



Getting Learn-to-Swim Adults Ready for Their First Lesson

Very often people come for their first adult learn-to-swim lesson nervous and ill-prepared. It doesn't have to be this way.

I specialise in teaching adults to swim, and here are my tips to help students get ready for their first lesson.



Goggle Prep Work - Some people show up with no goggles; or have new goggles they have never worn. I get them to adjust and wear their goggles in the shower in advance. When they arrive at the lesson the goggles fit, and they are familiar with them.

Attitude - Many people tell me that they have tried to learn to swim, but they can't. They often don't have much confidence in themselves. These negative thoughts can be a hurdle for them, and the instructor. The first thing I do when they book the lesson is give them a new saying to repeat, "I can swim".

Watch and Visualise - In the week before the lesson I get them to watch some YouTube videos and to visualise themselves swimming.

Lack of Strength and flexibility - many older people who have been inactive find the swimming actions awkward and tiring. Ideally, a couple of weeks before the lesson, I get them to know the "Y" position, and to do relaxed big arm circles. This loosens them up and builds a little strength.



Getting them to lay on their backs and do some light flutter kicks helps strengthen their core, and gives them a little kicking practice.



Swimming Actions - People are often trying to learn new movements in an environment they are not comfortable in. The stress of this produces some very awkward looking attempts at swimming. Giving them some simple instructions in advance, and getting them to practice the movements at home can greatly reduce the pressure of learning these at the lesson.

Swimming Theory - Before the lesson giving people a little theory on swimming, such as “why most people float”, “how propulsion works”, “why being streamline is important”, saves time during the lesson, and also helps with them their confidence.

Breathing - This is another important area that a little in advance homework can significantly improve. A few exercises can help them to relax, not hold their breath when swimming, and improve their lung capacity.

No Shows

When I first started teaching adults, my 'no show' rate was probably around 25%. Now that I supply them with some pre-lesson information and a reminder call, it is infrequent for someone to not turn up for the lesson.

Summary

Mentally this pre-first lesson work helps relax students and gives them a little confidence so when they hit the water, they have some idea of what to do. It also shows them that they can have some input into their learning to swim.

Not all people will do anything before their first lesson as they want their instructor to just tell them what to do, but those people serious about learning to swim will make an effort before the first lesson.

I have put all of these ideas and more into a little booklet.



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