

Learn to Swim

Swimming, 'Is it the best form of exercise?' Just Google "Benefits of Swimming" and you will find hundreds of published articles telling us about how good swimming is for us.

In some Countries swimming is extremely popular, and has many participants from a young age, whether for exercise, recreation, or as a competitive sport. In other Countries the climate can be too cold for Swimming unless you have access to a heated indoor pool.

Here in Thailand, despite warm weather all year round, the vast coastline, and the growing number of pools being built, swimming as both a skill and a Sport is still grass roots, and in fact quite a large percentage of the population are either afraid of the water, or have never had proper instruction on how to swim. But the good news is, it's never too late to learn how to swim.

Swimming works your whole body as you are using almost all of the major muscle groups. It improves your cardiovascular conditioning, muscle tone, strength, endurance, posture, and flexibility all at the same time. It is a low risk, low impact exercise, which means that not only are you unlikely to sustain any injuries swimming, almost anyone can participate, babies, the elderly, pregnant women and even people with disabilities. Doctors have been known to advise patients with respiratory conditions to take up swimming as it teaches breath control, increases lung capacity, and improves circulation. It is a fun, enjoyable and relaxing way to improve your health and fitness.

What is really interesting is the benefits of having your young children and babies attend learn to swim classes regularly. A group of researchers from Griffith University in Australia are currently half way through a four year study on how swimming lessons are benefitting the overall health and wellbeing of children. Professor Jorgensen said this study was the largest of its kind in 30 years and last year, stated *"We've only just done the first year of the study but already the indicators are suggesting that children who have been in longer periods of time in early swimming do appear to be hitting those intellectual milestones, those physical milestones, earlier than other children who aren't doing swimming"* The study aims to find out The physical, emotional, social and intellectual benefits of learning to swim in under 5s, and what factors enhance the benefits in different learn to swim contexts. Some parents have asked Professor Jorgensen what about other sports? Jorgensen says *"the interesting thing here is that children can participate in learn to swim before they can walk. No other 'sport' offers the same scope for the participation of young children. We have parents in the water with their kids from the time they are six months old. And yes, lots of parents are initially introducing their kids to the water for safety, and that's important. But what we are finding is that the benefits of involvement in learn to swim are quite substantial.*

Children can enjoy the aquatic environment, they are listening to their teachers and following instructions. They are developing lifelong skills."

In the experience of Hua Hin based Swim teacher, Matt Adcock, he has found that as he is teaching students, the growth of confidence in a child throughout their learning to swim is real. He says *"It is a rewarding experience helping them learn, they have fun and you actually see their own self-belief grow as they improve with each lesson."* Matt, a Swimming Teacher with internationally recognised qualifications, has first-hand experience. He grew up swimming competitively, still swims laps regularly, and has taught swimming to many young children. Matt agrees that it is never too late to learn to swim, and hopes to be able to share his knowledge and experience with the people of Hua Hin.