

Learn to Swim Program

Levels of Instruction The Learn-to-Swim program is divided into seven course levels. The list below outlines skills that participants must successfully demonstrate in order to complete each level and move to the next.

Level I: Water Exploration

Level II: Primary Skills

Level III: Stroke Readiness

Level IV: Stroke Development

Level V: Stroke Refinement

Level VI: Stroke Proficiency

Level VII: Advanced Skills

Level I: Water Exploration

Purpose: Orient to aquatic environment; create a sound foundation for aquatic and safety skills.

- Understand the basic water safety rules
- Know the fundamentals of using a life jacket
- Know how to handle a cramp
- Know how to get help
- Perform reaching assists without equipment
- Enter and exit water independently
- Fully submerge face for 3 seconds
- Blow bubbles
- Bounce in chest-deep water (bob) to chin level 10 times
- Walk 5 yards in chest-deep water, maintaining balance
- Float, while supported, on front & back
- Kick, while supported, on front & back
- Practice basic alternating arm action

Level II: Primary Skills

Purpose: Expand on fundamental aquatic locomotion and safety skills.

- Perform reaching & extension assist from deck
- Assist nonswimmer to feet
- Be familiar with rescue breathing
- Move from standing to horizontal position
- Hold breath and fully submerge head for 3 seconds
- Float or glide on front, unsupported, for 5 seconds
- Float or glide on back, unsupported, for 5 seconds
- Submerge to retrieve object in chest-deep water
- Explore deep water, with floatation support
- Enter pool into chest-deep water and stand
- Perform flutter kick on front & back (support optional)
- Turn over from front to back and back to front
- Float on back while finning with hands
- Practice back crawl arm action
- Perform combined (kick & arms) stroke front, 5 yards
- Perform combined (kick & arms) stroke back, 5 yards

Level III: Stroke Readiness

Purpose: Increase swimming skill competency; practice safety and non-swimming rescue skills.

- Understand safe diving rules
- Bob in water slightly over head to travel to safe area
- Jump into deep water with life jacket on
- Jump into deep water from side of pool
- Demonstrate the Heat Escape Lessening Posture for 1 minute
- Perform "huddle" position with other participants for 1 minute
- Know how to open airway for rescue breathing
- Retrieve an object from the bottom in chest-deep water
- Perform 15 bobs in chest-deep water
- Do back crawl, 10 yards
- Do elementary backstroke kick, 10 yards
- Dive from the side of pool from kneeling and compact positions
- Tread water
- Reverse direction while swimming on back
- Coordinate arm stroke for front crawl while breathing to the front or side, 10 yards
- Perform front glide with push-off, 2 body lengths
- Perform back glide with push-off, 2 body lengths
- Reverse direction while swimming on front

Level IV: Stroke Development

Purpose: Develop confidence and competency in strokes and safety skills beyond preceding levels; introduce breaststroke and sidestroke.

- Become familiar with CPR
- Demonstrate Rescue Breathing (without mouth-to-mouth contact)
- Perform rotary breathing
- Practice deep water bobbing
- Experiment with buoyancy and floating position
- Demonstrate diving from pool side, from both stride and standing positions
- Practice treading water with a modified scissors, modified breaststroke and/or rotary kicks (2 minutes)
- Demonstrate turning at the wall
- Perform the following:
 - Front crawl, 25 yards with rotary breathing
 - Back crawl, 25 yards
 - Elementary backstroke, 10 yards
 - Scissor kick, 10 yards
 - Sculling on back 5 yards or 15 seconds
 - Breaststroke kick, 10 yards

Level V: Stroke Refinement

Purpose: Continue stroke refinement; introduce butterfly, surface dives and springboard diving.

- Understand rules for safe diving from board
- Know how to recognize spinal injury
- Know hip/shoulder support for spinal injury
- Continue refinement of front crawl, back crawl, elementary backstroke, breaststroke and sidestroke
- Demonstrate alternate breathing
- Swim under water 3 body lengths
- Tread water 2 minutes with 2 different kicks
- Demonstrate basic dives:
 - Standing front dive from diving board
 - Long, shallow dive
- Perform the following:
 - Feet-first surface dive

Breaststroke, 10 yards
Sidestroke, 10 yards
Elementary backstroke, 25 yards
Dolphin kick, 10 yards
Front crawl, 50 yards
Back crawl, 50 yards
Stride jump entry
Open turn on front and back

Level VI: Stroke Proficiency

Purpose: Develop maximum efficiency and endurance for strokes; introduce flip turns.

- Demonstrate throwing assists
- Know how to roll a spinal injury victim face up
- Perform turns:
 - Speed turn and pull-out for breaststroke
 - Sidestroke turn
 - Breaststroke turn
 - Flip turn for front crawl
- Tread water for 3 minutes, 1 minute without hands, 2 minutes with hands
- Demonstrate jump tuck from diving board
- Perform an approach and hurdle on diving board
- Perform pike surface dive & tuck surface dive
- Perform the following:
 - Front & back crawls, 100 yards each, with turns
 - Breaststroke & sidestroke, 25 yards each
 - Butterfly, 10 yards
 - Breaststroke & sidestroke turns

Level VII: Advanced Skills

Purpose: Encourage lifetime fitness; refine strokes learned in previous levels; develop springboard diving skills; learn advanced rescue skills.

- Demonstrate an in-water rescue using equipment
- Demonstrate how to check heart rate
- Know conditioning principles
- Perform front dive from board (tuck or pike position)
- Demonstrate treading water for 5 minutes
- Retrieve diving brick in 8-10 feet of water
- Perform the following:
 - Continuous swim, 500 yards
 - Breaststroke, 50 yards
 - Front crawl, 200 yards
 - Sidestroke, 50 yards
 - Swim under water, 15 yards
 - Butterfly, 25 yards
 - Back crawl, 100 yards
 - Backstroke flip turn
 - Tread water for 5 minutes

For more information about Learn to Swim or other American Red Cross swimming and lifeguarding programs, contact your local American Red Cross or the American Red Cross web site - <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/aquatics/seven.html>.