

Happy New Year, Swimmers!

I hope you are taking advantage of this lovely summery weather by spending some fun family time together in the water, at the local pool or beach. Our long Australian summer is the perfect time for reinforcing those swimming skills learned during swimming lessons.

But, if your children haven't yet taken part in formal swimming lessons yet, there's a lot you can do to help your kids along their way. Talk them through the introductory swimming tips below -

1. **BUBBLES!** In the bath, kitchen sink, on pool steps, or in the shallows at the beach: try to get the hang of breathing out (slowly) with your mouth in the water. Then take a breath in the air. (Say 'in, out, in, out'). Next step is putting your whole face in (goggles are great for this). Put some pool or bath toys on the bottom for interesting (/distracting) viewing.



2. **WALKING WITH YOUR HANDS** – in shallow water. Most young children naturally kick (ineffectively) with their legs underneath them. For a better swimming kick, pretend you're part of a wheelbarrow race. Let your legs float up to the top of the water behind you while you're walking (or crawling) along, with your hands on the bottom. Then gently kick your feet on the top of the water. Then add a little paddle between the 'hand-steps'. (Say 'step, step, paddle, paddle, kick, kick'). You're swimming!



3. Once you are paddling between your 'hand-steps', add bubbles. Extra paddling under your chest will help you to lift your face up for a breath. (Say 'in, out, paddle, kick'). Paddle like you're digging in a sand pit with strong fingers and hands. Putting your face in (and blowing bubbles) while you're paddling keeps your body flat on the top of the water and is easier than holding your head up of the water.

4. Having trouble keeping afloat in the water when you're paddling? Add a pool noodle across your chest. You'll be able to paddle with your arms hanging over the noodle and it will keep you up, until you have another try at paddling without the noodle.



5. MOTOR BOATS – bend your noodle in front of you on top of the water, tuck it under your armpits and you have a u-shaped motorboat windscreen on the water in front of you. This area is perfect size for your face to fit while you're practicing breathing, and the noodle keeps the waves away. You can make bubbling motor boat noises while you practice in/ out breathing. You can also check out the amazing underwater world as you swim along.



REMINDE your children to stay away from water unless you're there to SUPERVISE.
Encourage RESPECT (not fear) of the water.
Have heaps of fun PRACTICING these new skills!

These tips are directed at young swimmers 4 years and over. All ages can try, but the level of understanding and physical capability will vary for younger children.

A big thank you to my lovely swimming model, who carried out this shoot with professionalism after only 4 lessons!