

Swimming Safety Checklist

By Lauren Meir

☐ Essential Items

- ☐ Beach bag
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Bathing Suits Can be packed in a bag or worn under clothes or suit cover-ups for easy changing.
- ☐ Flip-flop sandals and/or water shoes
- ☐ Visors, sunhats or baseball caps for added sun protection
- ☐ Bathing suit cover ups Large t-shirts or wraps will cover exposed skin.
- ☐ Change of clothes Include dry under-garments.
- ☐ Flotation devices for young children or new swimmers. These should meet all federal safety requirements
- ☐ Goggles, nose and ear plugs
- ☐ Swim cap (for pool swimming)
- ☐ Large sun umbrella (for the beach)
- ☐ Waterproof Sunscreen Should be at least SPF 15; at least SPF 30 for children and infants.
- ☐ Chap-stick ;or lip balm with SPF.
- ☐ Bottled Water.
- ☐ Fruit or other snacks with a high water content
- ☐ Any large flotation devices like rafts or recliners Blow these up beforehand.
- ☐ Plastic bags for wet belongings
- ☐ First Aid basics. Bandages and antiseptic wipes are quick fixes for minor injuries

☐ After Swimming

- ☐ Change into dry clothing as soon as possible Wet bathing suits can cause rash and discomfort, and may increase risk of sickness and infection.
- ☐ Rinse off in a quick shower Rinse off seawater or chlorinated pool water before changing.
- ☐ Ring out excess water from wet suits Place in a ;separate ;plastic bag.
- ☐ Comb out long hair gently, to avoid a tangled mess later.
- ☐ If at the beach, move away from others before shaking out excess sand Shake out towels, empty shoes and bags at a safe distance.
- ☐ Put Aloe Vera on any sunburned areas

☐ Swimming Safety

- ☐ **Learn How to Swim** If you haven't done so already, sign up for lessons. Start instructing children as early as possible.
- ☐ **Pay attention to signs** All public pools and beaches have signs with important safety rules or designated swimming areas. Make sure you read these before you enter the water.
- ☐ **All children should be closely supervised while in or around the pool, lake, or ocean.**
- ☐ **Test water temperature first** Cold water can be a shock to your system, and may make it harder to swim.
- ☐ **Swim in designated safe areas under lifeguard supervision** ;No one can predict hidden dangers, like sudden storms or rip currents. The same goes for poolside swimming - be prepared for the unexpected.
- ☐ **Never dive in shallow areas.**
- ☐ **Wait at least an hour after eating before going for a swim** Swimming on a full stomach can cause cramps.
- ☐ **Buddy Up** Always swim with a partner. ;Even experienced swimmers are ;susceptible ;to muscle cramps or exhaustion, which might make it difficult to reach safety. Doubling up or swimming in groups makes it easier to get help.
- ☐ **Know your limits** If you're not a strong swimmer, or are feeling tired, stay close to the shallow area and use a flotation device.
- ☐ **Know the difference between pool and lake/ocean swimming** Swimming in a lake or ocean requires more effort, due to water currents.
- ☐ **Get Safety Instruction** Learn basic CPR skills. These invaluable life-saving techniques can be especially helpful if you are at a pool party or private home where no lifeguard is available.
- ☐ **Don't chew gum or eat while swimming.**
- ☐ **Hydrate and rest frequently** Take breaks and drink plenty of water.
- ☐ **Reapply sunscreen every two hours**

☐ At the Pool

- ☐ **No running around the pool** The sign is there for a reason...surfaces are slippery and dangerous
- ☐ **Check pool rules** Some pools forbid diving, while other's insist on swimming caps for swimmer's with long hair. Know the rules before you go.
- ☐ **Use the ladder to enter and exit the pool.**
- ☐ **If Jumping, jump feet first.**
- ☐ **Be mindful of others** Swim courteously, especially if you are swimming laps or are nearby others who are.
- ☐ **Never dive in the shallow end.**
- ☐ **Don't swing on ropes dividing the lanes.**

- ☐ **At the Beach**
 - ☐ **Stay close to the shore.**
 - ☐ **If you find yourself in a current, don't panic** Swim parallel to the shore ;until you are free of the current, while gradually making your way back to shore. If you're unable to swim away from the current, stay calm and float with it until the current slows down. Then swim to shore.
 - ☐ **Be careful of the sea floor** Avoid all coral reefs. Wear water shoes in rocky regions, or search for sandy-bottom areas.
 - ☐ **Wear shoes whenever possible** Not only can sand can get hot enough to burn, it can hide hidden dangers like sharp rocks or broken glass. Tread carefully!
 - ☐ **If at the ocean, be on the lookout for jellyfish** Even small ones sting if you accidentally touch them.
 - ☐ **Keep your belongings in plain sight on your towel or mat.** Don't let your things get swallowed up by sand!