

Centennial Edition



Water Safety Instructor's Manual



American Red Cross

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE AND SAFE SWIM LESSONS

One of your responsibilities as an American Red Cross Water Safety instructor is to make class time as safe, effective and rewarding as possible for your participants. This requires careful planning and preparation, especially when you consider what needs to be accomplished in the course session and during each lesson. For example, you need to plan how you will present aquatic skills and water safety information, and what activities you will do with your participants to help them learn new information and master new skills. In addition, you need to consider the variables that can affect each class, making no two classes the same. The information in this chapter will provide you with a framework for course planning, from developing a block plan to translating it into individual lesson plans. Strategies for class organization, support and holding techniques, and flotation devices as teaching aids are also described.

PLANNING A COURSE SESSION

A course session consists of several lessons, or classes. When planning a course session, you can first create a block plan (a plan for the course session from beginning to end) and then use the block plan to create individual lesson plans for each class during the course session.

Factors to Consider When Planning a Course Session

Whether you are preparing a block plan or converting that block plan into a daily lesson plan, there are several factors you need to take into account. Considering these factors in advance can help you to develop and conduct a safe and effective course session.

First and foremost is safety, for you and your participants. You must make every effort to prevent injuries. Be familiar with the facility's emergency action plan, and your role in implementing it. Always make sure that a lifeguard is on duty and providing surveillance during any instructional periods. Be sure to explain, emphasize and enforce safety rules, and never leave the teaching area until all participants are accounted for and have left the area.

After you have considered the strategies you will use to help promote safety, consider factors related to the course session that you will be teaching. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the requirements for the course session?
- How many classes are there per session?
- How long is each class?
- How many participants are enrolled in the course session?
- What equipment needs to be available?
- Are there any program-specific procedures and requirements that must be followed?

Next, consider variables related to the participants. Ask yourself:

- Who are the participants and what are their goals for the course?
- How do the participants enrolled in the course session differ in terms of age, size, developmental level, skill level and learning style?
- How can I communicate most effectively with each participant, taking into account the participant's age, developmental level, language or cultural differences, differences in ability and preferred learning style?

Class size

The number of participants in the class affects how long it takes to organize drills, practice the skills and give feedback to the group and to individuals. For example, you may need less time for each activity when the class size is small. When this is the case, you can plan for more activities per lesson. Small classes also allow for greater flexibility to include optional skills and other activities.

Larger classes often require more planning to maximize participants' safety and participation. When the class size is large, consider using additional instructors or aides. Employing instructional methods such as station teaching or organizing drills using wave or stagger formations can help you to use class time more efficiently and effectively.



Teaching Tip: Using co-instructors and instructor aides (see Chapter 1) can be an effective way to increase the amount of individual attention each participant receives. When using co-instructors and instructor aides, be sure to define their roles and responsibilities clearly before the class meets. This helps eliminate confusion and lapses in supervision. Remember, you are ultimately responsible for the safety of all of your participants.

Participant ability and readiness

Developing block plans and lesson plans is easiest when all of the participants entering the course session have achieved the same level of prerequisite skills. However, this may not always be the case. If participants have a wide range of skills at the beginning of the course, you will need to develop a plan that challenges stronger swimmers while also offering opportunities for success for less advanced swimmers. A similar approach is needed when you have a participant with a disability or other health condition.

The skills you will plan to teach depend on your initial evaluation of your participants' abilities and readiness. Keep in mind that each skill prepares participants for more advanced skills. As participants gain ease and confidence with a skill, you can introduce the next skill in the progression.

COLA (Check–Organize–Lead–Assess) is an approach that can help you plan effective lessons that meet the needs of your participants and help them to achieve their goals. Use the COLA approach (Box 3-1) at the beginning of a course session to establish a baseline and throughout the course session to track progress.

Box 3-1. COLA (Check–Organize–Lead–Assess) Approach

Use the COLA approach to establish a baseline for each participant at the beginning of the course session and to assess each participant's progress throughout the session. Using the COLA approach will help you plan lessons that help the participant build on existing skills and learn new ones.

Check to see what the participant is able to do, as well as the participant's willingness to try new skills. Is the participant able to perform a few skills in the level you are teaching? If not, can she perform any skills from a previous level? Use the following questions and statements to guide this initial evaluation, which should take 1 to 2 minutes per participant:

- Can you do ___?
- Can you try to ___?
- Show me how to ___.
- Show me how you ___.
- Watch me and then let me know when you are ready to try.
- Watch me and then you try.

Organize your lesson plan based on the skills the participant has shown or expressed she is willing to try.

Lead the participant by presenting skills that encourage participation, build confidence and foster a willingness to try new skills.

Assess the participant's level of progress to help you plan the next lesson. You can conduct these assessments as part of a group activity or individually, depending on the make-up of the class.

Course completion requirements

When planning a course session, you need to consider what participants are expected to achieve by the end of the course, as well as the methods you will use to help them achieve those goals. Strive to reinforce skills that participants have already been learned, in addition to introducing new skills.

All of the courses in the American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program progress from level to level, building upon previously learned knowledge and skills. Teaching from the known to the related unknown is a logical teaching method that helps to promote success. Reviewing previously learned skills helps to reinforce learning and ease the transition to learning new skills.

In addition, you need to plan to address all required skills for the course session in some manner. Required skills for the various courses in the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program are listed in Chapters 7 through 10 of this instructor’s manual. After you have introduced a skill, participants need to be given the opportunity to review and practice it in subsequent lessons until they are able to achieve the course completion requirements. Time spent practicing and receiving immediate feedback following practice can increase proficiency.



Teaching Tip: To help track participants' progress toward meeting the completion requirements for the course, download the appropriate skills checklist from Instructor's Corner (instructorscorner.org) for each course that you teach prior to the first lesson.

Developing a Block Plan

A block plan (Figure 3-1) gives you a day-by-day overview of the course session across all lessons. By planning the main parts of your course from beginning to end, you set up logical learning sequences and ensure that all required safety information and skills are included.

One of the easiest ways to develop a block plan is to use a calendar approach. Each block is one day in the course. Include the following basic information in your block plan:

- Class level
- Day and time
- Number of participants
- Safety topic
- Review skills
- New skills
- Learning activities, including drills and games
- Equipment

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Learn-to-Swim Level 3—Stroke Development			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Safety Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair 	Safety Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think So You Don't Sink 	Safety Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too Much Sun Is No Fun 	Safety Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look Before You Leap
Review Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit skills assessment Level 2 Front crawl arm stroke and kicking drills 	Review Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bobs while moving toward safety Jellyfish float Front crawl stroke drills 	Review Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jump into deep water, return to surface, move onto back and float Push off streamlined, flutter kicking then swim front crawl 	Review Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jump into deep water, flutter kick and rhythmic breathing with kickboard Push off on back and kick with elementary backstroke using kickboard Push off on front and dolphin kick
New Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bobs in chest-deep water Flutter kick with rhythmic breathing Push off on front then begin flutter kicking with kickboard Tread water using arm and leg actions 	New Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flutter kick drills Survival float Jump into deep water, return to surface then swim back to wall Tread water and move into back float 	New Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push off and glide on front in deep water then move to a vertical position and tread water Elementary backstroke kick drills Push off on back and swim elementary backstroke then recover to vertical position Dolphin kick drills Push off on front and dolphin kick 	New Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotary breathing drills Push off streamlined with flutter kicking then swim front crawl Elementary backstroke arm drills Elementary backstroke coordination Jump into deep water, surface, rotate one turn, and swim front crawl to side Headfirst entry from the side in a sitting position
Game <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Ball, Green Ball 	Game <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ultimate Ring-Around-the-Rosy 	Game <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straw Hat Race 	Game <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharks and Minnows
Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swim Lesson Achievement Booklets Level 3 newsletters Foam noodles Swim bar floats Kickboards Different colored balls Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair poster 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water toys Foam noodles Swim bar floats Kickboards Think So You Don't Sink poster 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water toys Foam noodles Swim bar floats Kickboards Straw hats Too Much Sun Is No Fun poster 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foam noodles Swim bar floats Kickboards Look Before You Leap poster

Figure 3-1 Sample block plan, showing the first 4 lessons of an 8-lesson session.

The first time you create a block plan, you may have difficulty determining which skills to review, how to sequence the order for introducing new skills and how much time you will need to introduce a skill. Using the COLA approach (see Box 3-1) at the beginning of the course session can help you determine your starting point. Once you know your starting point, distribute the skills across the lessons, allowing several lessons for difficult skills and integrating safety skills and water safety topics throughout the plan. Remember to include time for participant practice and feedback. Always plan more activities than you think you will need for a lesson. This will keep participants engaged and help to avoid large gaps in time with nothing planned.

Keep in mind that plans are just that, plans. You need to be flexible and adjust the plan as necessary. For example, you may realize that after a few lessons, the participants have taken longer to learn a skill than you had expected. This is not unusual and it does not mean that the plan failed. It is just an indication that you need to readjust the plan. As you gain experience as an instructor, you will also become more confident and effective in organizing your block plans.



Teaching Tip: A block plan template and sample block plans for each level of the American Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses are available on Instructor's Corner (instructorscorner.org). You can use these sample block plans as guides for creating block plans that meet your own specific needs.

Developing a Lesson Plan

Once your block plan is created, use it as a guide to develop your daily lesson plan.

Parts of a lesson plan

A lesson plan is composed of the following parts (Figure 3-2):

- **Equipment.** All required equipment needs to be available and in good repair. Note who is responsible for getting it ready.
- **Housekeeping.** Allow time at the beginning of each lesson to greet participants and their parents, take attendance, make announcements and review general safety rules with participants.
- **Safety topic.** When possible, try to relate the water safety topic to a skill that is being introduced or practiced in the lesson. Refer to Longfellow's WHALE Tales and Chapters 2 and 3 of *Swimming and Water Safety* for detailed information about water safety topics. Include key words and phrases in your lesson plan to remind you of the safety concept you want to emphasize in the day's lesson.


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Learn-to-Swim Level 3—Stroke Development

Day 1

Equipment	Reminders		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swim Lesson Achievement Booklets • Level 3 newsletters • Foam noodles • Swim bar floats • Kickboards • Different colored balls • Swim As a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair poster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute one Swim Lesson Achievement Booklet to each participant. • Distribute newsletters to participants and/or their parents. • Review "Teaching Activities, Drills and Games" on Instructor's Corner. • Review "Red Ball, Green Ball" for setup and directions. 		
Time	Activity	Key Words/Phrases	Class Organization
Housekeeping			
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet participants and parents, introductions • Attendance • Announcements • Policies and procedures 		• Circle, on deck
Safety Topic			
4 minutes	• Swim As a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair		• Circle, on deck
Review Skills			
10 minutes	• Exit skills assessment Level 2	• "Show me your swimming skills"	• Wave
6 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front crawl <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arm stroke drills ○ Kicking drills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Long arms" • "Motorboat kicks" 	• Line, stagger or wave
New Skills			
2 minutes	• Bob (15 times) in chest-deep water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Take a breath and hold it" • "Blow bubbles and hum as you come up" • "Sweep arms down" • "Push off the bottom with your feet" • "Hop up and down" 	• Line away from wall
5 minutes	• Flutter kick with rhythmic breathing (head up or to the side)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Kick, kick, kick" • "Blow bubbles and hum, lift to take a breath, breathe, head back down and hum again" 	• Bracketed on wall
5 minutes	• Push off on front then begin flutter kicking with kick board (15 yards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Kick, kick, kick" • "Blow bubbles and hum, lift to take a breath, breathe, head back down and hum again" 	• Two lines
2 minutes	• Tread water using arm and leg actions (60 seconds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Hands back and forth" • "Soft and easy" 	• Semi-circle
Game			
4 minutes	• Red Ball, Green Ball		• Line
Closing			
2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank participants for their attention and participation • Offer positive reinforcement of what they did well • Review lesson • Announcements for next lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Good job" • "Safe" • "Great job, you all are great swimmers" 	• Circle, seated on deck

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Figure 3-2 Sample lesson plan, showing the first lesson of an 8-lesson session.

- **Opening activity.** Lessons usually have a formal opening activity, such as a land drill for a swimming skill, stretch exercises, a water adjustment drill (such as bobbing or rhythmic breathing) or a drill to review a previously learned skill. Make sure the opening activity is appropriate for the course and the participants, and keep it brief (no more than 5 minutes, depending on the length of the lesson and the participants' ages). Suggestions for teaching activities, drills and games are available on Instructor's Corner (instructorcorner.org).
- **Review skills.** You can review previously introduced skills in several ways. Consider demonstrating the skill again, using statements or guided questions to verbally review the skill or conducting a drill. Choose an appropriate method for the review based on the complexity of the skill and participants' previous success performing the skill. Always allow time for the participants to practice the previously learned skills, including enough time for individual and group feedback.
- **New skill introduction.** You may introduce a new skill in several ways. One way is to ask the participants to try something (see the "check" step in COLA; Box 3-1). This approach lets you see what participants can already do and may help apprehensive participants feel less pressure to perform at the same pace as their peers. Another way is to verbally explain the skill, and then demonstrate it (see Chapter 2 for more information on the *explain, demonstrate and practice* technique). Alternatively, you could have the class read appropriate parts of *Swimming and Water Safety* or view a video demonstration of the skill. Video demonstrations are available on the *Swimming and Diving Skills* DVD and on Instructor's Corner (instructorcorner.org).
- **New skill practice.** After introducing the skill, you need to allow time for participants to practice. Participant age and ability and the difficulty of the skill will help you determine how long to spend on each skill or part of a skill in each lesson. Some new skills can be learned by trying all steps of the entire skill at once. Other, more complex skills need to be broken down into smaller steps that are practiced one at a time. Allow enough time to arrange the class into an appropriate practice pattern and to give positive corrective feedback to each participant. Keep the participants motivated by varying the activities and including some fun drills or games.
- **Closing.** The closing is the "winding down" phase of the lesson. During this time, you should verbally review with the participants what they learned during the lesson and let them know what is coming up in the next lesson. In some courses, you may consider giving the participants a homework assignment. This part of the lesson is also a great time for individual practice. Let participants practice something they enjoy doing so they leave the lesson remembering the pleasure of the last activity. Alternatively, end with a game that is related to the skills the class just learned. When participants are reluctant to get out of the water at the end of the lesson, they will remember the experience as a fun activity and will be motivated and excited to attend the next lesson.

Writing the lesson plan

From your block plan, you have a high-level view of what water safety topics, review skills and new skills you plan to cover in the lesson. To complete your lesson plan, you need to fill in the following details:

- The assessment criteria you will use to check participants' readiness and skill level.
- The teaching strategies you will use to help participants learn information and skills (see Chapter 2).
- The amount of time you will spend on each activity.
- The key cue words, phrases or question trees you want to use.
- The pattern of organization you will use for participants' practice.

- The methods you will use to lead participants’ practice.
- The evaluation criteria you will use to assess participants’ progress.

As you plan your lesson, consider the following points:

- Each lesson needs to ensure that all participants are successful as well as challenged. Plan to make the lesson fun for everyone.
- For every activity, consider how you will safely engage as many participants as possible.
- The majority of the lesson time should be devoted to practicing previously learned skills and the new skills that are being introduced in the lesson, so plan for practice time with every skill you want to cover. Use your creativity and that of others to keep the practice fun.
- Plan multiple ways to practice each skill. For example, when you introduce a kick, you may use a drill having all of the participants holding onto the wall and then move to a wave drill using kickboards. Variation in practice helps to keep participants engaged and also gives you the opportunity to change activities if participants are struggling with a certain activity.
- Consider how you will transition from one activity to the next. Think about how long it takes to reorganize your class to begin the next part of the lesson. Also keep in mind the number of times participants will have to get in and out of the water. If they become chilled, they are not likely to make as much progress, nor will the lessons be a positive experience.

To complete your lesson plan, use a systematic approach such as this one:

1. List the safety topic, review skills, new skills and game you have identified on your block plan in the appropriate rows of the lesson plan in the “Activity” column. Complete the “Activity” column of the lesson plan by filling in the activities that will take place during the housekeeping and closing portions of the lesson.
2. Decide what teaching style and practice method you will use for each activity.
3. Arrange the planned activities in a logical sequence. For example, if you intend to use the *explain, demonstrate and practice* teaching strategy, be sure that a review skill appears before the new skill and that the demonstration occurs before the practice.
4. Keeping in mind the total class time, determine how much time you will spend on each activity and note this in the “Time” column on the lesson plan. Remember to allow time for transitioning from one activity or area to another. American Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics classes usually last 20 to 30 minutes. Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim classes typically last 30 to 45 minutes. Table 3-1 gives sample times for each major component of a lesson plan to help you budget your time.

Table 3-1. **Sample Time Assignments for Lesson Planning**

	Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics	Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim
Opening/Safety Topic	5 minutes	5 minutes
Review and Practice Previous Skill(s)	10 minutes	15 minutes
Teach and Practice New Skill	10 minutes	20 minutes
Closing/Games and Play	5 minutes	5 minutes

Classes in Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics and Preschool Aquatics last 20 to 30 minutes. Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim classes typically last 30 to 45 minutes. Private lessons typically last 30 minutes.

5. Review your planned activities and list any equipment that will be needed in the “Equipment” section.
6. For each activity, identify key phrases you will use to cue participants as they learn new skills or the questions you will use for indirect teaching methods (such as guided discovery). Try to think of different ways to say the same thing and write one- or two-word descriptions in the “Key Words/Phrases” column on the lesson plan. For questions, longer descriptions may be needed. Make sure the words, phrases or questions you intend to use are appropriate for the participants’ ages and level of understanding.
7. For each activity, decide how you will organize the participants and make a note in the “Class Organization” column on the lesson plan. Describe the pattern of organization or draw a small diagram of the the way you want the practice to flow.
8. If applicable, decide how to best divide tasks among yourself and any co-instructors or aides.
9. Add any additional reminders to yourself in the “Reminders” section of the lesson plan. These may include notes about things you need to do to prepare for the class (such as downloading materials from Instructor’s Corner), reminders to complete administrative tasks or reminders to follow-up with participants or their parents.



Teaching Tip: A lesson plan template and sample lesson plans for each level of the Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim courses are available on Instructor’s Corner (instructorcorner.org). You can use these sample lesson plans as guides for creating lesson plans that meet your own specific needs.

Adjusting the lesson plan

It is rare that a class follows a lesson plan *exactly* as written. You need to be prepared to adjust your plan for unexpected circumstances. For example, you may discover that participants need more practice with previous steps in the teaching progression, and as a result they are not ready for the steps you had planned to introduce today. Some participants may achieve a skill quickly, while others may have trouble and need more time. A drill you have planned may be too complicated or advanced for the participants’ skill level, or it may inhibit instead of promote the learning of a skill. For example, some participants can perform the entire skill but may have difficulty practicing the elements of the skill separately. In this situation, adjust the plan to allow those participants to do a variation of the drill to stay with the group rather than risk frustration or failure.

Pay attention to how your participants are responding to your lessons. If participants appear confused, show a regression in skills or exhibit negative behavior, this may be a sign that you need to adjust your lesson plan or your demeanor. You may need to modify the plan to better meet the needs of the participants (for example, by planning a wide range of skills to accommodate varying abilities). Or you may just need to appear more enthusiastic and excited about the activity and the class.



Teaching Tip: One of the best ways to be prepared to adjust the lesson plan is to write down several methods for practicing the same skill or skill sequence. You may want to include an activity that keeps participants in one place, a drill that requires participants to move around and a game. If a certain method of practice is not working, you can easily switch to another.

Evaluating the Success of the Lesson Plan

Taking the time to evaluate the lesson after it is over is important. This type of analysis helps you to improve as an instructor and to plan more effective lessons in the future. Ask yourself these questions immediately after the class ends:

- Did I follow my plan?
- Did the participants have enough time to practice?
- Did I choose the right activities? Were the drills too difficult, time-consuming or easy?
- Did I use my teaching area effectively?
- Did the drills I used match the ages and abilities of the participants?
- Did I use a variety of methods and equipment to enhance learning?
- Did I include a variety of skills in the plan so everyone had some success?
- Did the participants improve?
- Were my keywords or phrases appropriate and effective?
- Did I use co-instructors or aides effectively?

Use the answers to these questions to improve the next lesson plan. Analyze all parts of the lesson plan and decide what changes would have made it more successful.



Teaching Tip: You can download a *Water Safety Instructor Self-Assessment Form* from *Instructor's Corner* (instructorscorner.org).

You may find it easier to write the next lesson plan immediately after a lesson ends, while it is still fresh in your mind. Know your group, how much practice they need, and which skills will need only brief review and which need more time in the next lesson. If you see that you are falling behind, rework your block plan and, if necessary, get additional help for your class.

Organizing the class effectively, choosing the best activities and knowing what approach to use in a given situation all take experience. Learning from trial and error, in addition to good planning, can make you a more effective instructor.

ORGANIZING THE CLASS

To organize a class for effective teaching and learning experiences, always arrange the class so that:

- Everyone's safety is considered and you can see all participants at all times.
- Everyone can be successful and challenged.
- Everyone can hear and see instructions or hear your questions.
- Everyone can hear and see demonstrations.
- Everyone has an opportunity for enough active and effective practice.
- Everyone has an opportunity to be evaluated for skill improvement.

Formations

There are several ways to arrange participants for observation and practice. The arrangement you choose depends on the task, the number of participants, the number of instructors, the size and depth of the swimming area and whether others are using the facility.

Some of the same formations can be used with participants in the water or at the edge of the teaching area, depending on whether they are observing or practicing. In an outdoor setting, arrange participants so that the sun is behind or partially behind them, if at all possible.

- **Line formation.** In this formation, participants are arranged in a single line along the edge of the teaching area, either in a single line or in two parallel lines (Figure 3-3A). Pay attention to the water depth when using a line formation. Is the line along an equivalent water depth or is the line along descending depth? If the depth is descending, place the more inexperienced and shorter participants in the shallowest water. You may want to use two parallel lines if the class is large and the teaching area is limited. If participants are on the deck, those in the front may sit on the edge to allow better visibility for those behind.
- **“L” formation.** Another option is to arrange the class in an “L” on both sides of a corner (Figure 3-3B). This type of formation condenses the group for better visibility and hearing and is well suited for practicing stationary skills, such as bobbing or floating. The corner is also an ideal place to conduct classes for participants who are just beginning to swim independently because you can individualize the distance participants are asked to swim. For example, weaker swimmers can swim halfway across the corner to where you can assist them with the rest of the distance. Stronger swimmers can be encouraged to swim the entire distance across the corner. You can adjust the distance by moving the participants along the pool edge to a position that is farther from the corner.
- **Perpendicular formation.** A third option is to arrange the class into lines perpendicular to the side (Figure 3-3C). The first person in line performs a skill, swims to the side and then moves to the end of the line. This pattern is useful for observing individual entries or when the equipment for a task is in limited supply, such as reaching poles for extension assists.

For skill demonstration, be sure all participants are close enough and positioned so everyone can see. Different formations may be necessary depending on whether the demonstration is stationary (for example, kicking while bracketed to the side) or moving (for example, kicking with a kickboard). Some skills should be viewed from the front and back, as well as from the side. If you arrange the class in a line, consider whether it is better to swim up and down the line, across and back perpendicular to the line, or both. When using the “L” formation, moving demonstrations may be along each side or diagonally away from and back to the corner.

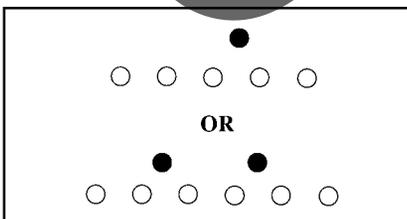


Figure 3-3A Line formation.

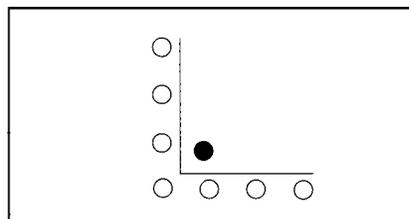


Figure 3-3B “L” formation.

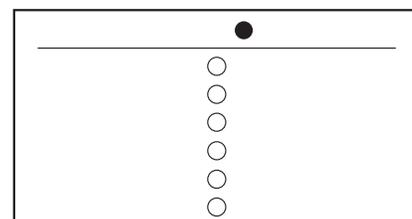


Figure 3-3C Perpendicular formation.



Teaching Tip: The “buddy system” is often advocated for swimming activities, including instruction. Depending on the formation, “buddies” may be next to, behind or across from one another.

Drills

Drills are used to help participants practice and improve their skills and increase their physical endurance. Drills may be static or fluid.

Static drills

Static drills—when participants practice in one place—are appropriate for certain skills such as kicking on the wall, treading water and practicing a specific skill component without movement. Any safe arrangement along the sides of the pool, standing in lines or randomly scattered based on the shape, size and depth of the teaching area, is appropriate as long as you are positioned appropriately to see all participants at all times. Remaining in the water for most of the time allows you to readily provide hands-on feedback as well as encouragement and corrections.

Fluid drills

Fluid drills—when participants are required to travel—help participants improve their skills and increase their physical endurance, and are useful for evaluating participant performance. Vary the type and formation of fluid drills to keep the practice interesting and help participants meet the course requirements. When choosing a fluid drill, consider the following factors:

- The participants’ skill proficiency
- The participants’ physical condition
- The intensity level of the drill
- The frequency and length of rest periods
- The distance needed for effective practice

Any drill pattern that starts as a line at the edge of the pool may also begin with participants away from the side in shallow water. For beginner swimmers, try standing a short distance away from the side and have the participants wade out to you to form a line parallel to and facing the side. Then, participants practice the skill as they go back toward the side. Position yourself a bit further out for each subsequent drill until the participants are comfortable going all the way across the pool. For more advanced swimmers, try using a fluid drill so participants can cover a greater distance, such as across the pool for one or more lengths, in a linear or circular pattern. However, this may not be possible for a beginning activity, or if the pool is very large.

Think about your participants when deciding if you want to start the drill away from the side or at the side. Starting away from the side has several advantages over starting at the side:

- Participants have a defined distance to cover that is set by you and within their abilities.
- Anxious participants are not facing an open area.
- The drill concludes with everyone at the side ready for the next exercise.

Individual Instruction

Individual instruction is appropriate when you need to give participants one-on-one attention (for example, for safety reasons or because the participant is fearful or anxious). Entering deep water for the first time and practicing headfirst entries are examples of skills that might require individual instruction. If possible, try to have extra instructors available to help. Because other participants will have to wait their turn, plan another activity that is related to the skill you are observing individually or one that leads up to it for the rest of the group to do.

Wave formation

Wave formation allows you to divide a large group into smaller units for maximum supervised practice (Figure 3-4). Each group performs as a unit. This method lets you watch smaller groups and give constructive feedback. It also makes better use of a small practice area. If you use the buddy system, have participants count off by number to form groups with one buddy in each pair. For example, “1” buddies go first while “2” buddies observe.

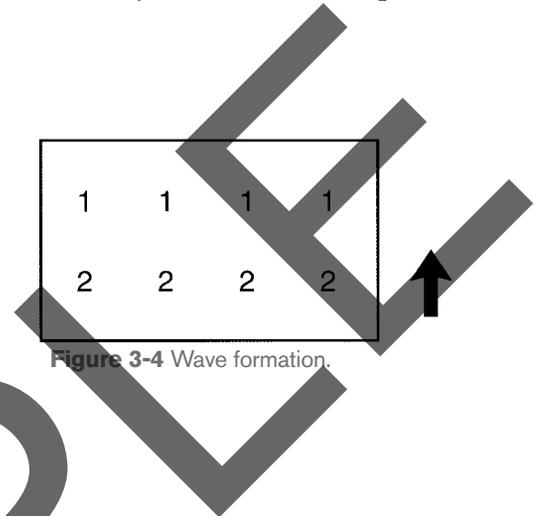


Figure 3-4 Wave formation.

Stagger formation

In the stagger formation, participants are positioned in a single line. Signal the first person in line to start swimming. The next person in line starts when the person ahead reaches a certain spot (Figure 3-5). This allows you to follow the progress of each participant for a few body lengths. In addition, you can speak to participants individually as they finish the swim while still having time to focus on the next swimmer. The stagger formation provides swimmers with a large amount of practice time and individual feedback, and gives them the opportunity to rest for a short time while they await their turns. When using the buddy system, structure the stagger in pairs. Then you can track two people at once and still provide individual feedback.

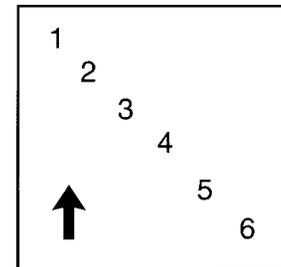


Figure 3-5 Stagger formation.

Circle swimming

For longer-distance swims to build endurance, participants may use the pool lanes. One option has swimmers keeping to the right side of one lane, swimming in a counterclockwise fashion (Figure 3-6). Another option is circuit swimming in which participants first swim in one lane and then move over another lane to swim in the other direction (always keeping to the right side of the lane). Continue this pattern so participants use all available lanes.

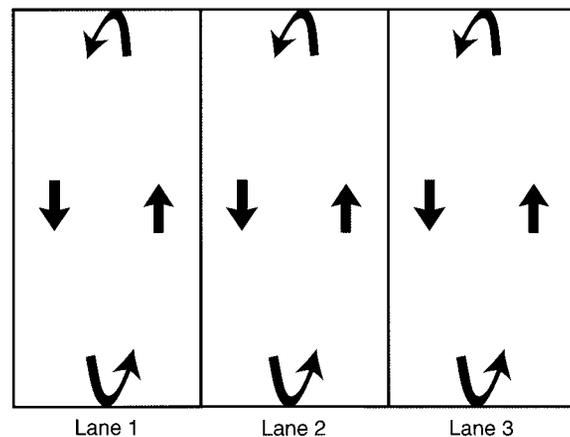


Figure 3-6 Circle swimming.

Perimeter swimming

For smaller pools or pools without lane lines, you can ask participants to swim a circle around the perimeter of the entire pool (Figure 3-7). This works well with reciprocal practice (see Chapter 2) since the coaching buddy can walk alongside the swimmer.

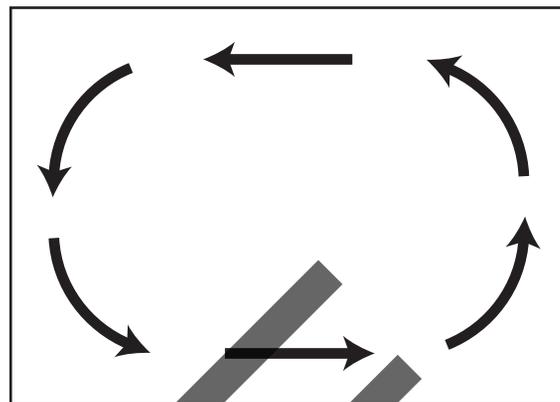


Figure 3-7 Perimeter swimming.

Assembly Lines and Stations

Assembly line teaching is a method of class organization that uses multiple instructors efficiently to provide greater assistance to participants. Each instructor conducts a particular drill or teaches a specific skill. There are many variations on assembly line and station teaching, depending on the numbers of participants, instructors and aides. When planning, consider the skills you want to teach, the participants' ages and experience, and the goals of the lesson.

Assembly line within one level

One way to use assembly line teaching is to teach the same skill at all the stations, but with different styles, techniques and drills. Another variation is to assign each instructor a different skill. As participants rotate from station to station, they receive a full and varied lesson in groups small enough for individualized attention. When using this approach, be sure that the activities at the different stations are compatible and that instructors are teaching the skills they are most proficient in.

Assembly line with more than one level

The assembly line method may also be used when several classes of participants at different, but consecutive, Learn-to-Swim levels are scheduled concurrently. This works best if participants are of similar ages. One instructor is assigned to each station. Participants remain with the same instructor until they perform the required skills well enough to advance. Some participants may move from one level to the next after only one lesson, while others may need to remain in the same level for a full series of lessons. This method allows maximum flexibility for participants to proceed at their own speeds. Participants also have the chance to experience a variety of instructors and the opportunity to meet new people as they move through the program.

In addition to providing flexibility for participants, this approach provides flexibility with programming. Co-instructors and aides can help with large groups or they may alter their positions as group structure changes. For example, they can be reassigned if a large group needs to be divided or combined into two small groups.

Station teaching

Station teaching promotes a high level of participant involvement and is most effective when participants take some responsibility for their own progress. In the most common use of station teaching, participants form a single group to receive information about the day's lesson. Then they are directed to stations at various parts of the facility, each with the appropriate equipment and written instructions for practice. The participants perform the skills at that station until they are signaled to rotate to the next station. The instructor moves from station to station, giving participants feedback. Having

a co-instructor at each station enhances the effectiveness of this method. After all participants have completed each station, review the material with the whole group and lead group drills to reinforce or check skills. Rotating through stations is also an efficient way to review previous skills, prepare for new skills and teach safety skills.

When using station teaching, you need to maintain the recommended instructor-to-participant ratios. In addition, ensure that enough lifeguards are on surveillance duty to effectively see all activities and respond quickly to any emergencies that may arise.

HOLDING AND SUPPORT TECHNIQUES

You can use a variety of holding and support techniques to help participants learn skills. Holding provides support and reassurance to participants while they explore the water and learn and practice new skills. With support, participants can assume the correct position for learning and practicing a skill. This helps participants develop confidence. When they know they will not submerge accidentally, they can relax and focus on practicing the skill they are learning. Because parents primarily provide support to their children during Parent and Child Aquatics classes, you will need to teach parents these holding and support techniques.

Different holding and support techniques are effective at different stages of learning. Factors such as the participant's age, weight and skill level as well as your personal preference determine which positions to use. Some techniques are more suited for participants who need individual assistance and practice while other techniques are more effective for group activities and drills.

Using support and holding techniques can be a delicate balancing act. You want participants to do as much as possible without support, while also giving them the help they need to learn skills in a developmentally appropriate and safe manner. As participants begin to relax and perform the skill, you should gradually reduce the support that you provide. Follow these guidelines when using holding and support techniques:

- Establish a relationship based on trust. When providing support, never take that support away unless the participant is expecting it and has been cued that he or she is performing on his or her own.
- Hold the participant lightly, not tightly. The participant should get the impression from you that this is a good experience, rather than something to fear. Let the participant experience as much natural buoyancy as possible while also providing enough support to promote confidence.
- Once the participant adjusts to the water, keep the participant at the appropriate level for performing the skill to prevent repeated uncomfortable temperature changes between the water and air. For example, when practicing the back float, squat down so that your shoulders are beneath the surface of the water. This allows the participant to rest the back of his or her head on your shoulder in a horizontal position.
- When movement is called for, smoothly move the participant in the appropriate direction of travel to help him or her get used to the sensation of moving forward in a horizontal position. When the participant is relaxed, the momentum that you generate by moving will help his or her body float up to a natural horizontal position. Make your movements smooth and expected rather than jerky and without warning.

- Whenever a participant feels fear or anxiety, hold or support the participant in a position he or she finds comforting and secure.
- Make eye contact with the participant whenever you are interacting with him or her. This helps keep the participant focused on what you are asking of him or her, and it helps to keep you focused on the participant. Remember to be sensitive to cultural differences; in some cultures, making direct eye contact is not appropriate.
- Focus on the safety of the entire class even if you are providing support to an individual. Always position yourself so that you can see the other participants. Never turn your back on the other participants in class.



Instructor's Note: Teaching swimming skills is very hands-on. As a water safety instructor, you will use holding and support techniques to increase participants' sense of security in the water and to support them while they practice new skills. You will also help participants get used to new or unfamiliar movements by physically moving their arms, legs or other body parts so that they get a sense of how the movement is supposed to feel. Whenever you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance, take care to follow the guidelines for positioning your hands carefully so that you avoid touching the participant in an inappropriate way. In addition, try to keep your hands as visible as possible when you are using holding or support techniques or providing hands-on guidance to minimize the chance that your handling of the participant could be construed as inappropriate.

Face-to-Face Positions

Face-to-face positions are most effective for children, especially those enrolled in Parent and Child Aquatics and the beginning levels of Preschool Aquatics and Learn-to-Swim. Use these positions to help introduce participants to skills on their front.

- **Hug position.** Use the hug position (Figure 3-8) for water adjustment and to practice kicking on the front. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's upper chest. Have the participant rest his head on your shoulder and place his arms loosely around your neck or over your shoulders. While supporting the participant's legs from underneath, have the participant extend the legs. You can use this position to manipulate the kick.
- **Chin support position.** Use the chin support position (Figure 3-9) to practice kicking on the front and bubble blowing. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's chin.



Figure 3-8 Hug position.



Figure 3-9 Chin support position.

Hold the participant under the upper chest and shoulders with your fingers and palms. Make sure the participant's chin rests on the heels of your palms so her chin does not accidentally submerge.

- **Hip support on front position.**

Use the hip support on front position (Figure 3-10) for water adjustment; to practice kicking on the front, the front glide, the front float and bubble blowing; and in preparation for kicking with the face down unsupported. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's chest. With your hands, support the participant in a horizontal position at the hips and abdomen from below. The participant's arms should be nearly fully extended and rest on top of your arms.

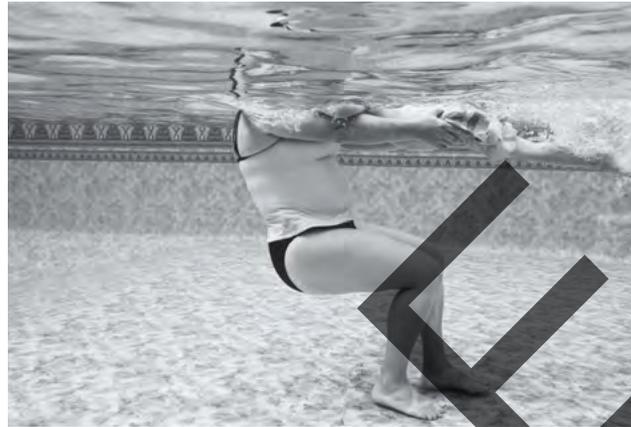


Figure 3-10 Hip support on front position.

- **Shoulder support on front position.**

Use the shoulder support on front position (Figure 3-11) for water adjustment and to practice kicking on the front, the front glide, bubble blowing, underwater exploration and rolling over. Position yourself so the water comes up to your shoulders and the participant's chin. Hold the participant under the armpits with your arms nearly fully extended. Grasp a heavier or fearful participant underneath the arms and upper chest with your thumbs up.



Figure 3-11 Shoulder support on front position.

Back-to-Chest Positions

Back-to-chest positions are used to introduce participants to skills on their backs. Participants often feel less confident on their backs, so introduce these positions gradually and provide firm support initially. Positioning the participant so that the ears are above the surface initially may help the participant get comfortable with being on his or her back. Do not continue any holding position if the participant becomes distressed.

- **Cuddle position.** The cuddle position (Figure 3-12) is used for back float, back glide readiness, kicking on the back and rolling over. Position yourself so that the water comes up to your neck and the participant's ears. The back of the participant's head rests on your



Figure 3-12 Cuddle position.

shoulder, with her cheek or the side of her head touching or right next to your cheek. Place one hand on the participant's lower back and the other on her chest. The participant's legs point away from you. Hold the participant horizontal by "sandwiching" her between your hands.

- **Hip support on back position.** The hip support on back position (Figure 3-13A) is used for back float and back glide readiness and for kicking on the back. Position yourself so that the water comes up to your neck and the participant's ears. The back of the participant's head rests on your shoulder, with his cheek or the side of his head touching or right next to your cheek. Hold the participant with both hands on the back to bring the body horizontal. Your exact hand position on the participant's back depends on the participant's ability to relax. Placing your hands on the participant's lower back provides the most support, whereas placing your hands on the participant's upper back gives less support but allows greater freedom of movement. As the participant becomes more comfortable, his legs will relax and he will lay his head back and allow his ears to submerge. Once the participant relaxes, you may reach down to the participant's legs and manipulate the kick (Figure 3-13B).

- **Back support position.** The back support position (Figure 3-14A) is used when the participant is comfortable on his or her back and maximum freedom of movement is



Figure 3-13 Hip support on back position. (A) Supporting the back. (B) Manipulating the kick.



Figure 3-14 Back support position. (A) Holding the participant away from the body so that the legs float up into a horizontal position. (B) Variation with participant held close for more support.

desired, but the participant still needs some support. Position yourself behind the participant so that your shoulders and the participant's ears are in the water. Support the base of the participant's head near the neck with one hand. Place your other hand in the middle of the participant's back to lift and stabilize him or her in a horizontal position. Tilt the participant's head back. Extend your arms to hold the participant perpendicular to and away from your body, smoothly moving backward to help the participant float to a horizontal position. If the participant has trouble relaxing and tilting his or her head, try using a variation of this position. Pull the participant close to you and position his or her head on your chest or shoulder for more support. Place one hand in the middle of the participant's back and the other hand around the chin or lower jaw and gently tilt the head back (Figure 3-14B). Resume the back support position when the participant relaxes.



Safety Note: Do not push on the fleshy part of the participant's throat.

- **Arm stroke position.** The arm stroke position (Figure 3-15A) is used to help young participants explore arm movements in the water. Brace your back against the side of the pool, sit on the steps or kneel on one knee in shallow water. The water should be up to your shoulders and the participant's upper chest or armpits. Sit the participant on your knee, facing away from you. Use one of your arms to circle the participant's chest and keep him upright. With your other hand, hold the participant's wrist from underneath and place your hand on top of the participant's hand. Move the participant's arm in a paddling motion and encourage the participant to imitate the movement with his other arm. If necessary, switch the arm you are using to support the participant and move the participant's other arm in the paddling motion. Balance a more secure participant on your knee and guide both arms in an alternating or simultaneous paddling motion (Figure 3-15B).



Figure 3-15 Arm stroke position. (A) Manipulating one arm. (B) Manipulating both arms.

Side-to-Side Positions

Side-to-side positions are used for water adjustment and for bubble blowing, kicking on the front, front glide, front float, beginning stroking, passing and practicing combined skills.

- **Hip straddle position.** The hip straddle position (Figure 3-16) is used for water adjustment, bubble blowing, and water entry and exit. This position is most appropriate for young participants and can be used in various depths of water depending on the skill the participant is learning. Have the participant face you and straddle your hip. Support the participant by reaching around the participant's back and placing your hand on the participant's upper thigh. You can hold the participant's hand with your other hand. Position yourself so the water level is appropriate for the participant. If the participant is cold or afraid of the water, begin by immersing the lower part of the participant's body. As the participant becomes more comfortable, gradually immerse yourself and the participant until the water reaches the participant's chest.
- **Shoulder support on the side position.** The shoulder support on the side position (Figure 3-17A) is used for water adjustment, bubble blowing, kicking on the front, front glide, front float, beginning stroking, passing and for practicing combined skills. Position yourself comfortably so the water line is between your waist or shoulders and the participant's chin or neck. This position gives maximum mobility in a support position. With you and the participant facing the same direction, hold the participant to your side by wrapping your hands around the participant's torso at about the armpits. Keep the participant's head up; you should be able to see his face. You can gently rest your arm or elbow against the participant's buttocks and legs to keep them underwater. To provide more support, encircle the participant's torso with your arms, wrapping one arm underneath the participant and the other over top and placing your palms on the participant's chest (Figure 3-17B). As the participant becomes more confident and skilled, hold him with both hands on the waist.

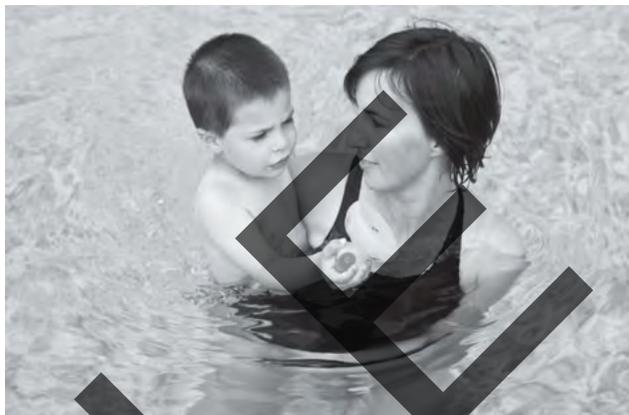


Figure 3-16 Hip straddle position.



Figure 3-17 Shoulder support on the side position. (A) Supporting the participant by wrapping your hands around the participant's torso at the armpits. (B) Variation to provide more support: place one arm underneath the participant and the other over top, with both hands on the participant's chest.

FLOTATION DEVICES

Flotation devices may be used for safety, or as teaching aids. There are many different types of flotation devices with different uses. Be knowledgeable about the uses, benefits and potential risks associated with any type of flotation device that you intend to use in your classes. This section describes flotation devices that are recommended for use in Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics, Learn-to-Swim and Adult Swim classes. Box 3-2 describes precautions you should take if you intend to use attached flotation devices as teaching aids in your classes.

Box 3-2. Precautions to Take If Using Flotation Devices

An attached flotation device (such as inflatable arm bands or Styrofoam floats) is never a substitute for close adult supervision. All children up to about the age of 5 or 6 years, no matter how well they can swim on their own or swim with or without flotation devices, should always remain within arm's reach of an adult.

If you choose to use attached floating devices as instructional aids, strictly limit their use with nonswimmers. Nonswimmers should stay in shallow areas and should not be allowed to become dependent on these aids. Also, teach nonswimmers and their parents about the potential hazards when these aids are used for recreational swimming or practicing skills without supervision from a qualified instructor. Children and parents may develop a false sense of security. Drowning is possible if the child goes into the water without the aid or if the aid comes loose or slips off when the child enters or paddles in the water. Always emphasize that these aids do not take the place of U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets. Remember, nonswimmers and swimmers alike should wear U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets in any situation in which there is a chance of falling into the water.

Ask yourself the following questions when considering the use of attached flotation devices for teaching:

- Does the device support the body in the proper position for the skill to be learned?
- Can the device be placed on the part of the body requiring support without interfering with movement of other body parts?
- Can the device be secured so it does not come loose or slip off?
- Is the device constructed so it cannot deflate accidentally?

Even if you are able to answer “yes” to all of these questions, attached flotation devices should still be used with caution.

Inflatable Arm Bands

Inflatable arm bands, sometimes called “muscles,” “wings” or “swimmies,” are used primarily for very small children but may also be used for some older, less confident participants. These devices keep the participant’s head above water and permit the participant to move independently as you assist with manipulating the participant’s limbs. Keep in mind, however, that arm bands restrict proper arm movement. Although they may be useful for participants learning to adjust to the water, they tend to promote a false sense of security in children who often do not realize that the device is providing the flotation. They raise the center of buoyancy and impair progress if participants become accustomed to kicking in a vertical position. Additionally, these devices often develop leaks and tend to slip off, placing the participant at risk for drowning.

(continued)

Box 3-2. (continued)

Styrofoam Floats

Styrofoam floats, also called float belts, come in a variety of shapes and provide enough buoyancy to support small children. They can help build strength and endurance because they enable the child to practice longer in water over his head. Styrofoam floats can be useful when practicing combined skills. For example, placing these devices on the back can help the child float on the stomach, or the child can float on her back when the device is placed on the stomach.

However, the disadvantages of Styrofoam floats often outweigh any advantages. Parents and children alike may become overconfident when these devices are used, putting the child's safety at risk. If the device is poorly positioned, the child's face can submerge. Always warn parents that they should not depend on any artificial devices for their child's safety other than a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.



Safety Note: A flotation device is never a substitute for close adult supervision. All children up to about the age of 5 or 6 years, regardless of their swimming ability, should always remain within arm's reach of an adult.

Life Jackets

Life jackets have limited usefulness as teaching aids because their bulk makes it difficult to perform skills effectively. They also can promote poor body position and can slip or slide off if not fitted correctly, potentially turning the participant face down and placing him or her in danger. While life jackets should not be used to teach participants to swim, Red Cross aquatics programs strongly advocate that all participants, including parents, know how to choose, use, wear and swim in properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets (Figure 3-18). Therefore, you should teach participants how to enter the water and swim while wearing a life jacket.



Figure 3-18 All participants and their parents should know how to choose, use, wear and swim in a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.

Free-Floating Supports

Free-floating supports can prop up the body to help participants practice skills such as breathing, kicking and arm strokes. The participants can hold the support with one or both hands or arms, or between the thighs or lower legs. Common free-floating supports include kickboards, swim bar (barbell) floats, foam noodles and pull buoys.

Kickboards

Kickboards are one of the most commonly used, and one of the most useful, teaching aids.

Kickboards are available in different sizes and can be used at all levels with varying degrees of assistance. Make sure to use the appropriate size for each participant. Kickboards are not safe or appropriate if the participant is too small, lacks enough coordination to maintain a stable body position or is at risk for unintentional submersion during use.

As participants mature and develop size and strength, they can hold the kickboard while they practice kicking. The kickboard helps to simulate proper body position so the participant can concentrate on kicking only or kicking in the streamlined position, and rhythmic breathing. To practice kicking only on the front, the participant holds the kickboard on the sides near the top with the arms extended. This allows the arms to rest on the kickboard and keeps the participant's head up to breath normally (Figure 3-19A). To add rhythmic breathing, the participant holds the kickboard on the sides near the bottom with the arms extended. The face is down in the water. The participant lifts the head to breathe, and then returns to the streamlined position.

To practice floating and kicking on the back, the participant holds the kickboard in the middle on both sides. Squeezing the kickboard against the chest and stomach helps the participant to float up to a horizontal position (Figure 3-19B). It may be easier for beginners to hug the kickboard while pressing it against the chest and stomach. More skilled swimmers can manipulate the kickboard in the water overhead in the streamlined position on the back (Figure 3-19C). If the kickboard alters body position or is too cumbersome, discontinue use.

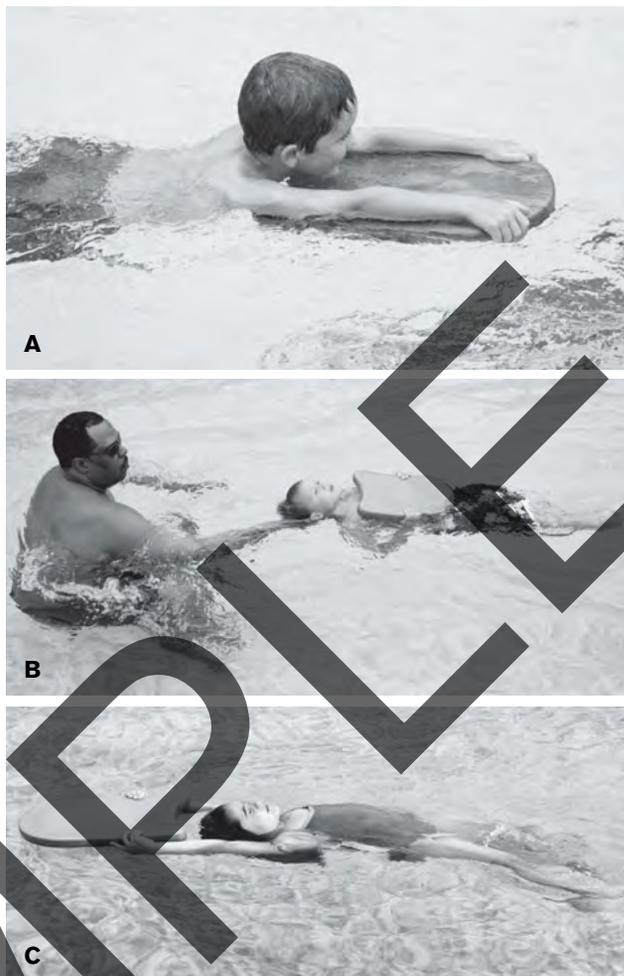


Figure 3-19 Kickboards can be used to practice (A) kicking on the front, (B) floating on the back and (C) the streamlined position on the back.



Instructor's Note: *Smaller kickboards are available that are easier for young participants to use. Also, some kickboards are available in shapes that are attractive to children, such as teddy bears and fish.*

Swim bar floats

Swim bar floats (a bar with floats on each end similar to a barbell) are also available in different sizes. Use the appropriate size for each participant. The participant holds the swim bar float in front with



Figure 3-20 Swim bar floats can be (A) held out in front and used like a kickboard or (B) placed under the armpits for support.

the arms stretched straight and uses it much like a kickboard (Figure 3-20A). Because the bar is easier to grasp than a kickboard, these aids are most useful with smaller children or participants who have problems with kickboards. You can place the swim bar float under the participant's armpits for support (Figure 3-20B) so that the participant can kick and stroke without fear of sinking. These aids can also be used to practice on the back by holding the swim bar float against the chest or over the head. When using swim bar floats, face the participant, offer encouragement and stay close enough to catch the participant if the swim bar float slips away.

Foam noodles

Foam noodles, available in different sizes and widely sold as toys, are useful instructional aids. The participant can hold the noodle in front with the arms stretched straight and use it in much the same way as a kickboard or swim bar float would be used (Figure 3-21). The foam noodle can also be placed under the armpits for support so the participant can kick and stroke without fear of sinking. A foam noodle can also be used to practice on the back by holding it under the armpits against the chest or over the head. Because foam noodles are less stable than kickboards and swim bar floats, always provide close supervision when participants are using them.



Figure 3-21 Foam noodle.

Pull buoys

Pull buoys are commonly used in the upper levels of Learn-to-Swim, Adult Swim and in competitive training. The pull buoy can be placed between the thighs or knees to provide buoyancy and allow the participant to concentrate on arm strokes (Figure 3-22). The placement of the device depends on how much buoyancy the participant needs. Good body position is essential when using a pull buoy. Maintaining correct body position using a pull buoy can be difficult, so only advanced swimmers should use these devices.



Figure 3-22 Pull buoy.



Safety Note: Never allow participants to tie pull buoys to their legs.

Stationary Supports

Stationary supports include the deck, the side of a pool or a dock, ladders or steps leading into the water, and the bottom of shallow water. Stationary supports can be used to support the body as the participant practices leg movements. Bracketing is a technique in which the participant balances and controls her body position while holding onto the side of the pool or the dock. Practicing leg movements in the proper body position helps the participant develop correct form. Two methods of bracketing are described here. Participants may find other ways to bracket themselves.

Bracketing in the front position

When bracketing in the front position, the participant grasps the gutter with one hand, bending the elbow slightly. With the other hand, the participant presses against the pool wall below the water line with the fingers pointing down and the elbow straight (Figure 3-23A). The submerged hand should be deep enough to support good body position. If this hand position is too difficult, the participant may try holding the gutter with both hands while keeping both elbows locked into a straight position (Figure 3-23B).

The participant keeps his head in the water, submerged to the ears, and breathes rhythmically, letting the hips and legs rise toward the surface naturally. The participant may wish to keep his head up, which will allow him to breathe normally. However, when the participant keeps his head up, the hips and legs will sink so the participant will need to work harder with his legs to keep his body near the surface.

Bracketing in the side-lying position

Bracketing in the side-lying position provides stable support while practicing the scissors kick.

When bracketing in the side-lying position, the participant grasps the gutter with the hand of the upper arm, keeping the elbow slightly bent. He places the palm of the lower hand against the wall directly

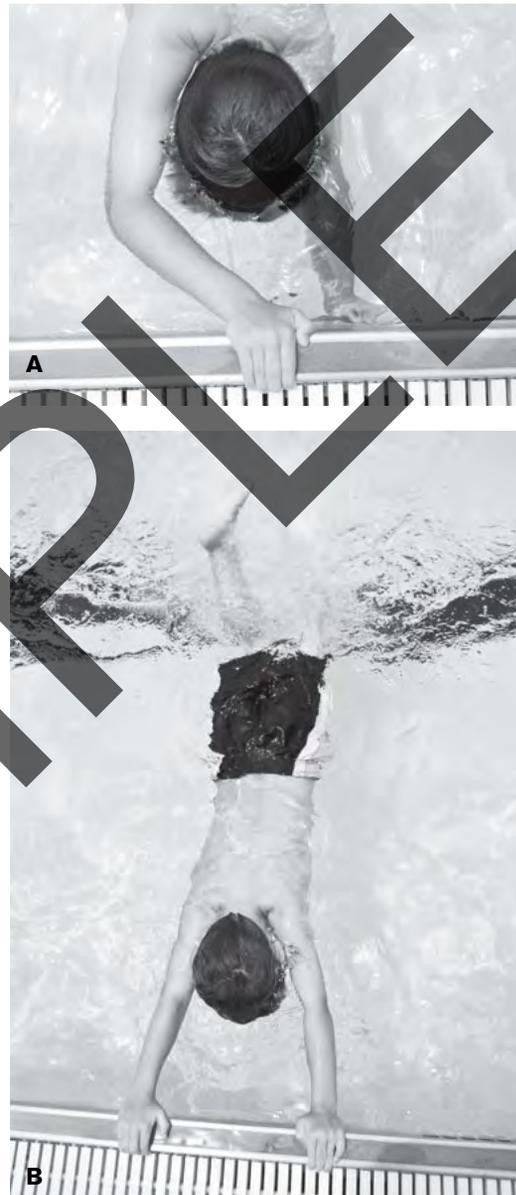


Figure 3-23 Bracketing in the front position. **(A)** Holding the gutter with one hand. **(B)** Holding the gutter with two hands.

under the top hand, with the fingers pointing toward the bottom and at a comfortable distance beneath the surface. The elbow of the lower arm should be straight and the body straight, stretched and perpendicular to the wall with the lower part of the ear in the water (Figure 3-24). The lower hand provides most of the support and control for the body. If the participant sways forward or backward, sliding the lower hand in the direction of the sway while exerting pressure against the wall can help to push the body back into the proper position.

Fins

Fins can help swimmers move faster and kick with less effort. Wearing fins can be especially helpful for developing a fluid flutter kick and dolphin kick. They also allow the participant to concentrate on arm stroking patterns, timing and breathing. Fins come in a variety of sizes. Be sure to have different sizes available so participants can use fins that fit correctly. The fins should fit snugly enough to stay on the participant's feet but they should not be so snug that they cause cramping.



Figure 3-24 Bracketing in the side-lying position.



Safety Note: Do not allow participants to walk on the deck in fins. Have participants sit on the edge of the pool while they put on and take off the fins.