

Swim TO Stay Safe, Swim Safe

Stay, Play, and Learn at Home Swim: Beginner – Lesson Two

Today's Lesson: Floats and Glides – Back and Front

[Build your swim terms knowledge base](#)

[Explore body positions that help you float and glide](#)

[Back Float and Glide](#)

[Front Float and Glide](#)

Swim Level: Beginner

Learn-to-Swim Levels: Guardian 2 to 3, Preschool 2 to 3, Ultra 2 to 3, 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**.

For all skills and drills, ensure that the area is free from obstruction and be aware of objects and people around you at all times. Caregivers should ensure that children are properly supervised at all times.

Remember that movement should be comfortable and should not cause any pain or discomfort in the joints or limbs. If discomfort is felt, please modify the movement so that it is comfortable for you. It is highly recommended to stretch prior to beginning any movement exercises.

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 following words:

Rocket Ship

Push

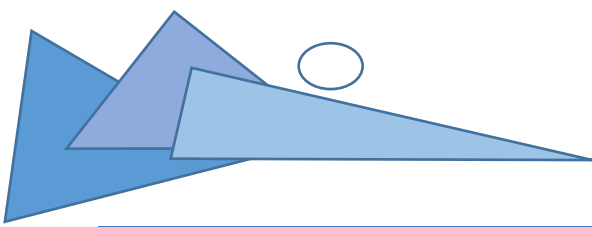
Swimming

Starfish

Water

Glide

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.



Knowledge Goal: Let's Explore How We Float

Do you Remember from Lesson One...

1. When an object floats, the weight of the object displaces the liquid it is submerged in (a downward force) and the water pushes upwards on the object (a buoyant force).
2. All objects have weight, mass and volume. The amount and type of material that make up an object affects the weight force on the object.
3. To float, the weight force on an object must be balanced by the upward push by the water on the object.
4. If you change the shape of an object, you do not change the weight but it may change the volume of the object. This change in volume will also affect the amount of upward push on the object.

Let's explore number 4 more closely. How do our bodies float?

How to Start:

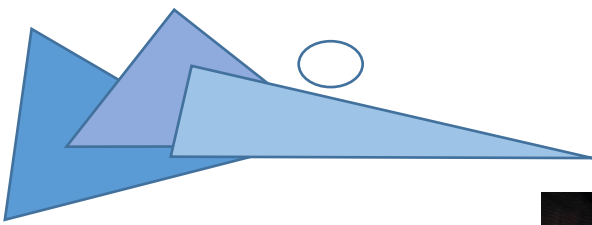
Consider which type of body positions will help you to float? Which type of body positions will make you more likely to sink? Let's explore the ideal floating positions in water.

Materials:

- An area free from obstructions
- Mat (optional)
- Bathtub
- Bed or mattress (optional)

Steps:

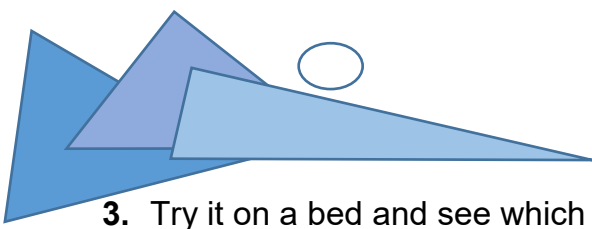
1. Lie down on the floor or use a mat if preferred.
1. Try the following body positions while lying on your back or front:
 - a. Figure 1 Starfish position – arms and legs spread out like a starfish.



- b. Rocket Ship position – arms above your head with hands close together to form the point of the rocket, legs together.
- c. Figure 2 Soldier Position - arms by your side, legs together



- d. Superhero position – one arm above your head, one arm by your side
 - e. Ball position – curl yourself up as small as you can, like a ball.
 - f. V-position – arms and legs straight and lifted off the floor slightly'
2. As you are trying each of these body positions, which ones do you feel as if you are 'floating' on the floor? Which ones does it feel as if you are sinking into the floor?



3. Try it on a bed and see which one sinks the mattress the most, which one the least? You are correct: the ball position which compresses your body into the least amount of space sinks the mattress the most. The star position which spreads your body out the most barely causes the mattress to sink.

Progressions:

- Try tightening your core (tummy) muscles when practicing each position. How does that affect your floating?
- If proper safety supervision is available and space permits, try these positions in a bathtub filled with water.

Variations:

- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult.
- 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.

Did You Know?

Most people prefer to relax and float on their back because it is easier to breathe. This is true if you are in calm water. However, if you are in faster moving water, such as a lake or ocean though, it is more likely that you end up breathing in water when water comes over top of your face unexpectedly. Here are some floating positions to use instead.

Survival Float

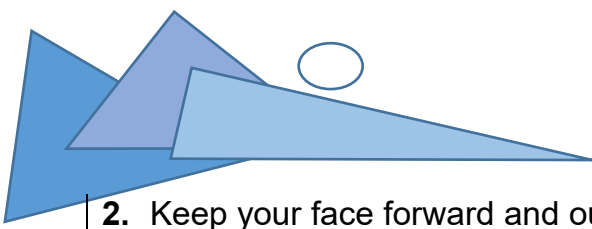
The best method of floating while in rough, open water is the face-down survival float. Take a deep breath and let your arms hang out in front of you, close to the surface, with palms facing down. Lower your face underwater, placing your chin to your chest. To breathe, lift your chin off your chest and pull your arms downward toward your body.

HELP Position

The Heat Escape Lessening Position in swimming is a survival method used to conserve heat if you have fallen in to cold water; ideally you are wearing a lifejacket. It increases the chances of survival by reducing the amount of body surface area that is directly exposed to cold water.

Steps

1. Draw your knees up to your chest.



2. Keep your face forward and out of the water.
3. Hold your upper arms at your side and fold your forearms (arm below the elbow) across your chest as if you are giving yourself a hug. Put your hands under your armpits.

Tips and Reminders

Always swim with a friend. Children should be accompanied by a caregiver who will remain in arms reach.

Always wear a lifejacket or personal flotation device when participating in any open-water activities.

If you fall into cold water with other people, try to huddle together in the help position to conserve even more heat.

Swim Goal: Back Float and Glide

When swimmers say 'float' we mean 'to rest or move on or near the surface of the water without sinking'. When swimmers say 'glide' we mean to move smoothly and gently through water in a floating position.

Let's explore how our body would feel 'floating' on our back.

How to Start:

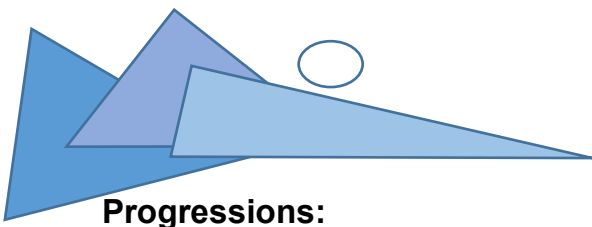
Complete as many activities below that match your comfort, age, and skill level or that of your child's.

Materials:

- An area free from obstructions
- Mat (optional)
- Bathtub
- Bed or mattress (optional)
- Handheld non-breakable mirror

Steps:

1. Lie flat on your back on the floor or use a mat if preferred.
2. Keep your arms straight at your side and your legs straight.
3. Tilt your head slightly back to look up at ceiling.
4. Have a partner hold a mirror over your face. Try focusing on your image in the mirror. If you are able to focus easily, then go ahead and make some silly faces.
5. Sit up as if you were standing from a float position in the pool. Practicing the sit up after the relaxed floor position is important. It helps teach how to recover independently from float position without sinking too much.
6. Try steps 1 to 5 using different float positions such as starfish or soldier.



Progressions:

- Practice the exercise while taking big breaths to relax the body completely.
- Practice while tightening the core muscles only, keep the stomach pointed up.
- Practice on a bed where it is more wobbly, concentrating on keeping the mattress from moving too much.
- Practice getting up from the float position with your feet over the floor and body on the bed.
- If proper safety supervision is available and space permits, try these positions in a bathtub filled with water.
- Work towards being comfortable with the ears in the water in order to ensure that your head is level with your body.
- In a pool, the glide comes from a movement to give propulsion, such as a push off from the wall, while in float position and then maintaining your streamlined float position.
- Repetition is the key to ensuring movements become more ingrained and your body is able to perform them more naturally. Repeat all movements at least 10 times before moving on to the next step or progression.

Variations:

- Remember that children learn best through play. Use games and songs to encourage children to copy and interact with a caring adult.
- To incorporate a core strength workout for youth and adults:
 - Try balancing on an exercise ball or bench with legs and feet touching the ground, or lifted off the ground.
 - Try balancing with the lower part of your body on the bed and the upper body off the edge of the bed.
- 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.

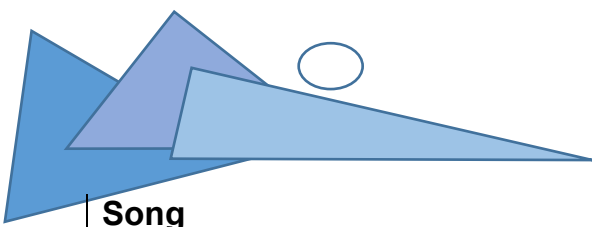
Song with Action: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Age Recommendation: 6 months +

Learn-to-Swim Recommendation: Guardian 1 to 3, Preschool 1 to 4, Ultra 1 and 2

Materials

- Bathtub



Song

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
How I wonder what you are.

Action While Singing

Back float position, arms and legs are straight out to look like a star and your face looking up at the ceiling/sky.

Tips and Reminders

Keeping the chin pointed to the ceiling while singing will ensure the proper float position. When practicing in a bathtub face-up, the ears should be in the water.

Did You Know?

Proper gliding position is important because it allows a swimmer to maintain their momentum while preparing for the next stroke. Gliding happens before or after a stroke and is commonly seen at the end of a lap or after a flip turn pushing off of the wall.

A proper glide keeps the body moving through the water smoothly making any added strokes more efficient.

Swim Goal: Front Float and Glide

You're ready for front float if you are comfortable submerging your face and blowing bubbles in water.

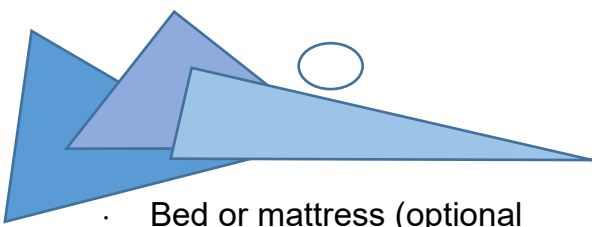
Let's explore how our body would feel 'floating' on our front.

How to Start:

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

Materials:

- An area free from obstructions
- Mat (optional)
- Bathtub



- Bed or mattress (optional)
- Handheld non-breakable mirror

Steps:

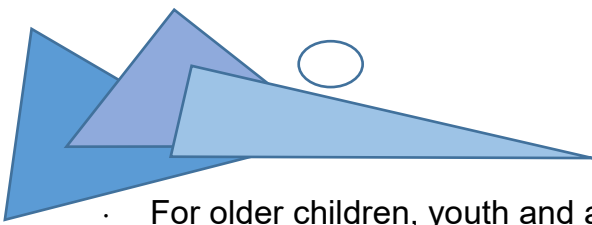
1. Lie flat on your stomach either on the floor or use a mat if preferred.
2. Keep chin up slightly
3. Raise arms and clasp hands together over your head biceps (upper arm) at your ears; keep your arms and legs straight.
4. Stand up as if you were standing from a float position in the pool. Practicing standing up after the relaxed floor position is important. It helps teach how to recover independently from float position without sinking too much.
5. Try steps 1 to 5 using different float positions such as superhero or r.

Progressions:

- Practice the exercise while taking big breaths to relax the body completely.
- Practice while tightening the core muscles only, keeping the stomach muscles from touching the floor.
- Practice on a bed where it is more wobbly, concentrating on keeping the mattress from moving too much.
- Practice getting up from the float position with your feet over the floor and body on the bed.
- If proper safety supervision is available and space permits, try these positions in a bathtub filled with water.
- Work towards being able to put your face in water and blowing bubbles while floating.
- In a pool, the glide comes from a movement to give propulsion, such as a push off from the wall, while in float position and then maintaining your streamlined float position.
- Repetition is the key to ensuring movements become more ingrained and your body is able to perform them more naturally. Repeat all movements at least 10 times before moving on to the next step or progression.

Variations:

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Did You Know?

Many types of forces act on the body when swimming. Drag refers to the forces that slow us down in the water as we are moving.

In front glide position, when your head is face down in the water and aligned with your arms above your head, biceps at your ears, drag is significantly decreased.

Next Lesson: Kicking and Arms

Look for our next lesson where we work on propelling ourselves through the water using our legs and arms.

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