



What to expect during your first month at Water Babies

Safety first

Nothing is more important than ensuring your little one is as safe as they can be in and around water. Safety is fundamental to our swimming program, and in your first four weeks with us, we will be teaching you the safest way to get in and out of the pool with your little one. This will enable you to feel confident wherever and whenever you swim so you can enjoy the water.

As well as safe entry to the water we also start to teach the 'hold on' skill. This teaches your little one to grasp hold of the side of the pool. As they get older and stronger to then progress this to being able to get to safety on their own should they ever fall into the water.



First swim and going underwater

Swimming underwater is an incredible skill and one that has huge benefits for your little one's development. Holding their breath underwater for longer periods improves their lung capacity and stamina. Right from your very first lesson we will be guiding you to use your little one's natural reflexes and simple word association to teach them the basics of swimming. You can help prepare for their first underwater swim by trying our 'Name, are you ready? Go' skill at home.

[Click here to watch](#)

Over the first four weeks you will not only learn how to take your little one underwater safely, but also introduce movement to progress this skill. Your little one will learn to control their breath through repetitive word association and be completely comfortable under the water.

[Click here to watch](#)

Bonding and touch

Swimming is an amazing opportunity for some skin-to-skin contact with your little one, and our lessons provide the perfect space for bonding skills and gentle movement. And 'Incy Wincy Spider' is a great skill that focuses on touch while also giving independence. Nurturing physical touch promotes development of babies' physiological systems involved in regulating emotions and stress responses.

The focused time in the water strengthens the bond between you and your baby, through holding them close and that skin-to-skin contact in the comforting warmth of the water. Your baby can smell you, feel your heartbeat, hear your breathing, which all helps calm and relax them (and you).

Communication

Instead of relying solely on words in our lessons, we also use signing because babies can communicate sooner using their gross motor skills (hand gestures) quicker than their fine motor skills (talking). This can help speed up their learning and avoid frustration when they can't communicate. We'll teach you how to sign some simple words and phrases using BSL so you can continue chatting when you go home!



What to bring to your first lesson

We always use a double nappy system to protect little ones and keep pools clean. There are a few different options for this:

Happy Nappy DUO - Saving money and the planet, this swim nappy is the perfect 2 in 1 solution. Comfortable and leak free with a highly technical active silver inner layer, meaning this nappy is the only thing your little one needs to wear in the pool.

Or you can purchase any Happy Nappy product and combine it with a reusable or paper swim nappy to form the double nappy system.

When you buy your Happy Nappy from us, we'll check the fit in your first lesson. Just keep the tags on. That way we can swap it if the size isn't perfect.

You will also need:

- **Towel** - one for your little one and one for you.
- **Changing mat** - it's perfect and means you can change your little one easily, wherever you are.
- **Goggles** - so, you get the best view in the house of your little one swimming underwater.
- **Warm hat** - little heads get cold easily after swimming.
- **Swimwear** - for you - could be a little embarrassing otherwise!
- **One bag only** - try to only bring essentials with you to your lessons.
- **Snacks and a drink** for on the way home - swimming is great for building an appetite. But please remember to leave the venue before you tuck into these.

Underwater Photo Shoots

There's nothing quite like seeing your baby swimming underwater. And we know time with them is precious, so having a snapshot of a skill that you and your little one have learnt together is something you'll want to keep for a lifetime.

Our underwater photography captures that special moment where your little one shows off everything they've learnt so far in their lessons.

Our photographers and equipment are world-class, so you can feel confident that you'll be taking home a beautifully crisp, high resolution shot of your baby, striking their best pose. We take up to 9 images of your baby on our shoots, so you'll have plenty to enjoy and look back on when they're older.

Teacher Top Tips

- Wear shoes that come easily on and off.
- Give little one lots of smiles and praise.
- Don't worry if little one is having a wobble, we'll help you through it!
- Come 'beach ready!' (swimwear on under clothes).
- Don't arrive too early to your lesson, little ones can get bored when waiting. 10 mins should be enough to get changed and arrive poolside.
- Bring your towel to poolside.
- Bring little one's onesie for their after-lesson outfit.



Top Skills and Songs you'll learn in your first month at Water Babies

Independent safe entry

This skill is used to give you independence and safety when entering the pool. Your little one is laid down by the side of the pool, toes nearest the water, so you can enter the pool with no worries that your baby could roll in. This method is used to avoid babies being carried on steps or ladders into the pool in case of a slip.

First underwater swim

The first underwater swim is done early in the program, this gets your baby used to going underwater with the word association of 'Name, are you ready? Go!' This phrase is used throughout the programme to help little ones associate those words with going underwater.

Stationary and moving underwater swims

These underwater swims use the cue 'Name, are you ready? Go!' with going underwater and aquatic breathing. The gentle movement of 'moving underwater swims' are to get your baby used to the sensation of swimming below the surface, as well as holding their breath for longer.

Swimming on our backs

This is the first back swimming exercise done to get little ones comfortable in that swim position. You will sing a song to your baby, with their head on your chest, maintaining eye contact to keep that close bond and reassure your baby that they are safe. The particular song will create word association with that feeling of closeness and comfort, whilst being on their backs in the water.

Incy Wincy Spider

This skill is used to highlight the importance of touch in the early development of babies, as well as laying on their backs independently. Your little one is placed on a mat on their back in the pool, tickled and sung to by you to create the association of feeling relaxed in that back swim position without being held.

*'Incy Wincy Spider came up the water spout,
down came the rain and washed the spider out!
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain,
and Incy Wincy Spider came up the spout again!'*

Bonding swim with teacher

This activity is done to get your baby used to swimming with your teacher, to create a bond and trust with them and reduce any separation anxiety from the carer.

Thank you for sending through your enquiry. We hope you found these tips and information helpful.

Your local office will be in touch with you very soon and we can't wait to meet you in the pool.

waterbabies.co.uk

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babies**
learn for life®

