



STUDENT HANDBOOK



“There is nothing like the assurance that comes from watching your children perform the skills that could one day save their lives!”

MELISSA B. (PARENT OF 3-YEAR-OLD ISABEL
AND 18-MONTH OLD HARRIS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ten Reasons You Will Love Swim Guru | 5

Choosing a Swim Program for your Child | 6

CHILD INFORMATION | 13

Getting Started | 14

Setting up a Profile, Purchasing and Booking Lessons | 16

Information For Parents Considering Lessons | 18

Continuing Lessons | 20

Flotation Devices | 23

Swimming With Your Child Outside of Lessons | 27

ADULT INFORMATION | 44

Getting Started | 45

Setting up a Profile, Purchasing and Booking Lessons | 46

Important Information to Know | 47

POLICIES & PROCEDURES | 48

Pool Protocols for LA Fitness | 49

Scheduling Assistance | 50

Cancellation Policy | 51

Snow Policy | 52



TEN REASONS YOU WILL LOVE SWIM GURU

- 1 WE ARE HIGHLY TRAINED!**

Experienced instructors receive extensive in-water training and classroom work. Additional topics cover childhood developmental stages, behavioral psychology, and anatomy and physiology. All coaches have training specific to infants and toddlers under the age of 3 and offer accelerated methods appropriate for any age.
- 2 WE ARE LED BY INDUSTRY EXPERTS!**

With over 25 years in aquatics and a background in survival swimming, our owner has crafted a curriculum specific to the Seattle market. Our focus starts with "learning to swim for safety and survival." Our SwimGuru coaches have given tens of thousands of safe lessons and are associated with the premier aquatic training and water safety organization, Starfish Aquatics, International (SAI). We also have our own clinical psychologist on staff!
- 3 WE ARE CAREER INSTRUCTORS!**

Our instructors are mature adults, not kids. Each coach has a diverse background in aquatics and relatable skills.
- 4 WE CAN RESOLVE ANY ISSUE AROUND LEARNING TO SWIM!**

We know exactly what to do in any situation.
- 5 WE GIVE STUDENT DIRECTED LESSONS!**

We focus on – and adapt to – each student's unique needs.
- 6 WE HAVE INDOOR POOLS AND OFFER LESSONS YEAR-ROUND.**

Indoors and heated provide the best learning environment.
- 7 WE BELIEVE PRIVATE LESSONS ARE THE BEST CHOICE AND YIELD THE BEST RESULTS.**

Brand new swimmer? Private lessons help students advance faster than conventional group lessons. Once independently swimming in any depth of water, swimmers can choose to participate in semi-private or small group lessons for further development.
- 8 WE LOVE TO COACH OTHERS ON HOW TO SWIM!**

We love to teach and are passionate about water safety. Let us teach you how to work with your child safely in the water to keep their skills intact!
- 9 WE ARE LIFEGUARD CERTIFIED.**

Enough said.
- 10 WE MAKE SWIMMING LESSONS FUN!**

We understand how to blend enjoyment with skill development which results in a positive experience and an efficient lesson. Come and observe lessons in progress today!



CHOOSING A SWIM PROGRAM FOR YOUR CHILD

10 FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- 1 WHAT IS MY CHILD'S RISK FACTOR?** If you live on the water, have a pool, own a boat, are planning a vacation around the water, or enjoy swimming frequently as a family, then teaching your child sooner rather than later is safer! All children are at risk of drowning until they can be independent and confident in any depth of water.
- 2 WHAT TYPE OF PROGRAM SHOULD I CHOOSE?** Parents often don't realize the variety of options they have when it comes time to teach their child to swim. Most private or public swim schools do not teach independent swimming or floating until a child is 3 years old. Between the ages of 6 months – 3 years old, children are usually directed to try a group water acclimation class. These courses are designed to encourage babies and toddlers to explore the water with their caregiver under an instructor's supervision. These types of programs teach caregivers water safety tips in a playgroup setting. The result is a child who craves water play yet has no skill that could help them if they are in the water unassisted. Depending on the facility, group lessons can begin when kids are 2-3 years old. Children enter a program with 4–6 other students and one instructor. Private lessons may be offered, but the focus is usually on building up groups of kids as it is more cost effective and profitable. Parents are required to enter their child into some type of system where the child progresses through different levels. Often children get stuck in the same level and the lack of progress can be frustrating. Monthly membership charges may be required.

WHAT CLASS IS RIGHT FOR MY TODDLER?

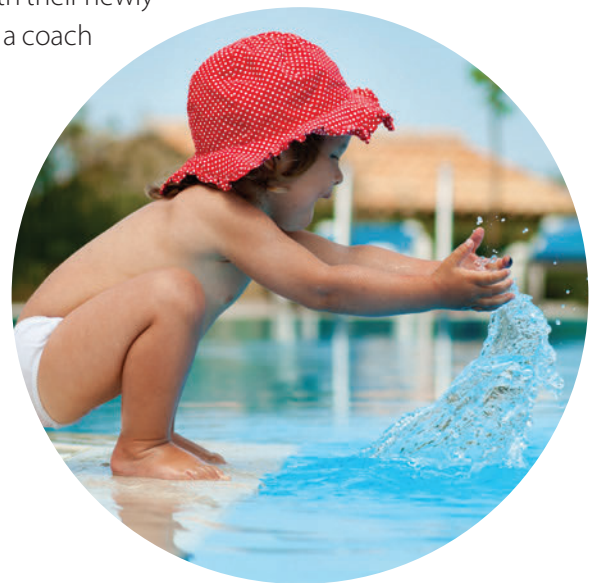
SwimGuru offers a course for children under three called SwimTots. This class offers caregivers lots of play and fun, but we also add learn-to-swim skills! When you and your young child are ready, we can teach you how to introduce submersion, back-floats, and short swims underwater. Students develop trust and acclimate to the water faster with the help of a loving caregiver. Caregivers enjoy the pace they choose for their child, with options to opt in or out of the skill being presented. Once babies and toddlers have participated in a SwimTots class the next step is to build on the progression learned with the caregiver in a continuing SwimTots class or enter the child into Private Lessons. Private Lessons can begin at SwimGuru as soon as a baby begins to crawl. If a parent does not begin with our SwimTots program, babies can be taught to back-float independently in any depth of water in private lessons. Once a baby begins to walk, they can learn to swim, roll to their back to breathe, then flip back over and swim again. This sequence of skills sets up a foundation of correct posture and independence and is the core of everything we teach at SwimGuru. 90% of the lessons at SwimGuru are private lessons. Private lessons are available to all ages.

HOW DOES SWIMGURU TEACH?

Each student has unique needs, and instructors provide only student directed lessons. Each student shows our instructor what they know and do not know, and we begin the process of blending what is known with the unknown. At any age, our patient instructors can help you or your child become independent and safe in the water. The average amount of time it takes to learn to swim independently is approximately 6-8 hours. Learning how to swim and float is a critical foundation for any age student to become independent and confident in any depth of water. All students must learn to do this prior to stroke development. Learning to swim confidently requires practicing the basics of swimming and floating first.

Play N' Practice Lessons are offered to SwimGuru children under 3 who have already been through their initial package of lessons and are now swimming independently. It is the perfect place for caregivers to practice with their newly minted swimmers! A play group setting where a coach helps you help your child master skills.

Semi-Private Lessons are offered to children who have completed their initial package of lessons and are swimming confidently. A great way to join a friend for 30 minutes! Parents are responsible for finding the partner for their child. Then each child schedules back to back 15 minute appointments for a 30 minute class.





Does your child know what to do in an accidental fall into the water?

The first thing they should know how to do is hold their breath, open their eyes, and look for the closest exit under the water.

Group Lessons & Swim Team Prep are offered to children age 5 and older who are ready to learn their competitive strokes. Ratio is 4 students to one Coach. Your private lesson coach will let you know when your child is ready.

3 WHAT IF MY CHILD DOES NOT LIKE TO GET THEIR FACE WET? Parents often protect their child from water on their face or eyes as soon as they begin to bathe them. The best thing a parent can do to prevent intolerance for water in the face is to expose your child to water over their head at bath time. Protecting a child from water on their face and in their eyes will make it very difficult for them to learn to swim. Did you know the older the child, the more resistant they become to submersion and opening their eyes to see underwater? Babies and toddlers will immediately open their eyes underwater as they collect vital information to help them make sense of their environment. More importantly, if you or your child fell in the water, the first thing you should know how to do is hold your breath, open your eyes, then look for the closest exit under the water. Learning to swim and survive an accidental fall into the water is a priority at any age. SwimGuru instructors are experts at helping your child learn to safely submerge. SwimGuru highly recommends parents or caregivers get in the water with their coach to help their child develop trust in submersion. Plan on getting in the water with us initially until your child becomes more comfortable. Our gentle approach to submersion will melt away a child's anxiety over water in their face quickly.

4 WHAT IF MY CHILD DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO HOLD HIS BREATH? Breath control can be taught in the bathtub at a very young age. A parent can begin by pouring water over a baby's head. The baby will be surprised at first and will protest a bit until they are used to it. If a child sniffs the water, while trying to put their face in water, the epiglottis in the back of the throat sensing something other than air will automatically close off to keep any liquid from entering the lungs. This sudden response can cause coughing and sputtering initially. This reflexive action is not your child "breathing" the water, but the opposite. Think of how hard it is for you to swallow down the wrong pipe! With additional practice a child will begin to recognize that water currents are the cue to hold their breath. Reward with lots of praise and high fives! A young child will be startled at first, but once they begin to tolerate it in the bath, submersion in the pool will not be as much of an issue. Parents who protect their child from getting their face wet can expect them to resist putting their face in the water at swim lessons. Parents also want to know if they can teach their child to hold their breath by blowing in their face before submersion. When air is felt directly in this manner on the face a reflexive action is to stop respiration for a moment. This is not a skill that is taught but simply a reflex that has nothing to do with breath holding. Ask yourself if your child were to fall in the water unsupervised, who would be there to blow in their face first? The goal is for your child to learn breath holding because of the stimulus of seeing then feeling the water, not air.

5 WHAT IF MY CHILD IS HESITANT AND CRIES DURING LESSONS? This is a very typical reaction of any child at any age who does not know what to do in the water. If your child is still non-verbal, their cry of protest means, "Hey! I don't know what to do, I don't have any skills, and this is challenging!" In addition, Babies & Toddlers experience separation anxiety and can begin to fuss even when the instructor is just holding them for the first time. An older child who is uncomfortable will express themselves verbally with many reasons why they should not have to do what the instructor may be asking. They may say they are afraid, they get water up their nose, they can't see, they don't know how to hold their breath, etc. The solution is to find an instructor that can help your child through the process of learning to submerge and swim and who understands how children learn these skills, all while honoring their emotions. All children who have not learned how to hold their breath and submerge will be very anxious until they are exposed to the experience. The only way to gain this experience is to submerge safely under an instructor's supervision so that each attempt is successful. Learning to swim requires learning how to balance on top of the water, then how to propel yourself face down in the water. An understanding of how to teach these skills is our expertise at SwimGuru. Anxiety is usually prevalent with any unskilled student. Fear can also be a learned behavior outside of the water. A history of being told it is not safe to go into the deep end or being told to stay away from the pool will result in a learned fear of the water. The solution to fear and anxiety is skills to solve the problem you are facing. Learning the skill of how to swim will ease anxiety and help overcome fear of the water.

6 I WOULD LIKE MY CHILD TO LEARN TO SWIM AND I DON'T WANT HIM TO BE UNHAPPY. A happy child in the water, who is unskilled, is not a safe child. A lot of parents are very surprised that a child who is happy in flotation devices, happy jumping in and getting caught by mom or dad, happy in the bath tub or play time at the pool, suddenly turns unhappy when they begin the actual process of learning to swim. Any time a child tries something for the first time that is out of their current comfort zone (such as submersion) they are usually resistant to try it a second time. Imagine if your child were learning how to ride a bike. They try and achieve balance and then fall off the bike. They will most likely be unhappy about the challenge. Then, with each attempt they get better at balance. It is the same for a child learning to swim. A new swimmer must learn how to hold their breath and balance on top of the water. Experience is the primary teacher in learning a new sensory motor skill such as swimming. Children who are unskilled are usually unhappy in the water to some degree until they know how to take care of themselves. An instructor who understands motor learning can safely help your child navigate the process from unskilled to skilled in the water. A child who is effective in any depth of water and can problem solve independently is a very happy child! Choosing the type of program that best fits your family's needs is crucial to this process. Observing lessons in progress with your child will go a long way to a successful experience with your brand-new swimmer. Taking the time to educate yourself about how a child learns to swim will help you learn how to best support your child in a loving empathetic nature. This will prepare you for the statement of "I don't like this, and I don't want to put my face in the water." Always discuss your concerns with your instructor so that they can develop a lesson plan that works best for your expectations and your child's comfort. Parents should be aware that their good-natured child will react strongly in their initial lessons if they have not had any experience or a bad experience. Once the child is skilled, they will be much happier!



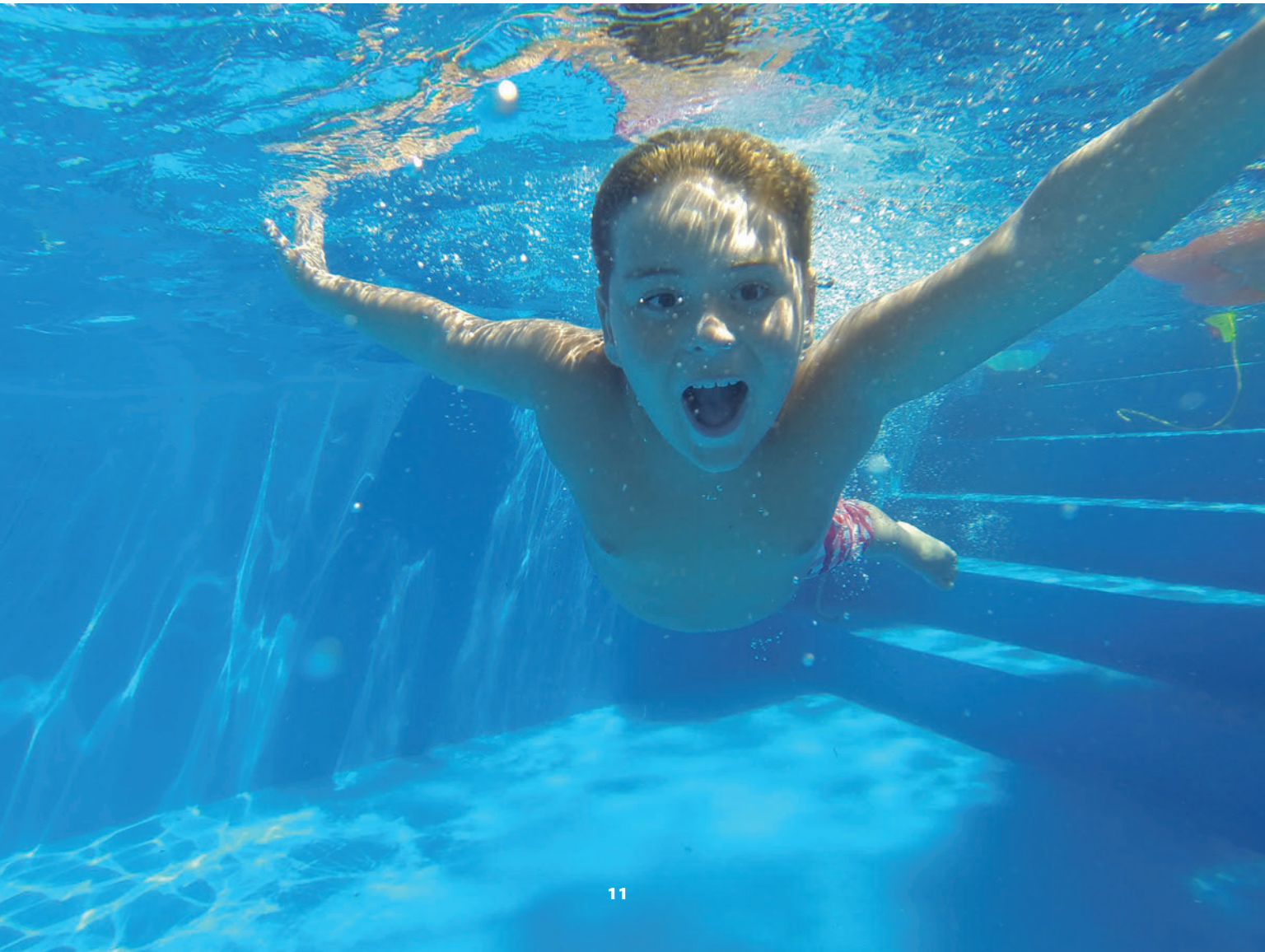
7 WHAT IF MY CHILD IS ADDICTED TO GOGGLES? Parents often want to help their child become more comfortable by purchasing goggles. Most young children do not tolerate goggles on their face. Babies and Toddlers sense the air or water with their eyes as well as their skin. They often get confused about breath holding and tend to feel claustrophobic, or don't like the pressure of wearing goggles. Older children who have been trained to become accustomed to goggles often refuse to swim without them. We encourage all our students to become comfortable with water in their face and eyes as soon as possible. If a child ever experiences an accident, they will not have goggles on. As instructors, we often see children who are addicted to goggles become very upset when their goggles leak, fall off, get foggy, are too tight or they fall into the pool. If an instructor is not careful, a savvy child will make goggles a reason to not have to swim. We have observed children panic and refuse to swim even though they know how! We encourage all our students to look under the water without goggles and be able to open their eyes so they can see where they are going. It is upsetting for a child to close their eyes underwater and have no idea how to swim and get to safety due to being blind

and disoriented. When a student is first learning to open their eyes, they will feel the water pressure and may react as if they are in pain. The difference between water and air is the weight, and if pool chemicals are in balance there should be no irritation for a short time in a lesson. Chlorine does not affect whether the eyes are irritated, it is the PH of the water. Once a student has demonstrated they are able to open their eyes underwater then they can wear goggles as determined necessary by the instructor. Goggles are quite useful for a variety of reasons, ask your instructor what is appropriate.

8

SHOULD I WAIT IF MY CHILD HAS HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE IN THE WATER?

Educating your instructor about your child's situation is very important. The more details you can provide the better chance of your instructor helping your child overcome their experience. Waiting until a child is older to start lessons will only create more anxiety and upset around learning to swim. Nothing will change by waiting. Consult an instructor who understands how to identify and deal with trauma, or other reasons surrounding a bad experience. Children who are younger will not even remember learning to swim, whereas the older child will remember.



9 MY CHILD TRIED SWIM LESSONS AND IT DID NOT GO WELL, WHAT CAN BE DONE? There are many reasons children fail at swim lessons. Plan on giving your instructor details on how the lessons were taught, what if any skill was accomplished, and what you perceive the problem to have been. Your instructor can discuss an appropriate lesson plan to help your child get to the next level in their swim development and suggest any necessary remedial work to correct bad habits.

10 HOW MANY LESSONS WILL IT TAKE FOR MY CHILD TO LEARN TO SWIM? There are many variables in learning to swim and no program can guarantee that your child will learn in a certain amount of time. Consider that if you choose private lessons for your child, they will learn at a much faster rate than group lessons. It is also important to schedule as many lessons as your schedule will allow close together. This will help speed up the learning process and create a higher retention rate of the skill. SwimGuru students learn to swim on average in approximately 6-8 hours of instruction.

Your due diligence as a parent when choosing a program that is right for your family is so important! Take the time to educate yourself, carve out the necessary time needed to accomplish the goal of learning to swim, and then plan on taking your new swimmer swimming! Repetition, practice and being a good role model will make your child a successful swimmer in no time!



1

**CHILD
INFORMATION**

An underwater photograph of a young child with light hair, smiling and swimming in a pool. The child is wearing colorful swim trunks. The water is clear blue, and there are many bubbles around the child. The background shows the tiled bottom of the pool.

GETTING STARTED

CHILD

- 1. Please read Ten factors to Consider When Choosing a Swim Program.**
- 2. Please come and observe students in lessons (with or without your child) before you begin their own lessons.** This will help you determine if we are a good fit for your family.
- 3. Once you purchase your New Student package, schedule ALL lessons.** If you cannot schedule 2x's per week, contact support for help or exceptions.
- 4. Review 24-hour cancellation policy also in this Handbook**
- 5. Digitally sign your liability release and waiver prior to your first lesson day.** Please do not bring signed waivers to the pool.
- 6. Please be prepared to get in the water with your child and instructor for the first few lessons.** This will be especially important if your child has never been in the water, is shy, is upset, or for any reason they are unhappy. Caregivers other than the parent are welcome! Be prepared to participate in the water in the future as determined by your instructor. Children are often fussy their first few lessons and this will help them feel more comfortable with the process. Once your child is independently swimming, we will also train you how to work with them on your own.
- 7. Please do not allow your child to eat or drink anything for 2 hours prior to lessons.** When younger children are learning breath control, they may swallow their air and then burp. If there are contents in the stomach, they could potentially get a stomach ache or they could spit up.

- 8. All children still in diapers must wear a disposable swim diaper (not a regular diaper) with a second swim pant that is snug at the thighs and waist.** There is a \$200 sanitation fee for poop in the pool. Please check your child's swim diaper *before* you hand them to the instructor for their lesson. All lessons are cancelled and the pool is closed for cleaning if diaper leakage occurs due to a bowel movement.
- 9. Arrive for your lesson at least 10 minutes prior to the start time.** This allows your child to change, use the restroom, relax, and be fitted for their wetsuit. Students should use the restroom before the lesson begins. Please tell your potty-trained child no restroom break once they are in the water. Lessons start on time and will be cut short if the parent arrives late. All students 7 years and younger will receive a wetsuit and goggles. Please come early so we can properly fit your child.
- 10. Please use the locker rooms or tents provided to change your child before or after lessons.** Please refrain from changing your child on the pool deck before or after the lesson.
- 11. Please do not leave any soiled diaper in the trash can.** Our lessons are held in a retail dive shop and a sports club. Help us avoid complaints by bringing an extra bag to take messy diapers home and throw away.
- 12. Please discuss any medical issue or concern about your child with Coach Carol prior to their first lesson.** We have experience teaching students with special needs and are happy to discuss whatever accommodation is necessary for your child. Please email coachcarol@swim.guru to discuss special accommodations. Coach Carol must approve all lessons with any special needs or considerations. A Doctor's note may be required.
- 13. Please add SwimGuru to your contact list.** We use email newsletters and Mindbody notifications to communicate important information about lesson booking, cancellation, confirmation and reminders. Please be sure you are receiving these messages by adding us to your email contacts and checking the box to receive our quarterly newsletter. If you are not receiving email correspondence from us, please email support@swim.guru.

Here is an example of a disposable swim diaper and a reusable swim diaper. Remember your non-potty trained child **must** wear both!



All students under 7 years old will receive a wetsuit and goggles their first lesson



SETTING UP A PROFILE, PURCHASING AND BOOKING LESSONS

1. **Create an account for each student who will be taking lessons.** Each child must have an account under their own name, and each child's account must have its own unique email address. We recommend setting up an account on a laptop or desktop computer, as it will be the easiest way. Then see additional instructions below to download our App for your smart phone.
2. **Digitally sign the [liability release and waiver](#) prior to your first lesson day.**
3. **Please read the pool protocols for our LA Fitness locations on [page 49](#)**
4. **As a new client you have access to our scheduling assistance service at no extra cost as it is built into your "New Child" package.** This means we will help you book your first package of lessons at no extra cost and train you on the self-serve booking system. We offer scheduling assistance appointments Monday through Friday. We will offer expanded scheduling service appointments during the release of a new schedule. If you would like to know appointment availability or sign up for scheduling assistance, please email support@swim.guru
5. **Do a search for availability *before* purchasing or simply understand that you may not be able to start lessons immediately at the time you require.** You can check schedule availability on the Scheduling Tab anytime on our website at www.swim.guru or on our mobile app.
6. **Lessons can be booked at any pool location.** Please pay attention to this detail so you know what pool you need to arrive at for each lesson. Liability waiver must be signed for all locations.
7. **The "Appointment Type" is always the same as the lesson package.** For example: New Child lessons use the New Child appointment type. Continue to use this appointment type until all credits are used up or you will erroneously be prompted to purchase more lessons.
8. **Choose 15-min (best) or 30-min for length.** Do not use "All." 30 minute lessons require prior approval from coaches for children.
9. **Select "Choose your own dates" and when the calendar function opens, select one month at a time.** The system is only able to show information this way if you are viewing 1 month or more.
10. **Purchase the age appropriate New Child package or New Adult package and immediately thereafter book ALL the possible lessons online.** We fill up quickly so waiting until later to book is risky. The longer you wait, the less you will have to choose from. Plan on spending some uninterrupted time initially to schedule. If the schedule is not extended past the month you are booking, stay tuned to our newsletter so you will know when to jump in and book all remaining lessons in the New Student package.
11. **New students with little to no prior swimming experience must try and book twice (or more) per week.** It is especially important for new students to book lessons as often and as early as possible so they don't lose lesson opportunities as the schedule fills up.
12. **If you are enrolling multiple children,** please set up each profile with a different email address and password, then email support@swimguru.com to coordinate scheduling for all students.
13. **Booking Last Minute Lessons (LMLs):** Please check for LMLs using the scheduling site by accessing it from your computer or mobile phone using the SwimGuru App. Schedule system is live 24/7. Search for future lessons anytime (set your date range).



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS CONSIDERING LESSONS

- 1. Our private lessons are more accelerated than most lessons with other swim school.** If you are considering lessons for your children it is important you are comfortable with our approach. Please come and observe anytime Monday–Thursday from 9:30am–6:00pm or call for lesson times offered at our Seattle LA Fitness (SLF) and Mukilteo LA Fitness (MLF) locations as schedules vary. Bring your child, check out the facilities, and meet the coaches! It is best to watch more than one lesson.
- 2. All students should begin with 15-minute lessons.** Children 4 or older must have additional approval from SwimGuru staff to take a 30-minute lesson initially. Children need to be assessed by their coach on a case-by-case basis for approval to move from a 15-minute to a 30-minute lesson.
- 3. Once you purchase your lesson package you will have 18 months to complete all lessons before the lesson credits expire.** Be aware of our 24-hour cancellation policy. You may cancel and reschedule any lesson as needed prior to 24 hours.
- 4. All spots are first come first serve and usually fill 2-4 months in advance.** After school and late afternoon and weekend hours are the first to go!
- 5. Group lessons cannot be rescheduled and are non-refundable.** All group lesson students must be approved by Coach Teigan and Coach Emma. Email them at coachteigan@swim.guru or coachemma@swim.guru for additional information or to schedule an assessment.
- 6. SwimTots group lessons cannot be rescheduled and are non-refundable.** Please email Coach Carol for additional information about SwimTots classes at coachcarol@swim.guru
- 7. We have a customized SwimGuru smartphone or computer app.** Once you create your account and purchase a lesson package in our scheduling system, download the App. It is called SwimGuru, Inc. and is available through Apple or Google (Keep in mind when searching that SwimGuru is one word, not two!). Use the same login credentials you used when creating the student’s account. This is a great way to stay on top of your account and look for last minute lessons (LML) once you become a client. Use your specific student login information to access multiple accounts.
- 8. All SwimGuru employees are dedicated to helping your children learn to swim.** In many cases, this can be a difficult process for your child so your patience and understanding are required as we help your child work through their anxiety. Parents are encouraged to communicate with us about their child’s learning process. Parents are required to honor their coach’s time by keeping their scheduled appointments as much as possible. Any parent who is dissatisfied should immediately contact us in writing to schedule a time to discuss the situation. Any parent who is discourteous with any staff member will be asked to leave the program. Any parent that misses more than 4 lessons in a row without canceling ahead of time may be asked to cancel all remaining lessons and rebook at a time that they can fully commit to the program.



- 9. The clothes test assessment.** This experience is a milestone for our new swimmers! Once a child is swimming and floating and has developed water-related problem solving skills, we give them the opportunity to swim in their clothes. All ages participate. It is a way to experience what an accidental fall into the water might feel like, recreated in a safe, non-threatening environment. Students dress as if camping at a lake in chilly weather. Pants, shirt, shoes, coat, (swimsuit underneath) and without goggles. Students experience extra resistance and problem solving under the careful guidance of their coach. Once they have demonstrated proficiency, they are rewarded with a SwimGuru t-shirt! Congratulations! Your coach will let you know when your child is ready for this assessment.



An underwater photograph of several children in a swimming pool. They are wearing blue swimming goggles and are looking towards the camera. The water is clear and blue, with light reflecting off the surface. The children are in various poses, some with their hands near their faces.

CONTINUING LESSONS

WHAT'S NEXT

SWIMGURU CONTINUING LESSON STUDENTS (CHILD AND ADULT)

Once you or your child have completed the Private Lesson Introductory Package, several different options are available.

CONTINUING LESSONS

SwimGuru students are invited to continue their practice and refine skills that may not have been mastered within the first package of lessons. Our coaches can recommend what's next at any point in a student's lesson package and help you develop a plan to continue that is right for your situation. Overall, it is recommended that students drop down to lessons once a week or a few times a month, once they have passed their clothes assessment and are swimming and floating confidently. Most of our students come once or twice a week for further development in a private lesson. As soon as swimmers are ready, regardless of where they are in their lesson package, we teach snorkeling and begin stroke work. Students will be taught competitive

strokes and everything that goes with competitive swimming if desired. Students will be taught to dive (Underwater Sports location only) and tread water.

Continuing Lesson credits can be purchased in any amount and booked at any location.

REFRESHER LESSONS

If students take a break from regular swimming lessons, plan on 1–2 hours of lessons for every 6 months out of the water as a refresher. It is important to realize that young children, who are growing quickly, need to adjust to their new swimming lessons to their new body size and cognitive development regularly. Purchase Continuing Lesson credits and book when ready.

PLAY N' PRACTICE

What's next after your child finishes their Introductory Package? Play N' Practice! This class is the perfect solution for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers who are learning to love the water! Our younger swimmers (18–48 months) thrive on splashing about with their parent or caregiver. This class emphasizes comfort and enjoyment in a playgroup setting. Come and explore with us and meet new swim friends! Toys, floats, problem solving, practicing skills, and lots of giggles!

SEMI-PRIVATE LESSONS

- Coach approval required for all partnerships.
- Purchase the Continuing Student Semi-Private \$40, 30-minute lesson credit. This appears as a 15-minute credit and is required to be booked back to back with another participants credit to create a 30-minute lesson window.
- Each student who is participating in the lesson should book a Semi-Private Lesson, 30-minute credit, back to back, at the desired time. If both students do not book together, we cannot guarantee both times, as all appointments are first-come, first-served. Both students booking the semi-private lesson will automatically receive a 30-minute lesson.
- In the note section of the appointment, state that the lesson is a semi-private lesson with the adjoining student. This way your coach will know to combine the two students.
- Review the cancellation policy. If one partner needs to cancel you can also cancel and rebook the spot with a regular continuing student 15-minute lesson credit for \$30 or a half hour lesson for \$60.
- Early Cancelled Semi-Private lessons will go back into your child's account to be rebooked later.
- If you would like scheduling assistance booking your semi-private lessons, there is a small service fee of \$25 per scheduling session. Please email Customer Service Manager, Molly Underwood to set up a phone appointment: support@swim.guru

CONTINUING STUDENT OPTIONS: PRIVATE OR GROUP LESSONS

Our group lessons are for SwimGuru students who have finished their Private Lesson Introductory Package and are swimming and floating confidently with or without goggles. We begin group lessons at the age of five. Your child's coach will recommend when to consider group lessons. We offer classes at 3 different skill levels.

- **Level One:** This group is for SwimGuru private lesson graduates or students from other programs who are 5 years old or older. Students must be able to swim and float independently without assistance in any depth of water. Focus is on beginning stroke development and fun in a group setting! Students will learn proper body alignment and all the concepts needed for a strong foundation of the four competitive strokes: free-style, backstroke, butterfly, and breaststroke. This class is perfect for students who need to build confidence and endurance. The class



ratio is 4 students to 1 coach and lasts 30 minutes. A coach recommendation or assessment is required to join this class.

- **Level Two:** This group is for SwimGuru Level 1 graduates or students from other programs that can swim a freestyle stroke with a side-glide or a side-breath and backstroke for 25 yards. The focus is on refinement of freestyle and backstroke and introduction to butterfly and breaststroke. The class ratio is 4 students to 1 coach and lasts 30-minutes. A coach recommendation or assessment is required to join this class.
- **Level 3:** This group is for SwimGuru Level 2 graduates or students from other programs that can easily swim freestyle with proper air exchange and backstroke for 25 yards. Students in this class ready to master butterfly and breaststroke. Dolphin kicks, flip turns, and proper starts will be introduced. The class ratio is 4 students to 1 coach and lasts 30-minutes. A coach recommendation or assessment is required to join this class.

SWIM TEAM PREP (STP)

Swim Team Prep is specifically designed for our most advanced swimmers, 6 years or older. This program is for SwimGuru Level 3 graduates and all others who are highly experienced, or are already involved with competitive swimming. The goals of this course are to refine and maximize your student's strokes, build endurance and give the feeling of being on a swim team in a non-competitive environment. The curriculum focuses on drills and skills to improve all four competitive strokes, flip turn and racing start mechanics, reading workouts and the pace clock, and swim team basics. All curriculum will be geared toward U.S.A. Swimming guidelines, which are currently used in competitive swimming nation-wide. This is an invitation only class. Swimmers must have a working knowledge of all four strokes (butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle), though they need not be perfect to join. Students should have ability to take direction from a coach on the deck and not in the water.

If a student is joining us from another swim school, they must be independent in any depth of water and an assessment will be required. Please email customer service at support@swim.guru to set up a scheduling appointment.





FLOTATION DEVICES

SHOULD I, OR SHOULDN'T I?

Many parents use flotation devices to help their unskilled child get accustomed to the water. Water wings, puddle jumpers, innertubes, lifejackets, built-in flotation in swimsuits, pool noodles, and the like are all designed to help a user experience positive buoyancy. Parents often depend on these items so they don't have to get in the water.

Flotation keeps the child independently supported in a vertical posture with their head out of the water. However, for an unskilled student, this posture puts them at great risk when they are not using flotation devices. Young children at play who wear flotation and/or are taught to jump into the water and get caught by a parent or caregiver do not learn to trust themselves, but someone or something else. What would a student do if they accidentally fell into the water where they could not touch the bottom? They would attempt to go vertical because that is the first thing they were taught to do with flotation; then they would sink. Even if a child could touch the bottom, it is unlikely they could stand up when under the water since their dependency on flotation has already taught them it is not necessary to do anything but wait to pop back up to the surface to breathe.

Proprioception, as it applies to swimming, is the sense of your body's position in the aquatic environment. It is what allows you to balance on top of the water without

consciously thinking about every adjustment and muscle movement. Your brain keeps careful track of the location of every muscle and joint in your body. Your body is aware of exactly where every extremity is in space, because each muscle, tendon, ligament and joint sends thousands of nerve fibers back to the brain through the spinal cord. Then those nerve fibers signal the body to make muscle contractions, relaxation, muscular tone, orientation, position and movement at every moment. Flotation devices send conflicting signals to the brain and interrupt the body's ability to learn the new motor skill of balance on top of the water.

Consider the Anatomy of a small child between the ages of 6 months–6 years old. Physically, the growth of a child happens from the trunk of the body outward. The younger the child the more compact. The head is large, the trunk of the body is large, and arms and legs begin to elongate outward as a child grows. A simple exercise is to hold your arms up in the air then have your child hold their arms up in the air. You will see a significant difference! If a toddler cannot even reach a few inches over their head, how could they possibly hold onto the side of a pool wall where the deck is six or more inches above their head? The ability to get your arms out of the water as you are swimming is also not available at this point in a child's development. The solution is to teach them to float on their back for safety and security. A small child's strength is mostly in their legs. Arm strength and ability to bring them out of the water catches up later. A child's head is a significant portion of their overall weight. If a two-year-old child weighs 25 pounds, and their head weighs 3-5 pounds, trying to keep up to 20% of their body weight above the water will cause them to sink if they are in a vertical posture without the aid of flotation. Imagine if you attempted to hold even 10% of your own body weight out of the water. Physics are against you! Given the physical limitations of young children, it is safest to teach a child to swim with their face in the water, then roll back to float for air when needed. The back-float posture is the key to survival for any student in the water who is too young to learn to tread water. Swimming in a face-down position, then rolling onto the back and floating for air and recovery is the foundation of all swimming. Future stroke development for any age student begins

with the proper head position and horizontal balance. A back-float position is a very easy posture for a young child to learn. All children up until the age of 4-5 years old are buoyant in a back-float position. Buoyancy is the combination of body fat, bone density, and muscle mass. As a child grows, the muscle mass and bone density increase at which point propulsion is needed to stay on top of the water. Heredity is also a part of overall buoyancy. As an adult, if you are a sinker, it is not your fault, you just need to be propulsive.

Flotation devices interrupt the process of swimming and floating at the motor level. The initial learning process that occurs at the motor level when a child wears flotation becomes hardwired in a student's muscles and memory. It is a difficult process to overcome initially learned bad habits and often a child will result back to these earlier positions in a time of panic. The folks who built balance bikes as

It is required by law to wear a life jacket on a boat, and we suggest using a life jacket for safety wherever there is a risk of falling in the water.



an option to using training wheels understand this. The folks who teach kids how to ski understand how to teach balance first. A successful golf swing is a motor process. When a student uses flotation, they associate air, security, and visual and auditory stimulation by a parent or friend when they are in a vertical posture. They can practice bicycling around the pool without using their arms, while keeping their head above the water, unfortunately it hinders the process of learning to swim.

The developmental stage of a young child is also a consideration. A very young child will not associate that the reason they are above the water is due to the flotation device. While wearing something that seems as harmless as water wings, a child will become overconfident, resistant to submersion, and it will take a lot longer to teach them to swim. The risk of them jumping in unsupervised is tripled due to their expectation that water is fun even though they do not yet have the skill to swim independently. A young child cannot connect that the reason they are above the water is because of the flotation device.



SwimGuru provides younger students with wetsuits that increase the margin of their buoyancy in addition to providing extra warmth. We find it helps students become more confident in their abilities as they are learning, and often accelerates the learning process. Your trained SwimGuru instructor will use the wetsuit as a tool to help your child become more comfortable swimming face down and floating on their back. We will also teach your child to adjust to swimming without a wetsuit, as well as how to safely interact with all floatable pool toys such as noodles, mats, rafts, etc.

A child who is taught to grab something that floats can quickly get stuck on the device without the problem-solving abilities to self-rescue.

Once a child is trained to be independent in any depth of water without the need for flotation, putting them back into flotation devices such as water wings, can put their newly acquired skills at risk. Your child's safety is the most important thing, and it is of course your personal choice.

The bottom line: Our advice is recognizing that using flotation will interfere with your child's training and will require remediation after using. If your child is new to swimming, it will always increase the number of lessons required to become independent in any depth of water.





SWIMMING WITH YOUR CHILD OUTSIDE OF LESSONS

Swimming with your child has many benefits, both physically and emotionally. Learning to swim is challenging. Your new swimmer will become happy and confident in their skills with additional practice, sprinkled with lots of play! Once you are ready to take your child swimming on your own, your SwimGuru coach will teach you how to work with your child outside of lessons so they can practice the skills they have learned so far. This chapter should give you some initial pointers on how to work with your child. This is by no means a complete list of things to do or how to solve all problems you may encounter, but it is a good start. Your coach will train you more specifically to work with your child and there is no such thing as a bad question! Schedule a lesson with your child, and any caregiver who will be taking your child swimming. Caregivers need to get in the pool so they are comfortable with your child's abilities and can learn how to work with them.

Suggestion #1:

Have fun! Go at your child's own pace.

Suggestion #2:

Require a bit of work on skills before you reward with lots of play!

Rule #3:

Please do not put your child in flotation devices such as water wings or puddle jumpers with built in flotation. Please refer to the **chapter on the use of flotation devices**.

CARETAKER TO CHILD:

“Let’s Get Started! Show me how you hold your breath and open your eyes!”

HOLD YOUR BREATH AS YOU GO UNDERWATER

Holding your breath and then submerging under the water is successfully learned by experience. At SwimGuru, we practice how to safely submerge with you, your child, and your coach in the water during a your first few lessons. Submersion techniques, and the physiological requirements on how to hold your breath, are discussed in initial lessons. Any concern you may have about submersion will be addressed by your coach. The practice of your child holding their breath can be encouraged by looking for a target underwater to grab or swim to. Your coach will provide you with lots of tips on how to successfully encourage your child to hold their breath and open their eyes. We will also help you identify why your child may not like to submerge initially. With a little practice, it will quickly become second nature!

OPEN YOUR EYES UNDERWATER

Your child is learning to become independent in the water both with and without goggles. The skill of opening your eyes underwater while holding your breath is important in case your child forgets their goggles or has an accidental fall into the water. A child who can see their way underwater will be much safer and calmer. If your child goes to the pool and forgets their goggles, it does not mean they can’t swim! Set your child up for success by having them practice with and without goggles. A child who is addicted to goggles will refuse to swim and could panic if water gets in their eyes. We have observed several occasions where a lifeguard had to jump in to rescue a child all because they forgot their goggles and could not keep their head above the water when they jumped in, even though they knew how to swim with goggles.

Did you know you can find resources at www.swim.guru/resources and watch resource videos on how to work with you child?

The visual acuity in the water is 20/200. Yes, it is blurry for everyone! However, you can still see shapes, colors, and most importantly, exits out of the water such as steps or a ladder. Any pool that has correctly balanced water will not damage a child’s eyes. Children often react to the slight pressure difference of the weight of the water in their eyes, which feels different than air. Encouraging a child to just keep their eyes shut scares them, because they need their sight to look for something to swim to. We have observed children fall into water, close their eyes, and not know how to find their way back to the side. They become disoriented and swim away from safety! Going underwater and opening your eyes is not painful, but could be explained as irritating, due to the pressure difference. If a child swims a long-time with their eyes open underwater, red eye can occur, as the pH of the eye is upset as its natural moisture is washed away. If



the pH of the water is out of balance, burning and itching can result. This can occur when water treatment chemicals are too low or too high. The different chemicals used to sanitize pool water all have mostly the same effect, the pH balance of the water is what causes eyes to burn.

An easy way for your child to demonstrate how they hold their breath and open their eyes is to put their face in the water and grab a toy or their goggles.

When you demonstrate yourself, it will be easier for your child to try it, too! It is important to practice small submersions first, before your child begins to swim.

Did you know that babies/toddlers don't like to wear goggles? They are using all their senses to determine whether they are underwater and don't like things covering their eyes!

CAUTION: Moving past this step and giving a child goggles right away will cause them to try to pick up their head and keep their eyes out of the water if they don't have goggles. You will see them try to make eye contact with you, versus the target you are trying to establish underwater. This presents a real danger as going vertical to pick up their head will cause your child to sink and all forward momentum will cease.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Encourage your child to hold their breath, open their eyes, and grab a toy or their goggles under the water while you hold them on your knee facing you.
- If your child is playing on the pool steps, have them put their face in the water to find their goggles or a toy.
- Encourage your child to look underwater and count your fingers.
- Practice looking underwater in the bathtub. Buy a special swim toy that sinks as a reward.
- Practice 2-3 times without goggles, then practice with goggles.
- Water up the nose? Make it a fun game to blow it out your nose when you come back up!
- If your child refuses to submerge, work with your coach before attempting on your own outside of lessons.
- Watch the video Tips for Submersion located located at swim.guru/resources.

CARETAKER TO CHILD:

“Show me how you swim and grab my hand underwater!”

SWIMMING TO A TARGET UNDER THE WATER

Once your child demonstrates they can independently hold their breath and open their eyes, it is time to introduce forward propulsion. You will see your child’s coach begin to build propulsive movement in a lesson by encouraging your child to submerge, go horizontal, and look for a target to swim too under the water. You can practice this with your child as well. A target can be many things: your arm, hand, or an object, or a toy. Hold the target 6–12 inches under the surface of the water. Teach your child to learn to wait for your permission to enter the water. Ready-Set-Go is commonly used. A child who jumps in without permission is at risk of an accident.

The idea is to have your child push off and swim to you several times before they swim away from you. Looking at the target will help achieve the correct head and body posture and result in balance in their swim. Only then can you expect them to swim away from you to a static target such as the steps, a ladder, wall, or another person. Once a child understands “swim to the target,” you simply help them identify which target to swim to!



TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Encourage your child to pick a target to swim to like goggles, a toy, or your arm or hand.
- Begin with a distance where your child can confidently push off and swim underwater toward you to the target you choose in about 1–2 seconds. Maximum time under water should be no more than 3–4 seconds before a breath. If your child becomes resistant, you may be asking them to swim too far.
- If your child is hesitant to swim, gently pull them off the step, wall, or ledge and drop your target under the water so they can see it and grab it successfully.
- Slowly increase the distance of the swim and time underwater to 2-4 seconds. If you don't see your child's confidence increase, decrease the distance and time under the water until they are more comfortable.
- Your proximity to your child, and identifying which targets to swim to, should always be adjusted to what your child can accomplish successfully.
- Looking and then touching a target underwater before they are picked up is the goal. The target ensures the correct head/body posture and balance in a swim.
- A lower target will also encourage the feet to kick higher. Feet should be kicking at, or just under, the surface of the water.
- A horizontal posture, with the head down and looking for a target, increases the productivity of forward movement in a swim.
- Make sure your child is looking down, not up at you! If a child makes eye contact with you, that means they are going vertical and will begin to sink. Propulsion increases when a target is lower in the water and the child achieves a horizontal posture.
- Watch the Tips for Targeting video on our website located at swim.guru/resources.

What teaches a child to hold their breath?

- A. *Blowing in their face before going under*
- B. *Saying "1-2-3 Go!"*
- C. *The stimulus of water over the face*

Correct answer is C!

CARETAKER TO CHILD:**“Show me how you swim to the steps!”**

Your child now enjoys swimming to you! Now you can introduce your child to swimming away from you. This takes extra confidence. If a child cannot see you under the water, they may lose their confidence and may attempt to turn around to come back to you for comfort and security.

Start by showing the child where you want them to swim, like the wall, the steps, a ladder, or similar. Make sure they are comfortable holding onto, or securely sitting, at the new destination. Begin with a small launch to the new destination. Help them understand where you want them to swim, by helping them successfully get there! Your coach will teach you many postures on how to launch your child away from you successfully. Your coach will teach you how to make your child successful.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- **SWIM TO THE STEPS UNDER THE WATER:** Put a small toy on the first step just under the surface. Launch the child and encourage them to grab the toy, put their hands on the step underwater first, then drop their feet to the step below, and then stand up or sit down for stability. Playing on the steps is a favorite secure place for children. Make sure they know how to successfully swim away and back to the steps. Allowing your child to try and pick up their head and then touch with their feet first will most likely result in them dropping their feet too soon and they will not have the ability to secure themselves. The body follows the head. They will go vertical too early and sink because they saw the step but did not touch it. Remember, your child most likely cannot distinguish that they are a body length away from safety! Teaching them to touch first with their hands, will ensure they are close enough to the top of the steps to stand up successfully. This is extremely important when you are on vacation in an unfamiliar pool. Remember this combination for success: touch with hands first, then drop feet to touch the step, then pick up the head.
- **SWIM TO THE LADDER:** Put a small toy on the ladder step or have your child swim and touch the first step that is under the water. The step can become the target. Remember, a child must be horizontal to swim, not vertical. Looking down at the step will keep them swimming in the right horizontal posture to touch it successfully. Once they touch the step ladder, they can go vertical to bring their head out of the water.

Did you know a 2-year-old can only reach a few inches above their head? Growth happens from the trunk of the body outward. The younger the child the shorter the arms. Consider this when working with your child. Can they reach to the height required to get their head out of the water?

- **SWIM TO THE WALL:** Water levels play a large part in a successful swim to a wall. If the water level is 4-12" below the pool deck, your child must be trained to swim up to the wall in a horizontal position, drop their hips, and then reach up to grab the wall from under the water, all before they lift their head out of the water. Young children struggle with this concept and find it easier to swim to something that is at the surface or just below the surface. Another reason they prefer the steps! Your coach will help you set up many training scenarios depending on the type of pool you encounter.
- **SWIMMING AT THE BEACH OR ZERO ENTRY DEPTH POOL:** Use the same concept as the steps, have your child swim until they can touch the sand or bottom with their hands, then drop their feet and then lift their head to stand up. Swimming to a float, a raft, or other object in the water, is a higher-level skill. Make sure your coach knows specifically what your child will be doing so they can teach them how to do it successfully in a lesson first. Your child should now be comfortably swimming both to and away from you!

Touch means air! Picking a child up as they look at and touch your target is a great way to reward a child for achieving a balanced, horizontal, head down swim!



GENERAL TECHNIQUE TIPS

For more specific concerns please work directly with your coach and child in a lesson

CHALLENGE	TROUBLE SHOOTING/SOLUTION
<p>Child lifts their head while swimming to you and loses propulsion, goes vertical, and sinks</p> <p><i>Children who try to lift their head for air will sink or teach themselves to do a frantic doggie paddle which is not sustainable.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a target and make sure they grab it first before requiring a swim. • Hold your body lower in the water. • Avoid eye contact if your child is lifting their head up to “see” you. • Shorten the distance between you and your child. • The body follows the head, gain control by requiring a shorter swim to a target under the water. • Work with your coach first on how to establish a target.
<p>Child jumps in the water to you without your permission</p> <p><i>Children who are not skilled swimmers and yet are encouraged to jump in and get caught is a dangerous game. Your child may have an expectation you will always be there to catch them! Teach your child that there are consequences for jumping in the water without permission. The consequence is if you jump in you must swim and help yourself back to safety.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish 1-2-3 Go, Ready-Set-Go, or another type of permission. Explain to the child it is unsafe to enter the water with out permission if old enough. • If child does it again, use one of these 3 choices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> REDIRECT: Turn your child under the water by rotating them back to where they came from and assist them back to security. ROLL OVER AND FLOAT: Assist them to get into a back float. Use this choice only if your child can already float and you have been trained to help by your coach. GRAB YOUR HAND OR ARM: Present your hand or arm as a target under water for them to grab. Tell them verbally at the same time. • You are showing them what to do if you were not there. Giving them the correct answer this way versus just picking them up and saying “Don’t do that” will help solve the problem as they realize they will not get picked up if they jump in without permission. • If child expects to be caught, and not go underwater, this will encourage them to jump in unexpectedly, as they assume you will always catch them. It can also cause a dangerous collision where one or both of you could get hurt. • Ask your coach to help with you and your child both in the water in the next lesson if this is still an issue.
<p>Child does not see the target</p> <p><i>Swimming with your eyes closed will be scary and could cause a child to become confused and swim away from safety</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure your child is opening their eyes by going through “open your eyes and hold your breath” protocols. Do this before you ask them to swim. • Hold your arm or hand directly at eye level so they can see it initially. • If they won’t grab your hand or arm or toy, place your hand on their face, if needed, so they grab your hand. • Lower your target to about 6-8” below the water once you are sure the child sees it. • Practice looking for things in the bathtub. • Ask your coach to help in your next lesson.

<p>Child does not kick or use their arms to swim</p> <p><i>Young children often use a small bicycle kick before they can learn to flutter kick. Arm movement comes as they are developmentally ready and stronger. Each child develops at their own unique pace.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the child swims to you, adjust your proximity to them to be a bit further back, yet still successful. Stay low in the water. • Move to the side so child turns to find you while they are swimming. • Place child face-in at an angle, and have them turn toward you, the step, or the wall. • Do not give the child so much momentum in a launch that they magically glide to their destination without effort. • Movement is a motor process and learned when an action is reinforced with a change in the environment (i.e., <i>I kick and am rewarded as I move forward to my destination, so kicking = propulsion</i>). • If your child has learned to rotate in the water, work on sitting on the wall, pushing off, and swimming back to the wall. • Ask your coach to give you additional tips on rotation and other things to use to shape movement.
<p>Child will not grab anything or attempt to swim</p> <p><i>Touch means air! If your child fell in the water, they would need to turn around, grab the wall, ladder, or steps and pull themselves up. A child who does nothing to help themselves may have been taught to “jump in and someone will automatically pick me up and rescue me” This is called learned helplessness and is often seen in children who are taught to jump in and get caught. Change the dialogue to “jump in and SWIM to me.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the child is swimming to you, set the precedent that grabbing an arm or hand results in immediately being picked up and breathing air. • When the child is swimming away from you, make sure they know this procedure: touch the step, hold the ladder or wall, then lift the head for air. • Make sure the child can see and understand what to hold on to for air and recovery. • Have the child pick out a toy, throw it to you, then swim and get it from your hand under the water to get picked up. • Place the child face down in the water by a step or wall, help them grab a hold of the step or wall, and then reinforce the action by putting your hands on their fingers to help them remain secure. • Work with your coach if your child appears to wait for you to do something for them.



CARETAKER TO CHILD:***“Show me how you float!”***

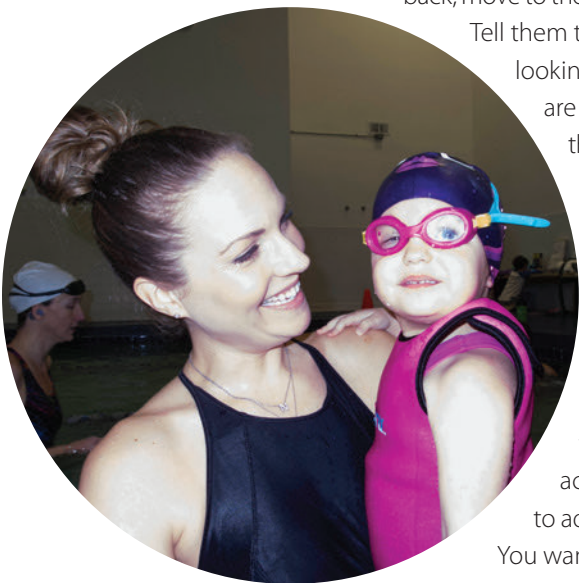
Your child should now successfully be swimming a short distance. True independence for a young child is swimming and knowing how to get to air by rolling over and floating. Check your child’s float for stability. Practicing how to float on your back is crucial. All younger children can float. Buoyancy is a combination of bone density, body fat and muscle mass. We are all born with a unique combination of these factors. Most young children can float easily with proper training and practice. Heredity also influences how well we float as we grow. The older we are, the more muscle mass and bone density increases. Body fat is positively buoyant, and women tend to float better than men. Older students may find it harder to maintain a float, as hips and legs are the heaviest bones in the body, and are the first things that tend to sink while floating. The answer is to learn how to compensate for this effect. If an older swimmer with a lot of muscle mass, heavy bones, and not a lot of fat, is not propulsive on their back, their hips and legs will begin to sink. Breath control also affects buoyancy. The solution to swimming confidently and independently is to build a foundation of swimming and rolling over to float for air when needed at a young age. Adults can learn the same sequence for safety, they just need to kick a bit if they sink while on their back. This swim-float-swim sequence is the foundation of all swimming and future stroke development. It is the number one technique that could save your child’s life in case of an accident.

Safety! When you jump in the water you either know what to do or you don’t. Learning to Swim is just the beginning, practice will achieve a solid foundation of problem solving and mastery.

CHECKING YOUR CHILD’S BACK FLOAT

Your coach will demonstrate how to check your child’s float in a lesson. Once the float is stable, your coach will work with you on how to assist your child (if needed) to roll over from a face down to a face up back float. Start by holding your child under the armpits, low in the water at arm’s length facing away from you. As you encourage them to lean back, move to the back of their shoulders, then to the back of their head.

Tell them to look up and point their chin at the ceiling. You are looking for a relaxed float with normal breathing. The ears are under the water, the head is in a neutral position with the chin slightly lifted, gaze is looking up or slightly back. The chest is higher than the stomach, the legs and feet are not flexed, but relaxed and open about hip width apart. Toes are peeking out above the water most of the time. Arms are out to the side, and the child resembles a resting starfish! You will be trained to notice the difference between an unstable float and a stable one. Older children should be able to talk. Once you understand how your child looks and acts in a stable float, you can coach them on your own to adjust their body to float in a balanced relaxed fashion. You want your child to feel confident on their back. Floating



on the back should ultimately be second nature to your child, and they should be able hold a back float until they are told what to do next.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- The goal is for your child to progress from a supported float to an unsupported float.
- Getting your child to trust you will not let go of them while on their back is the first step. Take it slow, and help them get into a balanced position while you offer neutral support.
- Breath control in a back float is very important. This is indicated by normal breathing, and, for older children, by the ability to talk. Sippy breath, where you do not see a full inhale and exhale, or a child who is loud and blowing out their air, will have a negative impact on buoyancy.
- Verbal children respond best to a set of directions that have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Before you begin, tell them what you would like to do (i.e., "I will hold you while you put your head back and your ears in the water. When I count to three, I will pick you up!")
- Hold your child while they find their correct balance. Once they bring themselves into balance and alignment, pick them up. Use this technique to help your child adjust different body parts that may need more attention.
- You can feel your child balancing on top of the water and relaxing. Once they have started to settle down, move to a more neutral support where you are touching them, but not providing a platform to wiggle on. Pick them up and give them lots of praise only when they can float with your unsupported touch.
- Begin to fade off your support slowly until you are not touching your child. Make sure and not just drop them out of a secure hold.
- Begin with small, varied increments of unsupported time and pick your child up off their back.
- For safety's sake, your child should be comfortable on their back if there is no wall, step, or ladder to swim to!

Did you know that for a young child, picking up their head and treading water is much more difficult than rolling over and floating?

GENERAL TECHNIQUE TIPS

For more specific concerns, please work directly with your coach and child in a lesson.

CHALLENGE	TROUBLE SHOOTING/SOLUTION
<p>Child refuses to float with you holding them</p> <p><i>Your child may not associate floating with breathing. Build trust and confidence by offering your full support while they are learning to float.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many possible reasons for this behavior. Determine why your child does not feel confident. A few possible reasons are water in the ears, vertigo, no balance, or being over stimulated by the parent’s proximity. • Work with your coach and child in a lesson so they can give you coaching on how to address this.
<p>Child drops their hips and appears to sit down in their float</p> <p><i>This is a common mistake. The child will try to sit up, turn around, and swim again, or try to grab you. Sitting in a float could be an attempt to begin to rotate. Work on exercises like “flat as a pancake” and “starfish.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child may be attempting to sit up. Provide less support and tell them to look into your eyes, and then you will pick them up. • The child could be expecting you to push their bottom up. Instead, encourage them to show you their belly button or tummy. Pick them up as soon as they correct their posture. Avoid pushing their bottom up, as this reinforces what you are trying to fix. • If your child is bending at the knees, encourage them to straighten their legs to correct the sitting posture. • Don’t allow your child to float in the bathtub, sit, touch the bottom of the tub and then float. Child could be fishing for the bottom of the tub with their bottom. • Make sure they do not drop their arms but rest them at the surface like a 5-point starfish.
<p>Child appears rigid and short of breath</p> <p><i>Verbal children should be able to comfortably count out loud in a back float. If they are unable to talk, work on helping them feel more secure.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child may be trying to “hold” themselves on top of the water versus feeling their float. Provide more support until breath and muscles relax. • Your child may be feeling a sense of vertigo. Provide more support and fade off to no support slowly. • Older children may need to engage their core to correct for sinking hips and legs.
<p>Child lifts their head out of the water in a float</p> <p><i>Water in the ears is a new sensation for kids learning to float. A natural air bubble forms in the ear that keeps water from entering the ear canal when they are floating, and they cannot hear as well. Head lifting will cause the water to go in and out of the ear and is difficult to get used to if their head is bobbling up and down.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver should adjust the amount of support provided. If the head is over supported, it will lift easily. Adjust the amount of support provided • Child needs to feel more balance and caregiver needs to be neutral with support at the back of the head. • Your child may associate water in the ears with not having access to air. This is a typical reaction of kids who have previously used flotation devices for independence in the water. • Your child may be attempting to sit up or rotate. Provide more support and go back to rewarding them for keeping their ears and head in the water while floating



CARETAKER TO CHILD:***“Show me how you swim and roll over on your back to float and breathe!”***

Please do not have your child attempt this skill unless you have been instructed by your coach within a lesson to practice on your own.

Your child has now shown you a productive swim and float. The next step is to develop a swim followed by recognition of a need to breathe, followed by a roll over and float. Your child will be trained to be face down for a small amount of time before rolling back into their back-float position for air and recovery. Encouraging a child to swim and hold their breath for longer than what is learned in class is dangerous. Your child needs to have the correct air exchange. Breath holding contests should never be encouraged. Air exchange training begins with swimming and floating and is crucial to stroke development. An ambitious child who “just wants to swim across the pool” is at risk for panic, running out of air, and a condition called Shallow Water Blackout. For more on Shallow Water Blackout, refer to this website: shallowwaterblackoutprevention.org

The combination of swimming followed by rotation to the back for air is a complicated set of skills. Your child may resist practicing this vital skill because it is challenging. They may encourage you to move closer so they can avoid it all together! This is when you take a stand for your child’s survival in the water. Breathing is not optional! With practice, your child will progress from timid to successful at each attempt. Your coach will show you how to best support your child as they go from assisted to unassisted in this part of the sequence. Our goal is for your child to respond to naturally occurring cues in the environment and their own body. This is achieved through practice.

The weight of the head out of the water is what causes a small child to sink. Up to 20% of a young child’s body weight is their head. In an accidental tumble into the water, one solution to safety is floating on their back with their ears in the water



CHECKING YOUR CHILD'S ROLL BACK TO FLOAT

Begin by asking your child to swim toward you and demonstrate how they roll over and float, before you ask them to swim away from you and roll over and float. A child who can see you under the water will feel more secure. Swimming away from you using the swim-float-swim sequence is introduced once your child has mastered swimming to you. Your coach will teach you how to set up different cues for your child (e.g., 1-2-3 with your hand then rotate, grab a toy halfway between you and them, or look at something on the bottom as a marker then rolling over to float). After they swim for about 3 seconds, they should begin rotate to their back. Once you see them attempt to turn over, you can assist them, if needed, to complete a full rotation. Once on their back, they must stabilize in their back-float and then take a least 2-3 breaths before turning back over to swim to you. Your coach will help you to establish your child's pace and correctly reinforce what they are attempting. The ability to swim, recognize when to breathe, flip back over, and continue this swim-float-swim sequence is the key to independence and confidence in any depth of water. It is the only solution for teaching a young toddler or child to becoming self-sufficient without the use of flotation devices. Your child will learn a combination of skills that will solve problems in the aquatic environment. Mastery of this skill will vastly increase your child's safety, confidence, and independence!

Mastery of a skill learned at the motor level only increases with practice

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Watch how close you are standing in front of your child when you ask them to swim to you. If you are too close, you will not see them attempt to roll back to float. If you are too far away, your child will get anxious and begin to lift their head to see or attempt to take a breath or turn around and go back to where they came from.
- If your child is verbal, give them direction such as "Swim toward me, grab the toy, then roll over and float. Take 3 breaths, then flip over and find me!" Giving them directions with a beginning, middle, and end will put them at ease.
- Ask verbal questions like "How many arms would you like to do before you rest?" Your child will begin to take ownership with this prompt.
- Your child should demonstrate several times they can swim and float to you confidently before you launch them away from you. When you launch them away, follow them in case you need to help them be successful.
- If your child is struggling, reassure them you are there to help them and support them when they try. Rebuild their confidence by trying something easier before you attempt the sequence again.
- Make sure you are comfortable with your child's skills in a lesson before you attempt anything outside of lessons.
- If your child is struggling with rolling over, assist them with what they are trying to accomplish instead of just picking them up.

GENERAL TECHNIQUE TIPS

For more specific concerns please work with your coach and child in a lesson.

CHALLENGE	TROUBLE SHOOTING/SOLUTION
<p>Child refuses to roll over and float</p> <p><i>If possible, identify why they are resisting first. Then offer to assist.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child does not like water up his nose when rolling over. Practice blowing water out the nose. • Child does not want to give up his momentum. Adjust your distance. You may be too close, and your child is stimulated to keep going. • Your child may be relying too much on momentum from launching. They may not want to stop to float because when they turn back over there is no momentum left. Work on increasing productivity in the overall swim. • Your child may not feel stable on their back and cannot breathe well. Re-stabilize the float before requiring rolling to float. • Your child may be unsuccessful in rolling over and then give up. Fully assist them until they begin to trust you and the process • These are just a few of the reasons. Explore other reasons and solutions with your coach
<p>Child attempts to lift head up before rotation</p> <p><i>The body follows the head. A head lift precedes the feet dropping and the child going vertical. A clean roll back to float looks like rolling down a hill or a log rolling in the river.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child may be focusing on a target in the wrong direction prior to rolling over. Use a cue, a toy or a marker on the bottom so the child focuses on the object prior to rotation. • Your child may be attempting to look at your eyes. Shorten the distance and re-establish a target to look at, prior to rolling. • Your child may be out of breath, and associate lifting their head with getting air. Shorten the distance before the roll back to float is required, and then assist them so they are successful. • Your child may not be able to see where they are swimming. Re-establish cues and targets, and the final goal of grabbing the wall or step. • Your child may be trying to clear their nose of water prior to rotation. Work on blowing water out the nostrils once on the back. Older children will be taught to blow air out in the rotation prior to taking a breath on the back.
<p>Child attempts to grab you or the wall on the way over in the rotation</p> <p><i>Your child is looking for extra security as they are not confident in their roll back to float. Verbal children need reassurance you will be close and help if needed!</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be accidentally holding your hand out under water where they can see it, and they swim to your hand. Remove your cue under the water and assist the rotation above the water. • Your child may be using you to sling-shot themselves to their back. Adjust your distance and prompt your child above the water halfway to you, so they cannot grab you first. • Your child could have low confidence in the roll back to float. Assist the rotation until the child is more confident, and they will take more responsibility for the rotation. • Child may not want to give up momentum and rolls over to float later than they should. Work on over all productivity in the swim after flipping back over out of the float.
<p>Child attempts to stand up instead of rolling over and floating</p> <p><i>A child may go vertical for a number of reasons. A child's initial experience with the water plays a large role in their comfort with touching the bottom or relying on flotation devices to get their air and head out of the water.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are in shallow water, your child may be instinctively dropping their feet to stand up. Make sure you practice where your child cannot touch the bottom. • Recognize they are trying to breath and going vertical is the precursor to trying to lift their head out of the water. Require less distance and time under water. • Your child may not be comfortable rolling over while moving yet. Practice rolling over to float without requiring them to swim any distance. • Your child may feel you are too far away. Shorten the swim and move closer to them. • If you require too long of a distance, your child may need your help breaking down how to manage the swim (i.e., "Show me 3 arms, then rest and take 3 breaths, then flip over and swim to me").

Your child's ability to practice swimming with you will greatly increase their overall confidence and performance. It is also a wonderful bonding experience — No phones, no computers, no televisions involved! Swimming outside of lessons will allow your child to achieve mastery in the water. The retention of a skill when practiced at the motor level has the highest rate of any type of learning. Motor skills besides swimming include riding a bike, skiing, skating, etc. A child who is out of practice will not be very confident in their skills and you may think they have forgotten how to swim. Swimming is a more complex sport for a young child because they must practice breath control, as well as how to operate in zero gravity. When your child practices, you will see their skills are there, you just need to help them become confident in their abilities. Practice will become play!





2

**ADULT
INFORMATION**



GETTING STARTED

ADULT

Learning to swim is one of the most rewarding accomplishments you will experience as an adult. Whether you are starting from scratch as a new swimmer, or would just like to work on technique, we can tailor a lesson plan to your specific needs.

Our website is all self-serve. However, as a new client you have one round of scheduling assistance that is built into your “New Adult” package. This means we will help you book your first package of lessons at no extra cost, and train you on the self-serve booking system. We offer scheduling assistance appointments Monday through Friday. We will offer expanded scheduling service appointments during the release of a new schedule. If you would like to know appointment availability, or sign up for scheduling assistance, please email support@swim.guru

SETTING UP A PROFILE, PURCHASING AND BOOKING LESSONS

1. **Create an account for each student who will be taking lessons.** Each student must have an account under their own name, and each student's account must have its own unique email address. We recommend setting up an account on a laptop or desktop computer, as it will be the easiest way. Then see additional instructions below to download our App for your smart phone.
2. **Digitally sign your liability release and waiver prior to your first lesson.**
3. **Please read the pool protocols for our LA Fitness locations on page 49**
4. **Lessons can be booked at any of our 3 pool locations.** Please pay attention to this detail so you know at which pool you should arrive for each lesson.
5. **When you purchase the New Adult package please book ALL the possible lessons online.** We fill up quickly, so waiting to book is not a good idea. To book more lessons, please purchase "Continuing Student" lessons, even if you haven't taken your first "New Adult" lesson yet. Immediately book any available lessons that work for you schedule.
6. **The Appointment Type is always the same as the lesson package.** For example: New Adult lessons use the New Adult appointment type. Continue to use this appointment type until the credits are used up or you will erroneously be prompted to purchase more lessons. Once the original package has been booked, you may purchase additional lessons and continue booking under Continuing Adult Student.
7. **Choose 30 minutes for your lesson length.** Do not use "All". A 60-minute lesson option is also available for more experienced students if we have the availability and your coach approves. If you wish to begin with a 60-minute lesson, please email coachcarol@swim.guru for additional details.
8. **Select "Choose your own dates" and when the calendar function opens, select one month at a time.** The system is only able to show information this way if you are viewing large amounts of time.
9. **Be sure to take note of our ongoing availability.** Book lessons with enough space for you to practice in between. A minimum of a week between lessons is recommended. You can check schedule availability any time on our mobile app or at swim.guru
10. **Booking Last Minute Lessons (LMLs):** Please check for LMLs using the scheduling site by accessing it from your computer or mobile phone using the SwimGuru App. Schedule system is live 24/7. Search for future lessons in any date range you choose.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW

- 1. You are welcome to come observe lessons anytime Monday–Saturday.** Please email support@swim.guru to set up a time to observe an adult lesson. All lessons are private.
- 2. All spots are first-come, first-served, and usually fill 2–4 months in advance.** After school and late afternoon hours are the first to go!
- 3. Once you purchase your lesson package, you will have 18 months to complete all lessons before the lesson credits expire.** Be sure and note we have a 24-hour cancellation policy. All lessons scheduled are paid in full if not cancelled online prior to 24 hours before the lesson. You may cancel and reschedule any lesson prior to 24 hours as needed.
- 4. We have a customized SwimGuru Smartphone or Computer App.** Once you create your account and purchase a lesson package in our scheduling system, download the App. It is called SwimGuru and is available through Apple or Google (Keep in mind when searching that SwimGuru is one word, not two!). This is a great way to stay on top of your account and look for last minute lessons (LML) once you become a student.
- 5. Refunds are possible in certain situations within our cancellation policy.** See [page 51](#) for details on the cancellation and refund policy.





3

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

POOL PROTOCOLS FOR LA FITNESS

1. Digitally sign your [liability release and waiver](#) prior to your first lesson.
2. Where to enter and exit the pool:
 - **Seattle:** access through the locker room.
 - **Lynnwood/Mukilteo:** access through the side door in the lobby
3. Students are not allowed to use the locker rooms or member shower areas, even if they are LA fitness members
4. All students must use stand up tents on the pool deck to change before and after lessons.
5. At the Seattle location, students are allowed to use the ADA restroom on the pool deck.
6. Students are allowed to use the shower on the pool deck before or after lessons.
7. Students are only allowed in the pool during their lesson time, not before or after.
8. Students are not allowed in the hot tub at the Seattle location..
9. Any students not potty trained must wear a disposable swim diaper with a diaper cover that has elastic around the legs and waist. Defecation in the pool will result in a \$200 fine because the pool will need to be shut down and cleaned.
10. Children must be accompanied by an adult on deck for the duration of their lesson.
11. Lessons are always held in the 3rd lane of the pool.
12. Bring your own towel.
13. Goggles and wetsuits are for sale on pool deck.
14. Lessons must be cancelled online no less than 24 hours prior to the lesson in order to avoid loss of the lesson credit. See [page 51](#) for our full policy.

SCHEDULING ASSISTANCE

FOR NEW STUDENTS

- Receive free scheduling assistance when you purchase a New Student Introductory Package. This applies to private lessons only, and with it you will receive training on how to manage schedules.
- Email support@swim.guru or call 206-200-9449 to request an appointment.
- We will book out all lessons in the New Student Starter Package.
- We will train you how to manage your accounts.
- We will instruct you on the use of the mobile phone app created for SwimGuru clients.
- Additional time past one hour billed at \$25 per half hour.
- Appointments available Monday-Friday. Expanded appointments available by request when new schedules come out.

FOR EXISTING STUDENTS

- Looking to streamline the booking process? Take advantage of our scheduling service to address all your scheduling needs.
- Email support@swim.guru or call 206-200-9449 to request an appointment.
- \$25 per half hour. Billed at the time of appointment reservation request. Billing information must be up to date in the student account or appointment will be canceled.
- Includes schedule system and app training.
- Lessons are booked live with you from existing schedules that are already open to the general public.
- Appointments available Monday-Friday. Expanded appointments available by request when new schedules come out.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

1

Have access to a desktop computer at time of appointment.

2

Have schedules and calendars handy for the time frame you are scheduling.

3

Collect any questions you have about using the software, the app, or the scheduling process.

4

Review the [cancellation policy](#)

CANCELLATION POLICY

Lessons must be cancelled online, by the student, no fewer than 24 hours prior to the lesson in order to avoid loss of the lesson credit. If you are unable to do this online, call 206-200-9449, hit #1 and leave a message for Customer Service. The time of day the message is received will be noted and the 24-hour rule will apply.

All lesson credits of any type expire 18 months from the date of purchase. No extensions or refunds of expired credits.

EARLY CANCELLATIONS

- All lessons canceled *before* 24 hours will be credited back to the student's account, and lessons can be rescheduled. This is designated as an Early Cancel. You will receive an automatic email/text confirmation from our online scheduling system.
- Early cancellations can be rescheduled by the student for any time, coach or pool, subject to availability.

LATE CANCELLATIONS

- Any lesson canceled *less* than 24 hours prior to the lesson will be designated as a Late Cancel. The credits will automatically be deducted from the purchased package of credits, and cannot be rescheduled. You will receive an automatic email/text confirmation from our online scheduling system.

LESSON TIME CHANGES WITHIN 24 HOURS:

- Students may request in writing that their lesson time be moved to a different open time with the *same* coach. Email the coach before 8:00am to request this option. Any email sent after 8:00am may not be read. Please do not show up at a time other than what was scheduled and confirmed. Changes will automatically generate a new confirmation email.

MAKE-UP LESSONS

- All students who cancel less than 24 hours before their lesson are allowed to request up to 2 make-up lessons within 6 months of the cancellation
- Make-Up lessons must be scheduled with the same coach who was originally booked.
- The 2 make-up lessons are subject to the coach's availability and are at the coach's discretion. Students requesting make-up lessons must email the coach with whom they cancelled. Provide the following information:
 1. Original date/time/pool of the cancellation.
 2. Supply options of available days/windows of times that you or your child can make-up the lesson.
 3. The 2 allowed make-up lessons must be scheduled within 12 months or will be considered expired.

SNOW POLICY

- For Seattle LA Fitness and Underwater Sports locations, SwimGuru follows Seattle Public School snow closures
- For Mukilteo LA Fitness, SwimGuru follows Mukilteo/Lynnwood Schools snow closures.
- At any location, if the applicable district has a late start, SwimGuru lessons will start at 1 p.m. for that day.
- At any location, if the applicable district closes early, SwimGuru lessons will be canceled at our discretion. Students will be contacted by their instructor as soon as the decision is made.



The logo for SwimGuru features the word "SwimGuru" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Above the letter "i" in "Guru", there are three small, light blue circles of increasing size, arranged vertically, resembling bubbles or a swimmer's head above water. A small "TM" trademark symbol is positioned to the upper right of the word.

WWW.SWIM.GURU