



**WEST COOK YMCA**

**Swim Lesson  
Overview Packet**

## Welcome to the West Cook YMCA Swim Lessons Overview!

Swimming is not only a fun, healthy activity, but an important life skill for all children. Learning basic water safety skills is a great introduction to the world of swimming that often continues with swim lessons and competitive swim programs, and can even lead to a career. In addition to learning lifesaving water safety skills, children can increase their physical activity by swimming. Swimming also motivates children to strive for self-improvement, teaches goal orientation, and cultivates a positive mental attitude and high self-esteem. It also teaches life lessons of sport and sportsmanship, so that children can learn how to work well with teammates and coaches and how to deal with achievement and skill development.

This program features four different age groups; Parent and Child, Preschool, School Age, and Teen & Adult. Within each age group, specific stages are identified with outcomes to match.



## Program Overview

<b>SWIM STARTERS</b> Parent* & child lessons	<b>SWIM BASICS</b> (Safety Around Water) Recommended skills for all to have around water			<b>SWIM STROKES</b> Skills to support a healthy lifestyle			<b>PATHWAYS</b> Specialized tracks			
<b>A</b> Water Discovery 	<b>B</b> Water Exploration 	<b>1</b> Water Acclimation 	<b>2</b> Water Movement 	<b>3</b> Water Stamina 	<b>4</b> Stroke Introduction 	<b>5</b> Stroke Development 	<b>6</b> Stroke Mechanics 	<b>Competition</b> 	<b>Leadership</b> 	<b>Recreation</b> 
Introduces infants and toddlers to the aquatic environment	Focuses on exploring body positions, blowing bubbles, and fundamental safety and aquatic skills	Increases comfort with underwater exploration and introduces basic self-rescue skills performed with assistance	Encourages forward movement in water and basic self-rescue skills performed independently	Develops intermediate self-rescue skills performed at longer distances than in previous stages	Introduces basic stroke technique in front crawl and back crawl and reinforces water safety through treading water and elementary backstroke	Introduces breaststroke and butterfly and reinforces water safety through treading water and sidestroke	Refines stroke technique on all major competitive strokes and encourages swimming as part of a healthy lifestyle	<b>Outcomes</b> Students build confidence, cultivate their passion, and stay active through specialized tracks.		
<b>Outcomes</b> Accompanied by a parent, infants and toddlers learn to be comfortable in the water and develop swim readiness skills through fun and confidence-building experiences, while parents learn about water safety, drowning prevention, and the importance of supervision.	<b>Outcomes</b> Students learn personal water safety and achieve basic swimming competency by learning two benchmark skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Swim, float, swim—sequencing front glide, roll, back float, roll, front glide, and exit</li> <li>- Jump, push, turn, grab</li> </ul>			<b>Outcomes</b> Having mastered the fundamentals, students learn additional water safety skills and build stroke technique, developing skills that prevent chronic disease, increase social-emotional and cognitive well-being, and foster a lifetime of physical activity.						

\*We define parent broadly to include all adults with primary responsibility for raising children, including biological parents, adoptive parents, guardians, stepparents, grandparents, or any other type of parenting relationship.

# Stages of Learning

↑ Infant & Toddler  
6 mos.–3 yrs.  
Stages A–B

↑ Preschool  
3–5 yrs.  
Stages 1–4

↑ School Age  
5–12 yrs.  
Stages 1–6

↑ Teen & Adult  
12+ yrs.  
Stages 1–6

SWIM STARTERS Parent & child lessons		SWIM BASICS Recommended skills for all to have around water			SWIM STROKES Skills to support a healthy lifestyle			PATHWAYS Specialized tracks
A Water Discovery	B Water Exploration	1 Water Acclimation	2 Water Movement	3 Water Stamina	4 Stroke Introduction	5 Stroke Development	6 Stroke Mechanics	Competition  Leadership  Recreation 
<p><b>Blow bubbles</b> on surface, assisted</p> <p><b>Front tow</b> chin in water, assisted</p> <p><b>Water exit</b> parent &amp; child together</p> <p><b>Water entry</b> parent &amp; child together</p> <p><b>Back float</b> assisted, head on shoulder</p> <p><b>Roll</b> assisted</p> <p><b>Front float</b> chin in water, assisted</p> <p><b>Back tow</b> assisted, head on shoulder</p> <p><b>Wall grab</b> assisted</p>	<p><b>Blow bubbles</b> mouth &amp; nose submerged, assisted</p> <p><b>Front tow</b> blow bubbles, assisted</p> <p><b>Water exit</b> assisted</p> <p><b>Water entry</b> assisted</p> <p><b>Back float</b> assisted, head on chest</p> <p><b>Roll</b> assisted</p> <p><b>Front float</b> blow bubbles, assisted</p> <p><b>Back tow</b> assisted, head on chest</p> <p><b>Monkey crawl</b> assisted, on edge, 5 ft.</p>	<p><b>Submerge</b> bob independently</p> <p><b>Front glide</b> assisted, to wall, 5 ft.</p> <p><b>Water exit</b> independently</p> <p><b>Jump, push, turn, grab</b> assisted</p> <p><b>Back float</b> assisted, 10 secs., recover independently</p> <p><b>Roll</b> assisted</p> <p><b>Front float</b> assisted, 10 secs., recover independently</p> <p><b>Back glide</b> assisted, at wall, 5 ft.</p> <p><b>Swim, float, swim</b> assisted, 10 ft.</p>	<p><b>Submerge</b> look at object on bottom</p> <p><b>Front glide</b> 10 ft. (5 ft. preschool)</p> <p><b>Water exit</b> independently</p> <p><b>Jump, push, turn, grab</b></p> <p><b>Back float</b> 20 secs. (10 secs. preschool)</p> <p><b>Roll</b></p> <p><b>Front float</b> 20 secs. (10 secs. preschool)</p> <p><b>Back glide</b> 10 ft. (5 ft. preschool)</p> <p><b>Tread water</b> 10 secs., near wall, &amp; exit</p> <p><b>Swim, float, swim</b> 5 yd.</p>	<p><b>Submerge</b> retrieve object in chest-deep water</p> <p><b>Swim on front</b> 15 yd. (10 yd. preschool)</p> <p><b>Water exit</b> independently</p> <p><b>Jump, swim, turn, swim, grab</b> 10 yd.</p> <p><b>Swim on back</b> 15 yd. (10 yd. preschool)</p> <p><b>Roll</b></p> <p><b>Tread water</b> 1 min. &amp; exit (30 secs. preschool)</p> <p><b>Swim, float, swim</b> 25 yd. (15 yd. preschool)</p>	<p><b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 25 yd.</p> <p><b>Front crawl</b> rotary breathing, 15 yd.</p> <p><b>Back crawl</b> 15 yd.</p> <p><b>Dive</b> sitting</p> <p><b>Resting stroke</b> elementary backstroke, 15 yd.</p> <p><b>Tread water</b> scissor &amp; whip kick, 1 min.</p> <p><b>Breaststroke</b> kick, 15 yd.</p> <p><b>Butterfly</b> kick, 15 yd.</p>	<p><b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 50 yd.</p> <p><b>Front crawl</b> bent-arm recovery, 25 yd.</p> <p><b>Back crawl</b> pull, 25 yd.</p> <p><b>Dive</b> kneeling</p> <p><b>Resting stroke</b> sidestroke, 25 yd.</p> <p><b>Tread water</b> scissor &amp; whip kick, 2 mins.</p> <p><b>Breaststroke</b> 25 yd.</p> <p><b>Butterfly</b> simultaneous arm action &amp; kick, 15 yd.</p>	<p><b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 150 yd.</p> <p><b>Front crawl</b> flip turn, 50 yd.</p> <p><b>Back crawl</b> pull &amp; flip turn, 50 yd.</p> <p><b>Dive</b> standing</p> <p><b>Resting stroke</b> elementary backstroke or sidestroke, 50 yd.</p> <p><b>Tread water</b> retrieve object off bottom, tread 1 min.</p> <p><b>Breaststroke</b> open turn, 50 yd.</p> <p><b>Butterfly</b> 25 yd.</p>	



## Infant & Toddler / Preschool Skill Continuum

This continuum outlines the skills taught at each stage for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children. Though school-age children, teens, and adults also learn the skills listed in stages 1–4, they achieve distinct milestones compared to preschool-age children. As a result, their skills are presented in a separate skill continuum.

	A Water Discovery	B Water Exploration	1 Water Acclimation	2 Water Movement	3 Water Stamina	4 Stroke Introduction
<b>Breath control</b>	<b>Blow bubbles</b> on surface, assisted	<b>Blow bubbles</b> mouth & nose submerged, assisted	<b>Submerge</b> bob independently	<b>Submerge</b> look at object on bottom	<b>Submerge</b> retrieve object in chest-deep water	
<b>Swim on front</b>	<b>Front tow</b> chin in water, assisted <b>Front float</b> chin in water, assisted	<b>Front tow</b> blow bubbles, assisted <b>Front float</b> blow bubbles, assisted	<b>Front glide</b> assisted, to wall, 5 ft. <b>Front float</b> assisted, 10 secs., recover independently	<b>Front glide</b> 5 ft. <b>Front float</b> 10 secs.	<b>Swim on front</b> 10 yd.	<b>Front crawl</b> rotary breathing, 15 yd. <b>Breaststroke</b> kick, 15 yd. <b>Butterfly</b> kick, 15 yd.
<b>Swim on back</b>	<b>Back float</b> assisted, head on shoulder <b>Back tow</b> assisted, head on shoulder	<b>Back float</b> assisted, head on chest <b>Back tow</b> assisted, head on chest	<b>Back float</b> assisted, 10 secs., recover independently <b>Back glide</b> assisted, at wall, 5 ft.	<b>Back float</b> 10 secs. <b>Back glide</b> 5 ft.	<b>Swim on back</b> 10 yd.	<b>Back crawl</b> 15 yd.
<b>Water safety</b>	<b>Roll</b> assisted, back to front & front to back <b>Wall grab</b> assisted	<b>Roll</b> assisted, back to front & front to back <b>Monkey crawl</b> assisted, on edge, 5 ft.	<b>Water exit</b> independently <b>Roll</b> assisted, back to front & front to back	<b>Water exit</b> independently <b>Roll</b> back to front & front to back <b>Tread water</b> 10 secs., near wall, & exit	<b>Water exit</b> independently <b>Roll</b> back to front & front to back <b>Tread water</b> 30 secs. & exit	<b>Dive</b> sitting <b>Resting stroke</b> elementary backstroke, 15 yd. <b>Tread water</b> scissor & whip kick, 1 min.
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Water exit</b> parent & child together <b>Water entry</b> parent & child together	<b>Water exit</b> assisted <b>Water entry</b> assisted	<b>Jump, push, turn, grab</b> assisted <b>Swim, float, swim</b> assisted, 10 ft.	<b>Jump, push, turn, grab</b> <b>Swim, float, swim</b> 5 yd.	<b>Jump, swim, turn, swim, grab</b> 10 yd. <b>Swim, float, swim</b> 15 yd.	<b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 25 yd.

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## School-Age / Teen & Adult Skill Continuum

This continuum outlines the skills taught at each stage for school-age children, teens, and adults. Though preschool-age children also learn the skills listed in stages 1–4, they achieve distinct milestones compared to school-age children, teens, and adults. As a result, their skills are presented in a separate skill continuum.

	1 Water Acclimation	2 Water Movement	3 Water Stamina	4 Stroke Introduction	5 Stroke Development	6 Stroke Mechanics
<b>Breath control</b>	<b>Submerge</b> bob independently	<b>Submerge</b> look at object on bottom	<b>Submerge</b> retrieve object in chest-deep water			
<b>Swim on front</b>	<b>Front glide</b> assisted, to wall, 5 ft. <b>Front float</b> assisted, 10 secs., recover independently	<b>Front glide</b> 10 ft. <b>Front float</b> 20 secs.	<b>Swim on front</b> 15 yd.	<b>Front crawl</b> rotary breathing, 15 yd. <b>Breaststroke</b> kick, 15 yd. <b>Butterfly</b> kick, 15 yd.	<b>Front crawl</b> bent-arm recovery, 25 yd. <b>Breaststroke</b> 25 yd. <b>Butterfly</b> simultaneous arm action & kick, 15 yd.	<b>Front crawl</b> flip turn, 50 yd. <b>Breaststroke</b> open turn, 50 yd. <b>Butterfly</b> 25 yd.
<b>Swim on back</b>	<b>Back float</b> assisted, 10 secs., recover independently <b>Back glide</b> assisted, at wall, 5 ft.	<b>Back float</b> 20 secs. <b>Back glide</b> 10 ft.	<b>Swim on back</b> 15 yd.	<b>Back crawl</b> 15 yd.	<b>Back crawl</b> pull, 25 yd.	<b>Back crawl</b> pull & flip turn, 50 yd.
<b>Water safety</b>	<b>Water exit</b> independently <b>Roll</b> assisted, back to front & front to back	<b>Water exit</b> independently <b>Roll</b> back to front & front to back <b>Tread water</b> 10 secs., near wall, & exit	<b>Water exit</b> independently <b>Roll</b> back to front & front to back <b>Tread water</b> 1 min. & exit	<b>Dive</b> sitting <b>Resting stroke</b> elementary backstroke, 15 yd. <b>Tread water</b> scissor & whip kick, 1 min.	<b>Dive</b> kneeling <b>Resting stroke</b> sidestroke, 25 yd. <b>Tread water</b> scissor & whip kick, 2 mins.	<b>Dive</b> standing <b>Resting stroke</b> elementary backstroke or sidestroke, 50 yd. <b>Tread water</b> retrieve object off bottom, tread 1 min.
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Jump, push, turn, grab</b> assisted <b>Swim, float, swim</b> assisted, 10 ft.	<b>Jump, push, turn, grab</b> <b>Swim, float, swim</b> 5 yd.	<b>Jump, swim, turn, swim, grab</b> 10 yd. <b>Swim, float, swim</b> 25 yd.	<b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 25 yd.	<b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 50 yd.	<b>Endurance</b> any stroke or combination of strokes, 150 yd.

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### **Mid-Session Reports**

Depending on the length of the session, mid-session reports will be handed out in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> session. This time frame will give our instructors the appropriate time to evaluate each participant accurately for the following sessions. These progress reports will provide information on skill progress, which will take time. The fluid nature of skill development in children varies from child to child with skill acquisition varying from slow to rapid. We recommend signing up for monthly enrollment options for swim lessons, to hold your spot in future months to help your child continue to build the confidence in and around water as well as build on their water swim skills.

### **Final Evaluations**

Final evaluations will begin to be handed out the seventh or eighth session to provide an updated assessment on the skill progress and the level suggestion for future sessions. Please note that progression throughout swimming is NOT linear and depends on both attending lessons and practice outside of the lesson time. Based on the required skills to progress, certain skills are more difficult to master than others and require even more practice. Even though your child may not progress to the next level, the focus should be kept on the skill development made rather than completing and progressing to the next level. Our staff have a vested interest in providing high quality lessons and want to see each participant succeed. Questions regarding final evaluations can be directed to the Aquatic Operations Manager or the Director of Youth and Aquatics Programming and Services.

### **Home Activities**

Home Activity Cards are available to improve swimming skills outside of the structured lesson. These drills have been designed to progressively build up skills and with continued practice, assist in reaching the passing standard. Remember that developing skills takes time and always needs refinement. Instructors throughout the sessions will pass along some of the Home Activity Cards.

### **Private Swim Lessons/Semi-private Swim Lessons**

The West Cook YMCA offers Private Swim Lessons and Semi-private Swim Lessons. These lessons provide the opportunity for participants to work one-on-one or two-on-one with an instructor toward specific goals. Lessons are offered on a monthly time slot basis, welcome to sign up for multiple months and schedule out payments or try it out for one month. Please inquiry by sending an email to [aquatics@westcookymca.org](mailto:aquatics@westcookymca.org) and we will connect with you to share what option may work best for you.

### **For More Details on Swim Levels**

Please visit our website landing page for details of each swim level at [www.westcookymca.org/swimlessons](http://www.westcookymca.org/swimlessons)