

Swimming Patches

Through this Swim Patch program, you will learn the basics of water survival and swimming skills.

There are an estimated 320,000 annual drowning deaths worldwide. Drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths, according to the site Stop Drowning Now. This patch program was written by four girls for their Silver Award project. They created it to prevent drowning, especially in kids, and to encourage people to learn how to swim. Pick the appropriate patch for your swimming level, or earn them all!

In the beginner swim patch, you will learn easy ways to stay safe in the water.

In the intermediate swim patch, you will learn how to swim freestyle and how to prevent drowning.

In the proficient swim patch, you will learn water safety and how to survive in the ocean, as well as basic skills like backstroke and freestyle.

In the advanced swim patch, you will learn important skills, get a chance to become a lifeguard at your local pool or learn life-saving skills, and learn the strokes of butterfly or breaststroke.

This patch program was created by Troop 2028 for their Silver Award.

Beginner Swim Patch

Step 1 - Learn about water survival:

During this step, you will learn water survival skills and about buddies.

Choice 1: Take a water survival class

Some of your community's local pools have water survival classes open to you and your neighborhood. Find a local pool in your community near you that offers classes and take one. You can do this with another girl in your troop or your guardian.

Choice 2: Watch an online video

There are many videos on YouTube or other websites that teach water survival techniques. Here are a couple of videos to try:

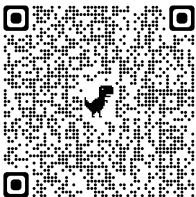
How to survive in open water

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkpWuoFQ-2g>



Tips for survival at sea. Watch videos 1 through 5

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety/water-safety-for-kids.html>



Choice 3: Learn the rules at your local pool

Find out what to do to be the best rule follower there. Talk to a lifeguard about the most important rules you should follow. Find out what injuries are the most common when swimming.

Step 2 - Learn about skills:

During this step, you will learn to swim without getting tired. Pick something you need to work on whether it is holding your breath underwater, staying afloat, front crawling, or backstroke.

Choice 1: Take a class

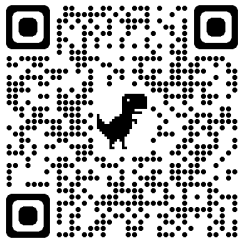
Many YMCAs, neighborhoods, or community pools have classes that teach you how to do proper swimming strokes and what to do in different areas. Find a class near you that teaches beginner tips on swimming and take the class, remember to start slow and build up gradually.

Choice 2: Find videos online

You can find skills about swimming on lots of websites. Some websites are American Red Cross, USA Swimming, Enjoy Swimming, Little Fish Swimming, or you can just find videos on YouTube.

5 Skills for Beginner Swimmers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6R0h-M7S0k>



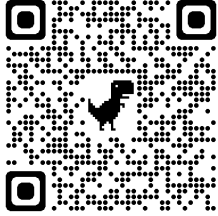
Choice 3: Have an experienced swimmer teach you

The person who teaches you can be a troop leader, another girl in your troop, or anyone that you know personally who can teach you how to do backstroke and tread water longer.

Extra resources:

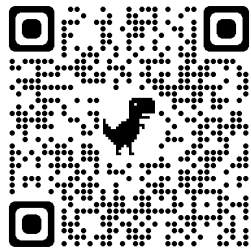
How To Tread Water For Beginners Without Getting Tired - Learn Swimming:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Y2ut4Pq7E>



How to Swim Backstroke For Beginners:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpj0iXerg0E>



Step 3 - Practice the skills:

During this step, you will be practicing the skills you learned in step 2. You can practice as much as you need to be able to do the skill that you chose, remember to start slow and build up gradually.

Choice 1: Practice at a pool

Go to a pool a few days a week and practice these skills until you are confident in your ability to do them. This might take longer for some people than others, and that's okay!

Choice 2: Have another swimmer judge you

Constructive criticism is one of the best ways to learn, so have another more experienced swimmer tell you what you're doing wrong and how to correct it.

Choice 3: Continue participating in the class

(This will be more simple to do if you choose to do choice 1 on step 2.) Being in a class is a good way to practice skills regularly, so it is a good option if you are willing to put in the time and effort.

Step 4 - Test out:

In this step, you will have an adult confirm that you can correctly do the skill you chose in step 2.

Choice 1: Have a certified lifeguard approve you

Go to a local pool and see if one of the lifeguards there can confirm that you can correctly swim the skill that you chose without stopping.

Choice 2: Have your instructor approve you

If you chose the class option for steps 2 and 3 you can have an instructor critique your ability without stopping.

Choice 3: Get a troop leader or parent who knows the skills to confirm your ability to perform the skills correctly

If you can't find a certified lifeguard and you know someone capable of performing the technique, see if one of these people can take the time to confirm that you are performing the technique correctly.

Step 5 - Teach someone else:

In this step, you will choose a water skill that you know how to do well and will teach someone else how to do this skill. For example, you could teach someone to hold their breath underwater or float. You can teach skills other than the ones listed, these are just ideas to get you thinking.

Choice 1: Teach a girl in your troop

Find a girl in your troop who doesn't know the skill you chose to teach and go to a public pool to instruct them. Make sure that the person you are teaching has a lifevest if they don't know how to swim and also have an adult who knows how to swim nearby in case you need help.

Choice 2: Teach a younger girl

Find a girl in another troop who is taking the patch but doesn't know the proper technique and go to a public pool to practice. Make sure that the person you are teaching has a lifevest if they can not swim and also have an adult who knows how to swim nearby in case you need help.

Choice 3: Create a video

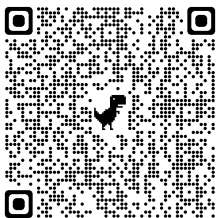
Make an instructional video on how to do the proper technique and post it online or share it with others. In the video make sure to introduce the skill, demonstrate it, and teach it.

Water Safety

I found this cool website levels 1 and 2 could use. You may need to talk to make sure you don't overlap

Water Safety for Kids

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety/water-safety-for-kids.html>



Learn about Buddies Episode 1

Learn about Depth Episode 2

Learn and Follow the Rules of Where You're Swimming

Have Inexperienced Swimmers Wear Coast Guard-Approved Life Jackets Episode 5

Intermediate Swim Patch

Step 1 - Water safety:

During this step, you will be learning about water safety.

Choice 1: Watch online videos about water safety

There are plenty of videos online that are able to teach you about water safety. There are two videos provided for example. There are other videos that you can watch if you would like.

Here are some recommendations:

Basic water safety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsYZhSHiRD8>



10 water safety tips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS4VfY4N2vs>



Choice 2: Take a course online

Learning about your water safety online is a good way to teach you about some simple skills that you should learn before going into water.

Water safety for kids (watch videos 6-8 on the link below):

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety/water-safety-for-kids.html>



Choice 3: Take an in person class

Learning about your safety and skills in person is a wonderful way to really soak in the information. You can search the web to find an in person class for swimming that is near you.

Step 2 - Learn some skills

In this step you will be learning how to swim freestyle.

Choice 1: Take a class

Many public places and swim clubs have classes that will teach you how to do these easy skills and more. Find a class near you that teaches freestyle and take the class.

Choice 2: Join a local swim team

You can find swim teams at your local public pools. Learning to be a better swimmer through teams will improve your skills. This task may take longer than the other options, but will get you more experience and become more advanced.

Choice 3: Have an experienced swimmer teach you

Knowing an experienced swimmer can make you more comfortable in water. This person could be someone in your troop, a family member, and friend, a lifeguard, or any other swimmers you know. Having them teach you skills will help you get more practice and help you learn those new skills.

Step 3 - Practice the skills:

During this step, you will be practicing the skills you have learned in the previous step.

Choice 1: Practice at a pool

After learning your new skills, you can practice in a pool. This can be at any pool. When you are first learning and practicing, having someone watch or swimming with a partner would be recommended.

Choice 2: Have another swimmer judge you

Getting feedback from another swimmer will help you improve on skills you haven't mastered yet. Having their word will get you to practice more until you have it perfected.

Choice 3: Continue participating in a swim team

As a continuation of choice 2 on step 2, you can practice more with the swim strokes and skills.

Step 4 - Test out:

In this step, you will test swimming freestyle for 25 meters without stopping and getting approved by an adult.

Choice 1: Have a certified lifeguard approve you

Going to a local pool with lifeguards will allow you to test your skills in front of an experienced person. Having their feedback can help you understand mistakes you have made and fix them.

Choice 2: Have a swim team coach approve you

If you have chosen the swim team options in steps 2 and 3, you can have your swim coach look at your skills. They are able to help you improve your skills if you haven't learned them very well yet.

Choice 3: Get a troop leader or parent that knows these skills to approve you

If you don't know where to find a lifeguard or you aren't on a swim team, you can find an adult who knows these skills well to watch you. Anyone who can do these skills well will have some sort of feedback to help you or let you know that you have done well.

Step 5 - Teach someone else:

In this step, you will teach another girl how to swim freestyle once you have mastered it and have been approved by an adult.

Choice 1: Teach a girl in your troop

If there are any girls in your troop who don't know how to swim freestyle yet, you can teach them. Let them feel comfortable in water before teaching them anything. Letting them have the feel of water before trying any skills is recommended so they do not feel pressured at first. If you are not confident in teaching free stroke, you can teach them the beginner patch.

Choice 2: Teach a younger girl scout

If you know any younger girls that don't know how to swim free stroke, you can teach them! Make sure they feel comfortable around water and stay with them at all times. Free stroke is a skill that is needed to swim so learning it earlier in life will introduce them to new skills sooner. Encourage them to keep trying even if they feel as if they cannot do it. If you are not confident in teaching free stroke, you can teach them the beginner patch.

Choice 3: Create a video

Making a video online with instructions on how to swim free stroke can be useful for anyone around the world. Encourage viewers to have an adult or an experienced swimmer around in case of mistakes or mess-ups.

Proficient Swim Patch

Step 1 - Learn about water survival:

During this step, you will learn water survival skills.

Choice 1: Take a water survival class

Some community centers or pools have classes on water survival that are open to the public. Find a place near you that offers classes and take one. You can do this with another girl in your troop or your parent or guardian.

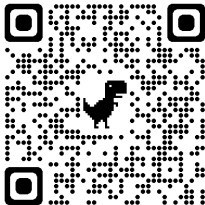
Choice 2: Watch an online video

There are many videos on YouTube or other websites that teach water survival techniques. Here are a couple of videos to try:

How to survive in open water - https://youtu.be/x_s8m189xK8



Tips for survival at sea - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4A0d0hERY0>



Choice 3: Become an ambassador for water safety online through the American Red Cross

<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/classes/becoming-an-ambassador-for-water-safety-online/a6R3o000001cxqb.html?cgid=swimming&isCourse=true&storedistance=undefined#cgid=swimming&zip=rockledge%2C%2Bfl&latitude=28.3164498&longitude=-80.72698539999999&zipcode=&searchtype=class&start=3>



Step 2 - Learn some skills:

During this step, you will learn to swim backstroke for 25 meters and tread water for 2 minutes.

Choice 1: Take a class

Many YMCAs, neighborhoods, or community pools have classes that will teach you how to do proper swimming strokes. Find a class near you that teaches backstroke and treading and take the class, remember to start slow and to build up gradually.

Choice 2: Join a local swim team

Many neighborhoods or community pools have summer swim teams for kids in elementary, middle, and high school. These teams will teach you strokes and any other skills that you might want to learn. This will take a little more time than the other choices, but if you are interested, it can be very fun.

Choice 3: Have an experienced swimmer teach you

The person who teaches you can be a troop leader, another girl in your troop, or anyone that you know personally who is able to teach you how to do backstroke and tread water longer.

Extra resources:

How To Tread Water For Beginners Without Getting Tired - Learn Swimming:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Y2ut4Pq7E>



How to Swim Backstroke For Beginners:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpj0iXerg0E>



Step 3 - Practice the skills:

During this step, you will be practicing the skills you learned in step 2. You can practice as much as you need to be able to swim backstroke for 25 meters and tread water for 2 minutes.

Choice 1: Practice at a pool

Go to a pool a few days a week and practice these skills until you are confident in your ability to do them. This might take longer for some people than others, and that's OK!

Choice 2: Have another swimmer judge you

Constructive criticism is one of the best ways to learn, so have another swimmer who is more experienced tell you what you're doing wrong and how to fix it.

Choice 3: Continue participating in a swim team

(This will be more simple to do if you choose to do choice 2 on step 2.) Being on a swim team is a good way to practice skills on a regular basis, so it is a good option if you are willing to put in the time and effort.

Step 4 - Test out:

In this step, you will get an adult to confirm that you can correctly swim backstroke for 25 meters without stopping and tread water for 2 minutes.

Choice 1: Have a certified lifeguard approve you

Go to a local pool and see if one of the lifeguards there can confirm that you can correctly swim backstroke for 25 meters without stopping and tread water for 2 minutes. You can also just find a person in your area who is lifeguard certified and schedule a time and place for you to test out.

Choice 2: Have a swim team coach approve you

If you chose the swim team choice for steps 2 and 3, you can see if one of your coaches is able to take a little bit of time to confirm that you can correctly swim backstroke for 25 meters without stopping and tread water for 2 minutes.

Choice 3: Get a troop leader or parent who knows these skills to approve you

If you can't find a certified lifeguard and you know someone who knows how to correctly do these skills, see if one of these people is able to take a little bit of time to confirm that you can correctly swim backstroke for 25 meters without stopping and tread water for 2 minutes.

Step 5 - Teach someone else:

In this step, you will choose a water skill that you know how to do very well and will teach someone else how to do this skill. For example, you could teach someone how to swim a certain stroke (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, or butterfly), teach them how to dive or teach them how to properly breathe while swimming a certain stroke (endurance and timing). You can teach skills other than the ones listed, these are just ideas to get you thinking.

Choice 1: Teach a girl in your troop

Find a girl in your troop who doesn't know the skill you chose to teach and go to a public pool to teach them the skill. Make sure that the person you teach knows how to swim (or just keep themselves afloat in the water) and have an adult who knows how to swim nearby in case you need any help or in the situation that you or the person you're teaching starts to struggle.

Choice 2: Teach a younger girl

Find a girl in another troop who is taking the patch and doesn't know the skill you chose to teach and go to a public pool to teach them the skill. Make sure that the person you teach knows how to swim (or just keep themselves afloat in the water) and have an adult who knows how to swim nearby in case you need any help or in the situation that you or the person you're teaching starts to struggle.

Choice 3: Create a video

Make an instructional video on how to do the skill and post it online somewhere or share it with other kids. In the video make sure to introduce the skill, demonstrate it, then teach how to do it and give tips.

Advanced Swim Patch

Step 1 - Water Safety

In this step, you will learn the importance of water safety and use it.

Choice 1 - Become a Lifeguard!

Take a class to become a certified lifeguard. Becoming a lifeguard can increase water safety awareness and you could even save someone's life!

(Do More! Look for an opportunity to work as a lifeguard at your local pool!)

Choice 2 - Teach non-swimmer life-saving skills!

Learn about water safety and life-saving skills! Put them then to good use by finding a friend, family member, or even someone from your Girl Scout troop who does not swim and teach them some skills such as: how to get out if you fall in, floating on your back, treading water, etc.

Choice 3 - Host an event

Host a small event where you can have little girls or non-swimmers come and learn the importance of water safety and learn how to use it. This will be a fun way for girls to learn the importance and they will even get some of their patch done.

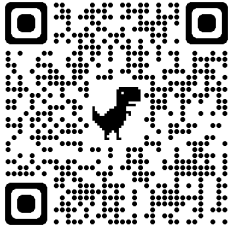
Step 2 - Learn a Skill

In this step, you will learn the stroke butterfly and/or breaststroke.

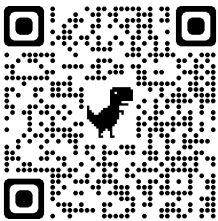
Choice 1- Watch Some Videos

An easy and common way that many people use to learn a swim stroke and technique is by watching videos about it! You can find videos on YouTube, Facebook, and many other websites. Just be safe about what you search and find.

Source 1: My Swim Pro: <https://myswimpro.com>



Source 2: The Global Triathlon Network: <https://www.youtube.com/@gtn>



Choice 2- Talk to an experienced swimmer

Find someone who has mastered this stroke. Sit down and have a conversation! Talk about how to do the stroke, secret techniques, and other tips that could help you!

Choice 3- Take a class

Join your local swim team or a YMCA class! This can help you learn the stroke faster or help you find something you love! You can even make new friendships.

Step 3- Practice

You can not get better without practicing! In this step, you will practice the stroke you learned in step 2. In this case, either butterfly, breaststroke, or both!

Choice 1- How Many Laps?

Go to your local pool. Set a timer to 5 minutes, and see how many laps you can do of that stroke in that allotted time! Challenge yourself and see how much you can improve.

Choice 2- Obstacle course!

Have some fun by gathering up some friends or family members and making an obstacle while you are swimming your stroke. Some ideas are having them spray water at you when you swim, or getting hula hoops and putting them underwater and swimming through them. Just make sure it is okay with the staff at the pool you are using.

Choice 3 - Have a Race!

Have a friend who knows the stroke(s) to race you!! You choose how many laps you will swim. Have fun!

Step 4- Test out!

Time to test out what you have learned! In this step, you are going to swim at least one length of a regulation pool (25 yards or meters) of the stroke you have been practicing and try to do it right.

Choice 1- Participate in a swim meet!

A great way to test out your new skills! You will be doing a race against others of that stroke. You will have officials and coaches watching you swim with others and give you info on what you can do better.

Choice 2- Have a professional watch you.

If you are more of a person who doesn't like to race, that's ok! This choice might be for you. Find a person who can swim that stroke well and have them watch you do one lap of it. After finishing, sit down and have a chat. See what you can do better!

Choice 3- Find a friend or family member who knows the stroke and can watch you!

Find someone who has mastered the strokes and have them watch you. Then talk about it together after swimming so you can learn how to do it better and improve.

Step 5- Teach someone else!

Now it's time to show off your amazing work! Teach another person about the stroke you learned or safety skills. Many people don't know much about swimming and don't take the time to learn about it. Help someone else by teaching them!

Choice 1- Teach your GS troop

At your next Girl Scout meeting, ask your leader if you can take some time to explain what you did for this patch and explain some safety skills in the water. Tell them about the things you learned, like how to save someone.

Choice 2- Teach a family member

Take some time to sit down with a family member. They can be at any skill level with swimming. Tell them about your journey. How to save someone's life and how to teach water skills or the stroke you learned.

Choice 3- Make a video

Make a video and share it online (Facebook, YouTube, etc). Remember to be safe, don't give out personal information, and always get parental permission first. If you are allowed to, you can talk about how to save someone's life or how to do the stroke you learned right. Talk about your journey! What you liked and what you did not like. What you feel you are good at. Tell them the patch you did and what things you would change! Be honest! But... HAVE FUN!