

# American Red Cross Water Safety Poll

Report Date: May 5, 2014



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# Methodology

This survey was conducted between April 17 and 20, 2014 using ORC International's Online CARAVAN omnibus survey.

The study was conducted among a national sample of 1,024 American adults, including 201 parents of children aged 4-17. The total sample is balanced to be representative of the US adult population in terms of age, sex, geographic region, race and education. The margin of error for the total sample of 1,024 adults is  $\pm 3.1\%$ ; the margin of error for the sample of 201 parents is  $\pm 6.9\%$ .

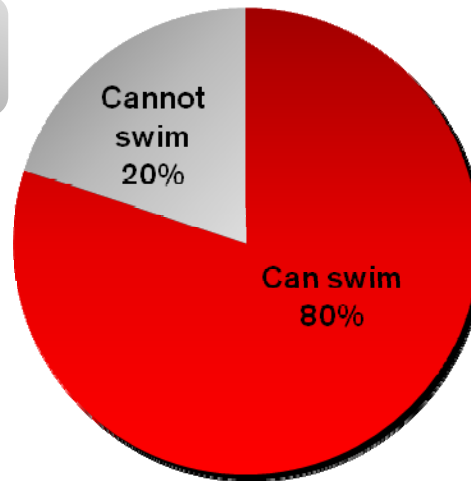
*Throughout this report, significant differences between subgroups are indicated by \*.*



## While the majority of Americans say they can swim...

31% of African Americans  
16% of whites

While one in five can't swim,  
just 2% expect to take  
swimming lessons this  
summer.



69% of African Americans  
84% of whites

### Subgroup Breakouts

#### Gender:

➤ Men are significantly more likely than women to report that they know how to swim (84% vs. 78%).

#### Age:

➤ Americans aged 35-44 (86%) and 45-54 (85%) are significantly more likely than those 25-34 (74%) or 65+ (75%) to report they know how to swim.

#### Swimming lessons:

➤ Only 8% of those who have taken swimming lessons say they cannot swim.

#### Region:

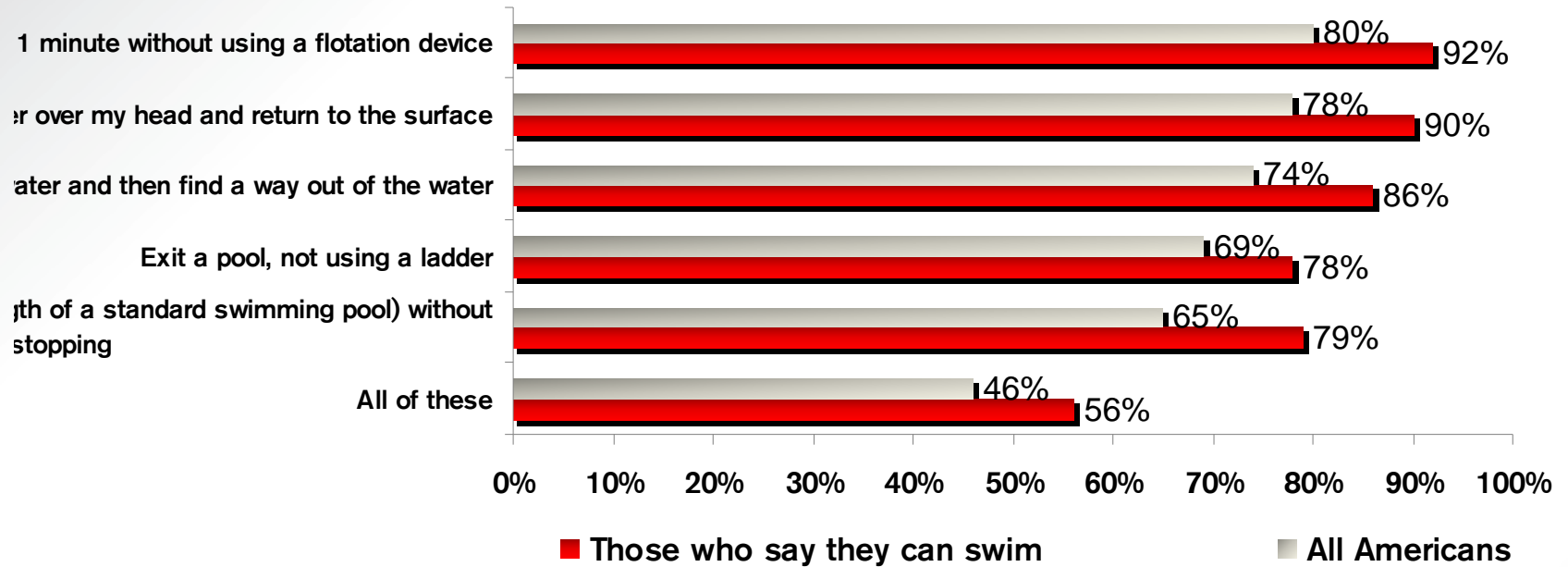
Suburban residents are significantly more likely than those in urban areas to report that they can swim (85% vs. 78%).

Q1: Do you know how to swim?



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# ...only 56% of those who say they can swim can perform all five basic water safety skills



## Subgroup Breakouts

### Ethnicity:

➤ Just one in three (33%) African Americans reports that they have all 5 of these skills, compared to 51% of whites. Still, 69% of African Americans say they can swim.

### Gender:

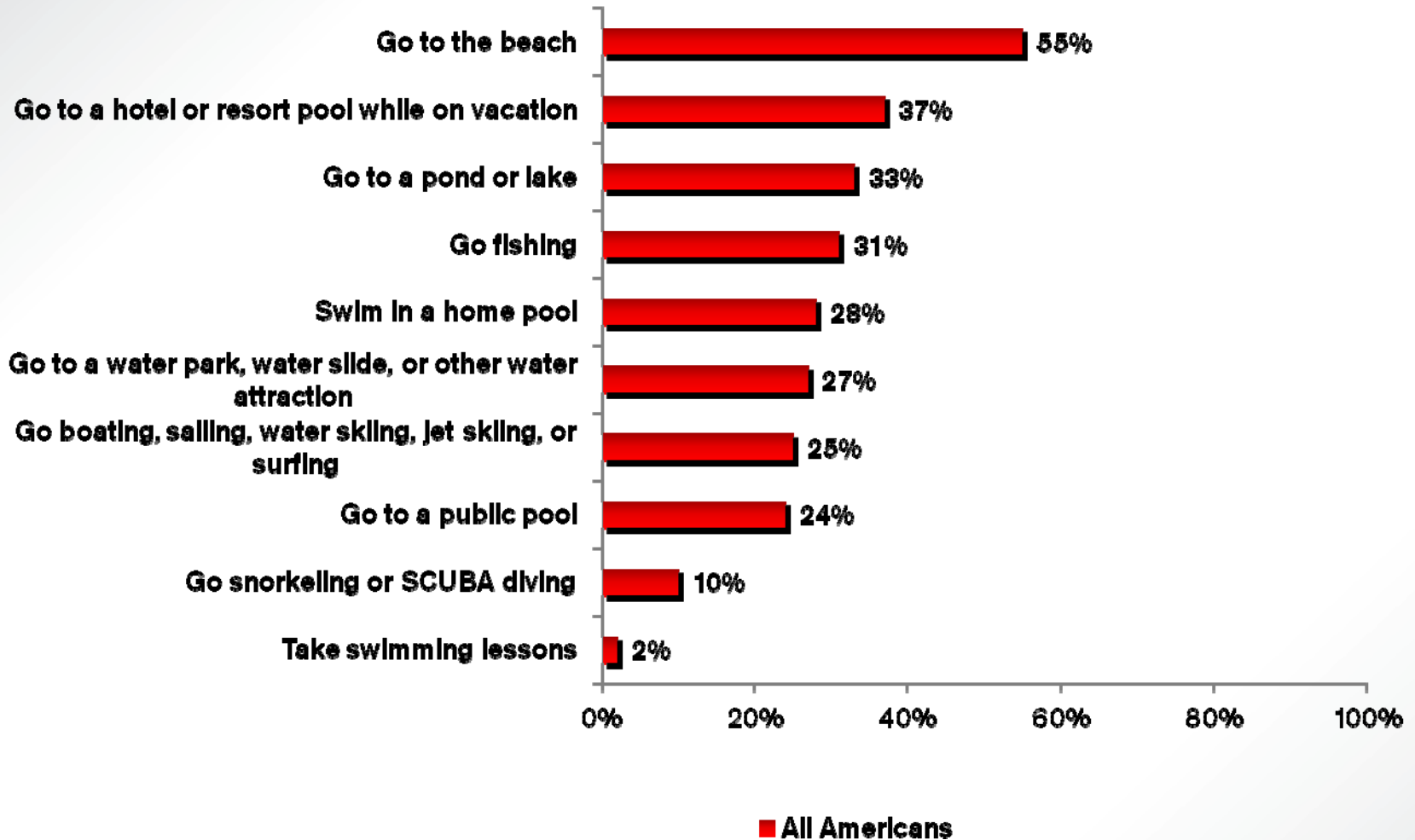
➤ Men are significantly more likely than women to report that they have all 5 skills (57% vs. 36%).

### Swimming lessons

➤ Those who have taken swimming lessons are significantly more likely than those who have not to demonstrate every single one of the basic safety skills (53% vs 42%).



# 80% have water activities in their summer plans



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Q6: Which, if any, of the following water activities do you expect to participate in this summer?

## Nearly a third plan to swim in a place without a lifeguard present

- **One in three (32%) expects to swim in a place without a lifeguard present.**
- **Just one in four (26%) plans to swim in a place with a lifeguard present.**

*Q6: Which, if any, of the following water activities do you expect to participate in this summer?*

- **Those who know how to swim are significantly more likely to swim without a lifeguard present (39%) than those who do not know how to swim (4%).**
- **Those who report having all 5 safety skills are significantly more likely to plan to swim in a place without a lifeguard present (46%) than those who do not (21%).**



**More than a quarter of Americans say they will be supervising children in the water.**

**27% of Americans expect to supervise a child near a pool, lake, or other body of water this summer.**

**18% of those who are NOT able to perform all water safety skills expect to supervise a child near a pool, lake, or other body of water this summer.**

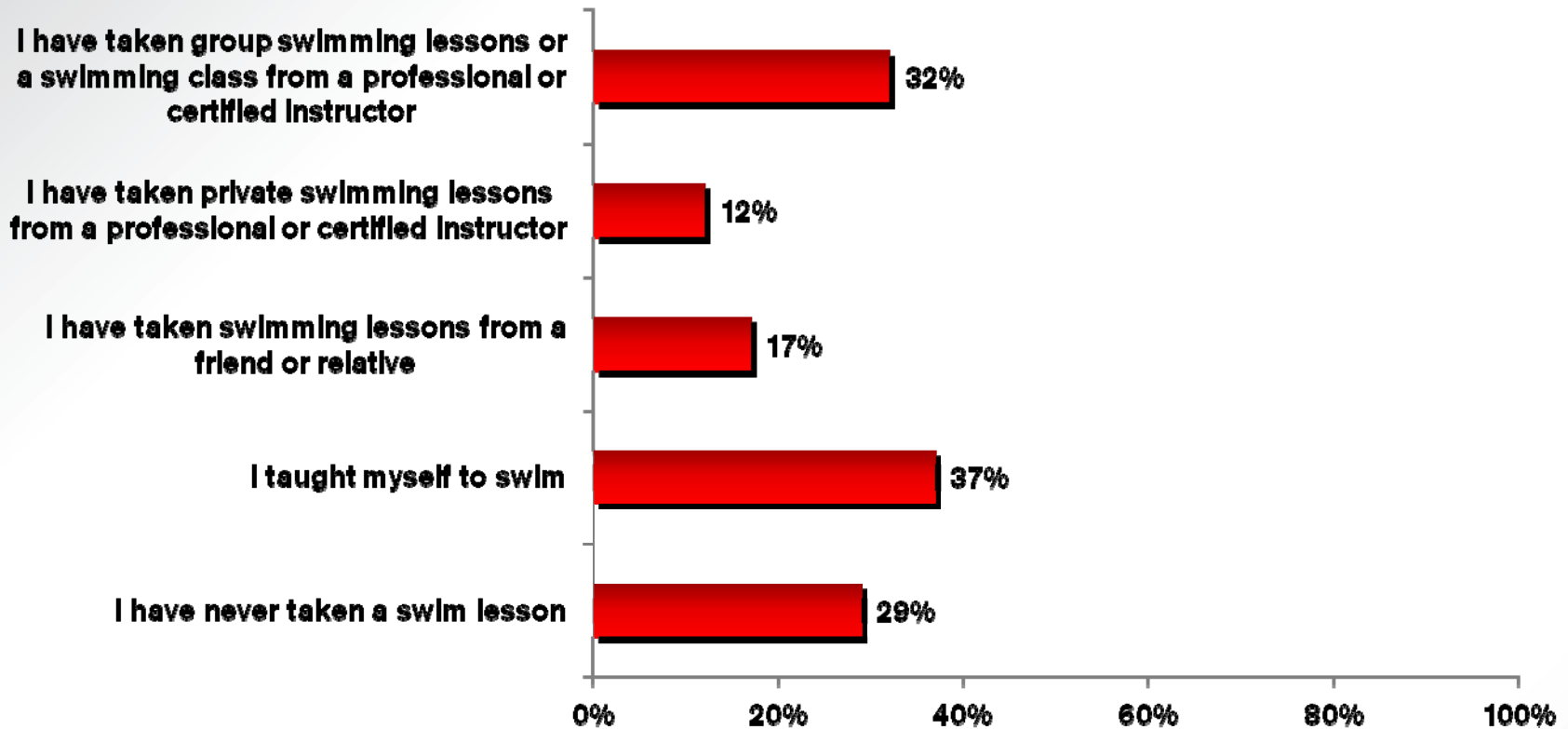
**Some groups are more likely than others to expect to supervise a child near a pool, lake or other body of water this summer.**

- Swimmers vs non-swimmers (32% vs. 6%)
- Those who have taken swim lessons vs those who have not (32% vs. 25%)



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# Six in ten Americans have not taken professional swim lessons



Those who say they can swim are more likely to have taken a professional lesson than those who say they cannot (44% vs 16%).

Among those who say they can swim, 56% say they have never taken a professional lesson.

Subgroup breakouts on the next slide



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Q3: Which, if any, of the following apply to you?



### Subgroup Breakouts for Swim Lessons

#### Location:

- Southerners (14%) are significantly more likely than those in the Midwest (7%) to have taken private swimming lessons from a professional or certified instructor, while Midwesterners are more likely to have taken group swimming lessons or a swimming class from a professional or certified instructor (38% vs. 27%).
- Those in rural areas (44%) are significantly less likely than those in urban (55%) and suburban (54%) areas to report having taken swim lessons of any kind.

#### Age:

- Just 7% of those 65+ have taken swimming lessons from a friend or family member, compared to 26% of 18-24-year-olds and 27% of those 25-34.

#### Gender:

- Women are significantly more likely than men to have taken professional swim lessons (43% vs 34%); however men are significantly more likely than women to have taught themselves to swim (44% vs. 29%).

#### Race

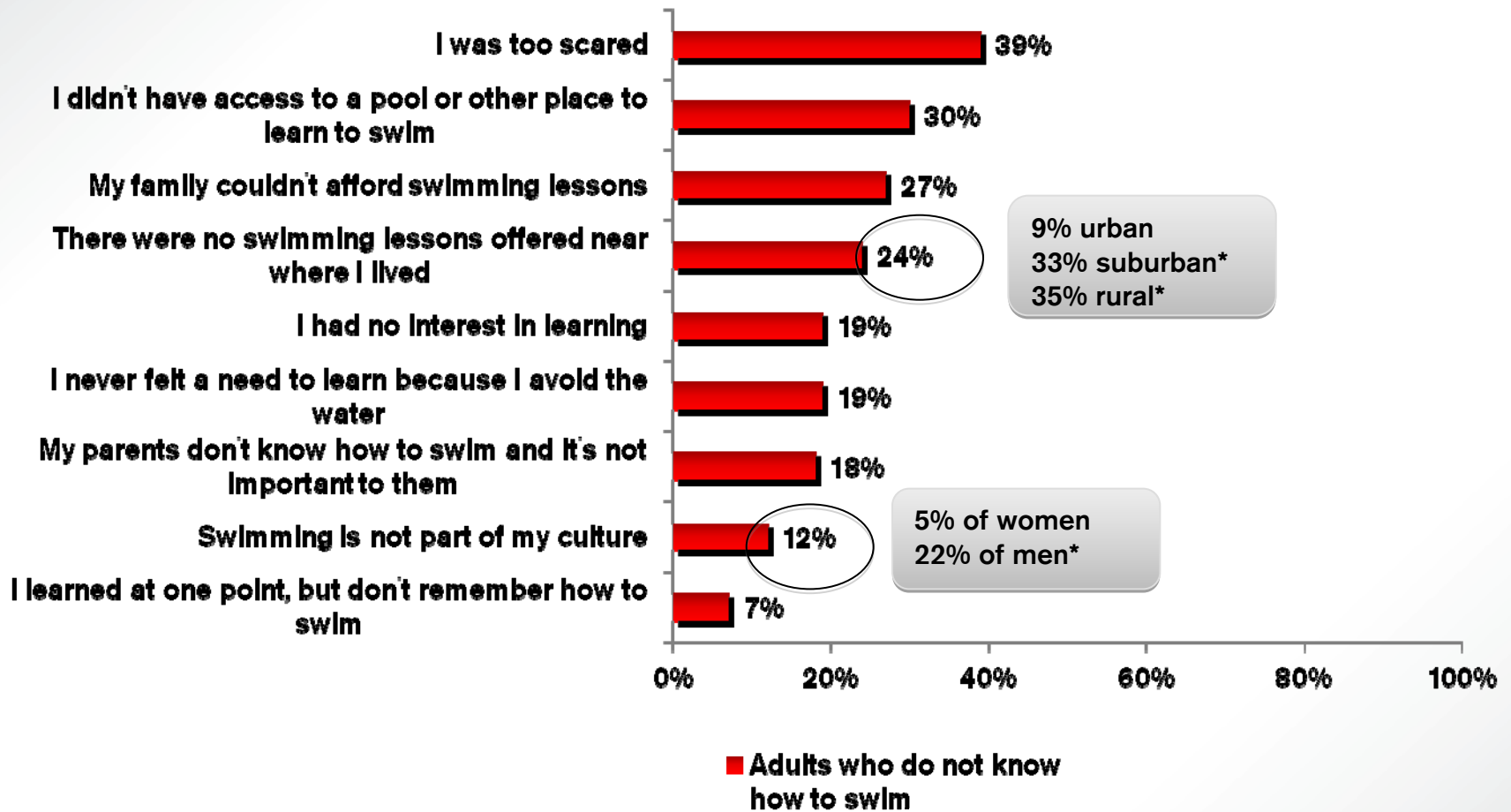
- 49% of whites and 55% of African Americans have taken **any** swim lessons (including group or private lessons from a professional or certified instructor or swimming lessons from a friend or relative)
- African Americans (23%) are significantly more likely than whites (13%) to have taken swimming lessons from a friend or relative, while whites (38%) are more likely than African Americans (27%) to have taught themselves to swim.

#### Basic Safety Skills

- Those who report having all 5 basic safety skills are significantly more likely than those who do not have those skills to have taken professional lessons (46% vs. 32%) or taught themselves how to swim (45% vs 29%).



For non-swimming adults, fear and access were the main barriers to childhood swimming.

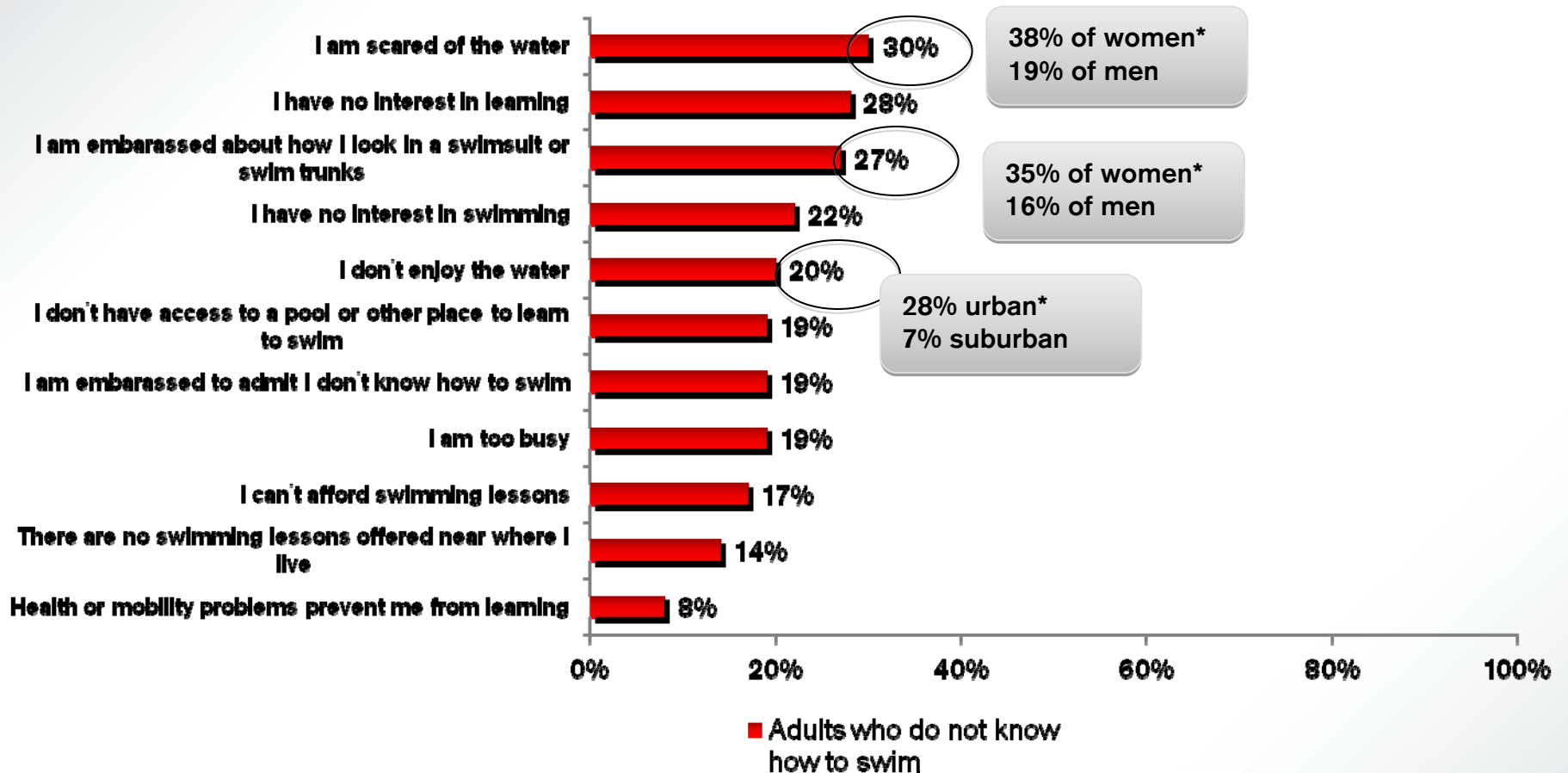


Q4: For which, if any, of the following reasons did you NOT learn to swim as a child?  
Base: 173 who say they do not know how to swim



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# Many barriers keep non-swimming adults from learning to swim now, with fear and lack of interest topping the list.



Q5: Which, if any, of the following keep you from learning how to swim now?

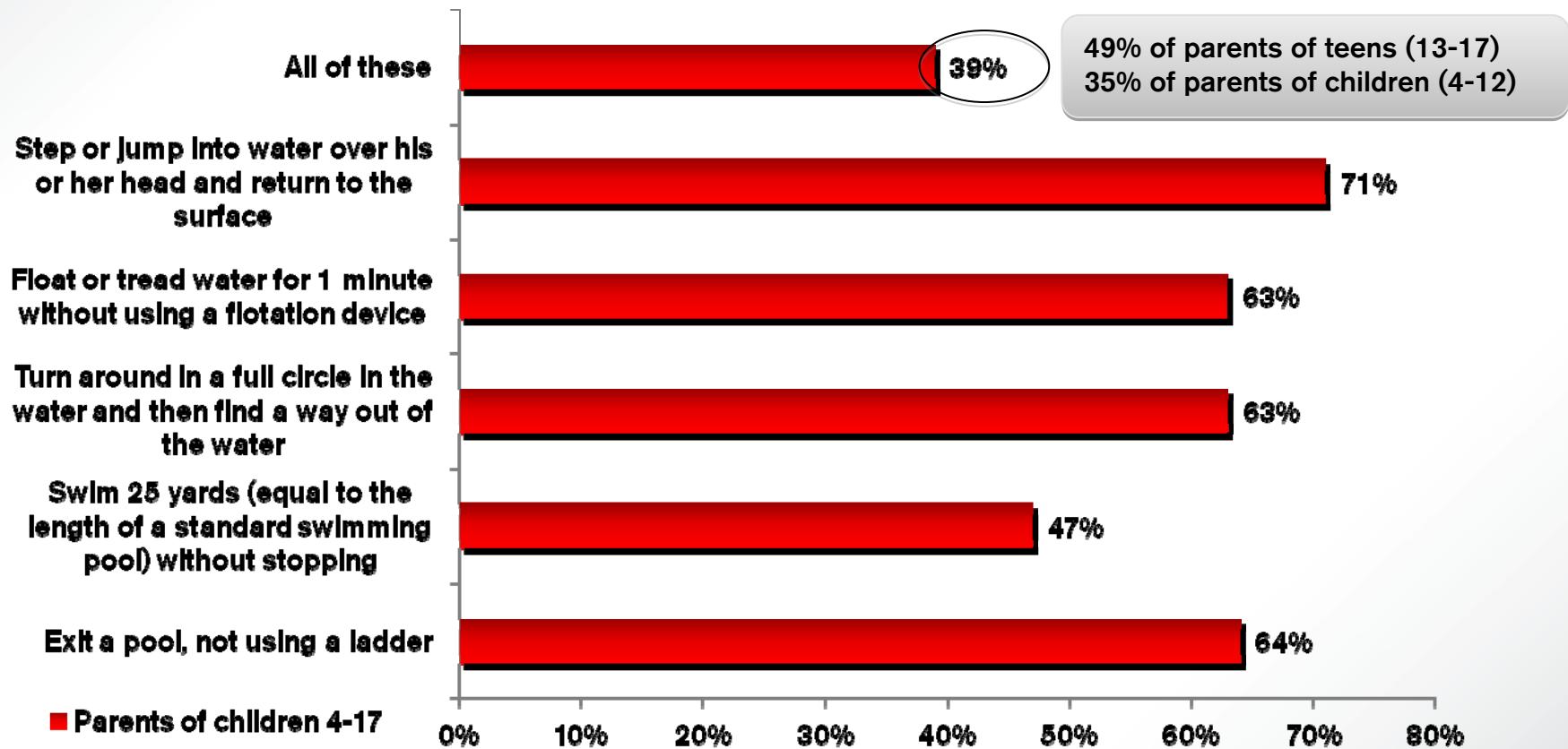
Base: 173 who say they do not know how to swim



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# Most children do not demonstrate basic safety skills — though many are gearing up to learn.

- 39% of parents of children between ages 4-17 report that their child has all five basic water safety skills.
- 20% of parents expect that their child will take swimming lessons this summer.



Q8: Think for a moment about your [OLDEST/YOUNGEST] child between the ages of 4 and 17. For each of the following, please indicate if it is something your [OLDEST/YOUNGEST] child can or cannot do or if you are not sure.

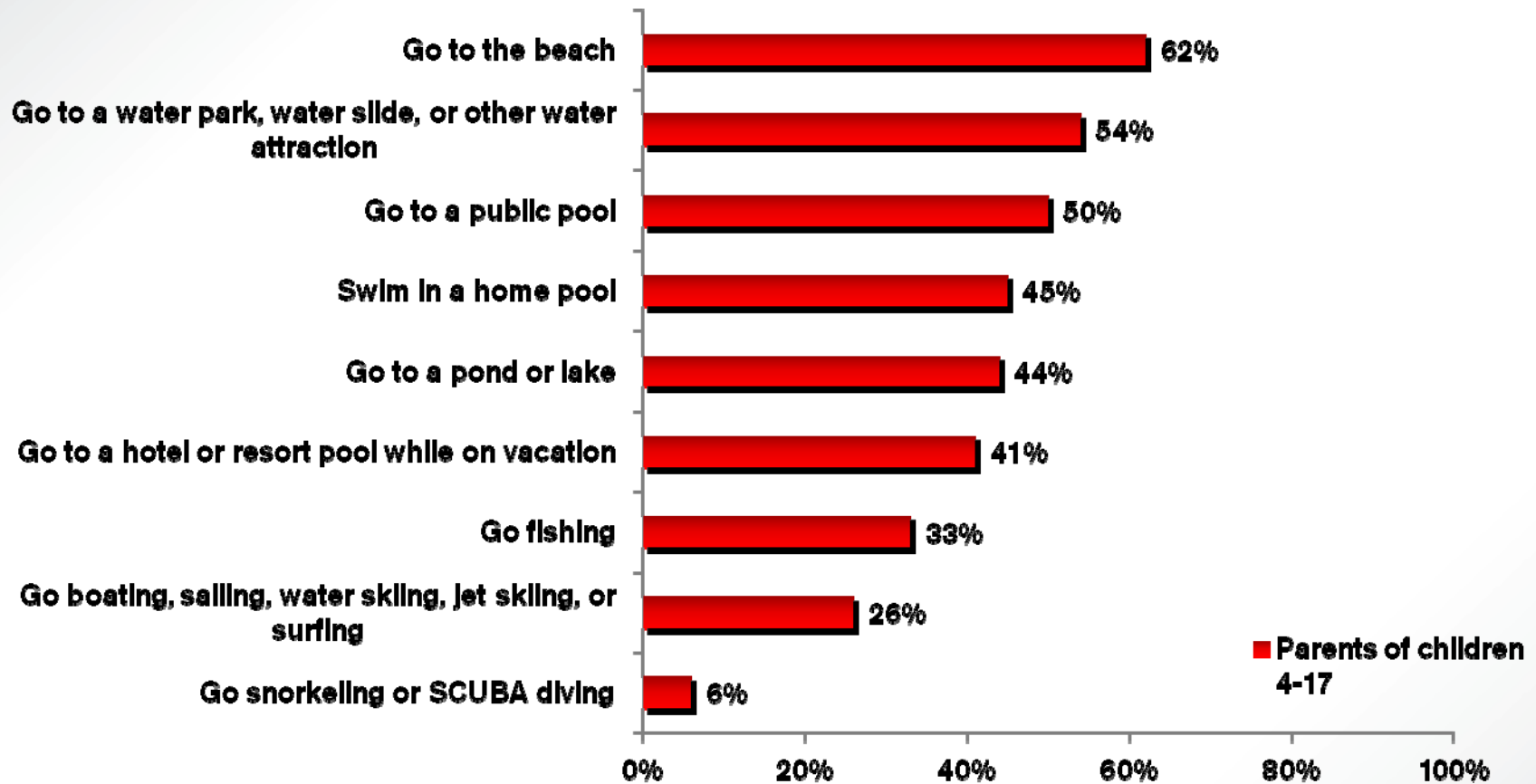
Base: 201 parents of children aged 4-17



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# Nearly all parents expect that their children will take part in water activities this summer.

- 94% of parents of children between ages 4-17 expect that their child will engage in some sort of water activity this summer.



Q9: Which, if any, of the following water activities do you expect your [OLDEST/YOUNGEST] child between the ages of 4 and 17 to participate in this summer?  
Base: 201 parents of children aged 4-17



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However, children won't always be supervised by a professional this summer.

**50% of parents expect their children to swim in a place that has a lifeguard.**

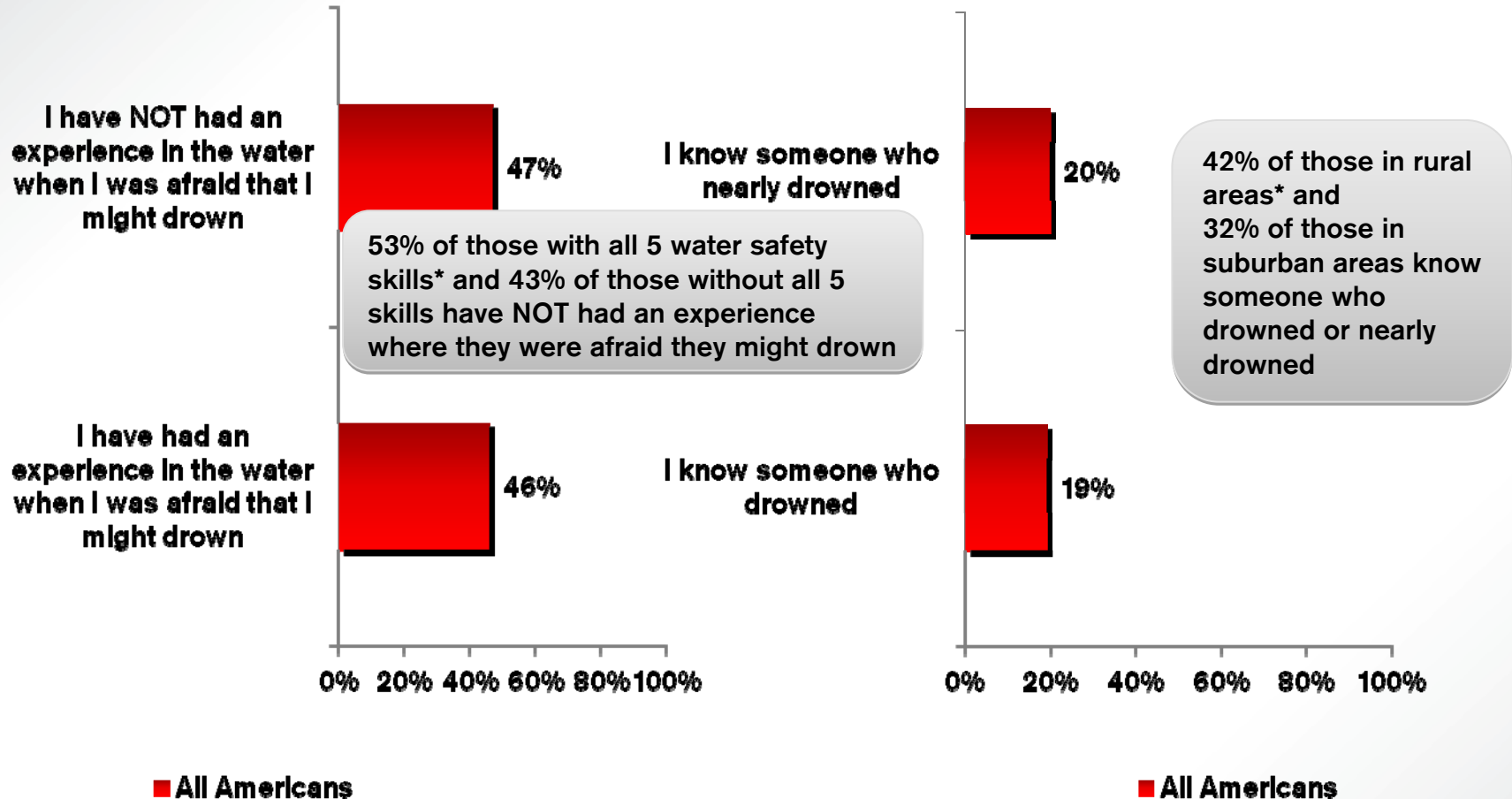
**35% of parents expect their children to swim in a place that has NO lifeguard.**

*Q9: Which, if any, of the following water activities do you expect your [OLDEST/YOUNGEST] child between the ages of 4 and 17 to participate in this summer?  
Base: 201 parents of children aged 4-17*



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# Near-drowning danger hits close to home for many Americans.



Q10: Have you ever had an experience in the water when you were afraid that you might drown?

Q11: Do you happen to know anyone who drowned or nearly drowned?



### Subgroup Breakouts for Drowning Questions

#### Location:

- Westerners are significantly more likely than those in the Midwest to report that they have had an experience in the water when they were afraid they might drown (51% vs. 39%), while Southerners are more likely than Westerners to report that they know someone who nearly drowned (23% vs. 14%).
- Those in rural areas are significantly more likely than those in urban or suburban areas to have known someone who has drowned (25% in rural vs 18% suburban and 14% urban).

#### Ethnicity:

- African Americans are significantly more likely than whites to report knowing someone who drowned or nearly drowned (51% vs. 32%).

#### Age:

- Near-drowning experiences are significantly more common among those aged 18-24 (56%) and 25-34 (59%) compared to those 45-54 (38%), 55-64 (36%), and 65+ (41%).
- Younger Americans (those aged 18-24) are significantly more likely than those in any other age group to report that they know someone who nearly drowned (36% vs. 22% of 25-34, 14% of 35-44, 22% of 45-54, 12% of 55-64, and 15% of 65+).

Q10: *Have you ever had an experience in the water when you were afraid that you might drown?*

Q11: *Do you happen to know anyone who drowned or nearly drowned?*

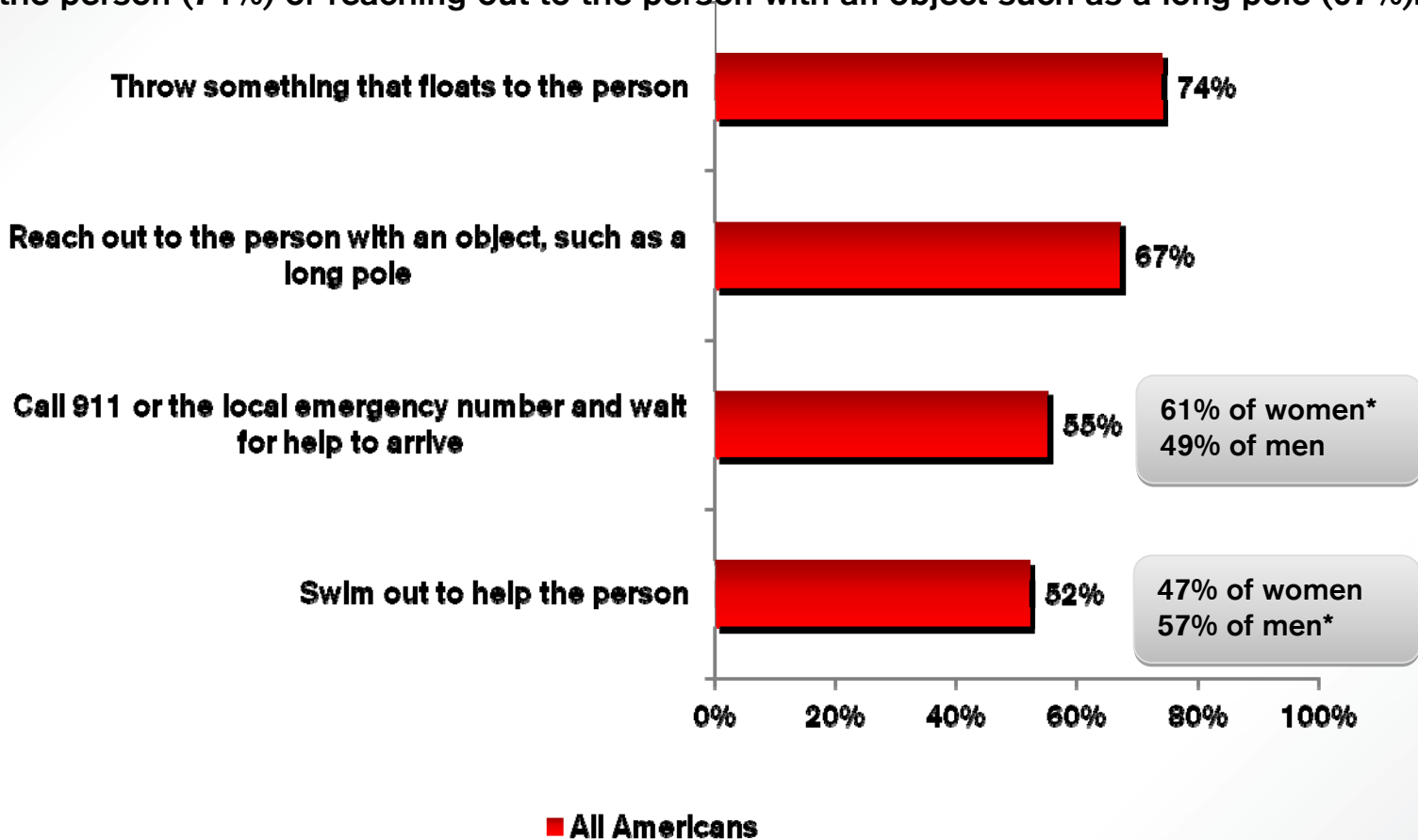


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## More than half would do the wrong thing if someone was in trouble in the water.

- If someone was in trouble in the water, 52% would swim out to help the person, unintentionally putting themselves in danger.
- The majority of people would take appropriate steps, such as throwing something that floats to the person (74%) or reaching out to the person with an object such as a long pole (67%).



Q12: If someone was in trouble in the water, which, if any, of the following would you do?



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