

Teaching Techniques for Aquatic Activities
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The following theories and strategies for teaching beginners to swim are based on the author's fifty-three years as a Red Cross Water Safety Instructor teaching children in various community pools, his forty-three years of teaching private lessons and clinics at the Link Hills Country Club Pool, as well as forty-six 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

Adjustment to the water:

- **Submerging:**



Teaching Style:
Coaxing vs.
Demanding

Both styles have
been shown to
work.

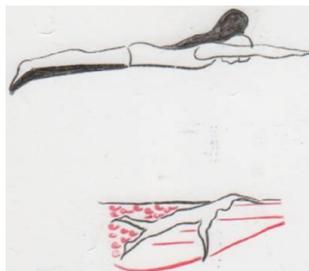
The most critical progressive step in learning to swim is to become comfortable while submerged in the water.

Why?

We swim “in” the water, not on top of it. Beginners often ask if they can learn to swim while keeping their faces above the surface. While it is possible to swim with the face above the surface, it is not **efficient** to do so.

When the face is lifted, the feet sink. The swimmer’s body assumes a more vertical angle rather than a more efficient horizontal position. Swimming at a vertical angle creates more frontal resistance and greater drag.

Additionally, when the face is held above the surface, the weight of the head pushes the body deeper into the water creating more resistance. With the face in the water, the buoyancy of the body is greater (more water is displaced). *A body is buoyed up by the weight of the fluid which it displaces. (Archimedes)* Carrying the face and head above the surface causes more gravitational force which pushes the body deeper into the water.



The horizontal body position is essential for efficiency.

The vertical position creates more frontal & drag

Submerging the face allows the head to “float” while lifting the face causes more gravitational force to push the body deeper into the water creating more resistance.

- **Breath Control:**



Learning to control breathing is essential in adjusting to the water.

Breath control involves:

- **Holding the breath for short periods:**
It is very important for the beginner to learn to prevent water from entering the nose by exhaling rather than depending on pinching the nostrils or using nose clips.
- **Blowing bubbles:**
Blowing bubbles while submerged is an important step in the progression to the next step, which is rhythmic breathing.
- **Rhythmic breathing:**
Bobbing – repeatedly submerging and blowing bubbles with the face submerged is a critical skill, which will be used in more advanced skills and in swimming strokes.

Buoyancy:



Turtle Float



Jelly Fish Float

Take Skills to Deep Water Early.

After some success in the three fundamental steps listed above while in shallow water, the beginner is given an **opportunity** to do these 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.

Progression:

Glide
Kick
Arms
Breathing



Glide-Kick



Beginner's 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



Stroke Development

Summary:

- Be patient
- Readiness
- Progression
- Go to deep water early
- Mechanical principles
- Realistic expectations
- Make it fun
- Teach and practice safety

Give the child learning opportunities; be patient, and ***they will learn to swim when they are ready.***