Swim TO Stay Safe, Swim Safe

Stay, Play, and Learn at Home Swim: Beginner - Lesson One

Today's Lesson: Getting Started

Build your swim terms knowledge base

Get comfortable in water

Blow bubbles and breathe while in water

Explore what floats and why

Swim Level: Beginner

Learn-to-Swim Levels: Guardian 1 to 3, Preschool 1, Ultra 1, Youth and Adult 1

Safety Reminders: Caregivers should ensure that children **are supervised and never left unattended in and around water**. Adults and youth who practice any water activities should, also, **have a buddy close by**. Bathtub and shower **safety measures** should be **adhered to at all times.**

Knowledge Goal: Word Challenge

Look online, choose from our resource page, or create your own word find, crossword or similar word game using some, or all of the following words

Bobs	Songs	Swimming
Float	Bubbles	Breathing
Glide	Water	

Before you continue with the lesson, do you know how these words relate to swimming? Revisit these words at the end of this lesson and see if you were right.

Swim Goal: Get Comfortable Getting Wet

Learning to swim starts with getting comfortable in varying water temperatures.

How to Start:
Complete as many activities below that match your comfort, age, and skill level or that of your child's.

Materials:

- Mat or towel

- Paint brush (or use hands)
- Bowl or bucket
- Water toys
- Shower
- Bath Tub

Steps:

1. Fill a bowl or a bucket with water and using a paint brush or hands paint parts of your face with water over a towel.
2. In the shower, practice putting your face in the running water partially, and then fully until you are comfortable
3. Fill a bathtub with water. Ease in until you are covered in water and using a bucket or bath toy pour water over your body, your head and your face.

Progressions:

- Start with warm water and gradually introduce cooler water.
- Work towards becoming fully comfortable with having your body and face wet in cooler water.
- Work towards getting your entire body wet

Variations:

- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult. Some game and song selections are listed below:

The Paint Game

Age Recommendation: 6 months +

Materials

- Bathtub or Container filled with water
- Paint brush (optional)
- Child-friendly soaps or bath paints (optional)

Activity

Sit in the bathtub with only a couple of inches of water or use a container of water for this activity. Take turns picking a favourite colour. With that colour, paint a different part of the body using your hands or a paint brush. Once your body is fully painted wash it off.

Variations

- Combine activity with other lessons: colours, colour-mixing, different parts of the body, or different shapes your hand can make such as a cupped hand, fingers spread out, or fingers together.

Tips and Reminders

Caregivers should assist young learners in getting wet slowly and encourage them to get their entire body wet, including their face.

Song with Actions: This is the Way We Wash Our Face

Age Recommendation: 6 months +

Material

- Bathtub or container filled with water
- Wash cloth (or use hands)

Song

This is the way we wash our face; wash our face; wash our face (using a wash cloth or your hands to wash your face as you sing the line).

This is the way we wash our face, in the swimming pool.

Variations

Repeat the song with the following lines with participants performing the actions that match the sentence.

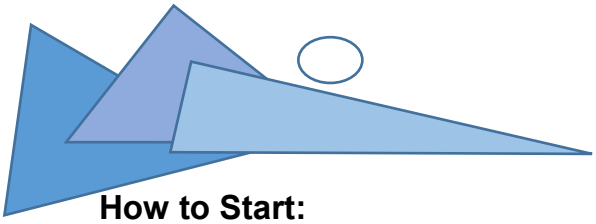
- Blow our bubbles (in a bowl, or bucket of water, or a tub filled with water)
- Splash our hands (in a bowl, or bucket of water, or a tub filled with water)
- Kick our feet (on the floor, a couch, or in a tub filled with water)
- Float and glide (on the floor, a couch, or in a tub filled with water

Tips and Reminders

This is a song to encourage young swimmers to get their face wet and to reinforce swim movement skills.

Swim Goal: Get Comfortable Blowing Bubbles in Water

Once you are comfortable getting your face wet, it's a good time to get comfortable breathing and controlling your breathing while in water.



How to Start:

Complete as many activities below that match your comfort, age, and skill level or that of your child's.

Materials:

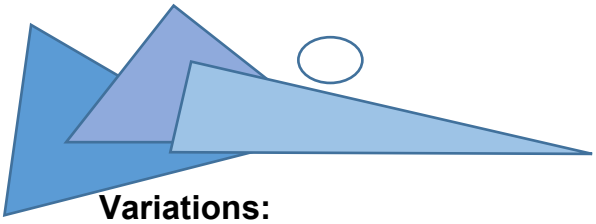
- Store bought or homemade bubbles
- Bubble wands or any item with a hole can be used to blow bubbles through
- Large bowl or container
- Mat or towel
- Bucket or water toys
- Shower
- Bath Tub

Steps:

1. Using store bought or homemade bubbles practice blowing bubbles through a bubble wand or similar. Practice blowing for different lengths of time. What happens if you blow hard versus softly and more controlled? What happens if you use only your nose?
2. In the shower, practice blowing bubbles through the flow of water the same as if you were blowing through the bubble wand. Try keeping your face under the flow of water and blowing for 3 to 5 seconds. Practice breathing through just your nose by humming the letter M. Try blowing bubbles or humming for 5 seconds through the water then look to the side, face out of water and take a breath and repeat. Try alternating which side you turn your head to when you take a breath.
3. Fill a large bowl or container with water and place on a counter. Ensure that the bowl or container is secure by placing a rubber mat or wet towel underneath. Practice blowing bubbles with just your mouth in the water. Then try with your nose. Did you know, when you hum in the water, you will automatically blow bubbles. Now try putting your whole face in. Try blowing bubbles while humming for 5 seconds through the water, then look to the side, take a breath then repeat. Try alternating side-to-side. Try using long controlled breaths. Try turning your head to the side so that your face is out of the water but your ear is still in the water.
4. In a bathtub filled with water, repeat step 3 again. Bonus: Can you open your eyes when your face is in the water?

Progressions:

- Start with warm water and gradually introduce cooler water.
- Work towards controlling your breathing through long exhalations
- Work towards minimizing side-to-side head movement



Variations:

- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult. Some game and song selections are listed below:

How to Make Your Own Bubbles

Age Recommendation: 3 years +

Materials

- 1 large cup or bowl
- 1 spoon
- ½ cup dish soap
- 1 ½ cups water
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Bubble wands

Instructions

1. Pour ½ cup dish soap into a large cup or bowl
2. Add 1 ½ cups of water
3. Add 2 teaspoons sugar
4. Gently stir mixture until sugar is dissolved
5. Start blowing bubbles

Tips and Reminders

Unused bubble mixture can be stored in a tightly sealed container.

Don't shake or stir the bubble mixture too much.

Try blowing bubbles with different items.

Did You Know?

Learning how to breathe properly in all activities is beneficial to long-term physical and emotional health. Blowing bubbles is a playful way to learn how to control breathing.

Tips and Reminders

Softer, more controlled exhalations create more fluid bubbles.

Mirror, Mirror

Age Recommendation: 2 years +

Materials

- Hand held mirror or other reflective surface (non-breakable, if possible)
- Ring or other toy (preferably a sinking toy)
- Bathtub or container filled with water

Activity

Place the mirror on the bottom of the tub or container. First try looking through the top of the water, then try putting the tip of your nose on the water with your eyes open. Work your way towards opening your eyes with your face in the water.

Tips and Reminders

This activity allows you to become comfortable opening your eyes underwater. Try this activity once you know how to properly submerge in the water.

If you have difficulties opening your eyes, try with goggles.

Knowledge Goal: Let's Explore What Floats and Why

When swimmers say 'float' we mean 'to rest or move on or near the surface of a liquid (water) without sinking.' But do you know why something floats? Do people float? Understanding why objects, including people, may or may not float helps us become better swimmers. Let's explore why that is.

How to Start:
What types of objects do you think will float? Are they heavy? Are they light? Are they big? Are they small? Think of your reasons. Now, let's experiment.

Complete as many activities below that match your comfort, age, and skill level or that of your child's.

Materials:

- 1 large container
- 2 small containers
- 1 'float' label or sign
- 1 'sink' label or sign
- A variety of objects:
    - Rock
    - Bottle cap
    - Wooden clothes peg

- Popsicle stick
- Feather
- Coins
- Key
- Button
- Shell
- Cupcake liner

Figure 1 Fill the large container with water and gather your materials

Steps:

1. Fill the large container with water.
2. Label each of the small containers float and sink.
3. Place one item at a time into the large container of water.
4. Does it float or sink?
5. Based on what you saw, place the object into the corresponding labelled container.
6. Discuss: Talk about why some objects sank and others did not.
    a. Does the weight, size or material the object is made from affect if the object floats?
    b. Were there bubbles when some objects sank?
    c. If the object floats, how much of the object was submerged below water and how much remained above the water?

Figure 2 The toy plastic screw bolt floats. If it were metal, would it float or sink?

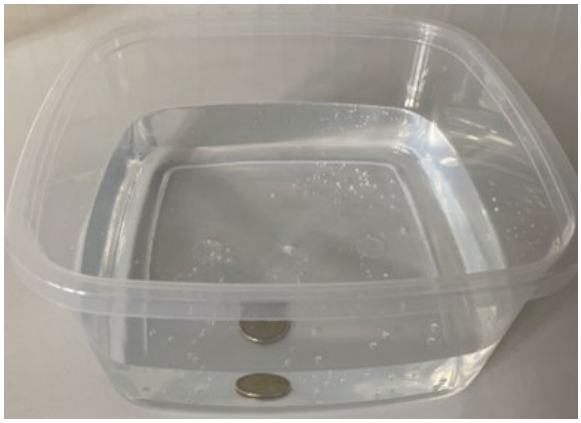


Figure 3 The coin sank. If a different sized coin was used, would it float or sink?

Figure 4 Selected objects, a clothes peg, toy screw bolt and cupcake liner that float

Figure 5 Selected objects, a key, different sized coins and two rocks that sink

Progressions:

Now that we have experimented with objects of different sizes, shapes, weights and densities, let's consider how we can apply this to helping us float in water. Things that can affect how high or low you float in water include your body mass index (fat levels), muscle density, lung size and the floating shape.

Let's explore: Which will float more easily, a relaxed body or a tense one?

- Lie down on the floor or a mat.

Figure 6 Lie down in a nice clear area around you

- Relax your entire body. Do you think it would be easy or hard to float like this?
- Then clench all muscles in the body. Do you think it would be easier or harder to float compared to your relaxed position? Do you think you will float when muscles are clenched? You are correct: you are more likely to sink.
- Try changing your volume and density. How? Relaxing allows your body to spread out. Other ways to relax?
    - Try a meditation exercise.

- Dance around, get loose. Dancing is a highly-effective form of stress-relief because our bodies naturally respond to rhythm and music with movement.

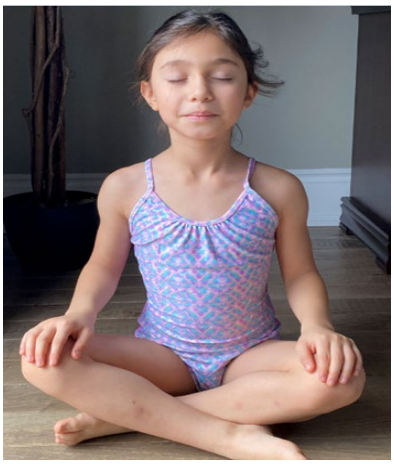


Figure 7 When we sit cross-legged and straighten our back, our breath moves more freely throughout our body.

Now that we have practiced how to relax our bodies, let's explore: How does our breathing affect our body's ability to float?

- We know an inflated beach ball will float, a deflated one will sink.
- By comparison, keeping your lungs inflated will help you to float higher in the water, releasing air from your lungs will cause you to sink into the water.
- Controlling your breathing will assist you in floating. Practice your breathing while lying relaxed on the floor.
    - Start off by holding your breath for a few seconds at a time.
    - Important reminder: although holding your breath will assist when first learning to float, it is not encouraged to hold your breath for periods of more than 10 seconds at a time.

Variations:

- Play around and look for other objects around the house that you can experiment with and observe how they float. Try an inflatable beach ball. Try a deflated beach ball.
- For older children, youth and adults, incorporate some knowledge principles to provide greater understanding. See below for some 'Did You Know?' tips and encourage the older learner to expand what they know about the science of swimming by visiting the library or looking online.
- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult. Some game and song selections are listed below:

Freeze Dance

Age Recommendation: 2 years +

Materials

- An area clear from obstructions
- A device to play music such as a radio, a compute or device with a playlist on it
- A song list

Activity

Have a dance leader who is in-charge of choosing when to start and stop the music. When the music is playing everyone playing is to dance and move. When the music stops everyone has to freeze. Play until the last one is standing by eliminating people who forget to freeze when the music stops.

Variations

- Give directions to vary their movements such as mimicking different animals, dancing different dance styles like salsa, ballet or breakdance, dancing like famous people.
- Try lying on the floor and having people move their body in time with the music before freezing in a float position.

Tips and Reminders

This activity allows you to get your body to relax. A relaxed body floats better than a tense body.

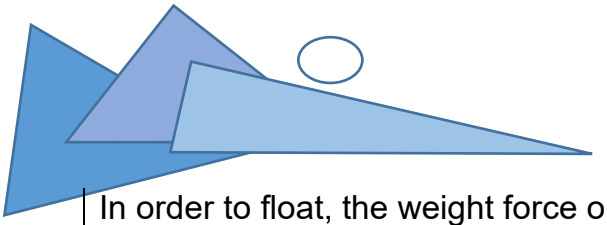
Did You Know?

When an object floats, the water pushes upwards on an object. For example, when you try to push (a downward force) an inflatable ball under the water you are able to feel the water pushing back up (a buoyant force). Objects that sink, such as a rock, are still experiencing an upwards push; it is just not as strong as the weight force of the object.

All objects have:

- Weight (how the force of gravity acts upon an object)
- Mass (how much stuff is in the object)
- Volume (how much space an object takes up).

The amount and type of material that an object is made up of affects the size of the weight force on the object.



In order to float, the weight force on an object must be balanced by the upward push of the water on the object.

Tips and Reminders

If you change the shape of an object, you do not change the mass of the object, but it may change the volume of the object. This change in volume will, also, affect the amount of upward push on the object.

Next Lesson: Floats and Glides – Back and Front

Look for our next lesson where we explore how to apply what we have learned about objects that float to how we float in water.

Continue to follow us on the path to learning how to swim.