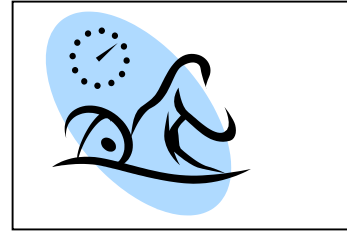


How Long Does It Take to Learn to Swim?



This is an important question we get asked all the time. The answer is: It depends. First you have to answer a few questions yourself. What are your swimming goals for yourself or for your child? What does "swimming" look like to you? In other words, how do you define swimming?

There are lots of different ideas of what swimming is. Some people believe swimming is the ability to jump in the deep end and tread water indefinitely. Other people think being able to swim underwater is swimming. Still more people believe a head-up, Tarzan-type of movement through the water is swimming.

The truth is there are lots of ways to move through the water yet very few of them actually define someone as a swimmer.

Love to Swim and Tumble School; the American Red Cross; the American Swimming Coaches Association; and the United States Swim School Association all agree the ability to swim at least 300 yards (the length of 3 football fields) continuously and masterfully, dramatically lowers the possibility of ever drowning.

Can a person do this with their head up the whole way? Not likely. When your head is up, your feet are down, creating an enormous amount of drag. This quickly leads to exhaustion causing the body to become vertical in the water. This same vertical body position is also known as the *drowning position*.

How about underwater? Can a person swim 300 yards underwater? Not likely. Swimming underwater requires you to hold your breath for long periods of time. The activity of holding your breath is fatiguing. Swimming a distance and holding your breath at the same time is both dangerous and exhausting.

Forget the 300 yards of swimming. Is treading water your goal? Lots of people believe being able to tread water is a minimum safety goal for swimming. But the truth is vertically treading water is exhausting and hard to sustain. Learning to float on your front or back is a much safer, more efficient method of "resting" or sustaining your position in the water. Few people, other than lifeguards and water polo players, need to learn to tread water in the traditional, vertical position.

Here are some other considerations when defining yourself or your child as a swimmer:

Safety

The first milestone at Love to Swim and Tumble School will be when you or your child has enough swim skills to be considered safer in the water. ALL CHILDREN MUST HAVE

TOTAL, VISUAL SUPERVISION BY AN ADULT WHILE IN OR NEAR A BODY OF WATER; no matter how advanced their swim skills are.

There is, however, a Love to Swim and Tumble School level where most students can swim a short distance and get a few breaths independently. These minimal skills for safer swimming occur after the completion of our Preschool Level 4 or School-age Level 3 Station. Prior to these stations, the swim students are unable to swim far enough, swim "head up" long enough or redirect their navigation effectively enough. Please do not pull your child out of lessons before he or she has mastered all the skills in these stations.

Stroke Acquisition

Beyond advancing to the minimal standard to make your child safer in the water, there are different stations to teach your child specific strokes in Love to Swim and Tumble School swim lessons.

Rhythmic breathing, timing and Freestyle technique are taught in Preschool Station 5 and School-age Station 4.

Preschool Station 5 also teaches elementary backstroke, introduces the core foundation for butterfly and breaststroke and achieves 30 feet of fundamental freestyle and backstroke. School-age Station 5 introduces backstroke, breath control for flip turns and accomplishes technically sound freestyle with balanced well-timed side breathing for 60 feet.

Competitive swim skills such as stamina, endurance, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke, racing starts, and flip turns are taught in our non-competitive swim team levels (School-age Station 6-10).

Curriculum Champion and Expert Swimming

To be considered an "Expert Swimmer", we offer the Individual Medley. This event consists of 8 lengths of each competitive stroke (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle). It must be swum consecutively with good technique and without stopping. We couple this with a 15 minute continuous swim in our highest level, Station 10. When your child masters these two events, he will then receive our Curriculum Champion trophy and a celebration party. This is a very exciting event in our swim school. We love knowing your child's strong swimming skills will make a lifetime of water experiences more numerous, comfortable and rewarding.

Now you can set goals for you or your child based on Safety, Stroke Acquisition or Expert Swimming.