

Swimming Benefits

Learning To Swim: The Cognitive Benefits for Your Baby

Besides the obvious fun and joy that come when you swim and promote water play with your baby, there have been many studies over the years to find out what other benefits infant swimming holds. Here are a few cognitive (mental) benefits for your young one:

- Physical activity improves cognitive abilities of all ages. Babies in the womb are already swimming for nine months, so it is easy for them to continue this while they are young, as they already have a natural affinity.
- Children under five involved in swimming lessons have been proven to be more advanced in both their cognitive and physical development than non-swimming five year olds. This information was gathered in 2009 by Griffith University in a study that included 45 swim schools in Australia, New Zealand and the United States.
- Children who learn to swim before the age of five have been shown to have statistically higher IQs, as reported by researchers and scientists in Melbourne. The same study found that children develop significant physical benefits due to the resistance of the water and the fact that swimming activates more large muscle groups.
- Studies have shown there is a link between exercise and the size and memory capacity of our hippocampus - the area of the brain primarily associated with memory and learning. This shows the importance of early childhood movement through play and exercise. Swimming is a key movement activity to stimulate your child's brain development, and you start them swimming at Hamilton Pools from three months!

In New Zealand, the importance of learning to swim for survival is obvious, yet recent surveys (2015) show that 70% of children and young adults cannot swim to save themselves. Learning to swim at a young age and sticking to it can save not only your child's life, it could save somebody else. Have a think about popping your child in the water into the lead up to the great New Zealand Summer – you'll be helping them on the way to knowing how to save themselves in the water, increase their learning ability and have a lot of fun while they're at it!

Learning To Swim: The Emotional Benefits for Your Baby

There are a wide range of benefits experienced by babies and children who learn to swim at a gentle, gradual pace. Parents who put their children in swimming lessons from a very early age, get to witness first-hand the many examples of mental, physical, emotional, developmental, and social benefits that result from taking their children to swimming lessons.

- Children learn social skills by relating to and interacting with other children in the same environment.
- Children help each other learn and grow faster by taking cues and gaining confidence when they see their peers attempting or achieving a new skill.
- Early swimming helps to foster a growing sense of self-esteem, confidence and independence.
- As your child's ability to freely move through the water increases - so too does their sense of well being.
- The time spent having fun and learning new things with your child in a pool is a perfect time for bonding in a relaxed environment.
- Babies learn to trust their parents/caregivers faster in an environment that directly relies on parental guidance and support.
- Spending time face-to-face, skin-to-skin with your baby in the water is a very special time for both parties.
- Through swimming lessons parents (especially new parents) can learn to exercise their patience, encouragement and kindness toward their little one. It also provides the opportunity for all parents to learn more and more about their little person's growing personality.
- Swimming can be very empowering for babies, offering them a new sense of freedom as well as a way to play and explore the brand new world around them in a truly fun and relaxing way.