



When do I Finish Swimming Lessons?

This is a question that I have also had to deal with over the years and I guess there is no definitive answer to this, because it depends on what level of swimming the parent wishes their child to achieve. Swimming is such a technical sport that there is always something to learn. One reason we teach other strokes before the pupil has perfected crawl stroke (freestyle) is: the process of learning other strokes (butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke) helps develop a pupil's confidence and feel for the water, as well as introducing variety into the lesson. This feel for the water is very important as it is the corner stone for good freestyle. So when you see the instructors teaching your child other swimming strokes, remember the instructors are not only developing your child's basic skills but are also making swimming lessons interesting.

In general most parents want their children to be able to swim well enough to save themselves if they fall into a body of water e.g. a swimming pool, lake, dam etc. When you have a pupil who can swim 100m non stop without goggles then that child is well on the way top being safe in most still water situations.

Now moving water (surf, rivers, fast flowing creeks etc.) is a very different matter. In these cases someone who can swim 400m non-stop has a fairly good chance of being able to swim out of most situations, provide they do not panic. A good example of someone who could swim 400m yet get into trouble in the water would be; getting caught in a rip in the ocean, because there is more than swimming skills involved in this type of situation. There needs to be a knowledge of where you have to swim in order to get out of a rip, and if it is a very strong one then the only option you may have is to let it take you out to sea and then start swimming parallel to the beach, until you get out of the rip and then swim in.

It really is up to the parent as to what level of safety they feel comfortable with. The parent of a three year old, who has a pool at home, may be happy with the fact that their child can swim back to the side if they fell into the pool, because this is all they need the child to be able to do to give them some piece of mind.

So *"when is a good time for my child to stop swimming lessons"* is very relevant to the needs of that family. A family who go to the beach a lot would require their children be strong swimmers.

Heated dressing rooms, private classes and parent viewing room.

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Water skiing activities would require a slightly less level of strength in the water because most water skiing activities:

- (a) have a boat that can turn around and come and get you and
- (b) are conducted in relatively calm water.

A family who never go to the beach or spend lots of time near the water may be happy with the fact that if they go to the local pool for a swim, they can relax because they know that their child can swim well enough to get back to the side of the pool. One other situation that I have encountered is parents just want their children to be able to go to school swimming lessons and not have to worry about being in the group that cannot swim.

How well someone wants their child to swim is very relevant to the situation that parents perceive their child will be in when they are around water, so there is no cut and dried time to stop lesson, you just have to take each case in relation to the needs of that family.

Of course what parents sometimes fail to realize is that, if they stop lessons before their child can swim a minimum of 100m non-stop then they may be placing restrictions on the amount of enjoyment their children get out of their social activities as they get older, and may want to go surfing, scuba diving, white water rafting or even just to enjoy the sheer joy of feeling confident in the water.

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