



**Before they start school,  
start swimming**

**A guide for parents**



# Before they start school, start swimming

Encouraging your child to learn to swim is one of the most important opportunities you can give them. If you get children interested in swimming when they're young there's a good chance they'll enjoy the water for the rest of their life.

Scottish Swimming has developed a new National Framework for swimming in Scotland, which provides a clear set of national standards and a pathway which allows you to follow how your child is progressing, and what this actually means in terms of their swimming ability. Enrol your child in swimming lessons today and you'll also have peace of mind that they're safer when they're near water.

## What should you expect from a swimming lesson programme?

All children should be having fun! They should be involved in games-based activities to help them learn core swimming skills such as breathing, submerging and moving in the water. Swimming strokes should be introduced gradually once the child has learned basic core aquatic skills. Lessons last around thirty minutes and children should be as active as possible throughout the lesson.

## What are the Core Aquatic skills?

These are the building blocks for learning more complex practices and they are fundamental to your child becoming a competent swimmer. For example, blowing bubbles in the bath/pool is the first stage for aquatic breathing; floating helps a child establish good body position for strokes to be developed and is key to teaching children safety. It is imperative that the core aquatic skills are taught well to enable swimmers to advance to more recognised techniques such as swimming the four main strokes.

**“Developing and delivering a progressive Learn to Swim programme is critical for the continued success of aquatics in Scotland. This framework develops fundamental aquatic literacy skills before developing stroke technique and proficiency in other water based activities.**

**Swimming is a sport for all and a sport for life and adopting this framework will encourage individuals to remain in the sport, whether as a competitor or for the fun, fitness and friendship element, as well as producing new role models on the world stage.”**

**Alan Lynn**  
Scottish Swimming National Coach



## National Framework for swimming in Scotland

Within the National Framework there are three programmes: Early Years; Learn to Swim; and Adults.

### **Early Years Programme:**

This consists of three levels: Adult and Baby; Adult and Toddler; and Adult and Child, the earlier you introduce your child to water the more confident he/she will become.

The Early Years programme is designed to introduce you and your child to the water in a fun way making it exciting and enjoyable for you both. It will provide you as a parent with confidence and skills to help teach your child to swim.

### **Learn to Swim Programme:**

This consists of six levels: Preschool, Swim Skills 1, Swim Skills 2, Swim Skills 3, Swim Skills 4 and Club Ready (Swim, Dive, Synchronised Swimming, Water Polo) with three overarching national standards: Gold, Silver and Bronze. The programme provides a fun, progressive and all-inclusive pathway for children to participate in any aquatic discipline to whatever level they aspire to.

It has the core philosophy of being fun, child-centred and based on establishing the core aquatic skills which are fundamental to a child learning more complex skills.

### **Adult Programme:**

Please visit our website for more information at [www.scottishswimming.com](http://www.scottishswimming.com)

## EARLY YEARS / ADULT & BABY

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**Aim:** To introduce the adult and baby to a swimming environment and develop the confidence and skills of the adult to ensure the safe and effective handling of the baby in the water.

- Objectives:**
- The adult will have the range of skills and knowledge necessary to handle their baby confidently and safely in the water
  - The 'quality time' aspect will be a key element of the adult and baby aquatic experience
  - Adult and baby will have experienced basic body positions and a range of movements in water
  - Adult and baby will have developed water confidence and enjoyment in the aquatic environment

## EARLY YEARS / ADULT & TODDLER

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**Aim:** To encourage independent movement and develop the water confidence and core aquatic skills of the toddler through structured play.

- Objectives:**
- The toddler will have been involved in interaction with other adults and children
  - The toddler will have experienced independent movement with buoyancy aids
  - The toddler will have developed some basic core aquatic skills through structured play focusing on enjoyment, fun and self-discovery
  - The toddler will have developed greater water confidence

## EARLY YEARS / ADULT & CHILD

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**Aim:** To further develop the core aquatic skills through structured play and develop the independence necessary for the next level (without an adult in the water).

- Objectives:**
- The child will demonstrate independent movement and a range of core aquatic skills
  - The child will have developed confident submersion and aquatic breathing
  - The child will have been involved in interaction with other adults and children
  - The child will become more attentive to the teacher's instruction and less reliant on adult support in preparation for the next level

# Learn to Swim

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## PRESCHOOL

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**Aim:** To become water confident and develop core aquatic skills (without adult assistance but with buoyancy aids as required).

- Objectives:**
- Introduce complete non-swimmers to the aquatic environment and establish an understanding of safety in and around water
  - Develop and progress water confidence
  - Establish an understanding of basic core aquatic skills
  - Encourage independent movement
  - Develop skills through enjoyment, fun and self-discovery

## SWIM SKILLS 1

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**Aim:** To further develop water confidence and develop core aquatic skills without aids.

- Objectives:**
- Develop confidence and ability to perform a wide range of core aquatic skills without buoyancy aids
  - Develop the basic technique of the 4 strokes
  - Introduce the basic technique of sculling
  - Develop balance and buoyancy through a variety of activities

## SWIM SKILLS 2

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**Aim:** To increase the competency of the core aquatic skills and develop basic stroke technique.

- Objectives:**
- Introduce and progress new core aquatic skills
  - Develop stroke technique to include all 4 strokes
  - Introduction to diving (pool permitting)
  - Develop awareness and feel for the water through a variety of core aquatic skills

## SWIM SKILLS 3

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**Aim:** Introduce more advanced stroke technique and achieve Triple S standard.

- Objectives:**
- Further develop competency in all four strokes
  - Development of Diving
  - Achieve the Triple S Award / Scotland Safer Swimmer Award
  - Further develop Butterfly and Breaststroke aiming to achieve legal technique

## SWIM SKILLS 4

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**Aim:** To improve the quality of stroke technique, introduce multi-aquatic skills/disciplines and basic lifesaving skills.

- Objectives:**
- To demonstrate competent technique in all four strokes
  - Introduce lifesaving skills and basic aquatic discipline skills
  - To provide basic skills to enable progression in to all aquatic disciplines including life saving



Scottish  
Swimming  

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Swim

## CLUB READY SWIM

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**Aim:** To improve and maintain stroke technique over distance and develop basic training and race skills producing a swimmer who is 'Club Ready'.

- Objectives:**
- Advance swimming stamina in all four strokes while maintaining technique
  - Improve efficiency in all 4 strokes
  - Develop turn technique for all 4 strokes
  - Knowledge and understanding of club training practices in a variety of core aquatic skills



Scottish  
Swimming  
Water Polo

## CLUB READY WATER POLO

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**Aim:** To introduce basic Water Polo technique and ball handling skills.

**Objectives:**

- Demonstrate Water Polo strokes
- Understand goal keeping skills
- Establish an understanding of the basic rules
- Develop ball handling skills
- Develop skills through enjoyment, fun and self-discovery

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Scottish  
Swimming  
Synchro

## CLUB READY SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING

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**Aim:** To introduce basic Synchronised Swimming, developing from the core aquatic skills and stroke techniques. To highlight the pleasure and interest obtained from working in pairs or small groups, from creative work and from working to music that synchronised swimming offers.

**Objectives:**

- Swimmers will develop the skill of sculling
- Swimmers will develop the three strokes (Frontcrawl, Backcrawl and Breaststroke) and their variations for Synchronised Swimming use
- Swimmers will be able to perform a range of the key body positions
- Swimmers will perform a range of simple movements/figures
- Swimmers will work in twos or threes to perform simple sequences of strokes and skills to music



## DIVE SKILLS 1 / LEARN TO DIVE

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**Aim:** To introduce new core aquatic skills, try out diving and cross over from swimming, gymnastics or trampolining.

- Objectives:**
- Pass Dive Skills 1, 2 and 3
  - Learn a head first entry from the poolside
  - Introduce forward and backward directions
  - Learn dive shapes
  - armswings

## DIVE SKILLS 2 / LEARN TO DIVE

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**Aim:** Introduction to six directions of dives from the poolside and the 1 metre and 3 metre boards.

- Objectives:**
- Perform quality movements and progressions
  - Attention to detail
  - Develop skills, chains and progressions

## CLUB READY DIVING

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**Aim:** To join a diving club and compete in events.

- Objectives:**
- Able to perform pike fall, tuck roll and straight fall from the 3 metre diving board
  - Able to perform a forward dive tuck, back fall and back dive from the 1 metre diving board
  - Able to jump from the 5 metre forwards
  - Potential to become competitive novice/skills level diver
  - Knowledge and understanding of club training practices and competition format and rules





# NATIONAL STANDARDS

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These levels have been split into three National Standards: Bronze, Silver and Gold. These standards have been created to provide an overview of what a child has achieved at certain stages of the pathway and also to deliver consistent standards across Scotland. The National Standards contain two Learn to Swim levels within each of them:

## BRONZE STANDARD

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### Becoming Water Confident

Preschool and Swim Skills 1 are targeted at developing core aquatic skills and water confidence

- Become confident in the water
- Develop basic movement in the water
- Develop skills through a fun and progressive pathway

## SILVER STANDARD

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### Developing a Safer Swimmer

Swim Skills 2 and 3 are targeted at further developing core skills and traditional stroke technique with the aim of achieving Triple S (Scotland Safer Swimmer)

- Develop the four strokes
- Develop a more competent swimmer
- Achieve Triple S

## GOLD STANDARD

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### Achieving Aquatic Competence

Swim Skills 4 and Club Ready are targeted at further improving stroke technique and introducing a multi aquatic approach

- Become 'Club Ready'
- Water safety aware and proficient
- Pathway to lifelong participation

To achieve Gold Standard, Swim Skills 4 and one Club Ready level needs to be achieved

After reading this leaflet you may still have some questions around your child learning to swim. You can find answers to some of the questions we regularly receive from parents at [www.scottishswimming.com](http://www.scottishswimming.com)





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