

Swimming

Top Tips

FOR
Children and young people!

Swimming is a highly beneficial exercise, offering physical and mental health advantages. For child amputees and those with limb differences, it provides opportunities for various aquatic activities.



Always swim with a lifeguard present.

First steps

Babies and toddlers



Follow the same process you would with any other child, making adaptations as necessary.

Children

Specialist swimming aids are rarely required.



- Non swimmers: Join a suitable class with coaching for pool entry and exit.
- New child amputees: May need to adjust techniques like kick-turns at the wall.
- Typical transition: After learning to swim, many children join a training club.
- Coach education: Addresses training requirements for swimmers with disabilities.
- Intergration: With adjustments, children can seamlessly join mainstream clubs.

Questions to ask...



1. Schedule a visit to the pool.
2. Discuss support and accessibility for your child.
3. Ask what disability training the teacher has received.
4. Ask if the swimming teachers have experience working with children with limb difference.
5. Verify if the swimming teacher holds a safety training certificate.
6. Check if the pool offers Swim England learn to Swim lessons.
7. Ask local pool about collaboration with organisation who offer discounted lessons like Level Water.
8. Check if the swimming school utilises impairment-friendly awards such as Alpha Step Awards, I Can Awards and Water Skills Awards.



To find your local swim provider visit
<https://www.swimming.org/learntoswim/>

If you can swim and want to join your local swimming club, use the links below:

England: <https://www.swimming.org/sport/how-to-become-a-competitive-swimmer/>

Scotland: <https://www.scottishswimming.com/find-a-club/>

Ireland: <https://www.swimireland.ie/membership/find-a-club/>

Wales: <https://www.swimwales.org/swim-locations/>

Swim England run water confidence classes for adults. See link above.



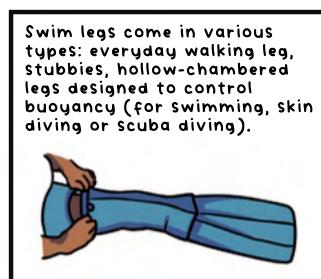
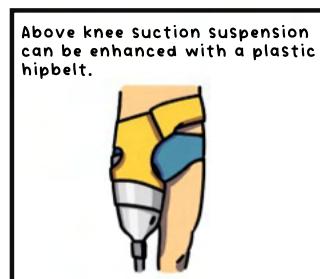
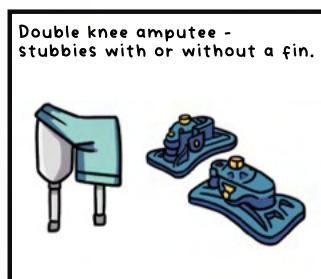
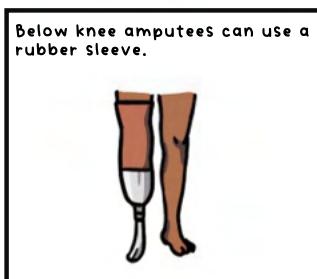
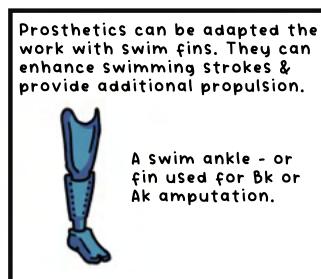
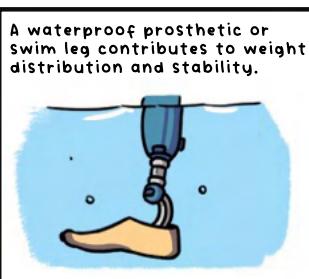
Further information

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/inclusion-learn-to-swim-programme/>

Adaptations

Can you go swimming with a prosthetic?

A child can swim with or without a prosthetic.



Contact Limbpower for more information.

Free or discounted scheme... Level Water

Contact Level Water to see if they have any availability for local swimming coaches in your area.

<https://www.levelwater.org/contact-our-team>

<https://www.facebook.com/Levelwater>



One to one lesson with Level Water are available for:

- Children aged between 4 and 11 years old.
- Children who cannot currently swim 10 metres.
- Children with mobility, visual or hearing impairment.

Start para-swimming programme supports young people with amputations and/or limb differences to develop their swimming skills, join the local swimming club and become a para-swimmer.

<https://www.swimming.org/sport/para-swimming-advice/>



SWIMMING AT THE BEACH

Avoid swimming alone due to risks of fatigue and currents.

Prepare for different entry and exit points in open water.

Wearing a waterproof prosthetic avoids the challenges of entering and leaving the water at different points.

After swimming, remove your liner and your socks and replace them with dry ones. Saltwater and chlorine are both corrosive to your prosthesis, thoroughly rinse your prosthesis once you've finished to help prevent corrosion.



Swimming

TOP TIPS

Do's and Dont's

DO



Use shower prosthesis, waterproof prosthesis to enter the pool area and water.

- Or leave the prosthesis poolside or near the water's edge. Cover with a towel to keep dry.

You can leave prosthesis in a locker and use crutches to enter the pool area. Crutches can be dangerous due to wet floors.

- If using crutches, use ferrels 'flexi foot' for a better grip.

Use wheelchairs to get a swimmer pool side. A hoist can be used to lower him/her into the water.

- Transfer from your own chair to a pool chair.

- Limit bum shuffling to the pool entry to exit.

Wear suitable footware: plastic waterproof sandals just for poolside use.

- Clean prosthetic foot with an antiseptic wipe.

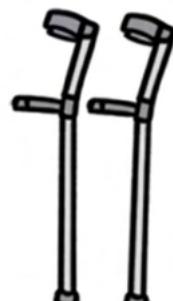
DON'T



Obstruct others if you leave the prosthetic poolside or near the water's edge.

- Hop, as the floor is slippery and dangerous.

Wear blue plastic shoe covers on the prosthetic foot as these can cause slipping.



Accessibility

In order to access the facilities safely:

Comfort

Contact facilities to discuss the staff's comfort with disabilities, ensuring a welcoming environment in addressing your child's specific needs. (Having your residual limb on show can be an uncomfortable experience).



Is there accessibility for prosthetics, crutches, or wheelchairs?

Check for easy and safe building features

Is the disabled parking near the entrance?

Is the venue accessible? (level access, ramps lifts) wide power assisted doors, hallways if required ect.

Is there level access to the pool?

Is reception accessible e.g. lowered counters?

Are there accessible changing rooms, toilets and showers equipped with wide stalls and reachable amenities?

Phone and check that the lift is working and ask what is the contingency if the lift isn't working?



Does the facility have level access?

What is the depth of the pool?

What is the ap depth between the ground and the water?

Swimmers without a prosthesis can enter the pool using built-in stairs. Sitting on the steps and using the hands to move the body into or out of the water.

There is no way to enter or exit the water. Each child must find their own way using problem solving.

Hoist swimmers without a waterproof prosthetic can use a pool hoist. They get out of the chair into the hoist and the hoist lowers them into the water.

Pool pods lower into the water chair onto a platform and then lowers the child into the water. You can swivel entry with or without support.

Forward entry with or without support.

Diving into the pool if permissible and at the correct depth check pool regulations. Or by simply jumping or diving into the water.

Note: Some children may require assistance in lifting themselves out of the water.

Note: Extra steps to lower from a wheelchair into the pool may be required.

Assistance may be needed to exit the water, possibly with a pool wheelchair, pod, or hoist.

For a positive swimming experience (see separate notes) with your prosthesis, start in the shallows and gradually wade into deeper water. Take it slow to adapt and enhance your comfort, making the experience increasingly enjoyable over time.

Adapted pool equipment. Arm bands and arm rings, rings, buoyancy aids, buoyancy suits, floats including head floats, swim noodles, woggles, poolside wheelchairs, pool pods, hoists, and other tools that can support a child with limb difference in the pool.

Inclusive lessons: Your child should be included in sessions. Teachers can incorporate adapted equipment and teaching methods to create an inclusive swimming environment. You can ask if they have classes specifically designed for children with physical disabilities.



Use a microfibre towel to dry the residual limb and sleeve.

After-care

After leaving the water, walking with a wet stump can cause blisters. Therefore, keeping the inner socket and residual limb dry is very important in preventing skin breakdown and blisters. If liners are used, they should be made from a fast drying, non-porous material. A hair dryer will dry a wet liner. Quickly, care must be taken not to distort the liner by overheating.

SUPPORT NETWORK



Limb Power

The NDSO* impairment expert for amputees and people with limb-difference.



Limb Centre Prosthetis

Can recommend and provide adaptive prosthetic and accessories like waterproof prosthetics, swim sleeves, covers or waterproof prosthetic bags.



LimbCentre Occupational Therapist

Play a crucial role in helping children adapt to swimming. Understand prosthetic adaptations.



Parent

Who has knowledge of the child/young person's medical history, capability and aspirations.



Limb Centre Physiotherapist

Can join you at the pool to support you in the changing room and transition you into the pool.



LEVEL WATER



Swim England, Scottish Swimming, Swim Wales, Swim Northern Ireland



Active Partnerships

Nationwide movement, physical activity and sport network in each country.

Swim Coach/Instructor
Have awareness of adapted pool equipment and how to use them effectively to create an inclusive and safe environment.

Foster Collaboration between prosthetics, OT's, Physiotherapists and swimming teachers to ensure everyone has the necessary knowledge about prosthetic equipment adaptations and adapted pool equipment children with an amputation or limb difference can enjoy a positive swimming experience.

THE BENEFITS OF SWIMMING

Swimming can be a highly beneficial and inclusive activity for children with disabilities. The unique properties of water, such as buoyancy and reduced impact on joints, make it an ideal environment for individuals with various physical and cognitive challenges.



- Experience Freedom and Independence in the water.
- Swimming offers enhanced accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- Promotes emotional and mental well-being.
- It brings about improved physical health by enhancing flexibility, mobility and muscle strength.
- Reduces strain on joints and muscles.
- Water's buoyancy reduces the impact and force on the residual limb.
- Swimming minimises impact on the residual limb.
- Swimming imparts vital lifesaving skills.
- Swimming is fun.

