

How long will it take my child to learn to swim?

*What most parents want to know is how long before their children acquire the water safety skills necessary to save themselves from drowning (**please keep in mind that no child is ever drown-proof; always supervise your children carefully**). A truthful answer is **there is no universal answer because each child is different**.*

In General children who start swimming lessons between the ages of 18mo -3 years old may take about one year to learn to be safe in the water (about 52 swim lessons).

Children older than 3 years old with no previous swimming experience may take about 6 months to one year to learn to be safe in the water (24-52 swim lessons)

The most important factors that come into play when learning to swim include age, consistency of the lessons, frequency of the lessons, fear of water, and motor skills/natural abilities.

Consistency *Once kids begin the process of learning to swim, consistency is key. It is important to keep the lessons/pool visits consistent as much as possible and to not take long breaks from swimming until the child can swim independently. A consistent swimming schedule allows for muscle memory to form and keeps the progress going. If your child gets sick, give them the appropriate time to recover, then resume swimming as soon as possible. Taking breaks from swimming (e.g. during the winter months) will set back the learning process, as the child will have to reacclimate with the water or relearn previously learned skills upon resuming swimming.*

Frequency - *Most parents opt for having their children swim once a week due to busy schedules or financial aspects – in this case, it's important to keep the lessons consistent. Swimming twice a week or more allows for great progress and helps children learn faster. Additionally, practicing with your kid is a great way to help them learn faster and increase their confidence in the water.*

Fear of Water - *Children who are introduced to the water at an early age and in a positive manner are more likely to develop a love for the water and not be afraid – which will help them learn to swim faster. For a child afraid of water, learning to swim may take longer. It's important to first help kids overcome their fear of water and find the joy of learning to swim.*

Parents can take an active role in helping children fearful of water by taking them to the swimming pool whenever possible. Be gentle and help your child feel safe rather than trying to teach them swimming skills on the first visits. To ensure a positive learning experience, work at the child's pace. Once the little swimmer is relaxed and happy in the water, learning skills such as submerging the face, or the back float will come easier.

Motor skills and natural abilities - *Physical abilities, coordination, motor skills – all play a role in how quickly a child will learn to swim. Learning to swim comes easier to children with good natural abilities. Children who have motor skills difficulties may take longer to learn – this should be expected, so the parent and instructor should be patient*

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and work at the child's pace. For those children, swimming lessons not only help them learn to swim, but also help them improve their motor skills and coordination.