. If the child is not ready to progress to the next skill or if the child moves, behaves, learns or communicates differently than his or her peers, try these suggestions:

- Take a step back to a “safer” skill that the child enjoys.
- Try a “me first, then you” approach where you perform the skill, then the child mimics the action.
- Try a “my turn, your turn” approach, where the child gets to choose what he or she wants to do, then you get to choose the next task. Sometimes alternating comfortable with challenging skills will allow the child to progress without as much anxiety.
- Use picture boards to show the progression so the child sees and understands what is coming next.
- Use a favorite toy, superhero character or song to enhance motivation to learn the skill. For example, demonstrate the skill using a favorite doll or superhero character, or have the child demonstrate the skill using the toy.
- Turn the skills into games, or sing songs and recite rhymes.

## **Working with Fearful Participants**

Young children may be reluctant to approach the pool or go into the water. Parents can take steps to familiarize the child with the pool environment before the lessons begin, increasing the child’s comfort level and confidence. Advise parents to use the following strategies, and repeat them on the first day of the session as needed:

- Visit the pool for a play date before taking lessons.
- Allow the child to observe other children playing from a safe distance.

- Walk around the deck and look at the steps, ramp, and ladders and play equipment, and talk about how much fun it might be to get in and play.
- Define the limits of the activity area using language the child can understand and relate to, such as “We will get to do lessons right over here. See the steps and railings? We get to hang on or sit down any time we want to.”

When a child is fearful, you need to help reduce that fear. Being consistent in your lessons—such as by starting and ending each lesson in the same way—helps the child become familiar with the routine. Familiarity is comforting and can promote willingness to participate. To reduce the impact of learned fears, plan carefully and give a lot of positive reinforcement. Children enjoy the water more when they can learn at their own pace, experience success, practice repeatedly and receive praise for their efforts. For more information about understanding and working with fearful children, see Chapter 5. Box 2-3 in Chapter 2 also provides general strategies for helping an anxious or fearful participant.

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## THE PRESCHOOL AQUATICS COURSE

Red Cross Preschool Aquatics provides young children with positive, developmentally appropriate aquatic learning experiences. Preschool Aquatics consists of three levels:

- Preschool Aquatics Level 1 is designed to orient young preschoolers to the aquatic environment and to help them gain basic aquatic skills. In addition, participants start learning about how to be safe around water.
- Preschool Aquatics Level 2 builds on the basic aquatic skills and water safety skills and concepts learned in Level 1. Participants begin to perform skills at a slightly more advanced level and begin gaining rudimentary propulsive skills on both the front and the back. This level marks the beginning of independent aquatic locomotion skills.
- Preschool Aquatics Level 3 builds on the skills learned in Levels 1 and 2. Participants are able to perform basic aquatic skills with greater proficiency, for longer distances and times. In addition, previously acquired water safety knowledge and skills are reinforced and expanded upon.

It is not necessary to introduce the skills in the specific order of categories. Young children do not learn skills in a single linear progression. When helping children acquire skills at more advanced levels, you may need to let them practice the skills at lower levels until they are more proficient and comfortable. Be sure, however, to integrate water safety skills in each lesson of each level, so participants learn what they can do to be safe in, on and around the water.

Refer to Box 8-1 for a summary of the terms used in this instructor’s manual to describe the completion requirements for each level.

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## PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 1

Level 1 introduces basic aquatic skills, which children continue to build on as they progress through Levels 2 and 3 of Preschool Aquatics and then Learn-to-Swim. In addition, children start developing positive attitudes and safe practices around the water in Preschool Aquatics Level 1.



**Instructor's Note:** *In Preschool Aquatics, especially in Level 1, many of the techniques used by parents in the Parent and Child Aquatics courses, including cueing and holding and support techniques, are used with skill practice. Refer to Chapter 7 for detailed descriptions of these techniques.*

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# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 1 OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Submersion items, such as diving rings</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for children</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit		
Enter water using ramp, steps or side	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Exit water using ladder, steps or side	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Breath Control and Submerging		
Blow bubbles	Demonstrate, at least 3 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Submerge mouth, nose and eyes	Demonstrate in shallow water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects	Demonstrate in shallow water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Buoyancy on Front		
Front glide	Demonstrate, with or without assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Recover from a front glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, with or without assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Buoyancy on Back		
Back glide	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Back float	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 3 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Changing Direction and Position and Treading		
Roll from front to back	Demonstrate, with support	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Roll from back to front	Demonstrate, with support	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Arm and hand treading actions	Explore, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Alternating leg action on front	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous leg action on front	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Alternating arm action on front	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous arm action on front	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Combined arm and leg actions on front	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Alternating leg action on back	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous leg action on back	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Alternating arm action on back	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous arm action on back	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Combined arm and leg actions on back	Demonstrate, with support, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Staying safe around water	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Recognizing the lifeguards	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Recognizing an emergency	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
How to call for help	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Too Much Sun Is No Fun	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
All Preschool Aquatics Level 1 exit skills can be performed with support.		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enter independently, using either the ramp, steps or side, travel at least 5 yards, submerge to mouth and blow bubbles for at least 3 seconds, then safely exit the water. (Children can walk, move along the gutter or "swim.")</li> <li>2. While in shallow water, glide on front for at least 2 body lengths, then roll to back and float on back for 3 seconds, then recover to a vertical position.</li> </ol>		

LWT, Longfellow's WHALE Tales; PSA, Preschool Aquatics; SWS, *Swimming and Water Safety*; WSIM, *Water Safety Instructor's Manual*.

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# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 1 SKILLS

## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

Teach children how to enter and exit the water safely. Children may need to adjust to the water temperature before practicing entering skills (see Chapter 7 for water adjustment techniques).

### Enter water using ramp, steps or side—independently

As a group or one at a time, have children enter the water in any of the following ways:

- Using a ramp—children walk down the ramp, holding onto a railing, if available
- Using steps—children walk down the steps, facing the water and holding onto a railing, if available
- From the side—children sit on the side, roll over onto the stomach, slide in feetfirst and hold onto the side with the shoulders in the water



**Safety Note:** Maintain contact with any child who needs help while entering the water when first learning the skill.

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**Teaching Tips:** In the beginning, discourage children from splashing, for the comfort of less eager classmates. Once children are in the water, you may need to start with some adjustment activities, such as having the children walk through waist-deep or chest-deep water while holding onto the wall or your hand for support. As confidence builds, children may try walking by themselves away from the wall or holding onto the gutter and moving along the pool wall by sliding their hands (“spidering” or “monkey walking”). If the pool is too deep for children to stand, you may help children one at a time adjust to the water by holding each child in a support position and giving him or her a short and fun ride. (Remember never to turn your back on the rest of the class.)

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### Exit water using ladder, steps or side—independently

As a group or one at a time, have children exit the water in any of the following ways:

- Using the ladder—children walk up the ladder with their back to the water, facing the ladder and holding onto the railings with the hands
- Using steps—children walk up the steps, facing the water and holding onto a railing if available
- From the side—children pull themselves up to the elbows, then to the stomach, then put one leg up on the side and continue to climb out of the water on all fours



**Safety Note:** Maintain contact with any child who needs help getting out of the water when first learning the skill. Be alert to other children reentering the pool.

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## Breath Control and Submerging

Practice and repetition help children learn basic breath control skills. Introduce these foundational skills from the very beginning and continue to build on them as the child progresses through swim lessons. Mastering basic breath control skills helps the child feel more comfortable in the water. In addition, breath control skills are essential for learning more advanced aquatic skills.

### Blow bubbles

Practice blowing bubbles from any stationary position as a group. If necessary, hold the children one at a time using the hip straddle or a face-to-face position. Explain that blowing bubbles through the nose keeps water from going in the nose.

Have children:

1. Take a breath and hold it for 1 or 2 seconds.
2. Blow slowly through the mouth and nose and put the mouth in the water.
3. Continue to blow slowly through the mouth and nose, then come back up.
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 until comfortable.
5. Next, take a breath and hold it for 1 or 2 seconds.
6. Blow slowly through the mouth and nose and put the mouth and nose in the water.
7. Continue to blow slowly through the mouth and nose, then come back up.
8. Repeat steps 5 through 7 until comfortable.



**Teaching Tips:** Try the following to encourage children to blow bubbles through their mouth and nose:

- First, have them blow with their faces out of the water. Pretend that your finger is a candle they can blow out. Continue by asking if the child can still blow out the “magic candle” when it is underwater. It will only blow out if the child forcefully blows bubbles. Rapidly moving your hand and tucking your finger inside your closed hand simulates the candle going out. Using each finger, have the child simulate blowing out each “candle” individually.
- Cut up a foam noodle that has a hole through the middle and let the child practice using it like a straw to blow bubbles on the surface of the water.
- If the child is having trouble blowing air through the nose (“nose bubbles”), try the following:
  - Demonstrate how to close the lips (as when making the m, b or p sound), and have the child imitate the action.
  - Tell the child that blowing bubbles through the nose is like blowing their nose. Have the child pretend that his or her hands are an imaginary tissue while you do the same. Demonstrating close to the water so that bubbles are created by blowing through the nose, blow into your “tissue” and encourage the child to do the same. Next, submerge and demonstrate blowing nose bubbles, and then challenge the child to do the same.
  - Demonstrate humming (starting with one of the letters) near the surface of the water, and then challenge the child to submerge the nose by either humming or blowing into an imaginary tissue with the lips closed.

## Submerge mouth, nose and eyes

The ability to hold the breath for short periods of time is an important part of breath control and an important safety skill. Many aquatic skills require swimmers to briefly hold the breath and submerge the face. If necessary, children may practice submerging first with support from you, an aide or a partner and then practice without support. The eyes may be open or closed at first.

Have children:

1. Stand in chest-deep water. Less confident children can face the wall and hold onto it.
2. Take a breath and hold it.
3. Squat to submerge the mouth. Exhale through the mouth then stand up.
4. Next, take another breath and hold it.
5. Squat to submerge the mouth and nose. Exhale through the mouth and nose then stand up.
6. Next, take another breath and hold it.
7. Squat to submerge the mouth, nose and eyes. Exhale through the mouth and nose then stand up.



**Teaching Tip:** Start by having children submerge for 1 or 2 seconds and gradually build to about 5 seconds.

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### **Instructor's Notes:**

- Although you should not teach a child to hold his or her nose, it is acceptable if the child does so at first. However, gradually discourage the child from holding the nose by showing the child how blowing bubbles through the nose makes holding the nose unnecessary.
  - Children who move, learn, communicate or behave differently may have a difficult time with the submersion skill and opening the eyes. It is acceptable to start the child off with a mask that covers both the nose and eyes and work on just getting the child comfortable with opening the eyes underwater. Being able to see underwater without the fear of getting water up the nose or in the eyes may improve the child's readiness to perform the skills without equipment. Then:
    - Work with the mask until the child is able to submerge the entire head with the eyes open.
    - Have the child practice blowing through the nose on the surface of the water with goggles on.
    - Gradually progress to submerging without equipment.
    - Finally, have the child open the eyes underwater.
- 



**Safety Note:** Do not let children hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit children to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

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## Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects

After children are comfortable holding their breath and submerging the face, practice submerging with the eyes open.

1. Standing in shallow water, hold an object just below the surface.
2. Have each child take a breath then submerge the face and take the object from your hand.
3. Gradually increase the depth by holding the object about 2 to 3 feet below the surface. Have the children take turns retrieving the object from your hand.



**Instructor's Note:** *If the child cannot stand in the water, refer to the underwater exploration skills in Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2 for information about providing support and assistance.*

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### **Teaching Tips:**

- *If the water depth is shallow enough, children can work in pairs taking turns submerging and recovering objects for each other without direct control by the instructor.*
  - *Integrate some simple submersion games, such as Underwater Tea Party, Ring-Around-the-Rosy, and Talk to the Fish. Children are capable of designing their own submersion and recovery games that encourage opening the eyes underwater.*
  - *Hold different color objects and instruct children to pick up a particular object.*
- 

## Buoyancy on Front

### Front glide—with or without assistance

1. Stand next to the child who is facing the wall about 3 feet from the wall.
2. Have the child extend the arms forward while you get ready to support the child using the shoulder support on the side position.
3. Cue the child to take a breath, lean forward, put the face in the water and push off the bottom. As the child pushes off the bottom, provide assistance as necessary to get the child into a horizontal position, then help him or her glide to the wall.



### **Instructor's Notes:**

- *If the water is too deep for children to stand, begin with the shoulder support on the side position.*
  - *Be aware that some children may not be able to perform a front glide with the face in the water at first.*
-



### **Teaching Tips:**

- *Start by having children stand up straight in the water or on the deck to learn the streamlined position. Tell them to hold their arms straight up over their ears with one hand on top of the other, making sure their arms are over their ears and not in front of their face. Have them put their legs together. Tell them, “With your head down, legs together and toes pointed, you are in the streamlined position for gliding.”*
- *You can also hold children in the hip support on front position. Have them extend their arms and legs and glide them through the water. Encourage them to take a breath and put their face in the water. When the child’s face is down, you may loosen your support.*
- *Allow children to practice the glide using a flotation device for support.*

## **Recover from a front glide to a vertical position—with or without assistance**

While holding the child in the shoulder support on the side position in the front glide, as necessary, help the child move from a horizontal to vertical position to recover. To recover to a vertical position, have the child:

1. Breathe out slowly.
2. Lift the head and press down with the arms.
3. Pull the knees under the body toward the chest.
4. Place the feet on the bottom and then stand up.

## **Buoyancy on Back**

### **Back glide—with assistance**

1. Have the child hold the wall, bend the knees and put the balls of the feet on the wall.
2. Have the child relax and put the head back, ears in or out of the water, and look up.
3. Use the hip support on back or the back support position, then cue the child to push gently off the wall. As the child pushes off the wall, provide assistance as necessary to get the child into a horizontal position.
4. Have the child raise the hips so the stomach is up and the arms are to the side.
5. Have the child keep the legs straight with the feet slightly under the surface and glide on the back.



**Instructor’s Note:** *Pushing off from the wall can be used when performing the back glide and the combined arm and leg actions on back.*



### **Teaching Tips:**

- *Start by having children stand up straight in the water or on the deck to learn the streamlined position. Tell them to hold their arms straight up over their ears with one hand on top of the other, making sure their arms are over their ears and not in front of their face. Have them put their legs together. Tell them, “With your head down, legs together and toes pointed, you are in the streamlined position for gliding.”*
- *Allow children to practice the glide using a flotation device for support.*

## Back float—with assistance

Have the child:

1. Submerge to the neck.
2. Hold the arms overhead and slightly out to the side.
3. Lay the head back until the ears are in the water and look straight up while you support the child using the hip support on back or back support position.
4. Raise the body gently at the hips and push the chest and stomach toward the surface.
5. Keep the legs relaxed, knees slightly bent and feet slightly beneath the surface.
6. Float in this position with help as long as possible or for at least 3 seconds.



### **Instructor's Notes:**

- *As the child experiences buoyancy, gradually decrease support by removing your hand from under the child's back, keeping your other hand under the child's head.*
- *If the water is too deep for the child to stand, have the child start from the wall and follow the steps in the back glide to move into a back float.*



**Teaching Tip:** *Start by having children stand up straight in the water or on the deck. Tell them to hold their arms up with their elbows bent and their hands to the side about a foot away from their head. Have them arch the back and look up with the head back. Tell them "With your head back and ears in the water, you are in the position for floating on your back." Remind them to keep their feet underwater and relax as much as possible.*

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## Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position—with assistance

While holding the child in the hip support on back or back support position in the back float, help the child move from the horizontal to vertical position to recover. To recover to a vertical position, have the child:

1. Take a breath, tuck the chin toward the chest and bring the knees forward by bending at the hips.
2. Sweep the arms back and down, then forward in a circular motion.
3. Exhale then stand up.

## Changing Direction and Position and Treading

The ability to change direction and position and to tread water are important skills for personal safety and self-rescue. These skills involve controlling the body's balance and position in the water.

### Roll from front to back—with support

1. Hold the child in a support position on the front. Move backward to generate some momentum.
2. Cue the child, then rotate him or her onto the back with the child's ears in or out of the water.
3. Move your hands to hold the child in a support position on the back and provide assistance as needed.

## Roll from back to front—with support

1. Hold the child in a support position on the back. Move backward to generate some momentum.
2. Cue the child, then rotate him or her onto the stomach with the child's face out of the water.
3. Move your hands to hold the child in a support position on the front and provide assistance as needed.

## Arm and hand treading actions

1. Have the children stand in chest-deep water and practice moving the arms in a smooth continuous motion just below the surface of the water.
2. Encourage children to periodically lift the feet off the bottom.

## Swim on Front

Children learn the basics of alternating and simultaneous leg and arm movements on the front as a foundation for learning the front crawl, breaststroke and butterfly in the future. Rather than trying to teach any specific stroke qualities now, guide them in exploring how they can use their arms and legs to help them move through the water. These initial attempts likely will not look like later kicks or arm actions. For example, initially, arm pulls to recover over the water are not necessary because children are just experimenting with the pulling or propulsive phase of the arm action.

Here are some suggestions for helping children practice arm and leg movements separately and then as part of a combined stroke:

- Have the children sit on the edge of the pool. Ask the children to show you different ways they can kick their legs or pull their arms. Encourage them to try both alternating (“one at a time”) and simultaneous (“at the same time”) movements.
- Have the children bracket on the wall. Ask them to place their face in or out of the water then kick their legs. Ask them to show you how they can kick making their legs go up and down (alternating as a rudimentary flutter kick or simultaneous as a rudimentary dolphin kick) or out and around (in a circle like a rudimentary breaststroke kick).
- Hold the children at the surface of the water. Ask them to show you how they can stroke with their arms one at a time and then at the same time. Allow them to practice with their faces in or out of the water. Have them practice arm and leg actions at the same time with your support.
- Have the children hold a flotation device (such as a foam noodle, swim bar float or kickboard) extended in front. Ask the children to show you different ways they can kick to move through the water.
- Have the children hold a foam noodle or swim bar float under the armpits. Ask the children to show you how they can pull the water with their arms and kick their legs.

## Alternating leg action on front—with support

First attempts at alternating up and down leg action on the front may resemble either a bicycling action or a rudimentary flutter kick with bent knees.

Guide the children so that they kick with the:

- Legs close together and mostly straight just under the surface.
- Knees, ankles and feet relaxed, making some, but not too much, splash with the feet.

## Simultaneous leg action on front—with support

Simultaneous leg action on the front may resemble rudimentary breaststroke or dolphin kicks. In these kicks, both legs move at the same time and in the same way in the water. Use one or both of the methods described below to guide the child's leg action.

1. Guide children to create a circular motion by:
  - Bending the knees and dropping the feet.
  - Separating and slightly spreading the legs, knees and ankles out.
  - Squeezing the legs and feet together quickly.
2. Guide children to create a simultaneous up-and-down leg motion with the:
  - Legs extended and close together just under the surface.
  - Knees, ankles and feet relaxed.
  - Hips moving up and down.

## Alternating arm action on front—with support

Guide children to move the arms in a continuous alternating motion by:

- Gliding each arm forward under the water, one at a time, palms down and fingers together but relaxed (not cupped).
- Reaching each arm out and down and pulling the water back toward the feet.
- Recovering each arm underwater with the hand in position to reach and pull again.

## Simultaneous arm action on front—with support

Guide children to move the arms in a simultaneous motion by:

- Gliding both arms forward under the water at the same time, palms down and fingers together but relaxed (not cupped).
- Sweeping both arms out and down and pulling the water back toward the feet.
- Recovering the arms underwater with the hands in position to reach and pull again.

## Combined arm and leg actions on front—with support

Have children pull with the arms and kick with the legs on the front as described earlier. Encourage them to use the alternating arm motion with the alternating kick or a simultaneous arm motion with the simultaneous kick.

## Swim on Back

Children learn the basics of alternating and simultaneous leg and arm motions on the back as a foundation for learning the elementary backstroke and the back crawl in the future. Rather than trying to teach the specific stroke patterns now, guide them to explore using their arms and legs to travel through the water on their backs in a comfortable manner.

Here are some suggestions for having children practice arm and leg motions separately and then as part of a combined stroke:

- Have the children sit on the edge of the pool. Ask the children to show you how they can kick their legs or stroke their arms.

- Hold the children at the surface of the water. Ask them to show you how they can stroke with their arms one at a time and then at the same time. Have them practice arm and leg actions at the same time with your support.
- Have the children hold a flotation device (such as a foam noodle, swim bar float or kickboard) across the stomach or extended overhead. Ask the children to show you different ways they can kick to move through the water.

### **Alternating leg action on back—with support**

First attempts at alternating up and down leg action on the back may resemble either a bicycling action or a rudimentary flutter kick with bent knees.

Guide the children so that they kick with the:

- Legs and knees close together and just under the surface with some splash.
- Knees, ankles and feet relaxed (knees can be bent).



**Teaching Tip:** Tell children to pretend to kick a ball upward.

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### **Simultaneous leg action on back—with support**

Simultaneous leg action on the back may resemble a rudimentary elementary backstroke or dolphin kick. Both legs move at the same time and in the same way in the water. Use one or both of the methods described below to guide the child's leg action.

1. Guide children to create a circular motion by:
  - Bending the knees and dropping the feet.
  - Separating and slightly spreading the legs, knees and ankles out.
  - Squeezing the legs and feet together quickly to make the water swirl.
2. Guide children to create a simultaneous up-and-down leg motion with the:
  - Legs extended and close together just under the surface.
  - Knees, ankles and feet relaxed.
  - Hips moving up and down.

### **Alternating arm action on back—with support**

Alternating arm action on the back may resemble a rudimentary back crawl, or the arms may simply perform an alternating finning action while staying under the water. Remember that when one arm is pulling, the other arm is coming back up.

Guide children to move the arms in a continuous alternating motion by:

- Reaching back, one arm at a time, extending the arm up to the shoulders or over the head.
- Reaching each arm back and down, then pushing the water back toward the feet.
- Recovering the opposite arm as the pulling arm pulls.

## Simultaneous arm action on back—with support

Guide children to move the arms in a simultaneous motion by:

- Bending the arms and moving the hands out from the side and up toward the shoulders.
- Pushing the water toward the feet in a short sweeping stroke with both hands at the same time.

## Combined arm and leg actions on back—with support

Have children stroke with the arms and kick with the legs on the back as described earlier. Encourage them to use the alternating arm motion with the alternating kick or the simultaneous arm motion with the simultaneous kick. The arms do not have to recover over the water either in the alternating or simultaneous actions because the purpose is to practice the basic coordination and propulsive actions. It is okay if children naturally bring the arms out of the water.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Preschool Aquatics Level 1:

- Staying safe around water
- Recognizing the lifeguards
- Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Recognizing an emergency
- How to call for help
- Too Much Sun Is No Fun

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When children complete Preschool Aquatics Level 1, they should be comfortable getting in and moving through the water and be willing to put their face in the water. Children should also be able to use arm and leg movements while supported.

All Preschool Aquatics Level 1 exit skills can be performed with support:

1. Enter independently, using either the ramp, steps or side, travel at least 5 yards, submerge to mouth and blow bubbles for at least 3 seconds, then safely exit the water. (Children can walk, move along the gutter or “swim.”)
2. While in shallow water, glide on front for at least 2 body lengths, then roll to back and float on back for 3 seconds, then recover to a vertical position.

If successful and the participant is of the age to remain in Preschool Aquatics, the participant should advance to Preschool Aquatics Level 2. If transitioning to Learn-to-Swim, the participant should advance to Learn-to-Swim Level 2.



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## **PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 2**

The objectives of Level 2 are to further develop basic aquatic skills. Children begin to perform these skills at a slightly more advanced level (for example, for longer lengths of time, for longer distances or in deeper water). Many skills in Level 1 are performed with assistance. Level 2 marks the beginning of independent aquatic locomotion skills. Children continue to explore using simultaneous and alternating arm and leg actions on the front and back to gain greater proficiency in preparation for performing strokes. Level 2 also builds on the water safety topics introduced in Level 1.

# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 2 OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Submersion items, such as diving rings</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for children</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit		
Enter water by stepping in from the deck or low height	Demonstrate, independently, into shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Exit water using ladder, steps or side	Demonstrate, independently, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Breath Control and Submerging		
Bobbing	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects	Demonstrate, independently, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Buoyancy on Front		
Front glide	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Front float	Demonstrate, with assistance, for at least 3 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Recover from a front float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, with assistance, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Buoyancy on Back		
Back glide	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Back float	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 5 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, with assistance, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Changing Direction and Position and Treading		
Roll from front to back	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Roll from back to front	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Tread water using arm and leg actions	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 15 seconds, in shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Combined arm and leg actions on front	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 3 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Finning arm action on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 3 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Combined arm and leg actions on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 3 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Staying safe around water	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Recognizing the lifeguards	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket	Discuss/demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Recognizing an emergency	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
How to call for help	Discuss/demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Too Much Sun Is No Fun	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
All Preschool Aquatics Level 2 exit skills can be performed with assistance.		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Glide on front for at least 2 body lengths, roll to back, float on back for 15 seconds, then recover to a vertical position.</li> <li>2. Glide on back for at least 2 body lengths, roll to front, then recover to a vertical position.</li> <li>3. Swim using combined arm and leg actions on front for 3 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then continue swimming on front for at least 3 body lengths.</li> </ol>		

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# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 2 SKILLS

## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

### Enter water by stepping in from the deck or low height—independently

Have children:

1. Stand up at the edge of the pool with the toes curled over the edge.
2. Step out away from the edge and into the water. If necessary, stand to the side of the child and hold the child's hand until he or she is used to the skill.
3. Move back to the side. Assist children as needed until they are able to perform the skill independently.



#### **Safety Notes:**

- Do not let children step in water that is less than shoulder deep.
  - Children should step straight out from the wall without turning.
  - Do not stand in front of a child who is stepping in.
  - Do not try to catch children in mid-air.
- 

### Exit water using ladder, steps or side—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Preschool Aquatics Level 2, children should be able to exit repeatedly and easily from chest-deep water independently.

## Breath Control and Submerging

### Bobbing—independently

Repeat the steps of this skill until the children are able to perform the skill at least 5 times. Have children hold the wall for support and:

1. Take a breath and hold it.
2. Submerge the mouth, nose and eyes or fully submerge for 1 or 2 seconds.
3. Blow bubbles slowly and come up.



**Safety Note:** Do not let children hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit children to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

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**Teaching Tip:** Encourage children to hum as they blow bubbles so they are blowing through their nose.

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## Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects—independently

In shallow water where the children can stand, have the children take a breath and then fully submerge and pick up an object from the bottom.

In water where the children cannot stand:

1. Have the children hold onto the wall.
2. Hold an object about 2 to 3 feet under the water so that children have to fully submerge to retrieve the object.
3. Have them take turns retrieving the object from your hand.
4. If children let go of the wall, help them get back to the wall as needed.

## Buoyancy on Front

### Front glide—with assistance

If the pool is too deep for children to stand but they are comfortable gliding with their faces in the water:

1. Hold children above the waist from behind. Have them put their feet on your legs just above your knees and squat to shoulder depth.
2. Tell them to move into a streamlined position.
3. Have children take a breath and put the face in the water.
4. Then have children push off and glide at least 2 body lengths.

To have children push off from the wall:

1. Have them hold the side of the pool wall with one hand and extend the other arm in front.
2. Place the feet against the pool wall, about hip-width apart.
3. Take a breath and hold it.
4. Let go of the wall and extend the arms into a streamlined position.
5. Push off the wall to begin.

### Front float—with assistance



**Instructor's Note:** *If necessary, have the child practice the skill with support and build up to having the child do the skill with assistance. To provide support during the front float:*

1. *Hold the child in a face-to-face position, with the child's face in the water.*
  2. *Walk backward slowly, just enough to allow the child's legs to float up to the surface and float for at least 3 seconds.*
- 

In Preschool Aquatics Level 2, children should be able to float on the front for at least 3 seconds with assistance as needed.

1. Hold the child in the hip support on front or shoulder support position with the child's face in or out of the water.
2. Walk backward just enough to let the child's legs float up.

3. Make eye contact with the child, cue the child and briefly release support so that the child moves forward slightly, free-floating between your outstretched arms with the face in the water.
4. Resume support by grasping the child's shoulders or armpits.

### **Recover from a front float or glide to a vertical position—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, children should be able to recover from a front float or glide with assistance as needed.

## **Buoyancy on Back**

### **Back glide—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, children should be able to do the back glide for at least 2 body lengths with assistance as needed.

### **Back float—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, children should be able to float on the back for at least 5 seconds with assistance as needed. Children may need to do slight kicks (breaststroke or scissors kick) and use finning motions to stay floating.

### **Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, children should be able to recover from a back float or glide with assistance as needed.

## **Changing Direction and Position and Treading**

### **Roll from front to back—with assistance**

1. Place the child in a face-to-face position.
2. Gain forward momentum to move the child into a front glide, then cue the child by tapping the back of the child's head.
3. Grasp the child's same wrist on the same side (right hand to right wrist, left hand to left wrist) and pull the wrist under. This causes the child's shoulder to dip, helping to turn the child over onto his or her back.
4. As the child turns, support the back of the child's head. At the end of the turn, the child should be in a back float with your support as needed.

### **Roll from back to front—with assistance**

1. Hold the child in the hip support on back or back support position while the child relaxes the arms to the side.
2. Walk backward with the child into a back glide, then reach across the child's body to grasp the child's wrist, supporting the back of the child's head with your other hand.
3. Cue the child and pull the child's arm across the child's body to assist with the roll. At the end of the turn, the child should be in a front float with your support as needed.

## Tread water using arm and leg actions—with assistance

Have children:

1. Stand in shoulder-deep water and practice moving the arms in slow, continuous motions just below the surface of the water.
2. Kick using any leg action that is efficient in holding the head above the surface, such as a modified breaststroke kick, scissors kick or rotary kick.
3. Continue treading water for at least 15 seconds.



**Teaching Tip:** Have children practice initially in chest-deep water with flotation support (for example, a foam noodle or swim bar float placed under the armpits) until they are comfortable. Encourage children to experiment with arm movements that help them maintain their position. Arm actions can start out large and exaggerated.

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## Swim on Front

### Combined arm and leg actions on front—with assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, children should be able to do combined arm and leg actions on the front for at least 3 body lengths with assistance as needed.



**Instructor's Note:** Pushing off from the wall can be used when performing the combined arm and leg actions on front.

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## Swim on Back

### Finning arm action on back—with assistance



**Instructor's Note:** Finning works well with both alternating and simultaneous kicking.

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Providing assistance as needed, have children:

1. Move into a back float with the head back and arms at the sides, relaxing the hands under the surface of the water with the palms facing the bottom of the pool.
2. Bend the elbows, slowly move the hands out from the sides and push the water toward the feet in short strokes using simultaneous or slightly alternating arm movements.

### Combined arm and leg actions on back—with assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, children should be able to do combined arm and leg actions on the back for at least 3 body lengths with assistance as needed.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Preschool Aquatics Level 2:

- Staying safe around water
- Recognizing the lifeguards
- Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Recognizing an emergency
- How to call for help
- Too Much Sun Is No Fun

The water safety topics in Level 2 are the same as those in Level 1. They are repeated to ensure that children start to really understand these very important concepts. When presenting the topics to the children, vary your approach. For example, rather than just telling children how to recognize the lifeguards, ask them questions to see if they can tell you how to recognize the lifeguards. Or, when presenting “Too Much Sun Is No Fun,” restate the main points then make it fun by having the children simulate putting sunscreen all over the exposed parts of their bodies.

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When children complete Preschool Aquatics Level 2, they should be gaining confidence in the water and should be willing to fully submerge. Children should also be able to use arm and leg movements with assistance as needed.

All Preschool Aquatics Level 2 exit skills can be performed with assistance:

1. Glide on front for at least 2 body lengths, roll to back, float on back for 15 seconds, then recover to a vertical position.
2. Glide on back for at least 2 body lengths, roll to front, then recover to a vertical position.
3. Swim using combined arm and leg actions on front for 3 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then continue swimming on front for 3 body lengths.

If successful and the participant is of the age to remain in Preschool Aquatics, the participant should advance to Preschool Aquatics Level 3. If transitioning to Learn-to-Swim, the participant should advance to Learn-to-Swim Level 2.

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## **PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 3**

The objective of Level 3 is to increase children's proficiency in performing previously learned skills. This is accomplished by providing additional guided practice and increasing repetitions, distances, times or levels of refinement. The skills in Level 3 are performed independently. Children improve their coordination and control of combined simultaneous arm and leg actions and alternating arm and leg actions. New water safety topics are introduced, and previously acquired water safety knowledge and skills are reinforced.

# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 3 OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for children</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit		
Enter water by jumping in	Demonstrate, independently, into shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Breath Control and Submerging		
Fully submerge and hold breath	Demonstrate, independently, at least 10 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Bobbing	Demonstrate, independently, at least 10 times, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3 SWS, Ch 5
Rotary breathing	Demonstrate, independently, 5 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Buoyancy on Front		
Float in a face-down position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Front float</li> <li>Jellyfish float</li> <li>Tuck float</li> </ul>	Demonstrate, independently, at least 10 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3 SWS, Ch 5
Recover from a front float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Buoyancy on Back		
Back glide	Demonstrate, independently, at least 3 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Back float	Demonstrate, independently, at least 15 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Changing Direction and Position and Treading		
Change direction of travel while swimming on front or back	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Tread water	Demonstrate, independently, at least 30 seconds, in shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Combined arm and leg actions on front	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Finning arm action on back	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Combined arm and leg actions on back	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Water Safety</b>		
The danger of drains	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Recognizing an emergency	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
How to call for help	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Too Much Sun Is No Fun	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 LWT
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3 LWT
Reach Or Throw, Don't Go	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3 LWT
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<p>All Preschool Aquatics Level 3 exit skills are done independently (defined as no adult contact, intervention or use of flotation devices).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Step from the side into chest-deep water, push off the bottom, move into a treading or floating position for 15 seconds, swim on front and/or back for 5 body lengths, then exit the water.</li> <li>2. Move into a back float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then recover to a vertical position.</li> <li>3. Push off and swim using combined arm and leg actions on front for 5 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then continue swimming for 5 body lengths.</li> </ol>		

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# PRESCHOOL AQUATICS LEVEL 3 SKILLS

## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

### Enter water by jumping in—independently

Have children:

1. Stand up at the edge of the pool with the toes curled over the edge.
2. Jump out away from the edge and into the water.
3. Move back to the side. Assist children as needed.



#### **Safety Notes:**

- Do not let children jump in water that is less than shoulder deep.
  - Children should jump straight out from the wall without turning.
  - Do not stand in front of a child who is jumping in.
  - Do not try to catch children in mid-air.
- 

## Breath Control and Submerging

### Fully submerge and hold breath—independently

Have children practice fully submerging for about 10 seconds at a time, exhaling (blowing bubbles) on the way up.



**Safety Note:** Do not let children hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit children to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

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**Teaching Tip:** When blowing bubbles, encourage children to hum to blow bubbles through the nose.

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## Bobbing—independently

Have children:

1. Stand about 5 feet from the wall then squat and submerge to shoulder depth.
2. Take a breath and hold it.
3. Squat to submerge the head for 1 or 2 seconds.
4. Blow bubbles slowly as they come up, hopping forward toward the wall.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 at least 10 times.



**Teaching Tip:** *If children are having trouble returning to the surface, have them put their arms in front and push down on the water as they come up.*

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## Rotary breathing—independently

Rotary breathing is used when swimming the front crawl. Have children:

1. Turn the head to one side, just enough for the mouth to clear the water but not so far that the body twists.
2. Take a breath.
3. Return the face to the water and exhale slowly.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 in a rhythmic pattern at least 5 times.



**Teaching Tips:** *Introduce and practice this skill in a variety of ways:*

- *Have children stand in chest-deep water, bend at the waist, put the face down in the water and practice 5 breaths in a row.*
  - *Have children bracket on the wall and practice 5 breaths in a row while flutter kicking on the front.*
  - *While also practicing the flutter kick on the front, have children use a flotation device and:*
    1. *Exhale and let go of the flotation device with one hand.*
    2. *Roll the body and turn the head to the same side until the mouth clears the water.*
    3. *Keep half of the head in the water and take a breath.*
    4. *Put the face back in the water, grab the flotation device and continue kicking.*
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## Buoyancy on Front

### Float in a face-down position—independently

In Preschool Aquatics Level 3, children should be able to float in a face-down position for at least 10 seconds independently. Children may do the front float, jellyfish float or tuck float.



**Instructor's Note:** *Children should be in chest-deep water for these skills. (If chest-deep water is not available, assist the children to recover.)*

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### **Front float**

Have children:

1. Submerge to the neck in chest-deep water with the arms extended in front, palms facing down.
  2. Take a breath and hold it.
  3. Bend forward at the waist and put the face in the water until the ears are covered.
  4. Keep the arms extended in front, gently push off the bottom and let the feet and legs float to the surface.
  5. Exhale slowly, lift the head, press down with the arms, pull the knees under the body toward the chest and place the feet on the bottom to recover.
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## ***Jellyfish float***

Have children:

1. Submerge to the neck.
2. Take a breath and hold it.
3. Bend forward at the waist and put the face in the water until the ears are covered.
4. Flex the knees slightly to raise the feet off the bottom. Let the arms and legs hang naturally from the body.
5. Continue holding the breath, relaxing as much as possible.
6. Allow the back to rise to the surface of the water and float for at least 10 seconds.
7. Drop the feet, exhale slowly and stand up to recover.

## ***Tuck float***

Have children:

1. Submerge to the neck.
2. Take a breath and hold it.
3. Bend forward at the waist and put the face in the water with the chin on the chest.
4. Flex the hips and bring the knees to the chest.
5. Hold on to the legs at mid-calf and allow the body to rise to the surface and float for at least 10 seconds.
6. Exhale slowly, let go of the legs and stand up to recover.

## **Recover from a front float or glide to a vertical position—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to recover from a front float or glide independently.

## **Buoyancy on Back**

### **Back glide—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to do the back glide for at least 3 body lengths independently.

### **Back float—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to float on the back for at least 15 seconds independently. Children may need to do slight kicks (breaststroke or scissors kick) and use finning motions to stay floating.

### **Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to recover from a back float or glide independently.

## Changing Direction and Position and Treading

### Change direction of travel while swimming on front or back—independently

Being able to change direction while swimming on the front and on the back is an important safety skill. It allows a swimmer to return to safety when pushing off from the wall or to move away from dangerous situations.

Stand about 2 yards from the pool wall in waist- to chest-deep water. Have children:

1. Push off from the wall and swim using combined arm and leg actions on the front or back.
2. Continue swimming around you, and then back to the wall.

### Tread water—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to tread water using arm and leg actions for at least 30 seconds independently.

## Swim on Front

### Combined arm and leg actions on front—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to do combined arm and leg actions on the front for at least 5 body lengths independently.



**Instructor's Note:** At this distance, children will need to take a breath. Encourage each child by walking backward in front of him or her. Every few strokes, cue the child to blow bubbles. If necessary during the first few tries, position your hands under the child's shoulders, briefly lift him or her up to take a breath then allow the child to continue swimming independently.

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## Swim on Back

### Finning arm action on back—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to perform finning arm actions for at least 5 body lengths independently.

### Combined arm and leg actions on back—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, children should be able to do combined arm and leg actions on the back for at least 5 body lengths independently.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Preschool Aquatics Level 3:

- The danger of drains
- Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Recognizing an emergency
- How to call for help
- Too Much Sun Is No Fun
- Look Before You Leap
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Reach Or Throw, Don't Go

As in Level 2, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the children's level of understanding.

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When children complete Preschool Aquatics Level 3, they should be increasingly confident in the water. Children are starting to swim independently using arm and leg movements but may still need assistance when taking a breath.

All Preschool Aquatics Level 3 exit skills are performed independently:

1. Step from the side into chest-deep water, push off the bottom, move into a treading or floating position for 15 seconds, swim on front and/or back for 5 body lengths, then exit the water.
2. Move into a back float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then recover to a vertical position.
3. Push off and swim using combined arm and leg actions on front for 5 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then continue swimming for 5 body lengths.

If successful, the participant is ready to transition to Learn-to-Swim Level 3.

# LEARN-TO-SWIM

**T**he objectives of the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim courses are to teach children and young teens to be safe in, on and around the water and to swim well. Aquatic and personal water safety skills are taught in a logical progression through six levels. Participants in Level 1 are oriented to the aquatic environment and gain some basic skills in each category. As they progress through the levels, participants build on their basic skills to learn and refine various propulsive movements on the front, back and side. On successful completion of Level 3, participants have achieved basic water competency in a pool environment. By the end of Level 6, participants have the prerequisite skills and have developed the necessary skill and fitness levels for entrance into advanced courses, such as Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguarding, or other aquatic activities such as competitive swimming and diving.

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# ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

## Prerequisites

The recommended minimum age for entry into Red Cross Learn-to-Swim is approximately 6 years old. There is no maximum age for any level; however, it is typical that participants in the Learn-to-Swim levels are elementary- to middle school-age children. There are no skill prerequisites for Learn-to-Swim Level 1. For Levels 2 through 6, participants must be able to demonstrate the exit skills assessment of the previous level. Instructors should evaluate all participants prior to the start of a session or during the first lesson, regardless of level, to determine an appropriate starting point for each participant. Some participants will have some experience with the water and may begin the program at a higher level.



**Instructor's Note:** Most Learn-to-Swim participants are school-age children and young teens, ranging in age from about 6 years to 15 years. Because of different levels of maturity, strength and ability, it is usually best to set up programs so that children and teens are grouped separately.

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## Course Length

Course sessions typically consist of 8 to 10 lessons of 30 to 45 minutes each. There is no required minimum or maximum course length.

## Class Size

Class sizes may range from one-on-one instruction to the American Red Cross recommendation of at least one instructor for every 6 to 10 participants in a course. A sufficient number of participants are necessary to successfully meet the objectives in the lesson plans. It is necessary to have enough participants to ensure that all skills can be conducted effectively.

Close supervision is necessary for effective practice and safety. To increase safety and instructional quality, consider using a co-instructor or instructor aide when certain factors are present, such as a participant who needs special attention, a participant who is fearful or anxious or a class that consists of young children.



**Instructor's Note:** Remember, although Water Safety instructor aides may assist in classes, only certified Water Safety instructors should be co-instructors. See Chapter 1 for more detailed information about co-instructors and instructor aides.

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## Facility

It is recommended that Learn-to-Swim classes be taught only in well-maintained swimming pools. If conducting classes in an open body of water, such as a lake, remember that open bodies of water are more likely to carry harmful organisms and are subject to wide variations in temperature, clarity and

weather conditions. Always check with facility management to ensure that open bodies of water have been checked for safety.

Optimal conditions at the facility can make your program more successful. Whenever possible, a facility for Learn-to-Swim classes should have:

- Working showers, with warm water and soap available.
- Adequate air circulation and sufficiently warm air temperatures.
- Secured pool entrances when classes are not in session.
- A storage space for instructional aids and toys.

## Temperature

Children between the ages of 6 and 15 years can tolerate water that is a little cooler than the preferred temperature for younger children. Typically, school-age children are most comfortable in water that is at least 84.2° F (29° C) during a 30- to 45-minute swim lesson. If you cannot control the water temperature, consider decreasing lesson duration and increasing the number of lessons. Other measures you can take to prevent participants from becoming chilled include increasing the intensity of the activity, encouraging participants to wear warm neoprene cover-ups (such as a vest, shirt, wet suit or ear wraps) and advising parents to bring an extra dry towel to wrap around the child when exiting the water, especially if the air temperature and humidity levels are low.

As a Water Safety instructor, you need to be able to recognize when a participant may be too chilled. If you notice that a participant seems chilled or uncomfortable, end the lesson promptly. Signals of hypothermia include shivering, numbness, glassy stare, apathy, weakness, impaired judgment and loss of consciousness.

## Depth

The course requirements are based on the assumption that the facility has water shallow enough for participants to stand and, for some levels, deep enough to learn headfirst entries and diving skills. The Red Cross recommends a minimum of 9 feet for headfirst entries and diving from poolside and 11 feet, 6 inches for diving from a 1-meter diving board (or deeper if state or local regulations require). If your facility does not meet these guidelines, you *must not* teach headfirst entry and diving skills. In such circumstances, headfirst entries are not required for successful completion of the level. If possible, move the class to another facility with proper depth to teach those skills.

## Course Requirements

For each of the six Learn-to-Swim levels, completion requirements are provided in the outlines in this chapter. Refer to Box 9-1 for definitions of the terms used to describe completion requirements throughout this instructor's manual. In addition, stroke performance criteria for swimming strokes are provided at each level. As your class proceeds, use the applicable skills checklist (available on Instructor's Corner; [instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) to chart participants' progress as they satisfy the requirements.

To receive a completion card for a given level, the participant must meet the requirements for the level. This includes demonstrating the completion requirement for all of the skills listed on the outline, as well as performing the exit skills assessment. To ensure that your participants are truly achieving success, review and practice the skills throughout the lessons until participants have reached the required

### Box 9-1. Terms Used to Describe Completion Requirements at Each Level

- **Explore**—the participant attempts various ways to perform the skill; the skill may or may not be done with support but is always done with close supervision
- **Support**—the participant performs a skill with support provided by a parent, an instructor or a flotation device
- **Assistance**—the participant performs a skill unsupported, but may begin and end the skill with support from a parent or instructor
- **Demonstrate**—the participant performs a skill
- **Independently**—the participant demonstrates a skill without support or assistance, but still with close supervision
- **Show and tell**—the instructor provides information using push, pull and balance techniques with the expectation that participants are engaged, answering questions or providing responses that indicate that they understand the concepts presented

performance criteria. Participants should be able to perform each skill successfully at least a couple of times to complete the level. To help participants prepare for the exit skills assessment, combine skills as participants begin achieving success with each individual skill. For example, once participants are able to step into the water repeatedly, front glide for a couple of body lengths and recover to a vertical position, have them put these skills together. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion about practice.)

A badge system provides additional opportunities to recognize and reward achievement outside of the levels. The badges can be effective for motivating participants to strive toward developing specific skills and for recognizing participants for something that they are doing well, especially when they are struggling with a specific skill or set of skills needed to successfully complete the level. Chapter 12 describes the badge system in more detail.

Customize safety and swimming skills to match the individual participant's capabilities. Be flexible in applying performance standards, but remember, the participant must be able to meet the objectives of the exit skills assessment to receive a completion card for the course level. A participant who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently may not be able to meet the performance standards. For example, a participant may be unable to move a joint in a particular way but can still move through the water in a modified way. In such cases, use your judgment as to whether the participant performs the skill as close to the standard as his or her condition allows. See Chapter 6 for more information about modifying skills.

## Resources

This chapter outlines the completion requirements and descriptions for each skill in each level, as well as the exit skills assessment for each level. The following additional Red Cross materials are available as resources:

- *Swimming and Water Safety*
- *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety DVD*
- *Swimming and Diving Skills DVD*

- Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety pages on Instructor’s Corner (access tools and resources you can share with parents to reinforce the information and skills participants are learning in class and to promote ongoing participation in the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program)
- *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet*
- *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales DVD*



**Instructor’s Note:** *Chapter 6 in Swimming and Water Safety and the Swimming and Diving Skills DVD provide additional detail and images for the performance of each swimming stroke.*

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## Support Materials

Keeping participants and their parents informed of progress is one of the most important things you can do to ensure optimal learning and customer satisfaction in your classes. Support materials are available to help you fulfill this responsibility.

### ***Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet***

The *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* is a convenient way for you to provide participants and their parents with progress reports as the participant progresses through the lessons.

The *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* provides a way of tracking what skills the participant has achieved and what skills still need work. Multiple panels track with the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels. Skills and exit skills assessments are listed by level in a checklist format. Once the participant has successfully completed all of the requirements for a level, the instructor acknowledges that accomplishment by signing and dating the page in the *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* and by checking a box indicating the participant’s readiness to enroll in the next level. These multiple opportunities for an instructor to acknowledge progress allow for the possibility that a participant will not successfully achieve all of the skills in a single session.

It is recommended that achievement booklets be provided to all participants in the Learn-to-Swim levels. Participants can use the same achievement booklet to track their achievements as they progress through the levels of Learn-to-Swim.

### **Completion cards**

Upon successful course completion, participants may be issued Learn-to-Swim course completion cards, which are included in the annual Learn-to-Swim Authorized Provider promotional package. To receive a completion card, Learn-to-Swim participants must be able to demonstrate the completion requirement for all of the skills listed on the outline, as well as perform the exit skills assessment. (Headfirst entries and diving skills are omitted from the completion requirements and exit skills assessment if the water is not deep enough.)

### **American Red Cross Swim mobile application**

The American Red Cross Swim mobile application (app) supports and promotes the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program, focusing on the courses in the Preschool Aquatics program and

Learn-to-Swim program. This app provides parents and children with water safety information and links them to Red Cross Authorized Providers that deliver the Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program. The app:

- Supports and promotes the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program.
- Allows parents to track and share the progress of their children through the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels.
- Provides adults with information about water safety in general, as well as water safety in specific environments.
- Helps children learn about water safety through video segments from Longfellow’s WHALE Tales, age-appropriate water safety messaging, and quizzes for the parent and child to complete together.

Encourage parents to download the Red Cross Swim mobile app as soon as they enter a child in your swim lesson program. The app can be found at [redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps](http://redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps) or downloaded directly from the iTunes or Google Play app stores.

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## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Keep the following safety considerations in mind when conducting Learn-to-Swim classes:

- Maintain a safety-first mindset.
  - Be sure that parents maintain active supervision of their children whenever children leave the class area.
  - Remind children to ask for permission to enter the water.
  - Explain and enforce the safety rules for your facility, and set a good example.
  - Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.
- Explain to parents that recreational water illnesses (RWIs) can be passed to others when people who have had loose stools return to the water too soon. Pediatricians recommend that children with fevers, rashes, diarrhea or any symptoms of an infection not participate in an aquatics program. Let parents know that they should not bring children to class who do not feel well, who have diarrhea or who are just recovering from a diarrheal illness. See Chapter 1 for more information on RWIs.
  - Discourage participants from swallowing water.
  - Remind participants to use the toilet before entering the pool.
  - Make sure participants shower before entering the pool.
- To maintain safety when working with one participant at a time:
  - Do not turn your back to the rest of the class. Instead, move in a direction that is parallel to the rest of the class.
  - Stay within quick reach of the rest of the class.
  - Work efficiently and try to give equal time to each participant. If absolutely necessary for safety, have the other participants sit on the side while waiting their turn, but realize that this is a poor teaching technique that limits active practice time.



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**Instructor's Note:** Teaching swimming skills is very hands-on. As a Water Safety instructor, you will use holding and support techniques to increase participants' sense of security in the water and to support them while they practice new skills. You will also help participants get used to new or unfamiliar movements by physically moving their arms, legs or other body parts so that they get a sense of how the movement is supposed to feel. Whenever you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance, take care to follow the guidelines for positioning your hands carefully so that you avoid touching the participant in an inappropriate way. In addition, try to keep your hands as visible as possible when you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance to minimize the chance that your handling of the participant could be construed as inappropriate.

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## WORKING WITH SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN AND YOUNG TEENS

### Developmental Considerations

There are developmental differences among children who enroll throughout the different levels of Learn-to-Swim. It is important to consider the developmental level of your participants, and to plan and present your lessons accordingly. Consider your participants' maturity, strength, endurance, agility, physical size and level of understanding. You may need to be flexible and adjust your plans once you meet participants. When you have participants of varying ages in the same class, you will need to plan a mix of skills and activities that participants can do together and separately. Chapter 3 provides more information about planning developmentally appropriate lessons, and Chapter 5 provides more information about working with school-age children and young teens.



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**Instructor's Note:** Teaching tips for working with children who move, learn, communicate or behave differently are incorporated throughout Chapters 7 and 8. In addition, Chapter 6 provides information about teaching strategies for participants with specific disabilities or health conditions.

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### Promoting Learning

COLA (Check–Organize–Lead–Assess) is an approach that can help you plan effective lessons that meet the needs of your participants and help them to achieve their goals. Use the COLA approach (see Chapter 3, Box 3-1) at the beginning of a course session to establish a baseline and throughout the course session to track progress.

In your role as a water safety instructor, your job is to guide, instruct and provide positive, corrective feedback to help your participants achieve the goals of the course. The best learning takes place when the environment is relaxed and comfortable, and the instructor and participant have developed an environment of trust for learning. Keep the following in mind:

- Explain the buddy system and pair off participants. Emphasize that this system helps participants help each other learn and provides added safety.

- Consider first letting participants show you how they perform the various skills as you introduce them. This is a good way to ease the fear of the unknown (the first days of swim class or the first attempt at trying a new skill) in some beginners. It also helps you evaluate what they already know, what they are willing to try and determine a good pace for introducing the skills.
- Encourage participants to explore different movements in the water. Observe what comes naturally to them and build on their strengths. As the session progresses, provide a wide variety of experiences to help participants master the skills of the level.
- Never force a participant to perform a skill; this only delays the participant’s readiness to try additional skills. Allow the participant to progress at his or her own pace through the skills.
- Praise effort regardless of the level of success.
- Remember that the skills and requirements are not cast in stone; be ready to modify them as necessary to meet the needs of individual participants.
- Always end the lesson with a game or activity that is enjoyable.



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for resources such as games and drills to aid in making the course more fun and to help participants achieve the course requirements.

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## Working with Fearful Participants

When a participant is fearful, you need to help reduce that fear. Being consistent in your lessons—such as by starting and ending each lesson in the same way—helps the participant become familiar with the routine. Familiarity is comforting and can promote willingness to participate. To reduce the impact of learned fears, plan carefully and give a lot of positive reinforcement. Participants enjoy the water more when they can learn at their own pace, experience success, practice repeatedly and receive praise for their efforts. For more information about understanding and working with fearful children, see Chapter 5. Box 2-3 in Chapter 2 also provides general strategies for helping an anxious or fearful participant.

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## LEARN-TO-SWIM COURSE

Red Cross Learn-to-Swim provides school-age children and young teens with positive, developmentally appropriate aquatic learning experiences. Learn-to-Swim consists of six levels:

- Learn-to-Swim Level 1 is designed to orient participants to the aquatic environment and to help them gain basic aquatic skills. In addition, participants start learning about how to be safe around water.
- Learn-to-Swim Level 2 builds on the basic aquatic skills and water safety skills and concepts learned in Level 1. Participants begin to perform skills at a slightly more advanced level and begin gaining rudimentary propulsive skills on both the front and the back. This level marks the beginning of independent aquatic locomotion skills.
- Learn-to-Swim Level 3 builds on the skills learned in Levels 1 and 2. Participants learn to swim the front crawl and elementary backstroke at rudimentary proficiency levels, and are introduced

to the scissors and dolphin kicks. Participants learn the survival float and increase the time duration for treading water. Participants also learn the rules for headfirst entries and begin to learn to enter the water headfirst from a seated position at poolside (if the water is 9 feet deep or deeper). On successful completion of Level 3, participants have achieved basic water competency in a pool environment.

- Learn-to-Swim Level 4 seeks to improve participants' proficiency in performing the swimming strokes that were introduced in Level 3. Participants perform these strokes with increased proficiency and are able to swim them for greater distances. In addition, participants learn the arm actions that accompany the scissors kick and breaststroke kick in order to begin performing the sidestroke and breaststroke at rudimentary proficiency levels. Participants also learn the back crawl and butterfly at rudimentary proficiency levels, in addition to the basics of performing a simple open turn at a wall.
- Learn-to-Swim Level 5 focuses on helping participants refine their performance of all six swimming strokes (front crawl, back crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, elementary backstroke and sidestroke). Participants perform these strokes with increased proficiency and are able to swim them for greater distances. Participants also learn to perform flip turns on the front and back.
- Level 6 focuses on refining strokes and turns and building endurance. Three options (Personal Water Safety, Fundamentals of Diving and Fitness Swimmer) provide participants with the opportunity to learn information and skills for specific aquatic activities.

It is not necessary to introduce the skills in the specific order of categories. Participants do not learn skills in a single linear progression. Allow participants to practice the skills at lower levels until they are proficient and comfortable with the skill. This will help them to acquire skills at more advanced levels. Be sure, however, to integrate water safety skills in each lesson of each level, so participants learn what they can do to be safe in, on and around the water.

Refer to Box 9-1 for a summary of the terms used in this instructor's manual to describe the completion requirements for each level.



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## **LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 1—INTRODUCTION TO WATER SKILLS**

Level 1 introduces basic aquatic skills, which participants continue to build on as they progress through Learn-to-Swim. In addition, participants start developing positive attitudes, effective swimming habits and safe practices in and around the water. Learn-to-Swim Level 1 skills overlap with the Preschool Aquatics Level 1 and 2 skills.

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 1—INTRODUCTION TO WATER SKILLS OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block and lesson plan for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

<b>Recommended Equipment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Submersion items, such as diving rings</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> </ul>		
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit</b>		
Enter water using ramp, steps or side	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Exit water using ladder, steps or side	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Breath Control and Submerging</b>		
Blow bubbles	Demonstrate, at least 3 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Bobbing	Demonstrate, at least 5 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects	Demonstrate, at least 2 times, in shallow water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
<b>Buoyancy</b>		
Front glide	Demonstrate, with or without assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Recover from a front glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, with or without assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Back glide	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Back float	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 5 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Changing Direction and Position and Treading</b>		
Roll from front to back	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Roll from back to front	Demonstrate, with assistance	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Arm and hand treading actions	Explore, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Alternating leg action on front	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous leg action on front	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Alternating arm action on front	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous arm action on front	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Combined arm and leg actions on front	Demonstrate, independently, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Alternating leg action on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous leg action on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Alternating arm action on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Simultaneous arm action on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Combined arm and leg actions on back	Demonstrate, with assistance, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Staying safe around water	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Recognizing the lifeguards	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4
Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Recognizing an emergency	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
How to call for help	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Too Much Sun Is No Fun	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enter independently, using either the ramp, steps or side; travel at least 5 yards; bob 5 times; then safely exit the water. (Participants can walk, move along the gutter or "swim.")</li> <li>2. Glide on front at least 2 body lengths, roll to a back float for 5 seconds and recover to a vertical position. (This part of the assessment can be performed with assistance.)</li> </ol>		

LTS, Learn-to-Swim; LWT, Longfellow's WHALE Tales; PSA, Preschool Aquatics; PWS, Personal Water Safety; SWS, *Swimming and Water Safety*; WSIM, *Water Safety Instructor's Manual*.

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 1 SKILLS

## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

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**Safety Note:** *Maintain contact with any participant who needs help while entering or exiting the water when first learning these skills.*

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### Enter water using ramp, steps or side—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Exit water using ladder, steps or side—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## Breath Control and Submerging

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**Safety Note:** *Do not let children hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit children to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.*

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### Blow bubbles

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Bobbing

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 2, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 2, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## Buoyancy

### Front glide—with or without assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 2, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Recover from a front glide to a vertical position—with or without assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Back glide—with assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Back float—with assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 1, participants should back float with assistance for at least 5 seconds.

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## **Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Changing Direction and Position and Treading**

### **Roll from front to back—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Roll from back to front—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Arm and hand treading actions**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Swim on Front**

### **Alternating leg action on front—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Simultaneous leg action on front—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Alternating arm action on front—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Simultaneous arm action on front—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Combined arm and leg actions on front—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

In *Learn-to-Swim Level 1*, participants should be able to perform the combined arm and leg actions on front at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

#### **Level 1 Combined Arm and Leg Actions on Front Stroke Performance Criteria**

Legs	Alternating or simultaneous kicking action
Arms	Alternating or simultaneous propulsive and recovery actions

## **Swim on Back**

### **Alternating leg action on back—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Simultaneous leg action on back—with assistance**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## Alternating arm action on back—with assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## Simultaneous arm action on back—with assistance

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## Combined arm and leg actions on back—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 1, participants should be able to perform the combined arm and leg actions on back at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 1 Combined Arm and Leg Actions on Back Stroke Performance Criteria

Legs	Alternating or simultaneous kicking action
Arms	Alternating or simultaneous propulsive and recovery actions

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 1:

- Staying safe around water
- Recognizing the lifeguards
- Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Recognizing an emergency
- How to call for help
- Too Much Sun Is No Fun

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When children complete Preschool Aquatics Level 1, they should be comfortable getting in and moving through the water and be willing to put their face in the water. Children should also be able to use arm and leg movements with assistance.

1. Enter independently, using either the ramp, steps or side; travel at least 5 yards; bob 5 times; then safely exit the water. (Participants can walk, move along the gutter or “swim.”)
2. Glide on front at least 2 body lengths, roll to a back float for 5 seconds and recover to a vertical position. (This part of the assessment can be performed with assistance.)

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## **LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 2—FUNDAMENTAL AQUATIC SKILLS**

The objective of Learn-to-Swim Level 2 is to give participants success with fundamental skills. Many of the skills taught in this level are the same skills taught in Preschool Aquatics Level 3. This level marks the beginning of true locomotion skills. Participants learn to glide and float without support and recover to a vertical position. Participants further develop simultaneous and alternating arm and leg actions on the front and back, laying the foundation for future strokes. New water safety topics are introduced, and previously acquired water safety knowledge and skills are reinforced.

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 2—FUNDAMENTAL AQUATIC SKILLS OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Submersion items, such as diving rings</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit		
Enter water by stepping or jumping from the side	Demonstrate, independently, into shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2, PSA 3
Exit water using ladder, steps or side	Demonstrate, independently, from chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Breath Control and Submerging		
Fully submerge and hold breath	Demonstrate, independently, at least 10 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Bobbing	Demonstrate, independently, at least 10 times, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3 SWS, Ch 5
Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects	Demonstrate, independently, in chest-deep water, at least 3 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Rotary breathing	Demonstrate, independently, 5 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Buoyancy		
Front glide	Demonstrate, independently, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Float in a face-down position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Front float</li> <li>■ Jellyfish float</li> <li>■ Tuck float</li> </ul>	Demonstrate, independently, at least 10 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3 SWS, Ch 5
Recover from a front float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, independently, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Back glide	Demonstrate, independently, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Back float	Demonstrate, independently, at least 15 seconds	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position	Demonstrate, independently, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Changing Direction and Position and Treading</b>		
Roll from front to back	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Roll from back to front	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Change direction of travel while swimming on front or back	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Tread water using arm and leg actions	Demonstrate, independently, at least 15 seconds, in shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Combined arm and leg actions on front	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Finning arm action on back	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2
Combined arm and leg actions on back	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 9, PSA 1
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Staying safe around water	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Recognizing an emergency	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
How to call for help	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Too Much Sun Is No Fun	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3, 5 LWT
Reach or Throw, Don't Go	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3 LWT
The danger of drains	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Step from the side into chest-deep water, push off the bottom, move into a treading or floating position for at least 15 seconds, swim on front and/or back for 5 body lengths, then exit the water.</li> <li>2. Move into a back float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then recover to a vertical position.</li> <li>3. Push off and swim using combined arm and leg actions on front for 5 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then continue swimming for at least 5 body lengths.</li> </ol>		

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 2 SKILLS

## Water Adjustment, Entry and Exit

### Enter water by stepping in from the deck or low height or jumping from the side— independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Levels 2 and 3, for step-by-step descriptions of this skill.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 2, participants should be able to enter the water independently.



#### **Safety Notes:**

- *Do not let children step or jump into water that is less than shoulder deep.*
- *Children should step or jump straight out from the wall without turning.*
- *Do not stand in front of a child who is stepping or jumping in.*
- *Do not try to catch children in midair.*

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### Exit water using ladder, steps or side— independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 2, participants should be able to exit repeatedly and easily from chest-deep water independently.

## Breath Control and Submerging



**Safety Note:** *Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.*

### Fully submerge and hold breath— independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 3, for a description of this skill.

### Bobbing— independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged objects— independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 2, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### Rotary breathing— independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Buoyancy**

### **Front glide—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, participants should be able to do a front glide for 2 body lengths independently.

### **Float in a face-down position—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, participants should be able to float in a face-down position for at least 10 seconds independently. Children may do the front float, jellyfish float or tuck float.

### **Recover from a front float or glide to a vertical position—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, participants should be able to recover from a front float or glide independently.

### **Back glide—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, participants should be able to do the back glide for at least 2 body lengths independently.

### **Back float—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, participants should be able to float on the back for at least 15 seconds independently. Participants may need to do slight kicks (breaststroke or scissors kick) and use finning motions to stay floating.

### **Recover from a back float or glide to a vertical position—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 1*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, children should be able to recover from a back float or glide independently.

## **Changing Direction and Position and Treading**

### **Roll from front to back—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, children should be able to roll from front to back independently.

### **Roll from back to front—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 2*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, children should be able to roll from back to front independently.

### **Change direction of travel while swimming on front or back—independently**

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In *Learn-to-Swim Level 2*, children should be able to change direction of travel while swimming on front or back independently.

## Tread water using arm and leg actions—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 2, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 2, participants should be able to tread water using arm and leg actions for at least 15 seconds independently.

## Swim on Front

### Combined arm and leg actions on front—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 2, participants should be able to do combined arm and leg actions on the front for at least 5 body lengths independently and at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

#### Level 2 Combined Arm and Leg Actions on Front Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk and legs may be horizontal to 45 degrees from surface; face in water
Legs—alternating	Alternate kicking action; rudimentary flutter or bicycle action
Legs—simultaneous	Simultaneous kicking action; rudimentary dolphin or breaststroke action
Arms—alternating	Alternate propulsive and recovery action; downward or slightly outward motion acceptable; underwater arm recovery acceptable
Arms—simultaneous	Simultaneous propulsive and recovery actions; downward and outward motion acceptable; underwater arm recovery acceptable

## Swim on Back

### Finning arm action on back—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 2, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 2, participants should be able to perform finning arm actions for at least 5 body lengths independently.

### Combined arm and leg actions on back—independently

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 1, children should be able to do combined arm and leg actions on the back for at least 5 body lengths independently and at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

#### Level 2 Combined Arm and Leg Actions on Back Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk and legs may be horizontal to 45 degrees from surface
Legs—alternating	Alternate kicking action; rudimentary flutter or bicycling action
Legs—simultaneous	Simultaneous kicking action; rudimentary dolphin or elementary backstroke action
Arms—alternating	Alternate propulsive and recovery action; underwater arm recovery acceptable; hand moving downward with minimal backward action acceptable
Arms—simultaneous	Simultaneous propulsive and recovery actions; underwater arm recovery acceptable

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 2:

- Staying safe around water
- Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Recognizing an emergency
- How to call for help
- Too Much Sun Is No Fun
- Look Before You Leap
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- The danger of drains

Some of the water safety topics from Level 1 are repeated for reinforcement. Vary your presentation to keep it interesting and to assess participants' level of understanding.

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 2, they should be increasingly confident in the water. Participants are starting to swim independently using arm and leg movements, but may still need assistance when taking a breath.

All Learn-to-Swim Level 2 exit skills are performed independently:

1. Step from side into chest-deep water, push off the bottom, move into a treading or floating position for at least 15 seconds, swim on front and/or back for 5 body lengths, then exit the water.
2. Move into a back float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then recover to a vertical position.
3. Push off and swim using combined arm and leg actions on front for 5 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to front, then continue swimming for at least 5 body lengths.



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## LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 3—STROKE DEVELOPMENT

The objectives of Learn-to-Swim Level 3 are to expand proficiency of previously learned skills by providing additional guided practice. Participants learn and practice survival floating and learn to swim front crawl and elementary backstroke at rudimentary proficiency levels. You introduce the scissors and dolphin kicks and extend the time duration for treading water. Participants also learn rules for headfirst entries and begin to learn to enter the water headfirst from a seated position at poolside (if the water is 9 feet deep or deeper). As in all levels, new and previously addressed water safety topics are included. Participants who successfully complete Level 3 have achieved basic water competency in a pool environment.

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 3—STROKE DEVELOPMENT OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in correct sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as kickboards, foam noodles and pull buoys</li> <li>■ Fins</li> <li>■ Equipment for reaching assists, such as reaching poles and rescue tubes</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Entry and Exit		
Enter water by jumping from the side, fully submerge, then recover to the surface and return to the side	Demonstrate, into deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Headfirst entry from the side in a sitting position*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 7
Headfirst entry from the side in a kneeling position*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 7
Breath Control and Submerging		
Bobbing while moving toward safety	Demonstrate, at least 15 times, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Rotary breathing	Demonstrate, 15 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Buoyancy		
Survival float on front	Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 3
Back float	Demonstrate, at least 1 minute, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Changing Direction and Position and Treading		
Change from vertical to horizontal position on front	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Change from vertical to horizontal position on back	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
While in a vertical position, rotate one full turn	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Tread water	Demonstrate, 1 minute, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 5

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Push off in a streamlined position on front, then begin flutter kicking	Demonstrate, 3 to 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Push off in a streamlined position on front, then begin dolphin kicking	Demonstrate, 3 to 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke kick	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Swim on Side</b>		
Scissors kick	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Reach or Throw, Don't Go	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3 LWT
Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 3 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
Developing breath control safely	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Making good decisions—choosing an exit point	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jump into deep water from the side, recover to the surface, maintain position by treading or floating for 1 minute, rotate one full turn then turn as necessary to orient to the exit point, level off, swim front crawl and/or elementary backstroke for 25 yards, then exit the water.</li> <li>2. Push off in a streamlined position, then swim front crawl for 15 yards, change position and direction as necessary, swim elementary backstroke for 15 yards, then exit the water.</li> </ol>		

\* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries.

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 3 SKILLS

## Water Entry and Exit

### Enter water by jumping from the side, fully submerge, then recover to the surface and return to the side

One at a time, have participants:

1. Stand at the edge of the pool, hold the arms up and out slightly to the side, curl the toes over the edge, take a breath, and jump out from the edge and into the water.
2. Sweep down with the arms and use any kick to return to the surface after entering the water.
3. Level off (bring the body to the surface in a horizontal position on the front or back) and swim back to the edge of the pool after surfacing.

### Headfirst entry from the side in a sitting position



**Safety note:** Headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9 feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries from poolside.

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One at a time, have participants:

1. Sit on the pool edge with feet on the edge of the gutter or against the side of the pool.
2. Extend the arms over the head.
3. Focus on a target on the surface that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water.
4. Lean forward, try to touch the water and push with the legs.
5. Straighten the body and extend both legs upon entering the water.
6. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.

### Headfirst entry from the side in a kneeling position



**Safety note:** Headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9 feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries from poolside.

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One at a time, have participants:

1. Kneel on one knee while gripping the pool edge with the toes of the other foot. The toes of the kneeling leg should be in a position to help push from the deck.
2. Extend the arms over the head.
3. Focus on a target on the surface that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water.
4. Lean forward, try to touch the water and, when starting to lose balance, push with the legs.
5. Upon entering the water, straighten the body and extend both legs.
6. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.

## Breath Control and Submerging

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**Safety Note:** Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

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### Bobbing while moving toward safety

Starting away from the wall in water about 1 foot over their heads, have participants practice bobbing back toward the wall. Have participants:

1. Relax and hold the arms out in front.
2. Take a breath and hold it.
3. Bend the knees to submerge.
4. Push off the bottom (or kick up if not at the bottom) and sweep down with the arms to rise to the surface, positioning the body at an angle to move forward.
5. Exhale slowly (blow bubbles) right before reaching the surface.
6. Inhale when the mouth clears the surface.
7. Repeat steps 1 to 6 at least 15 times to reach the wall.

### Rotary breathing

Refer to Chapter 8, *Preschool Aquatics Level 3*, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

In *Learn-to-Swim Level 3*, participants should be able to perform rotary breathing at least 15 times.



**Teaching Tips:** Introduce and practice this skill in a variety of ways:

- Have participants stand in chest-deep water, bend at the waist, put the face down in the water and practice 15 breaths in a row.
  - Have participants bracket on the wall and practice 10 breaths in a row while flutter kicking on the front.
  - While also practicing the flutter kick on the front, have participants use a flotation device and:
    1. Exhale and let go of the flotation device with one hand.
    2. Roll the body and turn the head to the same side until the mouth clears the water.
    3. Keep half of the head in the water and take a breath.
    4. Put the face back in the water, grab the flotation device and continue kicking.
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## Buoyancy

### Survival float on front

In this level, participants should be able to survival float for at least 30 seconds. Have participants:

1. Take a breath and hold it, then put the face in the water. Allow the arms and legs to hang freely. Rest in this position for a few seconds.

2. Take another breath by slowly lifting the arms to about shoulder height and moving the arms forward. Separate the legs, moving one leg forward and one leg back.
3. Exhale slowly into the water (blow bubbles), then gently press down with the arms while bringing the legs together. This movement lifts the mouth above the water for another breath.
4. Return to the resting position.
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 to take additional breaths.

## Back float

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 3, participants should be able to float on the back for at least 1 minute in deep water. Participants may need to do slight kicks (breaststroke or scissors kick) and use finning motions to stay floating.

## Changing Direction and Position and Treading

### Change from vertical to horizontal position on front

Starting from either treading water or after surfacing from jumping into deep water, have participants:

1. Take a breath.
2. Lean forward and put the face in the water until the ears are covered.
3. Extend the arms in front in the intended direction.
4. Kick the legs (breaststroke or scissors kick) to help move the body into a horizontal position.
5. Start swimming.



**Instructor's Note:** *It is not always necessary to put the face in the water if the participant is a strong enough swimmer. However, while learning this skill, putting the face in the water makes leveling off easier.*

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### Change from vertical to horizontal position on back

Starting from either treading water or after surfacing from jumping into deep water, have participants:

1. Move the arms overhead and slightly out to the side.
2. Lay the head back until the ears are covered.
3. Arch the body gently at the hips, pushing the chest and stomach toward the surface.
4. Kick the legs (breaststroke or scissors kick) to help move the body into a horizontal position.
5. Start swimming.

### While in a vertical position, rotate one full turn

Have participants:

1. Tread water to maintain a vertical position.
2. Use sculling motions to rotate 360 degrees.

## **Tread water**

In this level, participants should be able to tread water for at least 1 minute in deep water.

Have participants:

1. Stay nearly vertical, with the upper body bent slightly forward at the waist with the legs separated.
2. Make continuous sweeping movements with the forearms and hands just below the surface in front of the body. With the shoulders relaxed and the elbows away from the body, move the forearms out then back in. Rotate the forearms and hands as a single unit so the palms push the water in both directions.
3. Using one of the kicks described below, kick just hard enough to keep the head above water.

### ***With a modified scissors kick***

Have participants:

1. Recover by flexing the hips and knees and drawing the heels up.
2. Flex the ankle of the front foot and point the toes of the back foot.
3. Extend the front leg forward and the back leg backward, but not completely straight.
4. At the same time, forcefully press the legs together until they are nearly straight.
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 continuously.

### ***With a modified breaststroke kick***

Have participants:

1. Recover by flexing the hips and bending the knees so that the legs move up.
2. Flex the ankles, turn the feet out and extend the legs out.
3. Forcefully press the feet and knees down until the legs are nearly extended to about shoulder-width apart. The legs do not come all the way together or straight.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 continuously.

### ***With a rotary kick***

Have participants:

1. Stay nearly vertical, with the upper body bent slightly forward at the waist, making the same sculling movements with the arms.
2. Keep the back straight and the hips flexed so that the thighs are comfortably forward.
3. Pull up the lower legs so that they are at a nearly 90-degree angle to the thighs and the knees are slightly wider than hip-width apart.
4. Rotate the lower legs at the knees, one leg at a time, making large circular movements with the foot and lower leg. One leg moves clockwise and the other counterclockwise.
5. As each foot moves sideways and forward, extend it sharply outward.
6. As one leg kicks, the other leg recovers to kick immediately after the first leg kick.

## Swim on Front

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**Instructor's Note:** Refer to Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the front crawl.

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**Teaching Tip:** When swimming on the front, participants should begin in a streamlined position. To achieve a streamlined position in the water, have participants:

1. Extend the arms overhead.
  2. Clasp the hands together with the arms against the ears.
  3. Extend the legs together with the toes pointed.
- 

### Push off in a streamlined position on front, then begin flutter kicking

Have participants:

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on front. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, start with the legs straight, together and relaxed, with the toes pointed. Keep the knees and ankles loose and floppy, and continuously kick up and down.
3. During the downbeat, start with the thigh and follow through with the whole leg and foot.
4. Snap the foot downward as though kicking a ball.
5. During the upbeat, raise the leg straight toward the surface with little or no bend in the knee, until the heel just breaks the surface.
6. Continue kicking for 3 to 5 body lengths.

### Push off in a streamlined position on front, then begin dolphin kicking

The dolphin kick begins in the upper abdominals, hips and thighs and is a continuous up-and-down movement. The hips should only rise above and return just below the surface.

Have participants:

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on front. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, keep the legs together and start the downbeat by bending the knees.
3. Continue the downbeat by extending the legs in a whip-like motion.
4. Straighten the legs on the upbeat until the heels just break the surface. Keep the ankles relaxed.
5. Continue kicking for 3 to 5 body lengths.

### Front crawl

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**Teaching Tip:** One way to teach strokes is to:

1. Start with body position and the kick.
  2. Add breathing to the kick.
  3. Add arms to the kick and breathing.
-

## ***Body position***

Have participants:

1. Move into a face-down, streamlined position.
2. Look toward the bottom of the pool or slightly forward with the neck flat and the waterline at the middle of the top of the head.
3. Rotate around the midline of the body throughout the stroke.

## ***Legs***

Have participants push off in a streamlined position on the front and start flutter kicking.

## ***Arms***

For each arm stroke, have participants:

1. Slide the fingers of one hand into the water first with the palm pitched slightly outward.
2. Allow the hand to enter the water smoothly, keeping the elbow higher than the rest of the arm. The elbow enters the water last.
3. Extend the arm forward in front of the shoulder.
4. Bend the elbow so that the palm and forearm face toward the feet and press backward.
5. Allow the elbow and hand to move naturally, just outside the shoulder, as the arm travels backward.
6. Continue pressing the palm and forearm directly backward. The hand follows a path straight backward that traces the side of the body.
7. Keep the elbow slightly wider than the hand so the elbow remains bent and the palm and forearm face back.
8. Keep the palm facing back as long as possible and then move upward as the arm extends.
9. Accelerate the hand through the end of the stroke, until the arm reaches full extension.
10. Lift the elbow so that it is the first part of the arm to exit the water.
11. While lifting the elbow, keep the arm relaxed with the forearm hanging down.
12. Swing the arm around the side in a relaxed motion, keeping the hand wider than the elbow.
13. As the hand passes the shoulder, let it lead the rest of the arm until it enters the water.

## ***Breathing and timing***

Teach participants to breathe during each arm cycle or every 1½ arm cycles. Have participants:

1. Start turning the head toward the recovery arm (the arm that is out of the water) as it exits the water.
2. Look to the side, keeping the head aligned with the neck and the waterline at the top of the head. One ear stays in the water.
3. Inhale when body roll is at its maximum and the recovery elbow is high.
4. After inhaling, return the face to the water in a quick motion before the recovery arm re-enters the water.
5. Exhale slowly underwater through the mouth and nose between breaths.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 3, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 3 Front Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; rudimentary body roll; some side-to-side motion of trunk and legs acceptable
Legs	Continuous kicking; occasional bicycling action acceptable; legs bent at the hips or knees during downbeat acceptable; feet may break surface of water
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—underwater recovery or arm straight at elbow acceptable; hand enters at or above the level of the head; arm straight at the elbow during power phase acceptable; power phase finishing at hip level acceptable
Breathing and timing	Face in water and breathes consistently to the side—occasional head lift acceptable; arms and legs show general alternating pattern

### Improving Performance of the Front Crawl

Observation	Intervention
Legs and hips too low	Have participant lower head position.
Arm recovery and breathing are difficult	Have participant check head position.
Ineffective kick because legs are too rigid	Remind participant to relax and kick as if kicking a ball.
Head lifted up to breathe	Tell participant to exhale underwater then look to the side. One ear stays in the water while inhaling.
Feet break the surface too much	Have participant lift head slightly to drop legs. Be sure kick starts from the hip.
Toes “hook” at end of downbeat because ankles are allowed to flex	Have participant keep toes relaxed and floppy. Have participant practice with swim fins.
Arms lift out early	Have participant fully extend arms by pushing toward the feet.
Arms sweep wide in recovery	Have participant practice high elbow recovery with relaxed forearm and wrist.
Hands, elbows and arms drag through the water	Have participant lift elbow higher. Participant may also need more body roll.
Inefficient propulsion because of pulling with straight arms	Stress a high elbow as the arm pulls through. Have the participant practice arm pulls with support, such as a pull buoy.
Inefficient stroke because of incorrect breathing	Repeat learning drills for rotary breathing.

### Breaststroke kick



**Instructor’s Note:** Refer to *Instructor’s Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the breaststroke kick.



**Teaching Tip:** Have participants practice the breaststroke kick lying face-down on the deck with their legs extended over the water, bracketing the wall in the water or while using a kickboard.

Have participants:

1. Recover by bringing the heels toward the buttocks as much as possible without upsetting body position or allowing the knees to drop toward the bottom of the pool.

2. As the legs recover, gradually separate the knees and heels until the knees are about hip-width apart and the feet are outside the knees. Keep the heels just under the surface.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the ankles and rotate the feet so that the toes point outward.
4. With a continuous pushing action, forcefully press the feet and knees backward until the legs are extended (toes pointed) and the feet and ankles touch, and then hold the legs in a straight line.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 3, participants should be able to perform the breaststroke kick at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 3 Breaststroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface during glide
Legs	Legs bend at the knees bringing heels toward buttocks; knees may be wider than hips and ankles; heels may break surface of water; ankles may bend throughout power phase; occasional scissors kick or flutter kick acceptable; legs may be partially bent at the knees at the end of the power phase; occasional flutter kick during glide position acceptable; legs may not completely finish together in a closed position in the glide
Arms	Both arms extended overhead
Breathing and timing	Any type of breathing pattern is acceptable

## Swim on Back

### Elementary backstroke



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the elementary backstroke.

#### **Body position**

Have participants:

1. Move into a horizontal, streamlined position on the back, arms at the sides.
2. Keep the head submerged to the ears with the face out of the water.

#### **Legs**

Have participants:

1. Start with the legs together and extended with the toes pointed during the glide.
2. From this position, recover the legs by bending and slightly separating the knees, then dropping the heels downward to a point under and outside the knees. The knees are spread hip-width or slightly wider.
3. Keep the thighs in line with the hips—the hips should stay near the surface. Do not drop the hips when dropping the heels.
4. Rotate the knees inward slightly while the ankles flex and the feet turn outward.
5. Finish by pressing the feet backward with a slightly rounded motion, ending with the legs in the glide position. As the feet press backward, they move into a pointed position.

## ***Arms***

Have participants:

1. Keep the arms and hands just below the surface throughout the stroke.
2. From the glide position, recover the arms by bending the elbows so the hands (palms facing down or toward the body) slide along the sides to near the armpits.
3. Point the fingers outward from the shoulders so that the palms face back toward the feet.
4. Leading with the fingers, extend the arms out to the sides until the hands are no farther forward than the top of the head.
5. Without pausing, simultaneously press the palms and the insides of both arms in a broad sweeping motion back toward the feet, keeping the arms straight.
6. End this motion with the arms and hands in the glide position.

## ***Breathing and timing***

Have participants:

1. Breathe during each arm stroke. Inhale as the arms recover, and exhale as the arms press backward.
2. Start the arm recovery just ahead of the legs.
3. Finish the leg thrust at the same time as the arms.
4. Glide with the body streamlined after the combined propulsion.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 3, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### **Level 3 Elementary Backstroke Stroke Performance Criteria**

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; hips may be bent; chin tucked; ears may be out of the water
Legs	Knees may break the surface of the water during recovery; knees may be wider than hips and ankles; ankles may be bent throughout power phase; occasional scissors kick acceptable; legs may be partially bent at knee at the end of the power phase; legs apart with occasional flutter kick during glide acceptable
Arms	Hands may break water surface during recovery; arms extending above or below shoulder level acceptable; power phase finishing at waist level acceptable
Breathing and timing	Occasional breath-holding acceptable; arms and legs move simultaneously; minimal glide with some forward motion acceptable; little or no hesitation before beginning recovery

### **Improving Performance of the Elementary Backstroke**

<b>Observation</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
Body bent downward at the middle; body sitting in the water	Have participant tilt head back, look directly overhead and raise the hips toward the surface.
Extreme arch in back during power phase; face may be submerged	Check head position. Stress keeping arms parallel to surface during power phase.

Observation	Intervention
Knees break surface excessively during recovery	Check body position. Participants who are very buoyant should tilt the head forward slightly and round the back and shoulders slightly to lower the hips and legs. The feet should drop down rather than the knees pull up.
Hands reach too far above head	Emphasize sliding hands away from the shoulders in a perpendicular line with the shoulders.
Water washes over face during arm recovery	Check whether the participant is tilting the head back, lifting the knees or pushing water toward the face with the hands.
Water washes over face during arm pull	Have participant tilt chin downward slightly and pull parallel to the surface.
Hands recover from thighs or hips directly into extended position	Emphasize dragging thumbs up sides of body to armpits.
Power phases of arms and legs not together	Emphasize recovery of arms to armpits before legs start the power phase.

## Swim on Side

### Scissors kick

In Level 3, participants learn the kick used in the sidestroke—the scissors kick. Because most people have a dominant side, practice on each side.



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the scissors kick.



**Teaching Tip:** Have participants practice the scissors kick lying on their sides on the deck with their legs extended over the water, bracketing the wall in the water or holding a flotation device with the lead hand.

Have participants:

1. Lie on the side. Extend the bottom arm and put the head on the shoulder.
2. From the glide position, recover the legs by flexing the hips and knees and drawing the heels slowly toward the buttocks, keeping the knees close together.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the top ankle and point the toes of the lower foot to prepare for the kick. Move the top leg toward the front of the body and the bottom leg toward the back. When extended, the top leg should be almost straight.
4. Without pausing, kick the top leg straight and press it backward. At the same time, extend the bottom leg in a motion like kicking a ball until both legs are fully extended and together in the glide position.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 3, participants should be able to perform the scissors kick at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 3 Sidestroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body in side-lying position about 30 degrees from surface; hips may roll away from midline; bottom ear may be out of water with head raised
Legs	Elements of breaststroke or flutter kick acceptable; legs may separate slightly as knees bend in recovery; any type of foot and ankle position acceptable; legs may bend at the knees and be held loosely together during glide
Arms	Bottom arm extended overhead; top arm against the side
Breathing and timing	Any type of breathing pattern with occasional breath-holding acceptable

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 3:

- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice
- Look Before You Leap
- Developing breath control safely
- Making good decisions—choosing an exit point

As in earlier levels, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the participants' level of understanding.

In this level, participants are introduced to entering the water in a headfirst position. Rules for headfirst entries are taught in "Look Before You Leap" and should be repeated and built upon to ensure that participants clearly understand where and when it is appropriate to enter the water in a headfirst position.

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 3, they have achieved basic water competency in a pool environment. They are starting to show stroke proficiency in the front crawl and elementary backstroke. They have begun learning the breaststroke and the scissors kicks and can tread water for 1 minute. They demonstrate comfort in deep water and can enter the water headfirst from both the sitting and the kneeling positions.

1. Jump into deep water from the side, recover to the surface, maintain position by treading or floating for 1 minute, rotate one full turn then turn as necessary to orient to the exit point, level off, swim front crawl and/or elementary backstroke for 25 yards, then exit the water.
2. Push off in a streamlined position then swim front crawl for 15 yards, change position and direction as necessary, swim elementary backstroke for 15 yards, then exit the water.

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## LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 4—STROKE IMPROVEMENT

In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants improve their aquatic skills and increase their endurance by swimming the strokes learned in Level 3 (i.e., front crawl, elementary backstroke) for greater distances and with more advanced proficiency. Participants add arm actions to the previously learned scissors kick and breaststroke kick to perform the rudimentary sidestroke and to learn the breaststroke. Participants also begin to learn the back crawl and butterfly, as well as the basics of performing a simple open turn at a wall.

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 4—STROKE IMPROVEMENT OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys</li> <li>■ Fins</li> <li>■ Equipment for reaching assists, such as reaching poles and rescue tubes</li> <li>■ Equipment for throwing assists, such as ring buoys and throw bags</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Entry and Exit		
Headfirst entry from the side in a compact position*	Demonstrate in water at least 9 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Headfirst entry from the side in a stride position*	Demonstrate in water at least 9 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Breath Control and Submerging		
Swim underwater	Demonstrate, 3 to 5 body lengths without hyperventilating	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Feetfirst surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Buoyancy		
Survival swimming	Demonstrate, for at least 1 minute, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 3
Changing Direction and Position and Treading		
Front crawl open turn	Demonstrate effective turn while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Back crawl open turn	Demonstrate effective turn while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Tread water using two different kicks (modified scissors, modified breaststroke or rotary)	Demonstrate, at least 2 minutes	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 5

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
<b>Swim on Front</b>		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Push off in a streamlined position on back and begin flutter kicking	Demonstrate, 3 to 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Push off in a streamlined position on back and begin dolphin kicking	Demonstrate, 3 to 5 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Swim on Side</b>		
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Reach or Throw, Don't Go <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reaching assist</li> <li>■ Throwing assist</li> </ul>	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3 LWT
Recreational water illnesses	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3, 5 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perform a feetfirst entry into deep water, swim front crawl for 25 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 25 yards.</li> <li>2. Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim back crawl for 15 yards.</li> <li>3. Submerge and swim a distance of 3 to 5 body lengths underwater without hyperventilating, return to the surface, then exit the water.</li> </ol>		

*\* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries.*

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 4 SKILLS

## Water Entry and Exit

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**Safety note:** Headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9 feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries from poolside.

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### Headfirst entry from the side in a compact position

Have participants:

1. Put one foot forward and one back, with the toes of the leading foot gripping the edge of the pool.
2. Starting from the kneeling position, lift up so that both knees are flexed and off the deck in order to remain close to the water.
3. Extend the arms above the head.
4. Focus on a target that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water.
5. Bend forward and try to touch the surface of the water with the hands.
6. Push off toward the water. Bring the legs together upon entering the water.
7. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.

### Headfirst entry from the side in a stride position

Have participants:

1. Stand upright with one leg forward and one leg back, with the toes of the leading foot gripping the edge of the pool.
2. Extend the arms above the head.
3. Focus on a target that will allow for roughly a 45-degree entry into the water. Bend the legs only slightly while bending at the waist toward the water.
4. Try to touch the surface of the water, and lift the back leg until it is in line with the torso. The forward leg should stay as straight as possible.
5. Angle the hands toward the surface of the water to steer the body up.

## Breath Control and Submerging

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**Safety Note:** Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

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### Swim underwater

Have participants practice swimming underwater for 3 to 5 body lengths using the breaststroke or a dolphin kick:

1. When using the breaststroke, start with the arms in front, sweep them wide and back toward the feet and recover to the front.

2. When using the dolphin kick, the arms may be in front or to the side. To build momentum, start with the arms in front and sweep them wide and back toward the feet.

## Feetfirst surface dive, submerging completely

Have participants:

1. Start by treading water and maintaining a vertical position.
2. Press down forcefully with both hands and kick. Move the hands at the same time and bring them to the sides of the thighs while simultaneously performing a strong scissors or breaststroke kick.
3. Take a breath, at the top of this rise.
4. Keep the body vertical and in a streamlined position as they start moving downward.
5. Turn the palms outward, then sweep the hands upward for more downward propulsion, once downward motion slows. This sweeping action should occur completely underwater.
6. Tuck the body and roll into a horizontal position when the desired depth is achieved.
7. Extend the arms and legs and swim underwater.

## Buoyancy

### Survival swimming

In this level, participants must be able to survival swim for at least 1 minute in deep water.

Have participants:

1. Take a breath, bend forward at the waist and bring the hands up alongside the head.
2. Separate the legs into the stride position and extend the arms forward, then bring the legs together again and propel diagonally toward the surface.
3. Sweep the arms out and back to the thighs, and glide near and almost parallel to the surface.
4. Bend the legs and draw them toward the torso and bring the hands up alongside the head once again when a breath is needed.
5. Extend the arms forward and separate the legs in the stride position once again. Tilt the head back and prepare to breathe out, as in survival floating.
6. Repeat steps 1 to 5.



**Instructor's Note:** *A person who is not very buoyant will likely need to perform these movements slightly faster to prevent sinking before taking a breath.*

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## Changing Direction and Position and Treading

### Front crawl open turn



**Teaching Tips:**

- Explain to participants that when performing the front crawl open turn, they turn in the direction opposite the hand that touches the wall. For example, if their right hand first touches the wall, they turn to the left.
- Remind participants to start slowly and gradually increase speed.

- *Emphasize that the body should be in a streamlined position after pushing off.*
- *Point out that the trailing arm becomes the leading arm and vice versa.*

*The following progression can help participants learn this skill:*

- **Step 1. Demonstration.** *Demonstrate the open turn on the front for the front crawl, using first one hand to turn in one direction and then the other hand to turn in the other direction.*
- **Step 2. Push off and stroke.** *In shallow water, have participants:*
  1. *Push off from the wall, glide in a streamlined position to the surface, start kicking and then add the arm stroke.*
  2. *Walk forward and grasp the gutter, submerge shoulders, turn in the opposite direction, inhale, submerge, push off, start flutter kicking and then add the arm stroke.*

Have participants:

1. Extend the leading arm as they approach the wall until they touch the wall.
2. Bend the elbow of the leading arm and drop the shoulder slightly while rotating the body to move the body toward the wall.
3. Tuck the body at the hips and knees; turn and spin away from the leading hand; swing the feet against the wall, one foot above the other (if the right hand is the leading hand, the right foot will be on top); and extend the other arm toward the opposite end of the pool.
4. During the spin, lift the face out of the water and take a breath.
5. Return the face to the water as the leading hand recovers over the surface.
6. Extend both arms in front as the legs push off. Keep the body in a streamlined position on one side.
7. Rotate in the glide until face-down.
8. Before losing momentum, start flutter kicking to rise to the surface and resume the arm stroke.

## Back crawl open turn



### Teaching Tips:

- *Teach participants to watch a landmark on the ceiling or overhead to gauge the distance to the wall without looking back. When using a landmark, they should count the number of strokes it takes them to swim from the landmark to the wall.*
- *In some pools, backstroke flags are available as the landmark. Participants should count the number of strokes from the time the head passes under the flags until the hand touches the wall. Flags are positioned at a consistent distance in pools used for competition.*
- *In an outdoor pool, have a partner stand on the deck 3 to 4 feet from the wall to help participants see when they are one stroke short of touching the wall.*

*The following progression can help participants learn this skill:*

- **Step 1. Demonstration.** *Demonstrate a back crawl open turn in both directions.*
- **Step 2. Push off and stroke.** *Have participants push off on the back from the wall with hands overhead, glide in a streamlined position, start kicking and resume the arm stroke.*

■ **Step 3. Rotate to the front and glide.** Have participants:

1. Gauge their distance from the wall, using a landmark and counting the number of strokes it takes them to reach the wall.
2. Roll to a front-lying position one stroke from the wall and glide to the wall.

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Have participants:

1. At one stroke short of touching the wall, start to rotate to the front by turning the head and looking toward the pulling arm.
2. Take one more arm pull while completing the rotation onto the stomach. Extend the arm until it touches the wall.
3. Bend the elbow of the leading arm and drop the shoulder slightly while rotating the body to move the body toward the wall.
4. Tuck the body at the hips and knees; turn and spin away from the leading hand; swing the feet against the wall, one foot above the other (if the right hand is the leading hand, the right foot will be on top); and extend the other arm toward the opposite end of the pool.
5. During the spin, lift the face out of the water and take a breath.
6. Return the face to the water as the leading hand recovers over the surface.
7. Extend both arms as the legs push off. Keep the body in a streamlined position on the back.
8. Before losing momentum, start kicking to rise to the surface and resume the arm stroke.

**Tread water using two different kicks (modified scissors, modified breaststroke or rotary)**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants should be able to tread water using two of the following three different kicks—modified scissors, modified breaststroke or rotary kick—for at least 2 minutes.

## Swim on Front



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to Instructor's Corner for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the front crawl, breaststroke and butterfly.

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### Front crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 4 Front Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body horizontal to 15 degrees from surface; performs body roll; occasional side-to-side motion of trunk and legs acceptable
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips; ankles and knees extended but not rigid; feet remain below the surface—moderate splash acceptable
Arms	Above-water recovery with arm bent at elbow—arm straight at elbow acceptable; hand enters above the level of the head, fingertips first in front of the shoulder; arm extends fully after entry; arm bent at elbow during power phase; power phase finishes beyond the hip
Breathing and timing	Face in water; breathing to the side; exhales underwater on each breath; arms alternate—slight hesitation during breathing acceptable

## Breaststroke

### *Body position*

Have participants:

1. Move into a face-down, horizontal, streamlined position.
2. Extend the arms to the front with the palms face-down and below the surface.
3. Keep the back straight.

### *Legs*

Have participants:

1. Recover by bringing the heels toward the buttocks as much as possible without upsetting body position, and allowing the knees to drop toward the bottom of the pool.
2. As the legs recover, gradually separate the knees and heels until the knees are about hip-width apart and the feet are outside the knees. Keep the heels just under the surface.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the ankles and rotate the feet so that the toes point outward.
4. With a continuous pushing action, forcefully press the feet and knees backward until the legs are extended (toes pointed) and the feet and ankles touch, and then hold the legs in a straight line.

### *Arms*

Have participants:

1. Turn the palms outward about 45 degrees to the surface of the water while in a glide position.
2. Slightly bend the arms and press the palms outward until the hands are spread wider than the shoulders.
3. Bend the elbows and sweep the hands downward and inward.
4. Allow the hands to pass under the elbows with the forearms in a nearly vertical position.
5. Sweep the hands inward and upward until the hands are in front of the chest. The hands should be pitched slightly upward and almost touching each other.
6. Push forward with the elbows so that the hands start moving forward with the palms angled slightly upward.
7. Continue to extend the arms forward while rotating the wrists until the palms are facing down and below the surface at full extension in the glide position.

## ***Breathing and timing***

Participants should breathe during each arm stroke. Have participants:

1. From the glide position, start the power phase with the arms.
2. As the arms and hands start to pull backward, the head and upper body lift naturally for a breath.
3. Take a breath and start to bend the legs to prepare for the kick near the end of the power phase.
4. Without pause, start to recover the arms and drive forward into the water with the upper body.
5. Start the power phase of the kick by pressing backward with the feet as soon as the arms reach full extension, just before the head lowers into position between the arms. The upper body and arms will be in the glide position just before the kick ends.
6. Exhale in a slow, steady manner, mostly through the mouth, in the glide position until just before the next breath.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants should be able to swim the breaststroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### **Level 4 Breaststroke Stroke Performance Criteria**

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface during glide
Legs	Legs bend at the knees bringing heels toward buttocks; knees may occasionally be wider than hips and ankles; heels may break surface of water; ankles may bend throughout power phase; legs may be partially bent at the knees at the end of the power phase; legs together during glide position
Arms	Hands may begin catch wider than shoulder width; arm bend at elbow increases as hand moves toward waist—hands may be level or slightly deeper than elbows; hands may sweep beyond the shoulder, but not beyond waist
Breathing and timing	Rudimentary form of pull–breathe–kick–glide sequence; minimal glide with some forward motion acceptable

### **Improving Performance of the Breaststroke**

<b>Observation</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
Ineffective kick	Have participant keep ankles flexed and feet rotated outward. Emphasize pushing around and back until the feet touch.
Scissors kick action	Emphasize a narrow kick to avoid scissors action.
Knees and thighs drawn too far under hips	Have participant practice breaststroke kick with a front glide or using a kickboard.
Propulsion of kick is outward instead of to the rear	Stress pressing feet around and back, not out. Emphasize a semicircular, pushing motion. Wall exercise: gently hold inside of feet during propulsion to add resistance and have the participant feel direction of power. Do this very gently to avoid injury to knees.
Heels move outside knees	Stress proper alignment: knees in line with the hips and heels wider than the knees.
Elbows drop too soon during power phase	Have participant keep elbows high until hands align with them at the end of the down sweep.
Arms pull all the way to the thigh	Have participant shorten the pull and end downward and outward sweep when hands are under the elbows with forearms vertical.
Faulty timing	Have participant practice sequence from glide: pull and breathe, kick and glide.
Ineffective glide while learning	Have participant glide until momentum is almost lost.

## **Butterfly**

### ***Body position***

Have participants move into a face-down, streamlined position.

### ***Legs***

Have participants:

1. Begin the kick in the upper abdominals, hips and thighs in a continuous movement with the legs together.
2. Bend the knees to start the downbeat, then extend the legs in a whip-like motion.
3. Straighten the legs on the upbeat until the heels just break the surface.
4. The hips rise above and return just below the surface.

### ***Arms***

Have participants:

1. Start with the arms extended in front of the shoulders.
2. Simultaneously bend the elbows so that the palms and forearms start facing the feet. Keep the elbows high with the hands directly below and fingertips pointing down and slightly outward.
3. Continue pressing backward toward the feet with the palms and forearms. The hands move from the wide position at the end of the catch to a point at the waist that is just inside the width of the body.
4. Extend the arms toward the feet, which causes the arms to come closer to the body.
5. Accelerate the arms and continue pressing the hands back past the hips.
6. Recover by swinging the arms out of the water and wide to the sides with little or no bend in the elbows, making sure to lead this motion with the hands.
7. Move the arms just above the surface to enter the water in front of the shoulders. Keep the wrists relaxed and the thumbs down.
8. The hands enter the water with the thumbs facing down and the elbows remaining slightly flexed in front of or slightly outside of the shoulders.
9. After the entry, extend the elbows to prepare for the next arm stroke.

### ***Breathing and timing***

Have participants:

1. During the arm recovery, bend the knees to prepare for the first kick.
2. As the hands enter the water, press forward and down with the chin and the chest and extend the legs for the downbeat of the first kick. The upper body angles slightly downward at this point, and appears to bend or “pivot” at the waist. (“As the chest goes down, the hips go up.”)
3. Let the upper body rise toward the surface while bending the knees to prepare for the second kick.
4. Complete the downbeat of the second kick at the finish of pull and just prior to the hands exiting the water.
5. Exhale fully during the underwater pull as the body is rising up.

6. Inhale just as the arms exit the water.
7. Thrust the chin forward (not upward) just as the face clears the water.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants should be able to swim the butterfly at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

#### Level 4 Butterfly Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk may be horizontal to 30 degrees from the surface; face in water
Legs	Legs may be partially extended at the knee during the downbeat; minimal movement of the hip during the downbeat acceptable; legs may bend at the knees during upbeat—feet may break the surface; some flutter action acceptable
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—arms may contact the water; hands may enter wider than the shoulders; arms may be straight at the elbow during the recovery and catch actions; palms face backwards throughout pull; power phase finishing at waist acceptable; arms may be bent at elbow during finish
Breathing and timing	Arms pull and recover with minimal leg kick; arms may hesitate at side before recovery

#### Improving Performance in the Butterfly

Observation	Intervention
Weak arm propulsion, hands enter water too wide or narrow	Emphasize extending arms forward on entry. Keep elbows up and palms facing backward. Conduct arm-strengthening drills.
Hands “slip” by entering water too flat	Emphasize firm wrists, hands and fingers; hands angled down and out and thumbs rotated down.
Loss of propulsion because of dropped elbows	Stress keeping elbows higher than hands but lower than shoulders. Make sure participant is not lifting the body up excessively during the early part of the arm pull, which may force him or her to push down on the water instead of back.
Loss of propulsion because of pushing arms too wide during backward press under body	Emphasize bending elbows and pressing arms backward with hands coming close together under the body.
Body bobs because arm action stops at point of entry	Emphasize extending the arms forward and having a good kick when the hands enter. Make sure the chin and chest press forward. Make sure that the hands do not dive downward.
Ineffective kick because knees are not fully extended during downbeat	Have participant press feet down and use knees to snap lower legs to full extension. Conduct underwater dolphin kick drills.
Not enough breathing time because of narrow kick	Check coordination of breathing and arm pull. Have participant increase the size of the kick until it is about 2 feet from top to bottom. Make sure the knees are bending enough to set up the kick.
Difficulty getting arms out and around during recovery	Emphasize accelerating hands through finish and into recovery. Emphasize second kick. Be sure participant is not lifting upper body too high out of the water on breath.

## Swim on Back

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**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the elementary backstroke and back crawl.

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**Teaching Tip:** When swimming on the back, participants should begin in a streamlined position. To achieve a streamlined position in the water, have participants:

1. Extend the arms overhead.
  2. Clasp the hands together with the arms against the ears.
  3. Extend the legs together with the toes pointed.
- 

### Push off in a streamlined position on back and begin flutter kicking

Have participants:

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on back. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, start with the legs straight, together and relaxed, with the toes pointed. Keep the knees and ankles loose and floppy, and continuously kick up and down.
3. During the downbeat, start with the thigh and follow through with the whole leg and foot.
4. Snap the foot downward as though kicking a ball.
5. During the upbeat, raise the leg straight toward the surface with little or no bend in the knee, until the toes just break the surface.
6. Continue kicking for 3 to 5 body lengths.

### Push off in a streamlined position on back and begin dolphin kicking

The dolphin kick begins in the upper abdominals, hips and thighs and is a continuous up-and-down movement. The hips should only rise above and return just below the surface.

Have participants:

1. Push off just under the surface of the water in a streamlined position on back. Exhale through the mouth and nose while pushing off.
2. Before losing momentum, keep the legs together and start the downbeat by bending the knees.
3. Continue the downbeat by extending the legs in a whip-like motion.
4. Straighten the legs on the upbeat until the toes just break the surface. Keep the ankles relaxed.
5. Continue kicking for 3 to 5 body lengths.

## Elementary backstroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 4 Elementary Backstroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body horizontal to 15 degrees from surface; trunk and legs are aligned; slight chin tuck, ears near or below the surface
Legs	Knees remain below the surface of the water; knees and hips aligned; knees may be wider than ankles; heels drop by bending knees; ankles rotate outward with toes wider than the heel of the foot; lower legs move symmetrically in a circular pattern as knees return to a fully extended position; legs together, toes pointed with minimal movement
Arms	Hands remain under the surface and recover near or at the side of the body; arms may extend at or be above shoulder level; arms nearly straight at elbow at beginning of catch; arms partially bent at elbow during extension—wrists may be bent; power phase ends at the level of the hips
Breathing and timing	Relaxed rhythmic breathing pattern; arms and legs begin recovery at same time; some glide occurs at end of power phase

## Back crawl

### ***Body position***

Have participants:

1. Move into a horizontal, streamlined position on the back.
2. Have the waterline run from the middle of the top of the head to the tip of the chin with the ears underwater.

### ***Legs***

Have participants:

1. Hold the legs straight, together and relaxed. Keep the knees and ankles loose and floppy, and kick up and down.
2. Start the upbeat by bending the knee and whipping the foot upward until the leg is straight and the toes reach the surface, like kicking a ball.
3. Keep the leg nearly straight in the downbeat.
4. At the end of the downward motion, bend the knee and start the upward kick.

### ***Arms***

Have participants:

1. With the arm straight, place one hand in the water above the head, just outside the shoulder, little finger first. Keep the palm facing out, the wrist bent slightly and the hands relaxed with fingers straight.
2. Reach downward 8 to 12 inches at an angle, then bend the elbow so that the palm and forearm are facing toward the feet and fingertips are pointing to the side of the pool.
3. Keep the arm to the side of the body and the hand and forearm horizontal following a straight path, pushing water toward the feet, with the fingertips pointing to the side. Accelerate toward the feet with the wrist extended and the palm pitched slightly downward.

4. End with the arm straight and the hand below the thigh.
5. Relax the wrist and lift the arm straight up with the thumb leaving the water first.
6. Rotate the hand so that the little finger leads as the arm re-enters the water.

### ***Breathing and timing***

Have participants:

1. Move the arms continuously in constant opposition to each other; one arm recovers while the other arm pulls.
2. Use a regular breathing pattern during each stroke. Inhale when one arm recovers and exhale when the other arm recovers.
3. Rotate the body toward the recovery arm just before that hand enters the water.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, participants should be able to swim the back crawl at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### **Level 4 Back Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria**

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; ears may be out of water, chin on chest; hips may be bent; rudimentary body roll; slight side-to-side motion between shoulders and hips acceptable
Legs	Continuous kicking; occasional bicycling action acceptable; legs bent at knee acceptable; feet may break surface of water
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—elbows below surface acceptable; hands may enter at or above shoulder level; arm straight at elbow during power phase acceptable
Breathing and timing	Occasional breath-holding acceptable; arms in opposition—hesitation at finish acceptable

### **Improving Performance of the Back Crawl**

<b>Observation</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
Extreme arch in back; head too far back	Remind participant to relax the back, tuck the chin in slightly and keep ears in water.
Hips bend excessively	Have participant practice flutter kick with arms extended behind the head. Have participant focus on stretching body and keeping kick lower than body line.
Torso bends side-to-side	Check for proper body roll. Be sure head is aligned with spine and that hands enter water at 11 and 1 o'clock.
Legs too deep	Stress that toes should reach the surface at the end of each upward beat. The kick should churn the surface.
Knees bend too vigorously on downbeat	Stress starting the leg movement from the hips.
Hips too low in water	Emphasize body position and check head position.
Arm enters water with back of hand first	Have participant concentrate on arm rotation. Emphasize that the little finger enters first.
“Splash entry”: bent arm recovery, elbow enters water first, forearm and hand are thrown into the water	Have participant practice arm strokes with legs supported. Have participant do one-arm drills.
Arm overreaches on water entry, and hand enters behind head or opposite shoulder	Have participant overcorrect point of entry outside of shoulders. Emphasize an earlier rotation so the body is rotated toward the arm entering the water sooner.

## Swim on Side



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the sidestroke.

### Sidestroke

#### **Body position**

Have participants:

1. Move into a nearly horizontal streamlined position on the side.
2. Keep the head, back and legs in a straight line, with the legs together and fully extended.
3. Rest the lower ear in the water close to the shoulder, with the face just high enough to allow the mouth and nose to remain above the water.

#### **Legs**

Have participants:

1. Extend the bottom arm and put the head on the shoulder.
2. From the glide position, recover the legs by flexing the hips and knees and drawing the heels slowly toward the buttocks, keeping the knees close together.
3. At the end of the recovery, flex the top ankle and point the toes of the lower foot to prepare for the kick. Move the top leg toward the front of the body and the bottom leg toward the back. When extended, the top leg should be almost straight.
4. Without pausing, kick the top leg straight and press it backwards. At the same time, extend the bottom leg in a motion like kicking a ball until both legs are fully extended and together in the glide position.

#### **Arms**

With the leading arm, have participants:

1. From the glide position, rotate the arm slightly to position the palm down and angled slightly outward in the direction they are facing.
2. Bend the elbow and sweep the hand downward slightly and then back toward the feet, until the hand almost reaches the upper chest.
3. Without pausing, recover the arm by rotating the shoulder and dropping the elbow.
4. Pass the hand under the ear until the fingers point forward.
5. Thrust the arm forward, rotating it so the palm is down for the glide position.

With the trailing arm, have participants:

1. From the glide position, draw the forearm along the body until the hand is nearly in front of the shoulder of the leading arm.
2. Keep the palm down and angled slightly forward.
3. Sweep the hand downward slightly and then back toward the body and into the glide position.

## ***Breathing and timing***

Have participants:

1. Breathe with each stroke. Inhale while the trailing arm recovers and exhale as the trailing arm pushes back toward the feet.
2. From the glide position, start the stroke with the sweep of the leading arm. Recover the trailing arm and the legs.
3. Kick and stroke with the trailing arm as the leading arm recovers. By the completion of the kick and the stroke of the trailing arm, the arms and legs should be fully extended.
4. Glide until the speed slows.

In this level, participants should be able to swim the sidestroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### **Level 4 Sidestroke Stroke Performance Criteria**

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; hips may roll away from midline; bottom ear may be out of water with head raised
Legs	Scissors kick; legs may separate slightly as knees bend in recovery; any type of foot and ankle position acceptable; legs may bend at the knees and be held loosely together during glide
Arms	Leading arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may be straight during catch; hand may continue past upper chest Trailing arm: hand may break surface of the water; elbow may remain close to body; hand may pass by thigh and recover past shoulder of leading arm; arm may be partially bent at elbow
Breathing and timing	Rhythmic breathing pattern; arms and legs may move simultaneously; arm action may be continuous; some glide occurs at end of power phase

### **Improving Performance of the Sidestroke**

<b>Observation</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
Body bent at hips or back severely arched; body almost turned onto stomach or back	Have participant stretch the body from the head to the toes during the glide, and relax the neck and back muscles.
Head held too high, legs too low	Have participant relax neck muscles and lay the head on the shoulder.
Top and/or bottom knee drawn too far forward toward chest	Have participant keep the back straight. Emphasize relaxation and an easy recovery movement.
Top ankle not flexed during leg extension	Remind participant to flex top ankle while extending the leg so big toe points toward head.
Ineffective glide	Check whether power phase of kick and trailing arm are simultaneous. Have participant glide until momentum is almost lost.
Kick begins before trailing arm starts the power phase	Be sure trailing palm faces the feet before kicking.

Observation	Intervention
Legs drop too deep	Have participant lower the head into the water and start the next stroke sooner.
Legs open vertically on recovery	Have participant practice kick lying on deck to simulate scissors action.
Breaststroke kick	Have participant practice kick to simulate scissors action—extending top leg forward and bottom leg back—in bracket drill or with kickboard.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 4:

- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
  - Reaching assist
  - Throwing assist
- Recreational water illnesses
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Look Before You Leap

As in earlier levels, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the participants' level of understanding.

In this level, participants continue to learn headfirst entries. Rules for headfirst entries are taught in "Look Before You Leap" and should be repeated and built upon to ensure that participants clearly understand where and when it is appropriate to enter the water in a headfirst position.

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 4, they are starting to demonstrate effective and efficient strokes in the front crawl and elementary backstroke. They are starting to show stroke proficiency in the breaststroke, back crawl, butterfly and sidestroke. They can enter the water headfirst from both compact and stride positions.

1. Perform a feetfirst entry into deep water, swim front crawl for 25 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 25 yards.
2. Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim back crawl for 15 yards.
3. Submerge and swim a distance of 3 to 5 body lengths underwater without hyperventilating, return to the surface, then exit the water.



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## **LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 5—STROKE REFINEMENT**

In Level 5, participants refine their performance of all six strokes (i.e., front crawl, back crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, elementary backstroke and sidestroke) and increase the distances that they swim. Participants also learn to perform flip turns on the front and back.

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 5—STROKE REFINEMENT OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Water Entry and Exit		
Shallow-angle dive from the side*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Shallow-angle dive, glide 2 to 3 body lengths and begin any front stroke*	Demonstrate, in water at least 9 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5
Breath Control and Submerging		
Tuck surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
Pike surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
Changing Direction and Position and Treading		
Front flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Backstroke flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Tread water	Demonstrate, at least 5 minutes	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 5
Tread water, using legs only	Demonstrate, at least 2 minutes	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 5
Swim on Front		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Swim on Back</b>		
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Standard (back) scull	Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
<b>Swim on Side</b>		
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Water Safety</b>		
How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Recreational water illnesses	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Reach or Throw, Don't Go	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3, 5 LWT
Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 3 LWT
Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perform a shallow-angle dive into water at least 9 feet deep, swim front crawl for 50 yards, then swim elementary backstroke 50 yards using appropriate and efficient turning styles throughout.</li> <li>2. Swim breaststroke for 25 yards, change direction of travel as necessary, then swim back crawl for 25 yards using appropriate and efficient turning styles throughout.</li> </ol>		

*\* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries.*

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 5 SKILLS

## Water Entry and Exit

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**Safety Note:** All headfirst entries must be taught in water at least 9 feet deep. If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries.

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### Shallow-angle dive from the side

Have participants:

1. Start on the edge of the pool with the feet about shoulder-width apart and the toes gripping the edge of the pool.
2. Flex the hips and knees and bend forward until the upper back is nearly parallel to the pool deck.
3. Focus on a target. To gain momentum for the dive, swing the arms backward and upward, letting the heels rise and the body start to move forward.
4. When the arms reach the farthest point backward, immediately swing the arms forward. Forcefully extend the hips, knees, ankles and toes one after another to drive forward in a line of flight over and nearly parallel to the surface of the water.
5. Keep the body stretched and the hands interlocked and out in front.
6. During the flight, drop the head slightly between the outstretched arms, which should be angled downward slightly.
7. Make the entry at roughly a 45-degree angle to the surface of the water. Once underwater, steer upward toward the surface with the hands and head.
8. Keep the body fully extended and streamlined while gliding underwater. Before losing too much speed, start the leg kick to rise to the surface and start swimming.

### Shallow-angle dive, glide 2 to 3 body lengths and begin any front stroke

Have participants follow steps 1–8 for the shallow-angle dive, then glide 2 to 3 body lengths and begin any front stroke.

## Breath Control and Submerging

### Tuck surface dive

Have participants:

1. Use a swimming stroke and glide with the arms forward to gain forward momentum.
2. Take a breath, sweep the arms backward to the thighs, then turn the palms downward.
3. Tuck the chin to the chest, bend the body at a right angle at the hips and draw the legs into a tuck position.
4. Roll forward until almost upside down.
5. Extend the legs upward quickly while pressing the arms and hands forward with the palms facing the bottom.

6. Use a breaststroke arm pull for greater depth after the initial descent slows down.
7. If the depth of the water is unknown or if it is less than 8 feet, keep at least one arm extended over the head toward the bottom.

## Pike surface dive

Have participants:

1. Use a swimming stroke and glide with the arms forward to gain forward momentum.
2. Take a breath, sweep the arms backward to the thighs and turn the palms downward.
3. Tuck the chin to the chest and flex at the hips sharply while the arms reach forward and downward toward the bottom.
4. Lift the legs upward, straight and together, putting the body into a fully extended, streamlined and nearly vertical position.
5. Allow the weight of the legs and forward momentum to cause descent.
6. If the depth of the water is unknown or if it is less than 8 feet, keep at least one arm extended over the head toward the bottom.

## Changing Direction and Position and Treading

### Front flip turn



**Safety Note:** *This skill should be taught in at least chest-deep water.*

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### Teaching Tips:

- *Emphasize a tight tuck of the legs and head. The tighter the tuck, the quicker the roll.*
- *To help participants come up facing in the same direction as at the start, have participants keep their eyes open and somersault straight over so that their hips come over their heads and shoulders.*
- *Emphasize starting the roll with the hands at the side near the thighs and moving the forearms and palms toward the ears during the turn.*
- *Remind participants to look at the wall from underwater rather than picking the head up before starting the turn.*

*The following progression can help participants learn this skill. Try to teach the whole progression in one session so participants get the idea of the whole skill.*

- **Step 1: Forward Roll in Shallow Water.** *This step simply gets participants to do a forward roll and learn how to somersault in the water without becoming disoriented. Participants should keep their eyes open and exhale continuously through the nose. It may be helpful for participants to use the lines along the bottom of the pool to maintain orientation. Have participants:*
  1. *Stand with the hands at the sides in waist-deep water, palms facing front.*
  2. *Bend slightly at the waist and push gently off the bottom while tucking the head (chin to chest) and tucking the legs.*

3. *As the roll starts, press the hands over the head and bring the hips over to continue rotation.*
  4. *Exhale through their noses during this step. When the rotation is completed, stand up facing the way they began.*
- **Step 2: Forward Roll from Glide.** *This step gets participants used to doing the roll with some forward momentum. They will learn it is easier to do the roll when they are moving forward. Have participants repeat Step 1, except that they start the roll from a glide rather than standing. They can start the glide by pushing off the bottom or the wall.*
  - **Step 3: Forward Roll from Swimming.** *This step helps participants work on going from the front crawl stroke to the preparatory position (hands down to side, palms facing down). Have them do this away from the wall. Participants can repeat this step several times in a single 25-yard length of the pool. Have participants:*
    1. *Swim front crawl and after 4 or 5 strokes, leave first one hand and then the other hand down by their side.*
    2. *After a short glide, do the same forward roll as in Steps 1 and 2. They should finish in a standing position, facing the way they started.*
  - **Step 4: Forward Roll at the Wall.** *This step adds three critical parts to the skill. First, participants come out earlier from the forward roll; they end on the back rather than standing up. Second, they must start to gauge how far from the wall they must start the roll. Third, they must keep their hands forward of their heads as they plant the feet on the wall. This step takes the most time of all the steps, so be sure to allow enough time for it. Have participants:*
    1. *Stand in chest-deep water facing the pool wall, 1 body length away from it.*
    2. *Come out of the roll earlier and place the hands in front of the head when they try to plant the feet.*
    3. *Repeat Step 3, adapted this way, several times, each time starting closer to the wall. (Because of the distance from the wall, they will not touch the wall with their feet the first several times they do this.)*
    4. *Eventually move close enough to the wall that their legs are bent about 90 degrees when the feet make contact, and plant their feet on the wall with the toes pointing up or slightly to the side.*
  - **Step 5: Forward Roll at the Wall with a Push.** *When participants succeed with Step 4, have them push off the wall while on the back or in a side-lying position. They should keep a streamlined body position during the push.*
- 

Have participants:

1. *When one stroke length (3½ to 4 feet) away from the wall, keep the trailing arm at the side while taking the last stroke with the lead arm. Both hands will end up at the thighs with the palms facing up.*
2. *Perform a half-somersault by tucking the chin to the chest and bending at the waist while simultaneously using a single dolphin kick to push the hips forward and upward. Turn the palms down and push the hands toward the head in order to help the legs flip over the water.*

3. During the somersault, bend the legs to prepare to hit the wall. The hands will have reached the ears, which helps complete the forward flip.
4. Plant the feet on the wall with the toes pointed up or slightly to the side and the knees bent.
5. Extend the arms into a streamlined position above the head. Push off while facing up or facing diagonally to the side; then rotate to a face-down position during the glide.
6. Before losing speed, start a steady kick and resume the arm stroke.

## Backstroke flip turn

The backstroke flip turn is nearly identical to the front flip turn. Participants who have learned the flip turn for the front crawl usually learn this skill easily.



**Safety Note:** *This skill should be learned in at least chest-deep water.*

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### Teaching Tips:

- *Teach participants to use backstroke flags to gauge the distance to the wall without looking back. Participants should count the number of strokes from the time the head passes under the flags until the hand touches the wall.*
  - *If participants are having trouble, have them review the steps for the front crawl flip turn.*
  - *To prepare participants for this skill, first have them practice rolling to the front and gliding:*  
*Have participants:*
    1. *Gauge their distance from the wall using backstroke flags or another landmark, and count the number of strokes it takes them to reach the wall.*
    2. *Roll to a front-lying position one stroke from the wall and glide to the wall.*
- 

Have participants:

1. After passing the backstroke flags, accelerate toward the wall.
2. Start the flip one stroke from the wall by turning the head and looking toward the pulling arm as it does the catch.
3. While pulling, rotate onto the stomach, drive the head downward and stop the pulling hand at the hips. At the same time, the other arm recovers across the body, enters the water in the same position as in the front crawl and pulls to the hips.
4. Drive the head down and start somersaulting while tucking the knees tightly to the chest. During the somersault, turn both palms down and push the hands toward the head to complete the flip. Keep the legs tucked until the feet contact the wall, toes pointed upward.
5. While still on the back, push straight off forcefully and go into a streamlined position while leaving the wall.
6. Before losing speed, start kicking to rise to the surface and resume the arm stroke.

## Tread water

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to tread water for 5 minutes.

## Tread water, using legs only

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to tread water for 2 minutes using only the legs. Participants should place their hands under the armpits.

## Swim on Front



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the front crawl, breaststroke and butterfly.

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## Front crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 5 Front Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface in a streamlined position; body roll is a fluid motion—head, trunk and legs are aligned
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips and propels swimmer forward using a 2- to 6-beat kick; heels just break the surface
Arms	Above-water recovery with arm bent at elbow; arm relaxed as hand moves toward the head; arm extends fully in coordination with body roll; elbow and hand move just outside the shoulder as the arm travels straight backward; palm presses toward feet until arm reaches full extension during finish
Breathing and timing	Exhales underwater before the next breath during the power phase; head remains in line of the body—minimal head movement; alternate side breathing preferred

## Breaststroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to swim the breaststroke at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 5 Breaststroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 15 degrees from surface during glide; body incline should become more level following kick
Legs	Legs bend at the knees bringing heels toward buttocks—legs bending slightly at hips; knees and hips should be aligned—knees do not separate beyond hip width; ankles bend and rotate outward with toes wider than the heel of foot; knees and ankles extend at the end of the power phase—legs partially bent at the knees and ankles acceptable
Arms	Palms begin moving outward at or narrower than shoulder width—arms slightly bent; in the mid-pull, sweeps hands downward and inward; bend at elbow increases as hands move toward chest—hands deeper than elbows by end of pull; hands should not sweep beyond the upper chest area; sweeps hands back together so that hands travel along the midline underneath the body to a streamlined position
Breathing and timing	Pull–breathe–kick–glide sequence; rhythmic breathing with each cycle; glide after recovery with arms extended; slight hesitation before recovery acceptable

## Butterfly

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to swim the butterfly at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 5 Butterfly Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 15 degrees from the surface; head, trunk and legs are aligned with minimal movement to the left or right of the midline
Legs	Legs may separate slightly at knees during kick with minimal flutter action; single kick action acceptable; hips flex and knees extended; knees slightly bent; hips raise as legs extend
Arms	Above-water arm recovery—straight elbow, occasional arm contact with the water acceptable; hands should enter at shoulder width, with fingertips facing down; arms partially bent at elbows; arms start wide then move to inside the width of body at waist; hands press back toward the feet past the hips
Breathing and timing	Face-forward head lift begins at start of catch; head re-enters the water after taking breath, and hands pull toward waist; one leg kick paired with each arm cycle at a minimum; arms should recover directly from the finish—minimal delay before recovery acceptable

## Swim on Back



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the elementary backstroke and back crawl.

## Elementary backstroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 5 Elementary Backstroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface with arms at side during glide; chin up, ears in the water
Legs	Heels drop by bending knees; ankles bend to 90 degrees and rotate outward with toes wider than heels of the feet; knees and ankles fully extending at the end of the power phase
Arms	Arms extend at or slightly above shoulder level with hands no further than top of head; fingers lead arm extension; palms face toward feet; elbows extend as palms push backward and inward, stopping at the hips
Breathing and timing	Rhythmic breathing pattern—inhalates during recovery and exhales during power phase; arm recovery begins slightly before leg recovery; arm and leg power phases begin simultaneously; extended glide after power phase

### Back crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to swim the back crawl at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 5 Back Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body horizontal to 15 degrees from surface; head back with ears submerged; rudimentary body roll; trunk and legs should be aligned
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips; legs slightly bent at the knee during upward kick and straight at the knee with toes pointed during the downward kick; feet remain below the surface—moderate splashing acceptable
Arms	Above-water recovery—arm may be partially bent at elbow; hands exit thumb-side or little finger first; hands enter little finger first about shoulder-width apart; arm partially bent at elbow during power phase; hand and forearm finish beyond hip
Breathing and timing	Relaxed rhythmic breathing pattern; arms in opposition—slight hesitation at finish acceptable

### Standard (back) scull

First, have participants learn and practice the sculling motion while standing in shallow water, anywhere from waist to shoulder deep:

1. Bend the elbows with the hands in front, palms facing down. The elbows should be about 5 to 7 inches from the waist.
2. Hold the hands about 6 inches beneath the surface. Keep the hands flat with the fingers loosely held together and the arms relaxed.
3. Rotate the palms between 20 and 50 degrees to press water out and then in, moving the hands a total distance of about 12 inches. Keep the upper arms relatively still with a small rotation on each scull. Avoid “locking” the upper arms in place. Maintain a continuous movement, without stopping and starting at the in and out points of each scull.
4. Keep the hands moving with an even tempo and pressure.



**Teaching Tip:** Tell participants that although it may look as if the palms are flat and facing the bottom of the pool when practicing the sculling motion, they actually rotate from facing out to in, with almost no time spent facing flat toward the bottom. This movement is key to achieving lift. Tell participants that when they are doing the motion correctly, they may see a whirlpool develop over the fingers.

To do a standard (back) scull, have participants:

1. Get in a back floating position with the arms by the sides. Gently press the head and upper back down to help bring the feet to the surface.
2. Bend the elbows and rotate the arms so the elbows are pointing down, toward the bottom of the pool. The elbows should be about 5 to 7 inches from the waist.
3. Hold the hands at buttocks-depth (4 to 10 inches beneath the surface), palms facing the bottom of the pool, hands flat with the fingers loosely held together and the arms relaxed.
4. Rotate the palms between 20 and 50 degrees to press water out and then in. Keep the upper arms relatively still with a small rotation on each scull. Avoid “locking” the upper arms in place. Maintain a continuous movement, without stopping and starting at the in and out points of each scull.
5. Keep the hands moving with an even tempo and pressure.
6. Maintain the standard (back) scull for at least 30 seconds.

## Swim on Side



**Instructor’s Note:** Refer to *Instructor’s Corner* ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve the sidestroke.

## Sidestroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 5, participants should be able to swim the sidestroke at least 25 yards at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 5 Sidestroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Trunk horizontal to 30 degrees from surface; hips may roll away from midline; bottom ear may be out of water with head raised
Legs	Scissors kick on both sides; legs may separate slightly as knees bend in recovery; ankle of top leg begins the power phase in a bent position, may not extend fully as the leg extends and returns to the glide position; ankle of the bottom leg may not extend; toes pointed throughout the power phase; legs may bend at the knees and be held loosely together during glide
Arms	Leading arm: hand remains below the surface; elbow may be straight during catch; hand may continue past upper chest; pull ends at upper chest; arm is parallel to and below the surface, in line with head, trunk and legs  Trailing arm: hand remains below the surface of the water; elbow may remain close to body; hand may pass by thigh; forearm travels along the midline close to the body during the recovery
Breathing and timing	Rhythmic breathing pattern; arms and legs may move simultaneously; some glide occurs at end of power phase

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 5:

- How to call for help and the importance of knowing first aid and CPR
- Recreational water illnesses
- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Look Before You Leap
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice
- Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide

As in earlier levels, some of the water safety topics are repeated for reinforcement. Vary your presentation approach to keep it interesting and to test the participants' level of understanding.

Wrap up each class session by emphasizing the safety component of the skills participants have learned. Include additional topics as necessary so that you integrate water safety into each lesson. When selecting additional topics, think about current events or needs specific to your area or region. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 5, they are starting to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in all strokes. They are starting to work on endurance through longer swims that require using open and flip turns. They can enter the water using the shallow-angle dive and can then continue swimming.

1. Perform a shallow-angle dive into water at least 9 feet deep, swim front crawl for 50 yards, then swim elementary backstroke for 50 yards using appropriate and efficient turning styles throughout.
2. Swim breaststroke for 25 yards, change direction of travel as necessary, then swim back crawl for 25 yards using appropriate and efficient turning styles throughout.

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## LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—SWIMMING AND SKILL PROFICIENCY

- **Personal Water Safety**
- **Fundamentals of Diving**
- **Fitness Swimmer**

The objective of this level is to refine strokes so participants swim them with greater efficiency and effectiveness over longer distances. Level 6 offers three options to meet specific needs and interests—Personal Water Safety, Fundamentals of Diving and Fitness Swimmer. These options focus on preparing participants for more advanced courses, such as the Water Safety Instructor course, or other aquatic activities such as competitive swimming or diving. Customize this level to meet the objectives of the participants. For instance, you can promote the course for participants who want to enter competition or who want to achieve a higher level of fitness. Because of the variety this level offers, participants can repeat it to focus on different goals each time.



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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—PERSONAL WATER SAFETY

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—PERSONAL WATER SAFETY



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys</li> <li>■ Weighted diving objects, such as a diving brick</li> <li>■ Clothing for in-water skill practice</li> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ <i>Swimming and Diving Skills</i> DVD (recommended)</li> <li>■ <i>Swimming and Water Safety</i> (one for each participant; recommended)</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Swim on Front, Back and Side		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 100 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 100 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Turns		
Front crawl open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Back crawl open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Front flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Backstroke flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Sidestroke open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 7
Butterfly turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 7
Breaststroke turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 7

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Specialty Knowledge and Skills</b>		
HELP position	Demonstrate, at least 2 minutes, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 3
Huddle position	Demonstrate, at least 2 minutes, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 3
Feetfirst surface dive	Demonstrate, in water at least 7 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Tuck surface dive	Demonstrate, in water at least 7 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
Pike surface dive	Demonstrate, in water at least 7 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
Back float	Demonstrate, at least 5 minutes, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Survival float	Demonstrate, at least 5 minutes, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 3
Survival swimming	Demonstrate, at least 10 minutes	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 3
Tread water, using legs only	Demonstrate, 2 minutes, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Surface dive and retrieve an object from the bottom	Demonstrate, in water at least 7 to 10 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4, LTS 5
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3, 5 LWT
Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Know About Boating Before You Go Floating	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
The danger of drains	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
The dangers of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke.</li> <li>Jump into deep water, perform a survival float for 5 minutes, roll onto back and perform a back float for 5 minutes.</li> <li>Perform a feetfirst surface dive, retrieve an object from the bottom of the pool at a depth of 7 to 10 feet, return to surface, then back to starting point.</li> </ol>		

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—PERSONAL WATER SAFETY SKILLS

## Swim on Front, Back and Side

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**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve strokes.

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### Front crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart.

### Elementary backstroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart.

### Back crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of back crawl at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

### Level 6 Back Crawl Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to surface in a streamlined position; head is still and aligned with body, no side-to-side movement; body roll is a fluid motion—head, trunk and legs are aligned
Legs	Continuous kicking that starts from the hips and propels swimmer forward using a 2- to 6-beat kick; feet remain below the surface
Arms	Above-water recovery—arm straight at elbow; hand enters just outside shoulder in coordination with body roll; hand enters little finger first, reaching downward with elbow bent; fingertips point away from the body to the side; hand follows a straight path toward the feet; arm fully extended at elbow for the finish
Breathing and timing	Rhythmic breathing pattern—inhalates as one arm recovers and exhales as the other arm recovers; arms in continuous opposition—no hesitation at finish

### Breaststroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should swim at least 50 yards of breaststroke at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 6 Breaststroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface and streamlined during the glide position
Legs	Heels drawn toward buttocks; heels remain underwater; ankles rotate outward with toes wider than heels; knees and ankles fully extend at end of power phase
Arms	Arms sweep outward from the glide position (arms extended narrower than shoulder width); bend at elbows increases as hands move toward chest; elbows remain high throughout the pull; hands come together at the midline under the chin; arms extend forward to a glide position
Breathing and timing	No delay from finish into recovery; face and head submerge during arm recovery, kick and glide; exhales underwater

## Sidestroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should swim at least 50 yards of sidestroke at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 6 Sidestroke Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface and streamlined during the glide position; hips and shoulders aligned; bottom ear and lower face in water
Legs	Scissors kick on both sides; knees and hips bend, pulling heels toward buttocks; legs remain close together as knees bend; ankle of top leg begins the power phase in a bent position and extends as the leg returns to the glide position; ankle of the bottom leg remains extended with the toes pointed throughout the power phase
Arms	Leading arm: hand remains below the surface; palms angled down and slightly outward; elbow bends and hand sweeps slightly downward and slightly backward toward the feet; pull ends at upper chest; shoulder rotates and elbow drops; fingers lead arm extension as the hand passes the ear and the arm rotates so palm faces down; arm is parallel to and below the surface, in line with head, trunk and legs  Trailing arm: hand remains below the surface of the water; palm presses downward and slightly backward at the beginning of the catch and continues backward throughout the pull; forearm travels along the midline close to the body during the recovery
Breathing and timing	Regular rhythmic breathing pattern—inhalates during leg recovery and exhales during power phase of the kick; arms alternate; recovery phase of kick occurs during leading arm pull and trailing arm recovery; extended glide after power phase

## Butterfly

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should swim at least 50 yards of butterfly at the level of performance described in the stroke performance chart.

## Level 6 Butterfly Stroke Performance Criteria

Body position	Body is nearly horizontal to the surface in a streamlined position
Legs	Legs can separate slightly at knees during kick—no flutter kick motion; two dolphin kicks; legs extend during downbeat; legs straighten with ankles relaxed during upbeat; heels just break the surface
Arms	Above-water arm recovery with little or no bend in the elbows; hands enter thumb-side first in front of or slightly outside the shoulders; arms extend and hands accelerate and press back past hips
Breathing and timing	Forward rhythmic breathing pattern on stroke each cycle; inhales during face lift and arm recovery and exhales during underwater arm pull; forward and upward followed by forward and downward body action paired with arm action and dolphin kicks; face exits water before the arms and re-enters the water before the arms

## Turns

### Front crawl open turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should demonstrate the front crawl open turn during a continuous swim.

### Back crawl open turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should demonstrate the back crawl open turn during a continuous swim.

### Front flip turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should demonstrate the front flip turn during a continuous swim.

### Backstroke flip turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should demonstrate the backstroke flip turn during a continuous swim.

### Sidestroke open turn



**Teaching Tip:** The following progression can help participants learn this skill:

- **Step 1: Demonstration.** Demonstrate the sidestroke open turn first on one side to turn in one direction and then the other side to turn in the other direction.
- **Step 2: Push Off and Stroke.** Have participants walk through the water, touch the wall with the leading arm, place feet on the wall in a side-lying position and push off into the side-lying glide position with opposite ear in water.



**Instructor's Note:** Have participants practice the full turn on both sides. After doing this turn, participants can rotate to the other side if they prefer to sidestroke only on one side.

Have participants:

1. Approach the wall with the leading arm extended and touch the wall.
2. Bend the elbow, drop the opposite shoulder and rotate the back toward the wall.

3. Tuck the body, and swing the legs underneath the body to place them on the wall. Feet should be planted sideways with the foot on the leading arm side of the body placed above the foot on the trailing arm side of the body.
4. Take a breath and extend the trailing arm while pushing off the wall. During this step, the trailing arm now becomes the new leading arm. The leading arm used during the approach stays by the side and becomes the new trailing arm.
5. Once in the glide position, stay on the side and resume the stroke.

## Butterfly turn

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**Teaching Tip:** *The following progression can help participants learn this skill:*

■ **Step 1: Turn and Plant.** *Have participants:*

1. *Stand next to the end wall facing the side of the pool, with the hand of the trailing arm (in this example, the right hand) on the gutter. Crouch so that the head is just out of the water. Extend the hand of the leading arm (in this example, the left hand), palm up, toward the other end of the pool and about a foot under the surface.*
2. *Still holding onto the wall, put both feet parallel on the wall and pointing the same direction they are facing.*
3. *Let go of the gutter as they drop the head underwater. (The hand of the leading arm helps pull the head under.) As soon as the hand of the trailing arm lets go, it comes over the head and meets the hand of the leading arm forward of the head. At this point, both hands are forward of the head (arms slightly bent), the feet are planted on the end wall and the whole body is in a side-lying position.*
4. *Repeat this step several times without pushing off.*

■ **Step 2: Plant and Push.** *Have participants:*

1. *Hold the gutter with the hand of the trailing arm and extend the leading arm toward the opposite end of the pool.*
2. *Plant feet and push off. The key is to stay in a side-lying position while pushing off.*
3. *Push off and rotate to a prone position after their feet leave the wall.*
4. *Resume butterfly.*

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The complete skill adds the stretch to the wall and the tuck when participants plant their feet on the wall. Once participants can do each basic part, they can practice to gain speed. As they increase their speed, encourage them to touch the flat part of the wall (instead of grabbing the wall) when they make contact.

Have participants:

1. Time the last stroke to allow the body to be fully stretched upon reaching the wall.
2. Place both hands on the wall at the same time, then dip the shoulder in the direction of the turn. Tuck the hips and legs in tight as they continue to move toward the wall.
3. As the hands touch the wall, turn the head toward the left shoulder. Bend the left elbow and move the left arm backward as close as possible to the body.

4. When the legs pass under the body, move the right arm over the head, keeping it close to the head. Plant both feet on the wall with toes pointing toward the side and the knees bent.
5. Take a deep breath before the head submerges. Extend the arms into a streamlined position while pushing off with the body somewhat on its side.
6. Rotate into a face-down position while gliding about 1 foot below the surface.
7. After the turn, glide a short distance, then dolphin kick to the surface and start stroking.

## Breaststroke turn

The underwater pull for the breaststroke turn differs from the usual pull because the hands and arms pull all the way past the hips and the hands recover close to the body. This is called a pullout. In competition, one pullout is allowed at the beginning of each length, and then the head must surface.



**Teaching Tip:** *The following progression can help participants learn this skill:*

- **Step 1: Turn and Plant.** Have participants:
  1. Stand next to the end wall facing the side of the pool, with the hand of the trailing arm (in this example, the right hand) on the gutter. Crouch so that the head is just out of the water. Extend the hand of the leading arm (in this example, the left hand), palm up, toward the other end of the pool and about a foot under the surface.
  2. Still holding onto the wall, put both feet parallel on the wall and pointing the same direction they are facing.
  3. Let go of the gutter as they drop the head underwater. (The hand of the leading arm helps pull the head under.) As soon as the hand of the trailing arm lets go, it comes over the head and meets the hand of the leading arm forward of the head. At this point, both hands are forward of the head (arms slightly bent), the feet are planted on the end wall and the whole body is in a side-lying position.
  4. Repeat this step several times without pushing off.
- **Step 2: Plant and Push.** Have participants:
  1. Hold the gutter with the hand of the trailing arm and extend the leading arm toward the opposite end of the pool.
  2. Plant feet and push off. The key is to stay in a side-lying position while pushing off.
  3. Push off and rotate to a prone position after their feet leave the wall.
- **Step 3: Underwater Pullout.** Have participants:
  1. After push off, glide in front-lying streamlined position, arms in front of head, for 2 seconds. Perform an arm pull to the thighs, then glide with arms at sides for 2 seconds.
  2. Recover the arms with the hands close to the body as the legs recover.
  3. During the kick, extend arms forward of head, breaking the surface.
  4. Resume breaststroke.

The complete skill adds the stretch to the wall and the tuck when participants plant their feet on the wall. Once participants can do each basic part, they can practice to gain speed. As they increase their speed, encourage them to touch the flat part of the wall (instead of grabbing the wall) when they make contact.

Have participants:

1. Time the last stroke to allow the body to be fully stretched upon reaching the wall.
2. Place both hands on the wall at the same time, then dip the shoulder on the side of the body that the turn will occur. Tuck the hips and legs in tight so that they are directly underneath the body as they continue to move toward the wall.
3. As the hands touch the wall, turn the head to the left shoulder. Bend the left elbow and move the left arm backward, keeping it as close as possible to the body.
4. When the legs pass under the body, move the right arm over the head, keeping it close to the head. Plant both feet on the wall with toes pointing toward the side and the knees bent.
5. Take a deep breath before the head submerges. Extend the arms into a streamlined position while pushing off with the body somewhat on its side.
6. Rotate into a face-down position while gliding below the surface.
7. Before losing speed, take a complete underwater breaststroke pull to the thighs, glide again and then kick upward as the hands recover close to the body. Return to the surface to resume stroking.

## Specialty Knowledge and Skills

### HELP position

Have participants get in the water wearing U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets and then:

1. Draw the knees up to the chest.
2. Keep the face forward and out of the water.
3. Hold the upper arms at the sides and fold the lower arms against or across the chest.



**Instructor's Note:** Tell participants that they should not use the HELP position in swift river currents or white water.

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### Huddle position

Divide participants into groups of two or three. Have participants get in the water wearing U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets and then:

1. Have two people put their arms around each other so that their chests are together.
2. Have three or more people put their arms over each other's shoulders so that the sides of their chests are together.

### Feetfirst surface dive

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Tuck surface dive**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Pike surface dive**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Back float**

Refer to Chapter 8, Preschool Aquatics Level 1, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to float on the back for at least 5 minutes.

## **Survival float**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to survival float for 5 minutes.

## **Survival swimming**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to survival swim for 10 minutes.

## **Tread water, using legs only**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to tread water in deep water for 2 minutes using only the legs. Participants should place their hands under the armpits and can determine which kick is the most efficient for them.

## **Surface dive and retrieve an object from the bottom**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Levels 4 and 5, for step-by-step descriptions of the surface diving skills (feetfirst surface dive, tuck surface dive and pike surface dive). In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to surface dive to retrieve objects from the bottom of a pool in water that is 7 to 10 feet deep. Participants may perform a feetfirst, tuck or pike surface dive, whichever is most efficient for them.

## **Water Safety**

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The following water safety topics are required for Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety:

- Think So You Don't Sink
- Swim as a Pair, Near a Lifeguard's Chair
- Know About Boating Before You Go Floating
- Look Before You Leap
- The danger of drains
- The danger of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding

Since the focus of this level is personal water safety, many of the skills are water safety skills. In addition to the required skills and topics from the outline, consider other topics that are relevant to participants, based on their interests and the types of aquatic environments in the area. By Level 6, participants should have a good understanding of how to be safe in, on and around the water so it is important to build on this knowledge, not simply repeat it. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson. Also, offer *Swimming and Water Safety* as a great resource to participants.

## **Exit Skills Assessment**

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, they are able to swim all strokes effectively and efficiently. They are able to swim continuously while using the appropriate turns for the stroke. They also have a solid understanding about how to be safe in, on and around the water.

1. Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke.
2. Jump into deep water, perform a survival float for 5 minutes, roll onto back and perform a back float for 5 minutes.
3. Perform a feetfirst surface dive, retrieve an object from the bottom of the pool at a depth of 7 to 10 feet, return to the surface, then back to starting point.



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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVING

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVING OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** Starting with the skills in the Specialty Knowledge and Skills category, you must follow the order that skills are presented in this outline. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

<b>Equipment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys</li> <li>■ Weighted diving objects, such as a diving brick</li> <li>■ <i>Swimming and Diving Skills</i> DVD (recommended)</li> <li>■ <i>Swimming and Water Safety</i> (one for each participant; recommended)</li> </ul>		
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Swim on Front, Back and Side</b>		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 100 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 100 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Turns</b>		
Front crawl open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Back crawl open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Front flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Backstroke flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Sidestroke open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 7
Butterfly turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 7
Breaststroke turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 7

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
<b>Specialty Knowledge and Skills*</b>		
Basic stretching exercises for diving	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6
Body alignment and control	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Surface dive and retrieve an object from the bottom	Demonstrate, in water at least 7 to 10 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4, LTS 5
Diving from poolside		
■ Kneeling position	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ Forward dive fall-in	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ Standing dive	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Diving from the diving board		
■ Kneeling position	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ Forward dive fall-in	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ Standing dive	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Takeoff from the deck		
■ One-part takeoff	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ Two-part takeoff	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Takeoff from poolside		
■ One-part takeoff	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Takeoff from the diving board		
■ One-part takeoff	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ Two-part takeoff	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Forward jump, tuck position		
■ Tuck position	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With one-part takeoff from poolside	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With one-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With two-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8

*\* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries from poolside. If water depth is not at least 11 1/2 feet (or deeper if state or local regulations require), DO NOT teach diving from a diving board.*

Skills	Completion Requirements	References
<b>Specialty Knowledge and Skills* (Continued)</b>		
Forward dive, tuck position		
■ With one-part takeoff from poolside	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With one-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With two-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Forward jump, pike position		
■ Pike position	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With one-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With two-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
Forward dive, pike position		
■ With one-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
■ With two-part takeoff from the diving board	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 8
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
The danger of drains	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Know About Boating Before You Go Floating	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3, 5 LWT
Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
The dangers of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
1. Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke.		
2. Perform a two-part takeoff with a feetfirst entry from a 1-meter diving board.		
3. Perform a two-part takeoff with a headfirst entry from a 1-meter diving board.		

*\* If water depth is not at least 9 feet, DO NOT teach headfirst entries from poolside. If water depth is not at least 11½ feet (or deeper if state or local regulations require), DO NOT teach diving from a diving board.*

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVING SKILLS

## Swim on Front, Back and Side

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**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve strokes.

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### Front crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart.

### Elementary backstroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart.

### Back crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of back crawl at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

### Breaststroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of breaststroke at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

### Sidestroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of sidestroke at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

### Butterfly

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of butterfly at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

## Turns

### Front crawl open turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the front crawl open turn during a continuous swim.

## Back crawl open turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the back crawl open turn during a continuous swim.

## Front flip turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the front flip turn during a continuous swim.

## Backstroke flip turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the backstroke flip turn during a continuous swim.

## Sidestroke open turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the sidestroke open turn during a continuous swim.

## Butterfly turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the butterfly turn during a continuous swim.

## Breaststroke turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the breaststroke turn during a continuous swim.

## Specialty Knowledge and Skills

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### **Safety Notes:**

- *Beginning with this section, you must follow the order that skills are presented.*
  - *Do not allow participants to wear goggles while practicing any of the diving skills.*
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## Basic stretching exercises for diving

Tell participants that stretching has been shown to be beneficial for strength, power and range of motion. Some examples of stretching exercises for divers include:

- Jogging or fast walking.
  - Shoulder circles.
  - Leg swings—forward, backward and sideways.
  - Pike stretch.
  - Special exercises (if needed).
  - Arm swings.
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## Body alignment and control

Have participants practice proper body alignment on the deck in the following way:

- **Hand position:** Place the palm of one hand on top of the back of the other and grip the bottom hand with the fingers of the top hand. Interlock the thumbs. Hyperextend both wrists so the palm of the bottom hand hits flat on the surface.
- **Arm position:** Raise the arms overhead, with hands in line with the shoulders and hips. Lock the elbows. Press the upper arms tightly against the ears and head.
- **Head position:** Keep the head erect and tilted back very slightly to maintain alignment between the arms and with the torso.
- **Upper body position:** Lift the ribs up and align the back in a straight line.
- **Hip position:** Tilt the top of the pelvis (hips) backward to help reduce excess curvature or sway in the lower back.
- **Leg and foot positions:** Keep the legs straight at the hips and knees and the toes pointed.

## Surface dive and retrieve an object from the bottom

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Levels 4 and 5, for step-by-step descriptions of the surface diving skills (feetfirst surface dive, tuck surface dive and pike surface dive). In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to surface dive to retrieve objects from the bottom of a pool in water that is 7 to 10 feet deep. Participants may perform a feetfirst, tuck or pike surface dive, whichever is most efficient for them.

## Diving from Poolside

### Dive from kneeling position from poolside

Have participants:

1. Kneel on one knee on the pool edge. The leg in front should be bent with the toes of the forward foot gripping the pool edge. The other leg should be bent at the knee and the foot bent at the ankle with the toes tucked under to help push off from the deck.
2. Extend the arms overhead with the upper arms pressing together against the ears.
3. Focus on a target on the surface of the water about 2 feet from poolside.
4. Lean forward, keeping the chin tucked against the chest, try to touch the water with the hands and, when starting to lose balance, push with the legs. Dive downward, not outward.
5. When entering the water, straighten the body at the hips and extend both legs.



**Figure 9-1** Dive from kneeling position from poolside with instructor assistance from poolside. **(A)** The instructor holds the trail leg above and below the knee. **(B)** The instructor lifts the trail leg.

### ***Instructor assistance from poolside***

1. Stand on the side of the trail leg. Assist the participant by holding the trail leg above and below the knee (Figure 9-1A).
2. Lift the trail leg to keep the participant from doing a belly flop (Figure 9-1B).

### ***Instructor assistance from the water***

1. Position yourself in the water on the same side as the participant's kneeling leg. Do not get directly in front of the participant.
2. Hold your hand out, palm up, and have the participant place the palms of his or her hands on the palm of your hand (Figure 9-2A). Your hands should be in the location of the entry target.
3. Direct the participant to keep the head down as he or she begins leaning forward, pressing against your hands.
4. The participant pushes toward the water, staying in contact with your hand.
5. Lower your hand down as the participant begins to dive (Figure 9-2B).
6. When the participant's head reaches the surface, quickly move your hand away so the participant can enter the water cleanly and smoothly.



**Figure 9-2** Dive from kneeling position from poolside with instructor assistance from water. **(A)** The instructor holds his or her hand out, palm up. The participant places palms of his or her hands on instructor's palm. **(B)** The instructor lowers his or her hand as the participant begins to dive.

### **Forward dive fall-in from poolside**

Have participants:

1. Stand with feet together or up to shoulder-width apart with the toes of both feet on the edge of the deck.

2. Extend the arms overhead with the upper arms pressing together against the ears.
3. Bend forward at the waist so the upper body is at about a 45- to 90-degree angle to the legs. Focus on a target on the surface of the water about 2 feet from poolside and tuck the chin to the chest.
4. Rise up onto the balls of the feet and fall forward toward the water, keeping the knees straight.
5. Fall forward, lifting the hips and extending the legs upward so they are in line with the torso.

### ***Instructor assistance from the water***

1. Position yourself in the water to the side of the participant, who is standing on the deck. Do not get directly in front of the participant.
2. Hold your hand out, palm up, and have the participant place the palms of his or her hands on the palm of your hand. Direct the participant to keep the head down.
3. The participant pushes toward the water, staying in contact with your hand (Fig. 9-3).
4. Lower your hand down as the participant pushes toward the water.
5. When the participant's head reaches the surface, quickly move your hand away.



**Figure 9-3** Forward dive fall-in from poolside with instructor assistance from water.

### **Standing dive from poolside**

Have participants:

1. Stand with feet together or up to shoulder-width apart with toes gripping the edge of the deck.
2. Extend the arms overhead with the upper arms pressing together against the ears.
3. Focus on a target on the surface of the water about 4 feet from poolside.
4. Bend at the knees and begin to angle the hands down toward the target.
5. Push off the deck, then lift the hips and extend the legs so they are in line with the torso, angle the hands down toward the target and keep the chin tucked toward the chest.

### ***Instructor assistance from poolside***

Use this technique only for a participant having difficulty lifting the legs during the dive:

1. Sit at the pool edge to one side of the participant. Place one arm in front of the participant midway between the feet and knees, about 12 inches away from the legs (Fig. 9-4).



**Figure 9-4** Standing dive from poolside with instructor assistance from poolside.

2. The participant dives over your arm, while angling down toward the water.
3. Move your arm away as the participant leaves the deck.

### Improving Performance of the Standing Dive

Observation	Intervention
Diving too far out causing flat landing	Tell participant to aim at a closer target or dive just slightly closer than the target.
Lifting the head or arms up causing flat landing	Emphasize keeping the arms over the ears and squeezing the head between the arms. Emphasize proper body alignment, especially during the setup.
Pushing too late, causing legs to flip over head with arched back or roll into water	Tell participant to push off the deck earlier. Emphasize proper body alignment, especially as participant enters the water.

## Diving from the Diving Board



### Safety Notes:

- Do not use manual assistance for diving from the diving board. Make sure participants are proficient in diving from poolside before moving to the diving board.
- Move the fulcrum as far forward as possible to minimize bounce.
- Place a wet towel or chamois on the end of the board for dives from the kneeling position to help prevent knee abrasions.
- Ensure that participants keep the head and arms aligned during all steps. Participants should be practicing proper body alignment during dives from poolside.
- Ensure that participants choose a target that is appropriate for the skill. Choosing a target too far away may cause participants to dive too flat; a target that is too close may cause the legs to pass beyond vertical or the back to arch.
- Ensure that participants dive in a vertical, streamlined position.

### Dive from kneeling position from diving board

Have participants:

1. Kneel on one knee at the end of the diving board. The leg in front should be bent with the forward foot flat on the board. The other leg should be bent at the knee with the foot bent at the ankle with the toes tucked under to help push off from the board.
2. Extend the arms overhead with the upper arms pressing together against the ears.
3. Focus on a target on the surface of the water about 4 feet from the end of the diving board.
4. Reach toward the water, dropping the hands and head; try to touch the water and, when starting to lose balance, push with the feet and legs.
5. Straighten the body, extend both legs and point the toes immediately upon leaving the board.

## Forward dive fall-in from diving board

Have participants:

1. Stand with the feet together and the toes at the end of the diving board.
2. Extend the arms overhead with the upper arms pressing together against the ears.
3. Bend forward at the waist so the upper body is at a 90-degree angle to the legs and focus on a target on the surface of the water about 4 feet from the tip of the diving board.
4. Rise up slightly onto the balls of the feet and fall forward toward the water, keeping focused on the target.
5. Squeeze the upper arms against the ears while falling toward the water. The head should remain aligned between the arms.
6. Extend the body to a streamlined position for the entry.

## Standing dive from diving board

Have participants:

1. Stand with feet together with the toes of both feet on the end of the diving board.
2. Extend the arms overhead with the upper arms pressing together against the ears.
3. Focus on a target on the surface of the water about 4 feet from the end of the diving board.
4. Bend the knees slightly and begin to angle the hands down toward the target.
5. Push off the board, lift the hips and extend the legs so they are in line with the torso. Enter the water in a streamlined position.

## Improving Performance from the Diving Board

Observation	Intervention
Lifting the head from between the arms or ducking the head at entry	Emphasize keeping the arms over the ears, squeezing the head between the arms and keeping the head still.
Letting the hands and arms split apart before and when hitting the water	Emphasize gripping the hands, keeping the arms over the ears and squeezing the head between the arms.
Not extending the legs before entry, causing the body to roll forward underwater	Have participant practice the surface dive. Emphasize a streamlined body position during the dive.
Back overarches or knees flex on entry	Practice proper body alignment on the deck. Choose a target slightly farther away. Emphasize stretching the body through an imaginary hole in the water.

## Takeoff from the Deck

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**Safety Note:** Do these exercises only on a dry deck that is not slippery. When possible, have participants dry off to help keep the practice areas dry.

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### One-part takeoff on deck

Have participants:

1. Slowly raise the heels up as the arms lift overhead into a “Y” position.
2. Circle the arms slowly back and down behind the hips as the knees begin to bend.
3. With the feet flat on the ground, continue to bend the knees into a squat and swing the arms forward and upward, extending into a straight jump.

### Two-part takeoff on deck

Have participants:

1. Slowly raise the heels up as the arms lift overhead to a “Y” position.
2. Circle the arms slowly back and down behind the hips as the knees begin to bend.
3. With the feet flat on the ground, continue to bend the knees into a squat and swing the arms forward and upward, extending into a straight jump that travels forward about 2 foot lengths.
4. Jump again immediately after touching down, circling the arms back and down while jumping high and traveling forward.

## Takeoff from Poolside

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**Safety Note:** Two-part takeoffs are not practiced from poolside.

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### One-part takeoff from poolside

Have participants:

1. Slowly raise the heels up as the arms lift overhead to a “Y” position.
2. Circle the arms slowly back and down behind the hips as the knees begin to bend.
3. With the feet flat on the ground, continue to bend the knees into a squat and swing the arms forward and upward, extending into a straight jump that lands in the water.

## Takeoff from the Diving Board

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**Instructor's Note:** Having participants focus on a point in the middle of the pool helps keep the head in the proper position.

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### One-part takeoff from diving board

Have participants:

1. Stand upright at the end of the diving board with the toes at the edge.
2. Slowly raise the heels up as the arms lift overhead to a “Y” position.
3. Circle the arms slowly back and down behind the hips as the knees begin to bend.
4. With the feet flat on the board, continue to bend the knees into a squat and swing the arms forward and upward, extending into a straight jump that lands feetfirst in the water.

### Two-part takeoff from diving board

Have participants:

1. Measure 2 foot lengths back from the end of the board.
2. Slowly raise the heels up as the arms lift overhead to a “Y” position.
3. Circle the arms slowly back and down behind the hips as the knees begin to bend.
4. With the feet flat on the board, continue to bend the knees into a squat and swing the arms forward and upward, extending into a straight jump that travels forward about 2 foot lengths.
5. Jump again immediately after touching down, circling the arms back and down while jumping high and traveling forward into a straight jump that lands feetfirst in the water.

## Forward Jump, Tuck Position

### Tuck position

Have participants:

1. Sit or lie on the deck and pull the knees up to the chest.
2. Grab both legs at the shins midway between the ankles and knees, pulling the knees tight to the chest to form a tight ball shape.

### Forward jump, tuck position with one-part takeoff from poolside

Have participants:

1. Stand with feet together on the edge of the deck.
2. Perform a one-part takeoff, jumping as high as possible and moving through a straight jump position.
3. While in flight, pull the knees up to the chest and grab them briefly.
4. Kick the legs and straighten them toward the water. Enter feetfirst in a streamlined position.

## Forward jump, tuck position with one-part takeoff from diving board

Have participants combine the one-part takeoff from the diving board with a tuck jump and kick out into deep water. Participants should perform the tuck on the way up and be stretched into a straight line on the way down. Participants should enter feetfirst in a streamlined position.

## Forward jump, tuck position with two-part takeoff from diving board

Have participants combine the two-part takeoff from the diving board with a tuck jump and kick out into deep water.

## Forward Dive, Tuck Position

### Forward dive, tuck position with one-part takeoff from poolside

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**Safety Note:** Watch that participants rotate properly. Remind them to press the arms to the side (laterally) and overhead in the “come out.”

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Have participants:

1. Focus on a target at a 45-degree angle across the pool.
2. Start by using the one-part takeoff. Just before the legs push against the deck to begin the dive, throw the arms overhead to propel the upper body, arms and head into a tuck position. The motion of the arms is similar to one used to throw a ball overhead using two hands.
3. As the body rotates forward, grab the middle of the shins for the tuck position, pulling the thighs to the chest and the heels to the buttocks.
4. Attempt to kick the legs out on the way up.
5. While coming out of the tuck, bend the elbows, move the hands up the midline and grab the hands overhead to prepare for entry.
6. Align the body in a streamlined position and reach for the entry with the hands.

### Forward dive, tuck position with one-part takeoff from diving board

With toes on the end of the board, have participants repeat the forward dive tuck on the diving board using a one-part takeoff.

### Forward dive, tuck position with two-part takeoff from diving board

Have participants:

1. Start 2 foot lengths back from the end of the diving board.
2. Perform the two-part takeoff and combine it with a forward dive tuck.

## **Forward Jump, Pike Position**

### **Pike position**

Have participants:

1. Sit or lie on the deck and pull the legs up to the chest.
2. Reach for the toes with the fingertips and keep both legs straight.

### **Forward jump, pike position with one-part takeoff from diving board**

Have participants combine the one-part takeoff from the diving board with a pike jump and kick out into deep water. Participants should perform the pike on the way up and be stretched into a straight line on the way down. Participants should enter the water feetfirst in a streamlined position.

### **Forward jump, pike position with two-part takeoff from diving board**

Have participants combine the two-part takeoff from the diving board with a pike jump and kick out into deep water.

## **Forward Dive, Pike Position**

### **Forward dive, pike position with one-part takeoff from diving board**

Have participants:

1. Focus on a target at a 45-degree angle across the pool.
2. Start by using the one-part takeoff. Just before the legs push against the board to begin the dive, throw the arms overhead to propel the upper body, arms and head into a pike position. The motion of the arms is similar to one used to throw a ball overhead using two hands.
3. As the body rotates forward, reach for the toes with the fingertips and keep both legs straight with the thighs on the chest.
4. Extend the legs into a streamlined position on the way up.
5. Bend the elbows and move the hands up the midline and grab the hands overhead to prepare for entry.
6. Align the body in a streamlined position and reach for the entry with the hands.

### **Forward dive, pike position with two-part takeoff from diving board**

Have participants:

1. Start 2 foot lengths back from the end of the diving board.
2. Perform the two-part takeoff and combine it with a forward dive pike.

## Improving Performance of the Forward Dive, Tuck and Pike Positions

Observation	Intervention
Too much forward momentum	Emphasize body control and maintaining a streamlined position, keeping the hips over the balls of the feet on the initial up motion to delay forward lean until the board begins to recoil.
Over-rotating and passing vertical	Check to see if the participant is lowering the head too much or too quickly in flight. If so, tell the participant to continue watching the target during takeoff until he or she lines up for the entry. If not, move the target slightly farther away from the board.
Swinging the arms directly forward in the “come out” (may cause rotation past vertical)	Have the participant move the arms laterally and over the ears to prepare for the entry.
Incomplete pike position	The participant may need to improve lower back and hamstring flexibility or abdominal strength to assume a tighter pike position.
Under-rotating and entering less than vertical	The participant may be keeping the head too far back or leaning back during the takeoff.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The required water safety topics for Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Fundamentals of Diving include:

- Look Before You Leap
- The danger of drains
- Know About Boating Before You Go Floating
- Think So You Don’t Sink
- Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair
- The dangers of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding

Water safety should be integrated into every lesson, so consider other topics that are relevant to participants, based on their interests and the types of aquatic environments in the area. By Level 6, participants should have a good understanding of how to be safe in, on and around the water, so it is important to build on this knowledge, not simply repeat it. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson. Also, offer *Swimming and Water Safety* as a great resource to participants.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Fundamentals of Diving, they are able to perform headfirst dives from a diving board with confidence. In addition, they demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in all strokes. They are able to swim continuously while using the appropriate turns for the stroke. They also have a solid understanding about how to be safe in, on and around the water.

1. Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke.
2. Perform a two-part takeoff with a feetfirst entry from a 1-meter diving board.
3. Perform a two-part takeoff with a headfirst entry from a 1-meter diving board.

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—FITNESS SWIMMER

# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—FITNESS SWIMMER OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.



**Instructor's Note:** This option requires a pre-assessment and a post-assessment of each swimmer. Perform the Cooper 12-minute swim test (see *Swimming and Water Safety*, Chapter 10, Box 10-3) on the first day and last day of lessons, and compare the results.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flotation devices, such as kickboards and pull buoys</li> <li>▪ Weighted diving objects, such as a diving brick</li> <li>▪ Swim paddles and fins</li> <li>▪ Timing device, such as stopwatch or pace clock</li> <li>▪ <i>Swimming and Diving Skills</i> DVD (recommended)</li> <li>▪ <i>Swimming and Water Safety</i> (one for each participant; recommended)</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Requirements	References
Swim on Front, Back and Side		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 100 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 100 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 6
Turns		
Front crawl open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Back crawl open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Front flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Backstroke flip turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Requirements</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Turns (Continued)</b>		
Sidestroke open turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 7
Butterfly turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 7
Breaststroke turn	Demonstrate while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 7
<b>Specialty Knowledge and Skills</b>		
Surface dive and retrieve an object from the bottom	Demonstrate, in water at least 7 to 10 feet deep	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4, LTS 5
Circle swimming	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 10
Using a pace clock	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6
Using a pull buoy while swimming	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6
Using fins while swimming	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6
Using paddles while swimming	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6
Describe how to set up an exercise program	Discuss/Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 10
Demonstrate various training techniques	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 10
Calculate target heart rate	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 10
Demonstrate aquatic exercise	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6 SWS, Ch 10
<b>Water Safety</b>		
Look Before You Leap	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2, 8 LWT
Know About Boating Before You Go Floating	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
Think So You Don't Sink	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3, 5 LWT
Swim As a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2 LWT
The danger of drains	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
The dangers of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding	Show and tell	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke.</li> <li>Perform the Cooper 12-minute swim test, and compare results with the pre-assessment results.</li> </ol>		

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# LEARN-TO-SWIM LEVEL 6—FITNESS SWIMMER SKILLS

## Pre-assessment

### Cooper 12-Minute Swimming Test

Have participants swim for 12 minutes with the goal of covering the greatest distance possible, using whatever stroke is preferred. Tell participants that they can rest as necessary, but they should try to go as far as possible. Chart the distance traveled by participants to compare results at the end of the session.

## Swim on Front, Back and Side



**Instructor's Note:** Refer to *Instructor's Corner* ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) for activities and drills to help participants learn and improve strokes.

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### Front crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart.

### Elementary backstroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart.

### Back crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of back crawl at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

### Breaststroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of breaststroke at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

### Sidestroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of sidestroke at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

## **Butterfly**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to swim at least 50 yards of butterfly at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart.

## **Turns**

### **Front crawl open turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the front crawl open turn during a continuous swim.

### **Back crawl open turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the back crawl open turn during a continuous swim.

### **Front flip turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the front flip turn during a continuous swim.

### **Backstroke flip turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the backstroke flip turn during a continuous swim.

### **Sidestroke open turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the sidestroke open turn during a continuous swim.

### **Butterfly turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the butterfly turn during a continuous swim.

### **Breaststroke turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to demonstrate the breaststroke turn during a continuous swim.

## **Specialty Knowledge and Skills**

### **Surface dive and retrieve an object from the bottom**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Levels 4 and 5, for step-by-step descriptions of the surface diving skills (feetfirst surface dive, tuck surface dive and pike surface dive). In Learn-to-Swim Level 6, participants should be able to surface dive to retrieve objects from the bottom of a pool in water that is

7 to 10 feet deep. Participants may perform a feetfirst, tuck or pike surface dive, whichever is most efficient for them.

## Circle swimming

In this level, participants should circle swim whenever doing continuous swims. To circle swim, have participants:

1. Organize themselves in lanes by swimming speed.
2. Swim in a counterclockwise pattern around the center of the pool lane, staying to the right of center in the lane.
3. Stagger starts so that, in each lane, the fastest swimmer starts first, followed by slower swimmers at about 5-second intervals.
4. Signal to pass by tapping the lead swimmer's foot, if passing is necessary. The lead swimmer stops at the wall and moves to a far corner to let the faster swimmer pass, then waits a few seconds before following the new lead swimmer.

## Using a pace clock

Have participants learn the basics of using a pace clock by having them swim two different types of sets.



### **Instructor's Note:**

- *Position pace clocks where they can be seen by participants at each end of the pool. Be sure to synchronize pace clocks.*
  - *The fixed rest and straight sets provided are examples only. Be sure to have participants swim distances and rest appropriate to their level of skill and fitness.*
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## **Fixed rest set**

Explain to participants that they will swim a series of four 50-yard swims with a rest of 20 seconds between each. Have participants:

1. Be ready to push off at a certain time on the clock and swim. The first swimmers in each lane start when the second hand is at the "top," or on the "0" or "60" on the clock. The next swimmers push off when the second hand is at "5," the next swimmers push off when the second hand is at "10" and so on.
2. Upon completion of the first 50 yards, rest for 20 seconds.
3. After 20 seconds have passed, push off and repeat the series of swimming 50 yards and resting 20 seconds until completing the set of four.

### ***Straight set***

Explain to participants that they will swim a series of four repetitions of 50 yards on the minute. This means that they will swim 50 yards and then rest until the clock reaches 1 minute. As the second hand reaches the 1-minute mark, participants push off and swim again. Have participants:

1. Be ready to push off at a certain time on the clock and swim. The first swimmers in each lane start when the second hand is at the “top,” or on the “0” or “60” on the clock. The next swimmers push off when the second hand is at “5,” the next swimmers push off when the second hand is at “10” and so on.
2. Upon completion of the first 50 yards, rest until the clock reaches 1 minute.
3. After the clock reaches 1 minute, push off and repeat the series of swimming 50 yards and resting for periods of 1 minute until completing the set of four.

### **Using a pull buoy while swimming**

Have participants swim at least 25 yards using pull buoys.

### **Using fins while swimming**

Have participants swim at least 25 yards using fins.

### **Using paddles while swimming**

Have participants swim at least 25 yards using paddles.



***Instructor’s Note:*** For more information about using equipment such as pull buoys, fins and paddles to help participants learn and improve strokes, see Chapter 3. In addition, activities and drills using this equipment are available on Instructor’s Corner ([www.instructorcorner.org](http://www.instructorcorner.org)).

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### **Describe how to set up an exercise program**

Have participants set up an exercise program using the *Setting Up an Exercise Program Worksheet*, available on Instructor’s Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)). Review with participants the components of a workout. Have them check their own worksheets to see that they included all components for each exercise day:

- Warm-up
- Aerobic set
- Muscular development set
- Cool-down
- Stretching

Review with participants the elements of a sound fitness program. Have them check their own worksheets to see that they included all elements in their programs:

- Frequency—how often the exercise is done
- Intensity—how much the person works
- Time—the duration of the exercise session
- Type—the kind of exercise performed



**Instructor's Note:** Refer participants to *Swimming and Water Safety, Chapter 10*, for more information on setting up workouts and an exercise program.

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## Demonstrate various training techniques

Refer to *Swimming and Water Safety, Chapter 10, Table 10-1*, for information on various training techniques. Develop short workouts appropriate for the specific fitness levels of participants. The distance and speed swum will depend on the amount of time set aside for this portion of each lesson and the fitness levels of participants. Consider introducing a different training technique each lesson.

## Calculate target heart rate

Have participants calculate their target heart rate range using the *Heart Rate Worksheet*, available on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).

## Demonstrate aquatic exercise

Tell participants that aquatic exercise workouts and programs vary in many ways, but these workouts and programs should have the same components as a swimming workout. Have participants try each of the following moves commonly used in aquatic exercise workouts:

- Jog in place forward and backward
- March, step sideways, skip, gallop, leap and hop
- Step-ups—Begin with the legs in the stride position. Bend the back leg; bring forward into a knee lift; return to stride position; repeat. Reverse legs; repeat. Move opposite arm forward at the same time as the leg moves forward (right arm forward with left leg, left arm forward with right leg).
- Leg kicks—Begin with the legs together, knees slightly bent. Lift one leg at a time forward toward the surface, knee slightly bent. Do not kick the legs higher than the hips. Move arms in opposition to the legs—right arm forward with left leg, left arm forward with right leg.
- Alternate strides—Begin with the legs in the stride position. Position the arms in opposition to the legs. Reverse legs and arms. Keep arms under the water.
- Scissors—Begin with the legs together. Move legs into stride position, one forward, one back, moving opposite arms and legs forward and back at the same time. Repeat several times. Return to the starting position and switch the lead leg and arm.
- Heel lifts—Begin with the legs together. Keeping the knees directly under the hips, pull the heel of one foot toward the buttocks, then straighten and return to the starting position. Alternate legs.

## Water Safety

The concept of water safety should be central to every part of an aquatics program. The required water safety topics for Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Fitness Swimmer include:

- Look Before You Leap
- Know About Boating Below You Go Floating
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair
- The danger of drains
- The dangers of hyperventilation and extended breath-holding

Water safety should be integrated into each lesson, so consider other topics that are relevant to participants, based on their interests and the types of aquatic environments in the area. By Level 6, participants should have a good understanding of how to be safe in, on and around the water, so it is important to build on this knowledge, not simply repeat it. Chapter 4 provides more detail about integrating water safety topics into each lesson. Also, offer *Swimming and Water Safety* as a great resource to participants.

## Exit Skills Assessment

When participants complete Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Fitness Swimmer, they have an understanding of how to incorporate fitness swimming, aquatic exercise or both into a fitness program, and are working to improve their level of fitness. In addition, they demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in all strokes. They are able to swim continuously while using the appropriate turns for the stroke. They also have a solid understanding about how to be safe in, on and around the water.

1. Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke.
2. Perform the Cooper 12-minute swim test, and compare results with the pre-assessment results. (Swim for 12 minutes to cover the greatest distance possible, using whatever stroke is preferred. Rest as necessary, but go as far as possible.)

# ADULT SWIM

**T**he American Red Cross Adult Swim courses are intended for older teens and adults wishing to improve their knowledge of, and skill in, the water. Adult Swim offers three options to meet specific needs and interests—Learning the Basics, Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes, and Swimming for Fitness.

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# ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

## Prerequisites

Red Cross Adult Swim is intended for teens and adults with varying levels of comfort and skill in the water. Course prerequisites are as follows:

- Adult Swim—Learning the Basics. There are no prerequisites for this course.
- Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes. Participants must be:
  - Comfortable in chest-deep water.
  - Able to put their face in the water.
  - Able to perform strokes that can be recognized as front crawl, breaststroke and back crawl, each for 15 yards.
- Adult Swim—Swimming for Fitness. Participants must be able to swim the following strokes, at the level of performance described in the Level 4 stroke performance chart:
  - Front crawl, 25 yards
  - Breaststroke, 15 yards
  - Back crawl, 25 yards

## Course Length

Course sessions typically consist of 8 to 10 lessons of at least 45 minutes each. There is no required minimum or maximum course length.

## Class Size

Class sizes may range from one-on-one instruction to the American Red Cross recommendation of at least one instructor for every 6 to 10 participants in a course.

Close supervision is necessary for effective practice and safety. To increase safety and instructional quality, consider using a co-instructor or instructor aide when certain factors are present, such as a participant who needs special attention or is fearful or anxious.



**Instructor's Note:** Remember, although Water Safety instructor aides may assist in classes, only certified Water Safety instructors should be co-instructors. See Chapter 1 for more detailed information about co-instructors and instructor aides.

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## Facility

It is recommended that Adult Swim classes be taught only in well-maintained swimming pools. If conducting classes in an open body of water, such as a lake, remember that open bodies of water are more likely to carry harmful organisms and are subject to wide variations in temperature, clarity and weather conditions. Always check with facility management to ensure that open bodies of water have been checked for safety.

Optimal conditions at the facility can make your program more successful. Whenever possible, a facility for Adult Swim classes should have:

- Working showers, with warm water and soap available.
- Adequate air circulation and sufficiently warm air temperatures.
- Secured pool entrances when classes are not in session.
- A storage space for instructional aids.

## Temperature

Typically, people between the ages of 15 and 55 are most comfortable in water that is between 84° and 89° F ( $\geq 29^\circ$  to  $32^\circ$  C) during a 45-minute swim lesson. Older adults are more susceptible to hypothermia than younger people, even at relatively warm temperatures. If you cannot control the water temperature, consider decreasing lesson duration and increasing the number of lessons. Other measures you can take to prevent participants from becoming chilled include increasing the intensity of the activity, encouraging participants to wear warm neoprene cover-ups (such as a vest, shirt, wet suit or ear wraps) and advising participants to bring an extra dry towel to use after exiting the water, especially if the air temperature and humidity levels are low.

As a Water Safety instructor, you need to be able to recognize when a participant may be too chilled. If you notice that a participant seems chilled or uncomfortable, end the lesson promptly. Signals of hypothermia include shivering, numbness, glassy stare, apathy, weakness, impaired judgment and loss of consciousness.

## Depth

The course requirements are based on the assumption that the facility has water shallow enough for participants to stand and, for some courses, deep enough to learn surface dives.

## Course Requirements

For each of the Adult Swim courses, completion requirements are provided in the outlines in this chapter. In addition, stroke performance criteria for swimming strokes are referenced for each course. Completion criteria are defined to provide an opportunity for participants to gain a sense of achievement. As your class proceeds, use the applicable skills checklist (available on Instructor's Corner; [instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) to chart participants' progress as they satisfy the requirements.

To receive a completion card for a given course, the participant must meet the requirements for the course. This includes demonstrating the completion requirement for all of the skills listed on the outline, as well as performing the exit skills assessment. To ensure that your participants are truly achieving success, review and practice the skills throughout the lessons until participants have reached the required performance criteria. Participants should be able to perform each skill successfully at least a couple of times to complete the course. To help participants prepare for the exit skills assessment, combine skills as participants begin achieving success with each individual skill. For example, once participants are able to step into the water repeatedly, front glide for a couple body lengths and recover to a vertical position, have them put these skills together. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion about practice.)

A badge system provides additional opportunities to recognize and reward achievement outside of the levels. The badges can be effective for motivating participants to strive toward developing specific skills and for recognizing participants for something that they are doing well, especially when they are struggling with a specific skill or set of skills needed to successfully complete the course. Chapter 12 describes the badge system in more detail.

Customize safety and swimming skills to match the individual participant's capabilities. Be flexible in applying performance standards, but remember, the participant must be able to meet the objectives of the exit skills assessment to receive a completion card for the course. A participant who moves, learns, communicates or behaves differently may not be able to meet the performance standards. For example, a participant may be unable to move a joint in a particular way, but can still move through the water in a modified way. In such cases, use your judgment as to whether the participant performs the skill as close to the standard as his or her condition allows. See Chapter 6 for more information about modifying skills.

## Resources

This chapter outlines the completion requirements and descriptions for each skill in each course, as well as the exit skills assessment for each course. The following additional Red Cross materials are available as resources:

- *Swimming and Water Safety*
- *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety DVD*
- *Swimming and Diving Skills DVD*
- Learn-to-Swim and Water Safety pages of Instructor's Corner (access tools and resources you can share with participants to reinforce the information and skills participants are learning in class and to promote ongoing participation in the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program)



**Instructor's Note:** Chapter 6 in *Swimming and Water Safety and the Swimming and Diving Skills DVD* provide additional detail and images for the performance of each swimming stroke.

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## Recognizing Achievement

Upon successful course completion, participants may be issued Learn-to-Swim course completion cards, which are included in the annual Learn-to-Swim Authorized Provider promotional package.

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## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Keep the following safety considerations in mind when conducting Adult Swim classes:

- Maintain a safety-first mindset.
  - Explain and enforce the safety rules for your facility, and set a good example.
  - Do not let participants hyperventilate or have breath-holding contests. Limit participants to a single inhalation whenever you ask them to hold their breath or submerge.

- Educate participants that recreational water illnesses (RWIs) can be passed when people who have had loose stools return to the water too soon. Let participants know that they should not attend class if they do not feel well, have diarrhea or are just recovering from a diarrheal illness. See Chapter 1 for more information on RWIs. Also, remind participants to shower before entering the pool.
- To maintain safety when participants are working on skills simultaneously:
  - Position yourself so that you can see all participants at all times.
  - Stay close so that you can provide assistance if it is needed.



**Instructor's Note:** Teaching swimming skills is very hands-on. As a water safety instructor, you will use holding and support techniques to increase participants' sense of security in the water and to support them while they practice new skills. You will also help participants get used to new or unfamiliar movements by physically moving their arms, legs or other body parts so that they get a sense of how the movement is supposed to feel. Whenever you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance, take care to follow the guidelines for positioning your hands carefully so that you avoid touching the participant in an inappropriate way. In addition, try to keep your hands as visible as possible when you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance to minimize the chance that your handling of the participant could be construed as inappropriate.

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## WORKING WITH OLDER TEENS AND ADULTS

### Developmental Considerations

Physiological changes in teens and adults occur at various rates over time. When teaching this group, consider the following:

- Most people reach physical maturity by age 18, when many physiological functions, such as strength, physical ability, motor control and reaction time are near peak levels. However, by age 30, physical capacity has begun a slow decline that continues through the rest of life.
- During most of adulthood, the percentage of body fat gradually increases and lean body mass decreases, especially for inactive adults. Although adults in middle years may be quite buoyant because of their percentages of body fat, people of advanced age tend to be thinner and less buoyant. Bone density changes may also affect buoyancy and balance in the water.
- Overall strength declines little throughout life, especially in muscle groups used in daily activities. Thus, most people have enough strength for aquatic skills. However, older adults who are inactive may have much less strength, especially in the legs.
- One of the greatest changes that occurs with aging is the gradual loss of flexibility, especially in joints and muscle groups not used regularly. The saying “move it or lose it” has great meaning as a person ages. Stretching and range of motion are important for maintaining flexibility with aging.
- Most adults are affected to some extent by gradual degeneration in the joints. Healthy, active adults at any age also may have injuries from sports or other causes that affect their mobility. Joint pain and swelling may limit the ability to swim certain strokes. For example, the breaststroke kick might not be possible or desirable for people who have undergone knee surgery.

- Hearing, vision and how the body regulates temperature may also become impaired as people age. Older adults are particularly susceptible to heat- and cold-related illnesses. They may chill easily in average water temperatures and be unable to generate enough heat to stay comfortable through a lesson. Instructors need to be alert to signals that a participant may be becoming too chilled.
- Because of neurologic changes that occur with aging, some participants may need more time to plan and start actions.
- Many adults have chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, osteoarthritis, diabetes, hypertension and osteoporosis. These conditions may limit functional ability and reduce the person's ability to learn motor skills. For more information about adapting teaching to meet the needs of participants with chronic health conditions, see Chapter 6.



**Teaching Tip:** *When working with participants who are older adults, especially those with functional limitations brought on by age, a health condition or both, you can help bolster self-esteem by:*

- *Communicating directly with the participant, not through a third person.*
- *Offering assistance, and if the offer is accepted, asking how you can best assist the person.*
- *Avoiding using the word “elderly” because it implies frailty and helplessness.*
- *Being patient.*

## Promoting Learning

Adults differ from children in their approach to learning. For example, when children learn a skill, they are also learning *how* to learn the skill. Adults already have many strategies they rely on when learning new things. They enter the learning environment with extensive learning histories—a combination of experiences, what they have already learned and how they acquire information and skills. Thus, although children and teens may learn motor skills faster because of their physical abilities, adults have the advantage of having more developed learning strategies to rely on when they are trying to master a new skill.

## Involving Participants in Lesson Planning

When teaching adults, remember that they are attending the course because they want to participate and learn. Help to promote learning by engaging your participants in the planning process, individualizing your approach and adapting your teaching methods when necessary.

Engage participants in the planning process by asking them about their motivations, interests and needs. This helps to make lesson time as productive as possible and increases participants' motivation to follow the mutually designed plan of learning, thereby promoting success. For more information about involving participants in lesson planning, see Chapter 5.

In your role as a Water Safety instructor, your job is to guide, instruct and provide positive, corrective feedback to help your participants achieve the goals of the course. The best learning takes place when

the environment is relaxed and comfortable and the instructor and participant have developed an environment of trust for learning. Keep the following in mind:

- Adults desire quite a bit of freedom. They like to practice on their own with minimal interruption. A combination of a carefully chosen, logical teaching progression and a less formal approach in organizing and conducting the class can make learning as self-directed as possible.
- Adults, regardless of age, can learn new motor skills. However, the pace at which they learn may be faster or slower than that of young people. Some adults can use their past learning strategies to master new skills quickly. Others need more trials for mastery, taking longer to improve than younger learners. Allow participants the freedom to try new skills their own ways first.
- Most adults enrolled in an aquatics class are eager to be there. However, some may have serious doubts about their abilities to succeed at new tasks. Some may also be impatient to learn, trying to be perfect and worrying more about the accuracy of a skill than the speed with which it is performed. Adults may take time to do each part correctly. Be sure to allow adequate practice time and give positive and corrective feedback.



**Instructor's Note:** For more detailed information about taking an individualized approach to teaching adult participants and adapting teaching methods, see Chapter 5.

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## Working with Fearful Participants

A certain amount of fear and anxiety is normal among people who cannot swim or who swim poorly. However, intense fear can keep participants from trying or learning a new skill. Reasons for avoiding learning to swim are varied. Some fears result from personal experiences, such as a nonfatal drowning. Other fears may be referred from other sources, such as a family member's frightening experience, media coverage of a frightening event involving the water, or sensationalistic television programs or scary movies.

When a participant is fearful, you need to help reduce that fear. Being consistent in your lessons—such as by starting and ending each lesson in the same way—helps the participant become familiar with the routine. Familiarity is comforting and can promote willingness to participate. To reduce the impact of learned fears, plan carefully and give a lot of positive reinforcement. Participants enjoy the water more when they can learn at their own pace, experience success, practice repeatedly and receive praise for their efforts. For more information about understanding and working with fearful adults, see Chapter 5. Box 2-3 in Chapter 2 also provides general strategies for helping an anxious or fearful participant.

## Factors to Consider When Scheduling Adult Classes

### Program orientation

A program orientation that lets participants know where to go, how to find the swimming area, what the first-day procedures are and who to ask for help can help participants relax and enjoy the experience of attending swimming lessons. Many adult participants may be rushing from other responsibilities in order to attend class. Knowing where to go and what to expect can help reduce stress. Apprehensive beginners may also feel more at ease following a program orientation. Schedule the orientation at a separate time and publicize it well. Make the orientation meaningful. If possible, invite former or current participants to share success stories. Treat it as an important part of the program rather than a mundane task.

## Lesson length

Typically, a lesson lasts about 45 minutes, but this depends on the participants' needs and comfort. For example, if the water temperature is too cold, you may need to shorten the lesson because older participants chill more easily than younger participants. For some adult participants, there never seems to be enough practice time. When this is the case, try scheduling lessons before a recreational swim time so that participants can stay as long as they want after the lessons.

## Number of lessons

The number of lessons to be included in a course also needs to be considered. It may be useful to have an “ongoing” program or offer private lessons and let adults participate until their needs are satisfied. If a course offers a set number of lessons, individual planning and goal setting in the first lesson can help you determine what you need to cover in each lesson in order to meet the needs of the group and each individual participant.

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# ADULT SWIM COURSES

Red Cross Adult Swim courses provide older teens and adults with positive, developmentally appropriate aquatic learning experiences. Adult Swim consists of three course options:

- **Adult Swim—Learning the Basics** is designed to help participants gain basic aquatic skills and swimming strokes, including the front crawl, breaststroke and elementary backstroke. Participants also learn skills and concepts needed to stay safe around water, in addition to those needed to help themselves or others in an aquatic emergency.
- **Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes** seeks to improve participants' proficiency in basic aquatic skills (including rotary breathing, surface dives and treading) and the six basic swimming strokes (i.e., front crawl, back crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, elementary backstroke and sidestroke). (The butterfly stroke is optional.) Participants also learn skills and concepts needed to stay safe around water, in addition to those needed to help themselves or others in an aquatic emergency.
- **Adult Swim—Swimming for Fitness** focuses on refining the participant's front crawl, back crawl, and breaststroke strokes and turns, and building endurance. (The butterfly stroke and turn are optional.) Participants also learn skills and concepts needed to stay safe around water.

It is not necessary to introduce the skills in the specific order of categories. Participants do not learn skills in a single linear progression. Allow participants to practice the skills at lower levels until they are proficient and comfortable with the skill. This will help them to acquire skills at more advanced levels. Be sure, however, to integrate water safety skills in each lesson of each level, so participants learn what they can do to be safe in, on and around the water.



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## ADULT SWIM—LEARNING THE BASICS

Adult Swim—Learning the Basics introduces basic aquatic skills and swimming strokes, including the front crawl, breaststroke and elementary backstroke. Participants strive for stroke performance at the level indicated in the Learn-to-Swim Level 3 outline and stroke performance charts. Participants also learn skills and concepts needed to stay safe around water, in addition to those needed to help themselves or others in an aquatic emergency.

# ADULT SWIM—LEARNING THE BASICS OUTLINE



**Instructor’s Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards or swim bar floats</li> <li>■ Equipment for reaching assists, such as reaching poles and rescue tubes</li> <li>■ Equipment for throwing assists, such as ring buoys and throw bags</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Goals	References
Goal: Increase comfort level in the water		
Water Entry		
Enter water	Demonstrate, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 1
Walk in water	Demonstrate, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 10
Enter water by stepping or jumping from the side, fully submerge, then recover to the surface and return to the side	Demonstrate, in water over the head	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Change Direction		
Roll from front to back	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Roll from back to front	Demonstrate, independently	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
Change from vertical to horizontal position on front	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Change from vertical to horizontal position on back	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Change from vertical to horizontal position on front, then travel toward safety	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 10
Change from vertical to horizontal position on back, then travel toward safety	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 10

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Goals</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Treading</b>		
Arm and hand treading actions	Explore, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Tread water using arm and leg actions	Demonstrate, 1 minute, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2 SWS, Ch 5
<b>Goal: Experience breath control</b>		
<b>Breath Control and Submerging</b>		
Bobbing while moving toward safety	Demonstrate, at least 15 times, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3
Rotary breathing	Demonstrate, at least 15 times	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 3
Submerge and recover to surface	Demonstrate, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 10
<b>Goal: Experience buoyancy</b>		
<b>Buoyancy on Front</b>		
Front glide with recovery	Demonstrate, independently, at least 5 body lengths, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 2, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Survival float	Demonstrate, at least 30 seconds, in deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 3
<b>Buoyancy on Back</b>		
Back glide with recovery	Demonstrate, independently, at least 2 body lengths, in chest-deep water	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
Back float with recovery	Demonstrate, independently, at least 1 minute	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1 SWS, Ch 5
<b>Goal: Moving through the water</b>		
<b>Front Crawl</b>		
Combined stroke on front with alternating arm action	Demonstrate, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards at Level 3 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Breaststroke</b>		
Combined arm and leg actions on front with simultaneous arm action (modified breaststroke)	Demonstrate, at least 2 body lengths	WSIM, Ch 8, PSA 1
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards at Level 3 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6

<b>Goal: Moving through the water (Continued)</b>		
<b>Elementary Backstroke</b>		
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards at Level 3 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Sidestroke</b>		
Scissors kick	Demonstrate, at least 15 yards at Level 3 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Goal: Learn safety skills and safe behaviors in and around the water</b>		
Circle of Drowning Prevention	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Chain of Drowning Survival	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
General water safety	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Staying smart around the water	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Making good choices for where to swim	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Recognizing an emergency	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
How to call for help	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Selecting and fitting an appropriate life jacket	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Reaching assist	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
Throwing assists	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
<b>Exit Skills Assessment</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jump into deep water from the side, recover to the surface, maintain position by treading or floating for 1 minute, turn as necessary to orient to the exit point, level off, swim front crawl and/or elementary backstroke for 25 yards, then exit the water.</li> <li>2. Push off in a streamlined position, then swim front crawl for 15 yards, change position and direction as necessary, swim 15 yards elementary backstroke, then exit the water.</li> </ol>		

LTS, Learn-to-Swim; LWT, Longfellow's WHALE Tales; PSA, Preschool Aquatics; PWS, Personal Water Safety; SWS, *Swimming and Water Safety*; WSIM, *Water Safety Instructor's Manual*.

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# ADULT SWIM—LEARNING THE BASICS SKILLS

## Increase Comfort Level in the Water

### Water entry

Follow this progression for teaching water entry skills:

- Have participants enter the water using the ramp, steps or side.
- Have participants walk in the water.
- Have participants enter water that is over their heads by stepping or jumping in from the side, fully submerge, then recover to the surface and return to the side.

### Change direction

Follow this progression for teaching skills for changing direction and position in the water:

- Roll from front to back.
- Roll from back to front.
- Change from vertical to horizontal position on front.
- Change from vertical to horizontal position on back.
- Change from horizontal to vertical position on front then travel toward safety.
- Change from vertical to horizontal position on back then travel toward safety.

### Treading

Have participants first practice the arm and hand actions used for treading, and then have them practice treading water using arm and leg actions combined. Treading water should include exploration with different kicks. Allow participants to move through the water, experiencing buoyancy and feeling how the body works with the water. Let participants experiment, reinforce and build skills in the water with what feels natural. For a review of the hydrodynamics of buoyancy, see Chapter 4 of *Swimming and Water Safety*.

## Experience Breath Control

### Breath control and submerging

To help participants develop breath control, follow this progression:

- Blow bubbles—Demonstrate, at least 3 seconds
- Bobbing—Demonstrate, at least 5 times
- Bobbing while moving toward safety
- Rotary breathing
- Submerge and recover to the surface

## Experience Buoyancy

The goal is to experience buoyancy on both the front and the back, in a stationary (float) and moving (glide) position, and to be able to recover to a position of safety.

### Buoyancy on front

Follow this progression for experiencing buoyancy on the front:

- Front glide with recovery
- Front float
- Tuck float
- Survival float

### Buoyancy on back

Follow this progression for experiencing buoyancy on the back:

- Back glide with recovery
- Back float with recovery

## Moving Through the Water

### Front crawl

In Adult Swim—Learning the Basics, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the Learn-to-Swim Level 3 stroke performance chart.

Follow this progression to help participants learn the front crawl:

- Front glide with flutter kick
- Push off in streamlined position then begin flutter kicking
- Front glide with crawl stroke arms
- Front glide with modified breaststroke arms
- Combined stroke on front
- Front crawl

### Breaststroke

In Adult Swim—Learning the Basics, participants should be able to swim the modified breaststroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the Learn-to-Swim Level 3 stroke performance chart.

Follow this progression to help participants learn the modified breaststroke:

- Front glide with breaststroke kick
- Front glide in a streamlined position then begin breaststroke kick
- Combined stroke on front—simultaneous (modified breaststroke)
- Front glide with modified breaststroke arms
- Breaststroke

## **Elementary backstroke**

In Adult Swim—Learning the Basics, participants should be able to swim the elementary backstroke at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the Learn-to-Swim Level 3 stroke performance chart.

Follow this progression to help participants learn the elementary backstroke:

- Back glide with flutter kick
- Streamlined push off position then flutter kicking
- Back glide with elementary backstroke kick
- Back glide with finning or elementary backstroke arms
- Elementary backstroke

## **Sidestroke**

In Adult Swim—Learning the Basics, participants should be able to perform the scissors kick at least 15 yards at the level of performance described in the Learn-to-Swim Level 3 stroke performance chart.

## **Learn Safety Skills and Safe Behaviors in and Around the Water**

Participants also learn about water safety skills and behaviors to help make good decisions about where to swim, how to behave around the water and how to help someone who is in trouble in the water without getting into danger. Safety topics include the following:

- Circle of Drowning Prevention
- Chain of Drowning Survival
- General water safety
- Staying smart around the water
- Making good choices for where to swim
- Recognizing an emergency
- How to call for help
- Selecting and fitting an appropriate life jacket
- Reaching assists
- Throwing assists



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## **ADULT SWIM—IMPROVING SKILLS AND SWIMMING STROKES**

Adult Swim—Improving Skills and Swimming Strokes seeks to improve participants' proficiency in basic aquatic skills and the six basic swimming strokes. (The butterfly stroke is optional.) Participants strive for stroke performance at the level indicated in the Learn-to-Swim Level 5 outline and stroke performance charts. Participants also learn skills and concepts needed to stay safe around water, in addition to those needed to help themselves or others in an aquatic emergency.

# ADULT SWIM—IMPROVING SKILLS AND SWIMMING STROKES OUTLINE



**Instructor's Note:** The skills in the outline are not listed in a teaching order. Refer to the sample block plan and lesson plan for examples of how to organize the skills. All skills should be repeated until the participant is comfortable with the skill. Allow sufficient practice time in each lesson plan. Participants should be able to achieve the completion requirements of each skill at least several times.

Recommended Equipment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in appropriate sizes for participants</li> <li>■ Flotation devices, such as foam noodles, kickboards and pull buoys</li> </ul>		
Skills	Completion Criteria	References
Goal: Improve fundamental aquatic skills		
Water Entry		
Enter water by stepping or jumping from the side	Demonstrate, independently, into at least shoulder-deep water	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 2
Breath Control and Submerging		
Rotary breathing	Demonstrate, 15 times	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 3 SWS, Ch 6
Swim underwater	Demonstrate, 3 to 5 body lengths without hyperventilating	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Feetfirst surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Tuck surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
Pike surface dive	Demonstrate, submerging completely	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5
Treading Water		
Tread water using 2 different kicks (modified scissors, modified breaststroke or rotary)	Demonstrate, at least 5 minutes	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 5
Tread water, using only legs	Demonstrate, at least 2 minutes	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 5

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Completion Criteria</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Goal: Improve effectiveness and efficiency of swimming strokes</b>		
Front crawl	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards at Level 5 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 6
Breaststroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards at Level 5 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 6
Optional: Butterfly	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards at Level 5 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 6
Elementary backstroke	Demonstrate, at least 50 yards at Level 5 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 6
Back crawl	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards at Level 5 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 6
Sidestroke	Demonstrate, at least 25 yards at Level 5 performance criteria	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 6
<b>Goal: Improve ability to swim continuously and swimming endurance</b>		
Front crawl open turn	Demonstrate, while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Back crawl open turn	Demonstrate, while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 4 SWS, Ch 7
Front flip turn	Demonstrate, while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
Backstroke flip turn	Demonstrate, while swimming	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 5 SWS, Ch 7
<b>Goal: Learn safety skills and safe behaviors in and around the water</b>		
Circle of Drowning Prevention	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Chain of Drowning Survival	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
General water safety	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 2
Use of life jackets	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3
HELP Position	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 3
Huddle Position	Demonstrate	WSIM, Ch 9, LTS 6—PWS SWS, Ch 3
Identify the steps of CPR	Discuss	WSIM, Ch 4 SWS, Ch 3

### **Exit Skills Assessment**

1. Swim front crawl 50 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary using an efficient turning style, then swim elementary backstroke for 50 yards, also with an efficient turn.
2. Swim breaststroke 50 yards, change direction of travel using an efficient open turn as necessary, then swim back crawl for 25 yards using an efficient back crawl turn.
3. Submerge underwater and swim 5 body lengths underwater without hyperventilation, return to the surface, then exit the water.

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## ADULT SWIM—SWIMMING FOR FITNESS

Adult Swim—Swimming for Fitness focuses on refining the participant’s front crawl, back crawl and breaststroke strokes and turns, and building endurance. (The butterfly stroke and turn are optional.) Participants strive for stroke performance at the level indicated in the Learn-to-Swim Level 5 outline and stroke performance charts. Participants also learn skills and concepts needed to stay safe around water.

Customize this course to meet the objectives of the participants. Be sure to have the necessary equipment available, such as kickboards, pull buoys and fins.

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# ADULT SWIM—SWIMMING FOR FITNESS

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**Teaching Tip:** *The following resources, which should also be offered to course participants, are good references for learning about the details of each stroke and reviewing hydrodynamic principles that contribute to more effective and efficient swimming:*

- Swimming and Water Safety
  - Swimming and Diving Skills DVD
- 

## Effective and Efficient Strokes

### Front crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 3, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Adult Swim—Fitness Swimming, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 100 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 5 stroke performance chart, using either open or flip turns.

### Back crawl

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Adult Swim—Fitness Swimming, participants should be able to swim the front crawl at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart, using either open or flip turns.

### Breaststroke

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Adult Swim—Fitness Swimming, participants should be able to swim the breaststroke at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart, using a breaststroke open turn.

### Butterfly

The butterfly stroke is optional for Adult Swim—Fitness Swimming. Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill. In Adult Swim—Fitness Swimming, participants should be able to swim the butterfly at least 50 yards at the level of performance described in the Level 6—Personal Water Safety stroke performance chart, using a butterfly open turn.

## Effective and Efficient Turns

Turns are a critical aspect of efficient swimming. Open and flip turns are refined in this course. Participants should demonstrate open and flip turns during continuous swims throughout the course.

### Open Turns

#### Front crawl open turn

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Back crawl open turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 4, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Breaststroke turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Butterfly turn**

The butterfly turn is optional for Adult Swim—Fitness Swimming. Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 6—Personal Water Safety, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Flip Turns**

### **Front flip turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

### **Backstroke flip turn**

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn-to-Swim Level 5, for a step-by-step description of this skill.

## **Specialty Knowledge and Skills**

Specialty knowledge and skills related to fitness swimming include the following topics:

- Circle swimming and swimming etiquette
- Using a pace clock
- Setting up an exercise program
- Calculating target heart rate
- Training techniques
- Safety considerations for specific events, such as open-water swimming

Refer to Chapter 9, Learn to Swim Level 6—Fitness Swimmer, and Chapter 10 of *Swimming and Water Safety* for more information on these topics.

# WATER SAFETY COURSES AND PRESENTATIONS

**T**eaching people to be safe in, on and around the water is critical for anyone teaching others how to swim. Teaching water safety is integrated throughout the Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses. Participants will look to you as a water safety instructor to share your knowledge and to help them understand how to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies in and around the water. Lead by example, always demonstrating safe practices and behaviors and promoting a safety-first mindset and attitude.

The American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program offers many different ways to share water safety information. This chapter outlines the water safety courses and presentations you are authorized and encouraged to teach. Water safety instructors are eligible to teach all of these courses except for Home Pool Essentials, which is an online-only course.



**Teaching Tip:** Know your intended audience and what they hope to achieve and then select and customize a course or presentation that meets their needs.

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## WATER SAFETY COURSES

The Swimming and Water Safety program includes water safety courses intended for adults and children. The courses for adults are often needed to meet a requirement for a regulatory agency or job and lead to certification for participants. Participants may also enroll in these courses for personal enrichment. The Longfellow's WHALE Tales course is intended for children, and special Longfellow's WHALE Tales certificates are available for use, if desired.

### Basic Water Rescue

Basic Water Rescue is a 4-hour certification course for members of the general public involved in aquatic activities, as well as public safety personnel, camp personnel and day trip leaders, daycare workers, school teachers, aquatic fitness instructors, aquatic therapists and others who work around water. It provides participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent, recognize and respond to aquatic emergencies, including how to protect themselves when assisting others. This course *does not* provide participants with all the knowledge and skills needed to be certified as a lifeguard.

### Instructor materials

The Basic Water Rescue course outline, including the lesson plan, is available on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)). No videos or DVDs are required for this course. Water safety instructors can obtain the written exam, answer sheets and answer key from the Training Support Center.

### Participant materials

Participants should have a copy of *Swimming and Water Safety* to help them learn the basic principles of emergency prevention, planning and assisting others using nonswimming rescues in an aquatic emergency. The manual is available as a digital download or for purchase on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).

### Safety Training for Swim Coaches

Safety Training for Swim Coaches is a 6-hour blended-learning course developed in collaboration with USA Swimming. It is designed mainly for use by coaches who are members of USA Swimming, the YMCA or other national governing bodies seeking to satisfy a certification requirement. The course focuses on how to help maintain a comfortable and safe environment for swimmers, prevent accidents and emergencies, and respond to swimmers with illnesses or injuries in water or on land. This course is not intended to train an individual to become a lifeguard.

The course combines web-based delivery of content, an online exam and a facility-based, in-water skills session. A shorter review course option is also available, along with course combinations that include Adult and Child CPR/AED full, review and challenge course options. The certificate, Safety Training for Swim Coaches/First Aid, is valid for 2 years.

An "online content only" option, approximately 3 hours in length, is available for coaches currently certified in Lifeguarding. This involves completing the online learning portion of the course, including the online exam. No facility-based, in-water skills session is required. Course participants receive a Safety Training for Swim Coaches Online Content Only certificate for this course that is valid for 2 years.

## Prerequisites

No skill prerequisites are required to enroll in the Safety Training for Swim Coaches course. However, participants must be at least 15 years of age on or before the final scheduled session of the course. Also, because there is an in-water skills session, participants must be comfortable in chest-deep water.

## Instructor materials

Instructors use the *Safety Training for Swim Coaches Blended Learning Instructor's Manual*, available in digital format on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)). The instructor's manual contains a single lesson consisting of a short lecture/guided discussion on emergency care; non-swimming rescues and assists; head, neck and spinal injuries; and skill practice and evaluation. Skill charts and skill assessment tools are included. For detailed information on this course, including how to set up a blended learning course, go to the Swim Coaches page on Instructor's Corner.

## Participant materials

Participant materials include the online portion of the course and the *Safety Training for Swim Coaches Supplement*.

The online portion of the Safety Training for Swim Coaches course consists of four chapters. Information is presented through video slideshows with audio voiceover. Video-based scenarios give participants the opportunity to apply the concepts they have learned to real-life situations. Other features of the online course include quizzes to check understanding; access to the e-book supplement and More Info sections, which allow participants to read in more detail about the topic under discussion; additional resources (including links to helpful websites, fact sheets and skill sheets); and Read Along functionality (a transcript of the audio). The online portion of the course concludes with a 50-question final exam.

The *Safety Training for Swim Coaches Supplement* provides in-depth information about being a responsible and professional swim coach. Links embedded within the text allow quick access to websites with supporting information, and a resources icon in the margin highlights areas where more information can be found in the Resources section of the online content. A glossary and appendix containing skill sheets are also provided. The supplement, which is available in digital format only, is included in the online content, but is also available on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) and [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).

## Water Safety Today

Water Safety Today is intended for anyone with an interest in learning water safety knowledge and skills. This 2-hour presentation teaches participants how to recognize, prevent and respond to emergencies in, on and around the water. Successful completion of this course results in a certificate of completion that has no expiration date.

## Instructor materials

Instructors can access the presentation outlines and lesson plans for each presentation on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).

## Participant materials

*Swimming and Water Safety*, available as a digital download or for purchase on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)), is recommended for all participants to help them learn the basic principles

of emergency prevention, planning and assisting others using nonswimming rescues in an aquatic emergency.

## **Personal Water Safety**

Personal Water Safety is intended for anyone who wants to learn how to be safe in, on and around the water. This 5-hour presentation teaches participants how to prevent personal injuries and emergencies in, on and around the water along with survival and self-rescue techniques. It provides basic information on ocean safety (rip currents), safety at waterparks and boating. Successful completion of this course results in a certificate of completion that has no expiration date.

### **Instructor materials**

The course outline and lesson plan is included on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).

### **Participant materials**

All participants should have a copy of *Swimming and Water Safety*, available as a digital download or for purchase on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)). This manual includes descriptions and photographs of survival, self-rescue and swimming skills in addition to the basic principles of emergency prevention, planning and assisting others using nonswimming rescues in an aquatic emergency.

## **Home Pool Essentials™: Maintenance and Safety**

Home Pool Essentials, an online course co-written with the National Swimming Pool Foundation, is intended for anyone who owns or regularly visits a home with a residential pool or hot tub. It is designed to help home pool owners properly operate and safely enjoy a home pool or hot tub. Topic areas include maintenance and emergency planning. Successful completion of this course results in a certificate of completion that has no expiration date.

The course includes a free downloadable copy of the *Home Pool Essentials™: Maintenance and Safety Resource Guide*. To enroll in this course, participants must register at [homepool essentials.org](http://homepool essentials.org).

## **Longfellow's WHALE Tales**

Longfellow's WHALE Tales is a dry-land water safety program for children ages 5 to 12. It includes information on the following topics:

- Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair
- Be Cool, Follow the Rules
- Look Before You Leap
- Think So You Don't Sink
- Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice
- Know About Boating Before You Go Floating

- Too Much Sun Is No Fun
- In Your House and in Your Yard, Watch for Water, Be on Guard
- Wave, Tide or Ride, Follow the Guide

The *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales K–6 Educational Packet* contains lessons plans, fact sheets, activity sheets and printed posters to reinforce water safety topics. These materials are also available for download from Instructor’s Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)). The optional *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales* DVD supports nine of the 11 safety topics, featuring experiences elementary school-aged children may encounter related to water safety. (Longfellow’s safety topics Think Twice Before Going Near Cold Water or Ice and Know About Boating Before You Go Floating are not supported by video segments.) The videos on the *Longfellow’s WHALE Tales* DVD are also available as streaming video on Instructor’s Corner.

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## WATER SAFETY PRESENTATIONS

The Swimming and Water Safety program also includes water safety presentations to help teach people learn to be safe in, on and around the water (Table 11-1). These brief presentations can be offered in small or large group settings. The presentation outlines and lesson plans for each presentation are included on Instructor’s Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)). No participant materials are required; however, water safety instructors are encouraged to provide educational materials to participants from the Red Cross website ([redcross.org](http://redcross.org)). Many free resources are available to support participant learning, including tear sheets and eSheets on different water safety topics. Certificates are not issued for these presentations.

Table 11-1. **Water Safety Presentations**

Presentation and Description	Intended Audience
<p><b>General Water Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 30-minute presentation</li> <li>■ Focus on developing an awareness of the importance of water safety training and key information on being safe in, on and around the water for individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ People who want to learn about the importance of water safety and how to be safe in, on and around the water</li> </ul>
<p><b>Home Pool Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 30-minute presentation</li> <li>■ Information for home pool owners and apartment users on how to keep their family and guests safe in an aquatic environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Home pool owners and apartment pool users</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parent Orientation to Swim Lessons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 30-minute presentation</li> <li>■ Orientation to American Red Cross swim lessons offered at local aquatic facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parents of young children enrolled in American Red Cross swim lessons for the first time</li> </ul>

Table 11-1. (continued)

Presentation and Description	Intended Audience
<p><b>Sun Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 30-minute presentation</li> <li>■ Information about the dangers of too much exposure to direct sunlight, and ways to protect self and others while enjoying activities in the sun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ People who enjoy outdoor activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rip Current Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 30-minute presentation</li> <li>■ Focus on an awareness of the dangers of rip currents, including how to recognize and avoid them, as well as what to do if caught in one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ People who spend time at surf beaches or who are interested in learning about rip currents</li> </ul>



# Course Completion

# RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING ACHIEVEMENT

**T**he Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program provides multiple ways for water safety instructors to recognize and reward achievement as participants gain swimming knowledge and skills. An achievement booklet, a badge system and completion cards work together to help:

- Educate parents and participants about the knowledge and skills gained and the level of performance expected throughout the different levels.
- Keep parents and participants informed about progress made to date and skills that still need to be mastered.
- Motivate participants to work toward mastering the next set of skills or moving to the next level.
- Recognize and reward participants for knowledge and skill achievement.

Certificates of completion are also available for participants who successfully complete certain water safety courses.

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## LEARN-TO-SWIM COURSES

Authorized Providers (APs) and Licensed Training Providers (LTPs) must enroll in the Learn-to-Swim program annually on a calendar-year basis to teach the Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses. Categories are established based on the maximum number of enrollees projected for the year. The annual facility fee is assessed to each facility within an organization that has a pool or waterfront facility and offers lessons. Each fee paid includes an AP promotional package and an allotted number of Learn-to-Swim completion cards. The Learn-to-Swim page of Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)) details the fees, categories, number of completion cards and other items that are included in the promotional package. This information is updated annually.

### ***Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet***

The *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* is a convenient way for water safety instructors to provide participants and their parents with progress reports as the participant progresses through the lessons.

The *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* provides a way of tracking what skills the participant has achieved and what skills still need work. Multiple panels track with the Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim levels. Skills and exit skills assessments are listed by level in a checklist format. Once the participant has successfully completed all of the requirements for a level, the instructor acknowledges that accomplishment by signing and dating the page in the *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* and by checking a box indicating the participant's readiness to enroll in the next level. The multiple opportunities for an instructor to acknowledge progress allow for the possibility that a participant will not successfully achieve all of the skills in a single session.

It is recommended that achievement booklets be provided to all participants in the Learn-to-Swim levels. Participants can use the same achievement booklet to track their achievements as they progress through the levels of Learn-to-Swim.

All Learn-to-Swim APs/LTPs that are enrolled in the current year's program can purchase additional *Learn-to-Swim Achievement Booklets*. Information for purchasing additional achievement booklets is available on Instructor's Corner ([instructorscorner.org](http://instructorscorner.org)).

### **Badge System**

A badge system provides additional opportunities to recognize and reward achievement outside of the levels. The badges can be effective for motivating participants to strive toward developing specific skills and for recognizing participants for something that they are doing well, especially when they are struggling with a specific skill or set of skills needed to successfully complete the level. The badge skills do not have to be completed to successfully complete a level.

Regardless of the level the participant is enrolled in, the participant can "test" for any badge when he or she feels ready. A participant can ask to be tested or an instructor can encourage a participant to test for a badge. Participants can achieve a badge at any time.

The badges are not physical products. They are illustrated in the *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet* and are incorporated into the Red Cross Swim mobile application. The water safety instructor can check off the badges as they are achieved in the *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet*, and parents of participants can share the badges on social media using the mobile application.

Badges are grouped into four categories—foundation, safety, skills and endurance (Table 12-1). In Table 12-1, the column titled *Natural Level* indicates the level at which the skill or set of skills should be achieved naturally. Unless specified otherwise, the performance criteria for the identified level is used for evaluation. For example, participants who are seeking to achieve the Elementary Backstroke badge would be evaluated using the criteria in the Learn-to-Swim Level 4 stroke performance chart. The badges Lifeguard Prep and WSI Prep have two levels listed. In these cases, participants naturally achieve the skills and performance criteria in Learn-to-Swim Level 4, but the distances are not achieved until Learn-to-Swim Level 5.

Table 12-1. **Badges and Categories**










Name/Topic	Icon	Description	Natural Level
<b>Foundation</b>			
Exploring Under Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submerge, open eyes and retrieve an object from under water.</li> </ul>	1
Swim and Exit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From a position of being held by the instructor, swim the combined stroke on front or back for 2 body lengths.</li> <li>Exit the water independently.</li> </ul>	1
Bobbing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 times, demonstrating “true” bobbing/rhythmic breathing</li> </ul>	2
Combined Stroke on Front with Breaths		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim on the front at least 5 body lengths.</li> <li>Take two breaths during the swim (either to the front or back) independently.</li> </ul>	2
Back Float		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start on front.</li> <li>Roll from front to back independently.</li> <li>Float on back for 30 seconds.</li> </ul>	3
<b>Safety</b>			
How to Call for Help		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dial 9-1-1 or the local emergency number (on a template or a real phone that is disabled).</li> <li>Role play the call with a prepared script (requiring student to answer call-taker questions).</li> </ul>	1
Water Competency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step into the water from the side and totally submerge.</li> <li>Recover to the surface, then maintain position for 60 seconds by treading or floating.</li> <li>Rotate one full turn and orient to the exit.</li> <li>Level off and move on the front or back 25 yards.</li> <li>Exit the water.</li> </ul>	3
Life Jacket		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put the life jacket on correctly.</li> <li>Wear it appropriately.</li> <li>Swim while wearing for 10 minutes.</li> </ul>	3
Reach or Throw, Don't Go		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaching assist from side without equipment</li> <li>Reaching assist from side with equipment</li> <li>Throwing assist</li> </ul>	3

Table 12-1. (continued)

















Name/Topic	Icon	Description	Natural Level
Tread Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform for 2 minutes.</li> </ul>	4
Elementary Backstroke		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim for 25 yards (Level 4 performance criteria).</li> </ul>	4
Sidestroke		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim for 25 yards (Level 4 performance criteria).</li> </ul>	4
<b>Skills</b>			
Front Crawl		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off in a streamlined position on front and begin flutter or dolphin kicking, then swim front crawl at Level 5 performance criteria.</li> <li>Swim a total distance of 25 yards.</li> </ul>	5
Breaststroke		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off in a streamlined position, then swim breaststroke at Level 5 performance criteria.</li> <li>Swim a total distance of 25 yards.</li> </ul>	5
Backstroke		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off in a streamlined position on back and begin flutter or dolphin kicking, then swim backstroke at Level 5 performance criteria.</li> <li>Swim a total distance of 25 yards.</li> </ul>	5
Butterfly		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off in a streamlined position on front and begin dolphin kicking, then swim butterfly at Level 5 performance criteria.</li> <li>Swim for a total distance of 25 yards.</li> </ul>	5
Flip Turn		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim front crawl for 15 yards, perform front flip turn, then continue swimming front crawl for 15 yards.</li> <li>Swim backstroke for 15 yards, perform a back flip turn, then continue swimming backstroke for 15 yards.</li> </ul>	5
Shallow-Angle Dive		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete a shallow-angle dive, glide 2 body lengths and begin any front stroke.</li> </ul>	5
<b>Endurance</b>			
My First 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim 25 yards continuously using any one stroke at Level 3 stroke performance criteria.</li> </ul>	3
My First 50		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim 50 yards continuously using any two strokes at Level 4 stroke performance criteria.</li> </ul>	4
100-Yard Swim		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim 100 yards continuously using any two strokes at Level 5 performance criteria; open turns or flip turns are acceptable.</li> </ul>	5

Table 12-1. (continued)

Name/Topic	Icon	Description	Natural Level
Lifeguard Prep	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Swim 300 yards continuously using either the front crawl or breaststroke at Level 4 stroke performance criteria; open turns or flip turns are acceptable.</li> <li>■ Tread water for 2 minutes using legs only.</li> <li>■ Complete a combined time event: surface dive 7 to 10 feet, pick up 10-pound object, return to the wall, exit the water.</li> </ul>	4/5
WSI Prep	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrate the following strokes at Level 4 stroke performance criteria:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Front crawl – 25 yards</li> <li>○ Back crawl – 25 yards</li> <li>○ Breaststroke – 25 yards</li> <li>○ Elementary backstroke – 25 yards</li> <li>○ Sidestroke – 25 yards</li> <li>○ Butterfly – 15 yards</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Maintain position on back for 1 minute.</li> <li>■ Tread water for 2 minutes.</li> </ul>	4/5

## Learn-to-Swim Completion Cards

Completion cards are available for the courses in the Learn-to-Swim program. These cards can be used for Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses. The completion cards are included in the annual AP promotional package. The number of completion cards included is based on the projected maximum number of enrollees. The Learn-to-Swim page on Instructor’s Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)) details eligibility for purchasing additional completion cards.

Completion cards should be provided to participants who demonstrate competency in each required skill taught in a course. Competency is defined as being able to perform each skill to meet the objective without guidance. Participants must be able to demonstrate all of the skills listed in the outlines in Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 at the level of performance identified in the stroke performance charts, as well as perform the exit skills assessment. Any exceptions (such as head-first entries and diving skills if the facility does not meet minimum depth requirements) are noted in the outlines.

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## WATER SAFETY COURSES

Many agencies, organizations and individuals look to the American Red Cross for formal training resulting in certification. Successfully completing the requirements for several of the water safety courses, such as Safety Training for Swim Coaches and Basic Water Rescue, leads to certification.

American Red Cross certification means that on a particular date, an instructor verified that a course participant could:

- Demonstrate competency in each required skill taught in a course. Competency is defined as being able to perform each skill to meet the objective without guidance.
- Pass the final written exam with a minimum grade of 80 percent, if applicable. If the final written exam has more than one section, a minimum grade of 80 percent must be achieved on each section.

Achieving course certification does not imply any future demonstration of the knowledge or skill at the level achieved on the particular date of course completion.

The Red Cross issues a digital certification for successful completion of basic-level certification courses. Each digital certificate has its own unique ID and QR codes which allow for easy confirmation for validity and authenticity. These online certificates give instructors and course participants access to their Red Cross certificates anytime, anywhere. Once the class is completed, the instructor enters the course record through an online process. If a participant is marked as “pass,” he or she is emailed a digital certificate immediately upon approval by the Training Support Center.

Instructors are also able to provide certificates to participants or maintain hard copies by printing them on wallet cardstock or on 8½" x 11" paper. Complete instructions for processing course records and managing certificates are available on Instructor’s Corner ([instructorcorner.org](http://instructorcorner.org)).



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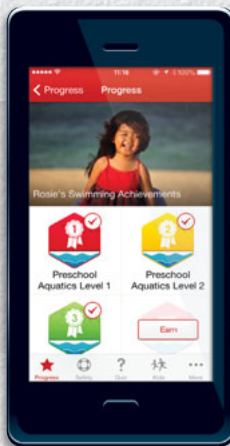
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