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Good Reasons for Teaching Babies to Swim

1. Babies less than a year old accept the water more readily than older children.
2. Fear of water is acquired as children grow older: the longer a child is kept away from water, the more likely the child will develop aqua-phobia.
3. Babies can exercise more muscles in the water, they are less restricted by gravity and their ability to sit or stand. This increased strength often manifests itself in early acquisition of physical skills like walking.
4. Swimming improves babies cardiovascular fitness. Although babies are limited in how much they can improve their endurance, swimming does have a beneficial effect.
5. Early mastery of water movements gives children a head start in learning basic swimming skills.
6. Water helps improve co-ordination and balance by forcing babies to move bilaterally to maintain their equilibrium.
7. Warm water combined with gentle exercise relaxes and stimulates babies appetites. They usually eat and sleep better on swimming days.
8. Doctors often recommend swimming as the exercise of choice for asthmatics. For many asthmatics, exercise produces bronchial hyperactivity. Swimming stimulates less wheezing than other forms of exercise, possibly because the warm, moist air around pools is less irritating to the lungs.
9. Babies flourish in the focused attention their parents lavish on them during swimming.
10. As babies learn how to manoeuvre in the water on there own their independence and self-confidence blossom.
11. Swimming provides babies with lots of skin-to-skin contact with their parents that psychologists say may deepen the bond between parent and child.
12. Learning to swim is not only fun, healthy activity but a safety measure as well. (Drowning is the major cause of accidental death in Australia for under 5s. For each drowning, many more are left with permanent brain damage. *Learn to swim ... its great!*)

Written by Kochen, C.L. Ph.D and McCabe, J. B.A.; *The Baby Swim Book*, Leisure Press, 1986



AFFILIATIONS

