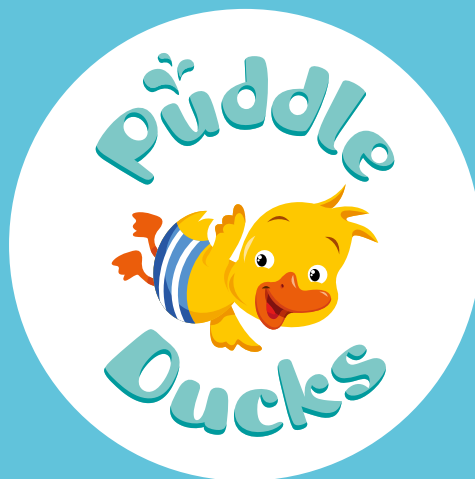




Babies & Swimming:


Everything You Ever
Wanted to Know





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Introduction

Swimming is one of the most exciting experiences you can have with your baby!

From birth, babies have a real connection with water. After spending nine months in the womb, water serves as a natural transition to the “outside world”.

Throughout this guide, we will look at the many benefits that both parent and baby can enjoy from swimming at an early age.

If you're thinking of starting swimming lessons with your baby or just going for a splash about at the local pool, our guide has all the information you'll need.



The Benefits of Baby Swimming

Both you and your baby will have great fun swimming – and there's also plenty of advantages to taking swimming lessons too. It is a time for you and your baby to relax together.

- The **bonding experience** is second-to-none – there is lots of eye contact and skin-to-skin, **strengthening** the wonderful bond between parent and child.
- It helps your baby **build confidence** in the water, and you too if you lack water-confidence.
- Swimming is a **fun and socially stimulating** activity for both parents and babies.
- Swimming is the only time your baby can feel truly **independent**.
- Swimming gives your baby the opportunity to **develop higher brain functions, co-ordination** and **core muscle** development, earlier than their non-swimming peers.
- Regular swimming can help **improve eating** and **sleeping** patterns.
- Encouraging a baby to take regular exercise, such as swimming, will make it easier to **establish a healthy lifestyle in the future**.

Baby Swimming Lessons vs a Splash About at a Local Pool

Many parents love the idea of taking their baby swimming but either they aren't confident swimmers themselves or feel as though they don't have the know-how to take their baby in the water. This can end up in a disappointing or frustrating experience for both baby and parent.

Many special swimming classes exist, which have a clear structure, including some **underwater swimming** (this is perfectly safe in the controlled environment of a reputable swim school). You may find this is a more enjoyable way to take your baby swimming.

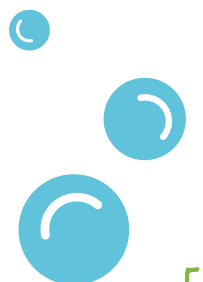
The best swim classes provide an **enriching environment** for the parent and baby to **strengthen their bond** and create happy memories associated with the water and learning to swim.

“The best swim classes provide an enriching environment”



If you are confident in the water and are keen on taking your baby swimming outside of a structured class then there are lots of online **videos** which can help you to make the most of your time in the pool, **suggested activities, hints** and **tips** to make your time in the water as fun and productive as possible.

You can find a **full range** of video tips, just like this, for babies **from birth** right up to **4 year olds** who are confident in the water on the [Puddle Ducks You Tube channel](#).



What You'll Need to Bring

Never underestimate the amount of things you'll need to bring with you. Bring a big bag so you have plenty of room for all your bits and bobs!

We advise that you pack plenty of disposable or reusable swim nappies – accidents can happen and it's always better to come prepared!

You should also bring these items with you:

- A **warm bottle** for after the swim if you're bottle-feeding
- Some of your baby's **favourite bath toys**
- A **plastic bag** for putting your wet clothes in at the end
- A **snack** for after swimming if your baby is on solids (swimming makes babies hungry, after all!)
- A **towel**, preferably one with a hood and take it to the poolside to wrap them up as soon as you get out
- **Coins or trolley tokens** for the lockers
- A **changing mat** and a **nappy bag**

You'll want to pack a few essentials, both for during and after swimming.





By bringing your baby's favourite bath toys, you'll **encourage a relaxing and fun atmosphere** for them.

“Encourage a relaxing and fun atmosphere”

Reusable swimming nappies are designed so that when they become wet, **they won't expand** and soak up liquid like a regular nappy would, but they aren't enough on their own. A **double nappy** system is **compulsory** in some pools; this is a disposable or reusable swim nappy with a neoprene swim nappy over the top. These outer nappies have cuffs round the waist and thighs to stop any 'accidents' leaking into the pool.



As the parent, you should wear **easy-to-wear clothes**, such as jumpers or tracksuits, as you'll want as **minimum fuss** as possible when getting dressed and undressed. Pop your swimwear on under your clothes so you are 'ready' but **don't forget** to pack your underwear for afterwards!

Safety First!

Just a few things to think about to make your first and subsequent swimming experiences with your baby the best they can be for both of you.

If you are taking your toddler swimming for the first time, you need to think carefully about the pool environment. First impressions are important and a cold pool could put a baby off wanting to go again.

Any pool you choose should be heated to **over 28°C, be clean** and **well-managed**. Many local authority pools have a 'baby' pool which is **warmer and shallower** than the main pool. If you are a member of a private gym with a pool, these are often warmer than average so ask if you can take your child along (there may be certain times of the week that children aren't allowed in).



If you cannot find a pool that is warm, you may want to consider a **mini-wetsuit** for your child. The logistics at the pool are also important; is there sufficient **room in the changing rooms**, do you need **money for a locker**, is the car parking plentiful and **close to the pool?**

Babies aren't very good at retaining body heat so if your baby starts to shiver, don't worry, just **take them out of the pool and wrap them up**. Wearable towels with hoods are good for this.

Babies shouldn't stay in the pool for too long. 15-30 minutes in the pool will be enough for their first time – you know your baby best!



If your baby has a skin condition, such as dry skin or eczema, they may become irritated by the chlorine in the water. **Rinse the pool-water off your baby immediately after swimming, and apply a moisturiser or their usual cream all over the skin.**

Safe entry and **exit** to and from the pool are as important as safety when you are in the pool.

We've put together some great videos for you to learn how to safely **enter** and **exit** the pool with your baby.



Here's a few bits of **advice** if you are worried whether your baby is fit to go swimming or not:

Parents often ask us whether their babies can swim **before they have been immunised**. The answer is **yes**, babies can swim any time before or after their immunisations.

If your baby has a mild cold/runny nose, there is **no reason** to keep them away from the pool but if they are running a **temperature** it's probably wise to keep them **off swimming** - we all know how bad we feel when we have a fever ourselves so keep them away from the pool and have plenty of extra cuddles at home.

If your baby is suffering from diarrhoea they must stay away from a pool for **two weeks** - this is a health and safety advisory from the Public Health Department and applies to all swimming lessons across the UK.

Drying your baby's ears properly can **prevent ear infections**. You can dry the ear canal by gently **tipping the head** to one side and then the other to allow natural drainage.

Whilst having wet hair in the outside won't give you a cold, it isn't a very nice feeling, so think about **bringing a hat**, along with **warm clothing** for when you leave the pool after your lesson. Always make sure you've **dried your baby's hair** as best you can.



What Happens at Baby Swimming Lessons?

Baby swimming lessons are taught in specially selected pools with limited class-sizes.

By having limited numbers, your teacher will be able to spend **more time working closely** with you and your baby to develop swimming abilities and water confidence.

Swimming lessons are **fun and relaxed**, and they encourage learning through play. Your teacher will help build up the **natural reflexes** that babies are born with, encouraging them to feel **safe and secure** in the water.

Puddle Ducks classes incorporate bespoke **rhymes, songs** and **movement** to make an interactive and educational atmosphere that will show even the most nervous swimmers just how much fun swimming can be. Baby swimming lessons are also very **social events** with lots of opportunity to meet and chat with parents who have babies the same age as yours.

How Soon Will My Baby Learn to Swim?

You should be prepared for it to take a while, and it would be better to make swimming a regular occurrence in your lives.

Initially, it isn't about 'learning to swim', it is about feeling comfortable and confident in the water. Plus, everyone learns at a different pace, so it can vary on how long it may take to adapt to the water.

At Puddle Ducks, we provide swimming lessons for children up to the **age of 10**, so there are always new things and techniques for your children to learn that can help them excel in the water. Children who have come through our programme can regularly **swim 10m before they start school!**





If you attend baby-swimming lessons, you can expect to do the following types of **activities**, all of which are a pre-cursor to your child learning to swim independently:

- Introducing voluntary breath holds and bubbles
- Feeling the water supporting them
- Trying out splashing and kicking
- Setting the swim position and muscle memory
- Spurting to expel water
- Introducing signals and improving communication between baby and parent
- Slow introduction to the underwater environment – at your baby’s pace

Don’t book swimming lessons for a **quick fix**. Instead, consider it a **skill for life**.



Who Are Puddle Ducks?

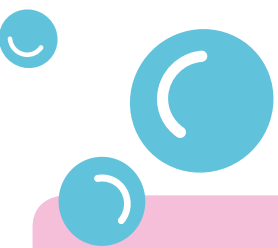
Swimming is important in developing a strong bond between parents and children. By doing an activity that equips children with essential life skills, you will also help improve their confidence in the water and in other areas of their lives.

So, why go to Puddle Ducks for swimming lessons?

Your baby is at the **centre of everything we do**. Our teachers are trained to identify your baby's stage of development, and will **tailor activities** to suit your baby's pace.



“Your baby is at the centre of everything we do.”



We believe in giving you and your baby choice. If your little one isn't ready to do an activity, we will **listen and adapt** accordingly to something they are comfortable with.

We provide **real value**. Swimming lessons are an investment in your child's safety and future. Our lessons are **informative, educational,** and **great value**.



We are **constantly developing**. We continuously review and develop our programmes to ensure that they are **up to date** and that they offer the very best lessons possible.

Three-lesson cancellation policy. We're very confident that you and your baby will enjoy every bit about our swimming lessons, but if you decide after three lessons that you don't want to continue, we will give you a full refund on all of your remaining classes.



What are you waiting for?

Find your local classes on **our website**, and experience just how much fun you and your little one can have in the water!

www.puddleducks.com



Find us on

