

The World's Longest List of Urban Myths about Swimming

By Graham Dietrich – www.swimbettertoday.com



1 – It takes months for adults to learn how to swim.

Not true - It is possible to learn the basics of swimming in under 4 hours of lessons. It does take months to years to become a good swimmer.

2 – Rips drown people, even reasonable swimmers.

Not true - It is panic and exhaustion that drown people. Unfortunately, we have built up the story of how dangerous rips are and if you get caught in one you are in serious trouble. If you stay calm, float to survive and then if you need to, signal for help you will be okay.

3 – You must wait 30 to 60 minutes after eating before going swimming or you will get cramps and drown.

Not true – It might not feel comfortable swimming with a full stomach but your body can handle it.

4 – You can't drown in shallow water or water you can stand up in.

Not true - Accidents happen and you can drown in water a few centimetres deep. Open water currents can pull you into deeper water. The water does not need to be deep for fear, panic and exhaustion to drown someone.

5 – People of colour have trouble swimming.

Not true - In most countries, it is a lack of facilities and swim lesson opportunities as well as cultural reasons that we see a lot fewer people of colour swimming.

6 – Swimming can make you taller.

Not True – Many swimmers are tall but this is their natural state. The reaching forward during the stroke is a good stretch but it is not proven to be lengthening your spine to make you taller.

7 - Swimming in chlorinated water turns your hair green.

Not true - Chlorine can lighten hair but it is copper in the pool water that turns hair green. It comes from the pool chemical copper sulphate or the copper piping used at the pool.



8 – Some places add a chemical to the pool that turns blue if someone pees in the pool.

Not true - This is a common story used to discourage people from peeing in the pool.

9 - Swimming in the ocean is good for healing skin sores.

Not true - Sterile salt water is an old effective remedy for cleaning sores. Unfortunately, seawater is often not sterile. It can carry bacteria from river mouths, estuaries, decomposing sea plants and life, fisheries, mines, farms, stormwater drains and sewage plants. The warmer the water the more likely it is that bacteria is present.

10 – A quick swim in cold water will sober you up.

Not true - It might shock you into being a bit more alert for a short time but it will not reduce the alcohol in your system.

11 – Kicking harder makes you faster.

Partly True – Over short distances a kick with good technique kicking can add to the swimmer's speed. Over longer distances the extra energy required for the harder kick may tire the swimmer sooner, thus slowing them down overall.

12 – You have to be fit to swim

Not true – Like all exercise and activities, you start at your level and with practice you can reach the level you want.

13 – You don't sweat when you swim.

Not true – If your effort increases your body temperature you sweat wherever you are.

14 - Chlorine burns your eyes when you open them underwater.

Not true – It is not the chlorine but an imbalance in the water chemistry and the water pH not being between 7.2 and 7.6

15 – Swimming in winter causes colds.

Not true - Swimming in winter itself doesn't directly cause colds if you avoid overcrowded indoor heated pools and keep warm out of the water.



16 – You need to swim lots of laps to swim fast.

Not true – To swim fast you need shorter more intensive sessions where you swim fast.

17 – The more laps you swim the better your technique gets.

Not True – Swimming with poor technique just locks it into your muscle memory. You have to work on your technique with focused drills to make it better.

18 – You need kickboards, noodles, fins and pull buoys to teach an adult to swim properly.

Not true – Plenty of people learn without them. For some people these are helpful but for other people they slow down their progress and for others they become reliant on them and think they need to learn to swim.

19 – You must push out at the back of the pull

Not true – Many swimmers chose a faster stroke by shortening the pull and not pushing at the back of the pull.

20 - You don't need to hydrate while swimming in the pool

Not True – In the pool, you still sweat and breathe out moisture so unless you are drinking a lot of pool water you need to drink.

21 – Strong swimmers don't drown.

Not True – Statistics show that 66% of people who drowned were considered good swimmers.

22 – Butterfly is a hard stroke to learn, especially for adults.

Yeah, that is true

23 – Being a good swimmer is the best way to get fit.

Partly True – Yes, swimming is a good way to get fit but being a really poor swimmer will get you fit faster with less laps.

