

Teaching Beginners to Swim
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The following theories and strategies for teaching beginners to swim are based on the author's fifty-one consecutive years as a Red Cross Water Safety Instructor teaching children in various community pools, his forty-one years of teaching private lessons and clinics at the Link Hills Country Club Pool, as well as forty-four years of teaching swimming to students at Tusculum University.

Steps to Teaching a Beginner to Swim:

1. Adjustment to the water:
 - a. Submerging
 - b. Breath holding
 - c. Blowing bubbles
 - d. Rhythmic breathing ("bobbing")
 - e. Opening eyes under water



Adjustment/Breath Control

2. Buoyancy
 - a. Turtle float
 - b. Jelly fish float
 - c. Front float
 - d. Back float



Jelly Fish Float

3. Locomotion
 - a. Glide (body position)
 - c. Kick
 - d. Arms
 - e. Breathing
 - f. Coordination



Front Glide

Take Skills to Deep Water Early.

After some preliminary success in shallow water in achieving the three fundamental steps listed above, the beginner is given an **opportunity** to do the skills in deep water – often in the first lesson!



The ladder is an excellent place to introduce beginners to deep water.



The beginner climbs down and back up the ladder, eventually turns loose, and floats up to surface.



The beginner experiences buoyancy as she discovers that it is difficult to submerge while her body keeps floating up!

Encourage the beginner to turn loose of the ladder and float or swim back to the surface.

Locomotion: Add the kick and arm movements = a swimming stroke!
Progression: Glide, Kick, Arms, Breathing



Glide-Kick



Beginners Crawl

Readiness: The Most Important Factor!

Whether a young child actually learns to swim or only completes a series of water experiences by learning lead up skills depends on his or her *readiness*. Give the child the opportunity (instruction and pool time) and ***they will swim when they are ready!*** ***Be patient!***



Four year old - Beginners Crawl



Five year old enjoying the pool.

Children learn at different rates:



Two year old swimming in Deep Water



Five year old – Crawl Stroke