

West Laurel Swim Club - Summer Swim Lesson Program

Level 1 Teachers guide

Level 1 - purpose:

The purpose of level 1 is to allow the student to get comfortable in and around the water and to practice water safety. To achieve this goal students will practice going underwater and holding their breath as well as pushing of the wall both with and without kicking. They will also practice floating on their back.

Level 1 is meant for beginner students who have had no formal lessons before or those who are very uncomfortable around water.

Level 1 - Goals:

1. The student will complete 10 “bobs” without assistance from the teacher.

A bob consists of the student completely submerging their face in the water and blowing bubbles from their mouth or nose. The student should not wipe their face between bobs. The student may, if they choose, hold onto the wall while completing bobs.

2. The student will demonstrate front and back glides from ready position.

A glide consists of pushing off of the wall from ready position in streamline. During a front glide the face is in the water with the student blowing bubbles. During a back glide the student should be relaxed with face above the water.

3. The student will complete front and back kicks for at least 10 feet.

Kicks consist of the students pushing off of the wall from ready position in streamline and maintaining a steady kick for at least 10 feet. During a front kick the face is in the water with the student blowing bubbles. During a back kick the student should be relaxed with face above the water.

Level 1 – suggested techniques:

For students who are afraid to dunk their head consider challenging them to retrieve items from the bottom of the pool or to touch the bottom of the pool with their hands.

Compare blowing bubbles in water to blowing bubbles in a drink through a straw.

To help students float on their back encourage them to take and hold deep breaths, your chest is like a balloon. Keeping the head tilted back and the belly up also helps with floating on the back.

While first learning to kick use a kickboard or noodle, students might not be comfortable with putting their head in the water right away.

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Level 2 Teachers guide

Level 2 - purpose:

The purpose of level 2 is to teach students the basics of swimming. The students will develop their freestyle skills and begin the basics of backstroke. To achieve this goal the students will practice kicking/turning to the side to develop the freestyle breath and begin to build up endurance in the water. They will also work on the basic arm movements of freestyle.

Level 2 is meant for students who are comfortable in the water but are not yet quite able to swim complete laps of the pool.

Level 2 - Goals:

1. The student will complete front and back kicks for 20 feet.

Kicks consist of leaving the wall from ready position and kicking a quarter of the way across the pool without stopping. During front kicks the face should be in the water (unless taking a breath). During back kick student should be relaxed with their face above the water.

2. The student will complete the side-glide-kick drill for 20 feet.

Side glide kick consists of the student kicking on their side with the face above the water. One arm is up leading the swimmer while the other arm is at their side. Every six kicks the student will switch sides, during each switch the face goes in the water and the student takes one front crawl style pull.

3. The student will swim freestyle for 20 feet.

Freestyle consists of pulling with your arms while kicking with your feet. The face is in the water, shoulders should rotate with each arm as it pulls. To take a breath the student turns their head to the side.

Level 2 – suggested techniques:

If the student has trouble kicking 20 feet on their own consider using kickboards and practice going back and forth until they build up leg strength and endurance. Challenge them to see how far they can go without stopping.

If the student has trouble floating during side glide kick have them hold onto a noodle with their lead hand until they are strong enough to do it without help.

If the student has trouble getting their face in the water when switching sides tell them to blow bubbles like they would with a straw in a drink.

If the student has trouble turning their head to the side to breath during freestyle have them roll completely to their side each time they breathe.

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Level 3 Teachers guide

Level 3 - purpose:

The purpose of level three is to improve the students free and back skills while beginning to teach the breaststroke and butterfly kicks. To achieve this goal the students will work on building their endurance in backstroke and freestyle by swimming increasingly larger distances. They will also begin to learn the basic techniques behind the breaststroke and butterfly kicks to prepare them to swim all four competitive strokes.

Level 3 is for students who are comfortable swimming freestyle and are ready to begin learning how to swim the other three strokes.

Level 3 - Goals:

1. The student will swim one half length of the pool freestyle.
2. The student will complete a half lap of the pool backstroke.

Backstroke consists of pulling with your arms while kicking with your feet. The swimmer is on their back instead of their belly with shoulders rotating with the arms as they pull. Head remains out of the water at all times.

3. The student will kick 20 feet breaststroke.

During the breaststroke kick toes are pointed outward at all times. Each foot moves in a circular motion much like a frog would kick in the water.

4. The student will kick 20 feet butterfly.

During the butterfly kick the legs move together as one as a dolphin moves its tail. The whole body should move in a wave-like motion during the kick.

Level 3 – suggested techniques:

If the student is having a hard time staying above water during backstroke advise them to tilt their head back and stick their belly up, this helps with floating.

In backstroke the arm should come close to the head, if their arms are swinging way out advise them to touch their ears with their arms until they are used to it.

If the student is having a hard time with the breaststroke kick try having them lay flat in the grass and move their legs through the motions for them. Feeling the proper motions can help them do it on their own even if it's not in the water.

Many students have trouble moving forward when they first learn the butterfly kick, if they aren't getting anywhere remind them to point their toes and use their whole body to kick. They should not be over-bending their body at the waist.

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Level 4 Teachers guide

Level 4 - purpose:

The purpose of level 4 is to teach students the full breaststroke and butterfly strokes while continuing to build up their endurance in freestyle and backstroke. Breaststroke and butterfly are often the hardest strokes for students to learn so most of the instructional time will be dedicated to learning these strokes.

Level 4 is for moderately strong swimmers who can correctly swim both free and back for moderate distances who wish to learn breaststroke and butterfly.

Level 4 - Goals:

1. Students will swim one full length of the pool freestyle.
2. Students will swim one full length of the pool backstroke
3. Students will swim 20 feet breaststroke.

Breaststroke consists of the “frog” kick. The arms move together, starting from the students’ chest the hands move out palms together. The hands then separate and move about shoulder width apart where they then return to the students’ chest. There is one pull per kick.

4. Students will swim 20 feet butterfly.

The full butterfly stroke consists of the student completing a dolphin kick while moving both arms together. The arms stay straight and move out across the water starting at the hips and finishing above the students head.

Level 4 – suggested techniques:

If the student is not timing the breaststroke correctly have them slow down and exaggerate the glide between strokes. This will help them with timing the stroke so there is exactly one pull per kick. The two pull one kick drill for breaststroke can also help fix timing problems.

If the students are having a hard time staying above water during butterfly have them breathe every other stroke. This helps them get into a more regular rhythm with their body and helps them stay on the surface of the water.

If the student cannot keep their arms straight during the butterfly pull have them turn their palms upward, this puts their arms in a position where it is harder to bend the elbows.

Make sure the student is breathing once per stroke for breaststroke; the head should come out of the water every time even if they student doesn't feel like they have to take a breath.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my child wear a floatation device during the lesson?

Students will not be permitted to wear floatation devices during swim lessons. Students must be able to complete the goals without assistance, we cannot accurately assess whether the students have achieved the goals if they are wearing a floatation device. There are also times where floatation devices can actually create safety concerns during lessons, such as when jumping/diving in.

How do I decide which level to pick for my child?

When picking a level consider how comfortable your child is in the water and how strong a swimmer they are. Consider what skills they already know or have already learned during previous lessons. If your child can already complete most of the goals of a level, it is recommended that you select the next level up. If you are still not sure, the coordinator can assess the students' abilities and place your child at the appropriate level.

Can my child move to a different level once lessons have started?

Children will remain in the level selected by their parent/guardian for the duration of the swim lesson session with two exceptions. First, if the child is clearly way above or way below the skill level required to be successful at that level they will be moved up or down accordingly. Second, if the child progresses and improves rapidly within the first few lessons they may be moved up to a more challenging level. The coordinator will have the final say in all cases.

How do I know when my child is ready for the next level?

If you are planning to enroll your child in multiple sessions it might be difficult to know just when to move them up to the next level. The best time to move them is when they have completed all, or at least most, of the goals established for the level they are currently in. This will ensure that they have mastered the skills they need in order to be successful at the next level. Remember that everyone learns at a different rate, some children might spend several sessions at the same level before they are ready for the next one. This is completely OK; learning to swim is very different from learning to do most other things. It is not a process you should rush! You can always ask the lesson coordinator if you are not sure which level is right for your child.

What will be taught at each level?

The goals and techniques used for each lesson will be posted on the swim lesson bulletin board at all times. The main goals have been limited to increase the focus of each level to produce a more effective swim lesson program. While each teacher will use their own techniques and creativity to achieve those goals, the posted goals will always be the main focus of the level with each lesson working towards preparing the students to achieve those goals.

Does my child have to wear goggles?

Goggles are not mandatory but are highly recommended. If your child can comfortably open their eyes in the water then goggles are not necessary. If your child cannot comfortably open their eyes in water goggles will greatly increase their ability to be successful in the program, especially at the higher levels.

Does my child have to wear a swim cap?

Swim caps are not mandatory but are recommended for anyone with hair that is longer than about 5 inches. Your child might have a hard time being successful if they have hair in their face and eyes. If your child does not want to wear a cap then a hair tie will also be great for keeping hair out of the face.

Can I help my child during the lesson?

While as a parent/guardian you might want to always be there for your child it is important that you do not interfere with the swim lesson. If you have questions or concerns please direct them to the coordinator, parents should not be talking to the teachers while the lesson is in progress. This is especially important for younger students who might be afraid of completing certain tasks. They need to realize that, just like at school, the teacher is in charge and they must listen to the directions that are being given. Parents are, of course, welcome to sit and watch the lesson. Parents should not be in the water attempting to help with the lesson at any time.