



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

STRONG & CONFIDENT SWIMMERS

Swim Lessons Welcome Guide
YMCA OF THE SUNCOAST

CITRUS MEMORIAL HEALTH FOUNDATION YMCA
CLEARWATER YMCA
GREATER PALM HARBOR YMCA
GREATER RIDGECREST YMCA
HERNANDO COUNTY YMCA
HIGH POINT YMCA
JAMES P. GILLS FAMILY YMCA
NORTH PINELLAS YMCA



Learning how to swim isn't just about encouraging your kids to get in the water. It's about building skills that will help ensure their safety, and encouraging a healthy activity in which they can participate for a lifetime.

The Y offers private and group swim lessons for ages 6 months to adults, developmental and competitive swim teams, and master's swimming programs. But we teach more than just swimming! Researchers at the Search Institute identified 40 key building blocks, or "developmental assets," that help promote healthy moral, spiritual and physical growth in youths.

Our purpose is to develop competency in swimming, along with confidence and endurance. A child is advanced to the next stage only when he or she can proficiently and safely perform the skills within his or her level.

We expect each child to learn and progress at his or her own rate. Don't be discouraged if your child doesn't complete all the skills within his or her stage during any one session. Your child needs to know that it is acceptable to take as much time as necessary to master the skills.

Our aquatics staff hopes that your child enjoys participating in this session of swim lessons and will continue participating in future sessions.



TEACHING METHODS

While observing your child's lessons, you will see our instructors use many different teaching methods. They're trained to employ a variety of methods to enhance the learning experience and promote overall developmental growth. Some skills will be taught using the command or task styles, which are teacher-centered, but often the instructor will use student-centered methods like 'guided discovery.' In this style, the instructor doesn't give answers, but allows the child to discover answers for themselves.

When students are allowed to actively and creatively participate in their learning, they tend to remember what they learned better and longer. Instructors are also trained to use games, songs, and non-swimming activities to engage your child in fun ways while they develop endurance, practice skills, and explore the aquatic environment. Please don't hesitate to ask if you have questions regarding the teaching methods and activities chosen by your child's instructor.

OUR INSTRUCTORS

YMCA swim instructors are carefully selected for their skills in swimming and the desire to teach participants at all ability levels. Each instructor must attend a 18-hour YMCA swim instructor training course and must shadow another instructor prior to teaching class. Instructors are knowledgeable about swimming, teaching methods, children's developmental stages and aquatic safety.

We strive to provide the same instructor throughout all classes in a given session; however, a situation may arise that can prevent the instructor from being able to teach all of the classes. If this occurs, we will provide a qualified substitute. If for any reason you have concerns or questions about an instructor, please notify your aquatics director so the situation can be addressed.



STEPS FOR SUCCESS

- Your child may experience excitement, apprehension, insecurity or even fear at the thought of taking swim lessons. Our instructors are trained to handle these varying emotions, and we found that it's best for you to stay positive and share your excitement. We suggest lots of praise for accomplishments — even the smallest ones!
- While parents are welcome to stay on the pool deck during class, please sit far enough away so that your presence is not a distraction. Please resist going to your child even if they are crying or misbehaving. It is important for the instructor to develop trust and set disciplinary boundaries, and parental interruption can make this task more difficult.
- If you are going to leave the pool deck, please let your instructor know where you will be so they can find you in the event of a pool closure. Parents are not allowed to leave the YMCA while their child is in a swim lesson.
- Make sure your child is wearing proper swim attire. Children who are not potty trained **MUST** wear a swim diaper. If your child needs to change into or out of their suit at the YMCA, please do so in the locker room, not on the pool deck.
- Encourage your child to use the restroom before class starts. If your child needs to use the restroom during class, a parent must accompany them. The instructor is not permitted to go into the restroom with your child.
- Every effort is made to start class on time. This minimizes distractions for your child, the other children, and the instructor. Please arrive promptly and ready to participate in class.
- Apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before class or the lotion will rub off in the water and be ineffective.
- In accordance with the pool rules, you must directly supervise your child before and after class.

OUR GOAL

YMCA swim lessons help adults, kids and families learn an important life skill and supports them in gaining the knowledge, ability, and stamina to become strong and confident swimmers.

The lessons follow a continuum that outlines the skills taught at each stage for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children. Though school-age children, teens, and adults also learn the skills listed in stages 1–4, they achieve distinct milestones compared to preschool-age children. As a result, their skills are presented in a separate skill continuum.

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CANCELLATIONS

Although every effort is made to hold class as scheduled, circumstances such as inclement weather and water contamination (for example, when there has been an 'accident' in the pool) may require that we cancel class. We offer our participants a make-up schedule to account for any cancelled classes by the YMCA.

We are committed to quality class ratios that provide for skill development and the utmost safety. When you register your child a space is reserved, limiting the spaces available for others. If your child is unable to attend for any reason, please notify us before the start of the session so that we may fill the space and issue you a credit or refund. After the session begins, a full refund or credit may be given for illness or injury only; pro-rated refunds for other reasons may be considered at the discretion of the aquatics director.

If the YMCA holds class but your child is absent, we do not provide credit or refunds. If a class is in progress and we are required to close the pool, we will only reschedule or issue credit if we have completed less than half of the class.

Classes with low enrollment may be cancelled or combined. You will be contacted in the event that this happens and provided with alternatives.



STAGE DESCRIPTIONS

SWIM STARTERS

Infants and toddlers

Accompanied by a parent, infants and toddlers learn to be comfortable in the water and develop swim readiness skills through fun and confidence-building experiences, while parents learn about water safety, drowning prevention, and the importance of supervision.



A / WATER DISCOVERY

Parents accompany children in stage A, which introduces infants and toddlers to the aquatic environment through exploration and encourages them to enjoy themselves while learning about the water.



B / WATER EXPLORATION

In stage B, parents work with their children to explore body positions, floating, blowing bubbles, and fundamental safety and aquatic skills.

SWIM BASICS

Preschool
School-age
Teen/Adult

Students learn personal water safety and achieve basic swimming competency by learning two benchmark skills:

- Swim, float, swim—sequencing front glide, roll, back float, roll, front glide, and exit
- Jump, push, turn, grab



1 / WATER ACCLIMATION

Students develop comfort with underwater exploration and learn to safely exit in the event of falling into a body of water in stage 1. This stage lays the foundation that allows for a student's future progress in swimming.



2 / WATER MOVEMENT

In stage 2, students focus on body position and control, directional change, and forward movement in the water while also continuing to practice how to safely exit in the event of falling into a body of water.



3 / WATER STAMINA

In stage 3, students learn how to swim to safety from a longer distance than in previous stages in the event of falling into a body of water. This stage also introduces rhythmic breathing and integrated arm and leg action.



4 / STROKE INTRODUCTION

Students in stage 4 develop stroke technique in front crawl and back crawl and learn the breaststroke kick and butterfly kick. Water safety is reinforced through treading water and elementary backstroke.



5 / STROKE DEVELOPMENT

Students in stage 5 work on stroke technique and learn all major competitive strokes. The emphasis on water safety continues through treading water and sidestroke.



6 / STROKE MECHANICS

In stage 6, students refine stroke technique on all major competitive strokes, learn about competitive swimming, and discover how to incorporate swimming into a healthy lifestyle.

SWIM STROKES

Preschool
(stage 4 only)
School-age
Teen/Adult

Having mastered the fundamentals, students learn additional water safety skills and build stroke technique, developing skills that prevent chronic disease, increase social-emotional and cognitive well-being, and foster a lifetime of physical activity.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS? Our Welcome Center staff is available to answer any questions about the swim lessons program.