

AMERICAN RED CROSS (ARC) SWIM LEVELS

The American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program Learn-to-Swim Skills offers six comprehensive course levels that teach how to swim, both skillfully and safely. The prerequisite for each level is the successful completion and/or demonstration of the skills from the preceding level, except for Level 1, which has no prerequisite. Each level of Learn-to-Swim includes training in basic water safety and helping a swimmer in distress. Below indicates the skills needed for each ARC Levels I-VI.

LEVEL 1: Introduction to Water Skills ages 4 & up

Purpose: Helps students develop positive attitudes, good swimming habits and safe practices around the water.

Level 1 participant learns to:

- Enter and exit water safely
- Blow bubbles through mouth and nose
- Bobbing
- Open eyes under water and retrieve submerged objects
- Front and back glides and floats
- Recover to vertical position
- Roll from front to back and back to front
- Tread water using arm and hand actions
- Alternating and simultaneous leg actions on front and back
- Alternating and simultaneous arm actions on front and back
- Combined arm and leg actions on front and back
- Learn how to stay safe, including recognizing an emergency and knowing how to call for help
- Use a life jacket

Level 1 Exit Skills Assessment:

- 1) Enter unassisted, move 5 yards, bob 3 times then safety exit water;
- 2) Glide on front 2 body lengths, roll to a back float for 3 seconds and recover to a vertical position.

LEVEL 2: Fundamental Aquatics Skills

Purpose: Give students success with fundamental skills. Learn to float and recover to a vertical position.

Level 2 participants learn to:

- Enter and exit water by stepping or jumping from the side
- Fully submerge and hold breath
- Bobbing
- Open eyes under water and retrieve submerged objects
- Front, jellyfish and tuck floats
- Front and back glides and fronts
- Recover to vertical position
- Roll from front to back and back to front
- Change direction of travel while swimming on front or back
- Tread water using arm and leg actions
- Combined arm and leg actions on front and back
- Finning arm action
- Safety skills – recognizing an emergency, knowing how to call for help, perform non-swimming assists, using a life jacket, pool rules

Level 2 Exit Skills Assessment:

- 1) Step from side into chest-deep water, move into a front float for 5 seconds, roll over to a back float for 5 seconds then return to vertical position.
- 2) Move into a back float for 5 seconds, roll to a front then recover to a vertical position.
- 3) Push off & swim using a combination of arm and leg actions on front for 5 body lengths, float for 15 seconds, roll to the front then continue swimming for 5 body lengths.

LEVEL 3: Stroke Development

Purpose: Builds on skills from Level 2 & develops strokes through additional guided practice in deeper water. Level 3 participants learn:

- Jump into deep water from the side
- Dive from sitting and kneeling positions, in water at least 9 feet deep

- Bobbing
- Rotary breathing
- Survival float
- Back float
- Change from vertical to horizontal position on front and back
- Tread water
- Flutter, scissor, dolphin and breaststroke kicks on front
- Front crawl and elementary backstroke
- Learn to look carefully before entering the water
- Learn to perform simple non-swimming assists
- Learn to recognize, prevent and respond to cold water emergencies

Level 3 Exit Skills Assessment:

- 1) Demonstrate competency in all required skills and activities, including in-water skills
- 2) Jump into chest-deep water from the side, swim front crawl for 15 yards w/ face in the water and rhythmic breathing pattern (to front or side), maintain position by treading or floating for 30 seconds, back crawl for 15 yards.

LEVEL 4: Stroke Improvement

Purpose: Develops confidence and strength to improve skills learned and introduces new aquatic skills.

Level 4 participants learn to:

- Diving entry from the size in compact and stride positions in at least 9 feet of water
- Swim underwater
- Perform feet first surface dive
- Survival swimming
- Front crawl and backstroke open turns
- Tread water using 2 different kicks
- Front and back crawl, elementary backstroke, breaststroke, sidestroke and butterfly
- Flutter and dolphin kicks on back
- Use safe diving rules, water safety rules, perform throwing assists
- Perform compact jump a height while wearing a life jacket
- Perform the following:

o Front crawl and elementary backstroke, 25 yards

o Breaststroke & back crawl, 15 yards

o Butterfly and side sidestroke

Level 4 Exit Skills Assessment:

- 1) Perform a feet-first entry into chest-deep water, swim front crawl for 25 yards, change direction maintain position on back 1 minute in deep water (float or sculling) and swim elementary backstroke for 15 yards.
- 2) Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, change direction and swim back crawl for 15 yards.

LEVEL 5: Stroke Refinement

Purpose: Provides further coordination and refinement of strokes, swimming further distances.

Level 5 participants learn to:

- Shallow-angle dive from the size then glide and begin a front stroke
- Tread water w/ two different kicks, 2 minutes
- Learn survival swimming, 2 minutes
- Survival floating, 2 minutes
- Sculling
- Water safety, non-swimming assists, calling for help, waterpark safety, helping others
- Perform the following:
- o Standing dive, Shallow dive, glide two body lengths and begin any front stroke
- o Sidestroke, elementary backstroke 25 yards
- o Tuck & pike surface dive
- o Front and back flip turns
- o Front and elementary backstroke, 50 yards
- o Breaststroke and back crawl 25 yards
- o Butterfly 15 yards

Level 5 Exit Skills Assessment:

- 1) Perform a shallow dive into deep water, swim front crawl for 50 yards change direction and minutes swim elementary backstroke for 50 yards.

2) Swim breaststroke for 25 yards and swim backstroke for 25 yards.

LEVEL 6: Swimming and Skill Proficiency

Purpose: Refines the strokes so students swim them with ease, efficiency, power and smoothness over greater distances.

Level 6 is designed with “menu” options that each focus on preparing students to participate in more advanced courses, including the Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguard Training courses. Instructor will determine options offered. These options include:

- **Personal Water Safety**
- **Fundamentals of Diving**
- **Fitness Swimmer**

All options include these endurance skills and turns:

- Front and back crawl, 100 yards
- Breaststroke, 50 yards
- Sidestroke and butterfly, 50 yards
- Elementary backstroke, 50 yards
- All open turns and flip turns while using swimming strokes

Level 6 Exit Skills Assessment:

For each option, a specific set of exit skill assessments a given, but all of the options will require a continuous, 500 yard swim.

Which Level is right for my child?

Level 1 is for beginners with little or no experience in the water. To enroll into Levels 2-6, students must have completed or at least be able to confidently demonstrate the skills listed in the previous level, including the exit skill requirements.