Adult Swim Lesson Guide

A one-page guide for adults who want to learn to swim: where to find adult classes, what to ask, the five water competency goals, and staying safe meanwhile.

Letter page · For adults, older adults, parents

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Adult lessons are made for beginners. About 40 million U.S. adults say they can't swim, and more than half have never had a lesson (CDC, 2023).

Find a class, then ask

- [ ] **Anywhere:** the U.S. Masters Swimming adult instructor search, the Red Cross providers map, or a YMCA.
- [ ] **New York City:** free NYC Parks adult and senior classes, by lottery each fall, winter and spring (indoor classes need a recreation center membership).
- [ ] **Ask:** is the instructor certified? Is a lifeguard on duty? Is there a class for complete beginners?
- [ ] **Ask:** what swimwear is allowed? Are there adult-only or women-only sessions? What does it cost?

Your goals: the five water competency skills

- [ ] Enter water over your head, then come back to the surface.
- [ ] Float or tread water for at least 1 minute.
- [ ] Turn over and turn around in the water.
- [ ] Swim at least 25 yards, then get out of the water.

Until then, and after: never swim alone, swim where a lifeguard is on duty, wear a life jacket on boats, and don't drink around water.

What you can do today: call one pool and tell them you're a beginner. Read learning to swim as an adult and, if you're nervous, how adults overcome a fear of water.

Sources

1. Vital Signs: Drowning Death Rates, Self-Reported Swimming Skill, Swimming Lesson Participation, and Recreational Water Exposure, United States, 2019-2023, CDC (MMWR). https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7320e1.htm
2. Adult Swim Lessons, American Red Cross. https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/swimming/swim-lessons/adult-swim-lessons
3. Water Safety, American Red Cross. https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety.html
4. Adult Learn-to-Swim Instructor Search, U.S. Masters Swimming. https://www.usms.org/alts/altsinstrsearch.php
5. Learn to Swim, NYC Parks. https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/learn-to-swim

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