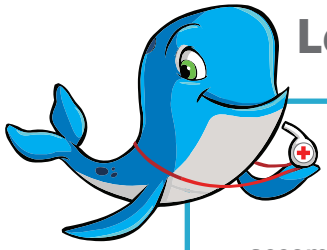
American Red Cross

SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY NEWS



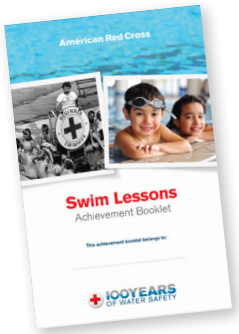
Learn-to-Swim Level 4–Stroke Improvement

Welcome to American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim Level 4!

We know you are very proud of your child's swimming and water safety accomplishments so far. You are seeing your child perform a variety of skills with ever-increasing levels of quality and confidence.

We're proud to offer you:

- Professional instructors who are well trained by the American Red Cross.
- Learning made fun in a safe environment.
- A balanced program that teaches swimming skills and how to be safe in the water, including a focus on lowering the risk of drowning and increasing the chances of drowning survival.
- A comprehensive swimming and water safety program for everyone in the family–from infancy to adulthood including:
  - A free Red Cross Swim mobile application available for download from iTunes, Google Play or Amazon Marketplace app stores.
  - *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklets* to track skill achievement and progression through the levels.
  - Badge system to recognize and reward achievement outside of the levels, motivating participants to strive toward developing specific skills and for recognizing participants for something that they are doing well, especially when they are struggling with a specific skill or set of skills needed to successfully complete the level.



What do participants learn in Learn-to-Swim Level 4?

In Learn-to-Swim Level 4, our instructors follow a plan to introduce new swimming and water safety skills and to build on previously learned skills, improving the swimming stroke proficiency and swimming for longer distances. Each class is loaded with fun, engaging and challenging activities that motivate children to want to perform and learn to swim. Some of the milestones in Level 4–Stroke Improvement include:

- Swimming the front crawl for 25 yards.
- Swimming the elementary backstroke for 25 yards.
- Swimming the breaststroke for 15 yards.
- Swimming the butterfly for 15 yards.
- Swimming the back crawl for 15 yards.
- Swimming the sidestroke for 15 yards.
- Headfirst entry* from a stride position (*only if the water is at least 9-feet deep).
- Open turns on the front and back.

PARENT'S CORNER

How can you help?

- Praise your child and help him or her be proud of the efforts and accomplishments toward being a safety-conscious and skilled swimmer.
- Remind your child that people develop swimming skills at different rates. Participants rarely achieve all of the skills and performance requirements in a single session.
- Have your child ask the instructor which skills he or she should review and then make it possible for your child to practice these skills at a local aquatic facility.
- Download the Red Cross Swim mobile application and use it to help encourage your child's progress and knowledge about water safety as well as share your child's progress and successes. Also have your child watch the stroke performance videos for additional demonstrations of each stroke.
- Encourage your child to ask to test for badges.

How participants improve in between classes?

- Make it possible for them to attend public or family swims to develop strength and practice skills.
- Think about safe locations for diving. Think "safety first" by entering "feet first, the first time" to ensure there are no water hazards.

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In Learn-to-Swim Level 5– Stroke Refinement participants will:

- Refine their performance of all the strokes (front crawl, back crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, elementary backstroke and sidestroke).
- Increase their endurance by swimming familiar strokes for greater distances.
- Learn flip turns on the front and back.

How are Learn-to-Swim Level 4 participants evaluated?

Instructors follow a plan that details the skills to be introduced at each level along with performance expectations. Your child's progress and skill achievement are continuously monitored and evaluated. Once all Level 4 skills are achieved and the exit skills assessment is completed, your child receives a completion card and is ready to move on to Level 5!

Check in with your child's instructor to find out how he or she is doing. At the end of the session, your instructor will date, sign and provide comments on your child's *Swim Lessons Achievement Booklet.* Once your child has successfully completed all of the requirements for a level, the instructor will indicate in the booklet that your child is ready to enroll in the next level.

Where do swimmers go after Level 4?

By now, participants are able to make good progress in the water, but they are not done yet! Swimmers move through the six levels of Red Cross Learn-to-Swim as they master the skills required at each level. After successfully demonstrating the completion requirements from Level 4, enroll swimmers in Learn-to-Swim Level 5. Other opportunities at this level of achievement include Water Safety Instructor or Junior Lifeguarding courses.

BE A WATER SMART FAMILY!

As your child improves his or her swimming skill and endurance, the opportunities to engage in and enjoy aquatic activities in a variety of settings greatly increases. But every aquatic setting is different and poses specific safety challenges. Being aware of these safety challenges can help you stay safe no matter what aquatic setting you are in.

Too much sun is no fun. Ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun are invisible, so you need to take steps to protect your skin whenever you go outside, even on cloudy days. Always wear a sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30.

Look before you leap. Remember the rules for headfirst entries. Always check with a lifeguard to see if it is okay to jump in the water. If it is allowed, make sure that you can see what is in front of you and below the water before you enter the water.

Wave, tide or ride, follow the guide. Follow all posted directions and instructions from the lifeguards to get into the correct position before starting down a water slide–face up and feetfirst in most cases. On speed slides, crossing the legs helps prevent injuries.