

MERIT BADGE SERIES



SWIMMING



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"



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Note to the Counselor

Merit badge counselors are responsible for following the requirements, procedures, and techniques presented in this pamphlet and ensuring that each Scout earning the merit badge is able to demonstrate knowledge and skills at a level consistent with the requirements. In addition, counselors must ensure that all applicable BSA safety policies, including Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat, are followed during training, practice, and review.

Counselors for the Swimming merit badge must be registered members of the Boy Scouts of America, have current training in swimming (either Safe Swim Defense or Safety Afloat, or both), and be approved by the local council advancement committee. Councils with an aquatics committee should utilize that committee to coordinate with the advancement committee for approval of qualified counselors.

All counselors should have formal training in the knowledge and skills indicated by the requirements, experience in teaching such skills to youth, and experience in identifying and managing risks associated with the activities involved. This should include, at minimum, current or previous certification as Aquatics Instructor, BSA or instructor certification from the American Red Cross or YMCA. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Demonstrations or activities in the water must be conducted according to BSA Safe Swim Defense standards, which appear in the “Safety and First Aid” section.



Emphasis on Stroke Mechanics

With the revisions to the Swimming merit badge requirements, the goal is to emphasize teaching Scouts correct stroke mechanics. It is critical for them to learn these strokes correctly, in good form and with proper breathing, so they can swim with greater ease and efficiency. Furthermore, the ability to correctly perform these strokes will make Scouts safer in and around the water as well as when they tackle advanced water activities such as the Lifesaving merit badge and BSA Lifeguard.

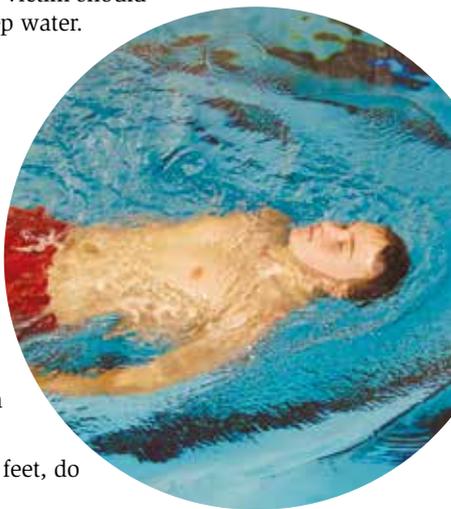




Requirements

1. Do the following:
 - a. Explain to your counselor how Scouting's Safe Swim Defense plan anticipates, helps prevent and mitigate, and provides responses to likely hazards you may encounter during swimming activities.
 - b. Discuss the prevention and treatment of health concerns that could occur while swimming, including hypothermia, dehydration, sunburn, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, muscle cramps, hyperventilation, spinal injury, stings and bites, and cuts and scrapes.
2. Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete the BSA swimmer test: Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth. Level off and swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.
3. Swim continuously for 150 yards using the following strokes in good form and in a strong manner: front crawl or trudgen for 25 yards, back crawl for 25 yards, sidestroke for 25 yards, breaststroke for 25 yards, and elementary backstroke for 50 yards.
4. Do the following:
 - a. Demonstrate water rescue methods by reaching with your arm or leg, by reaching with a suitable object, and by throwing lines and objects. Explain why swimming rescues should not be attempted when a reaching or throwing rescue is possible, and explain why and how a rescue swimmer should avoid contact with the victim.

- b. With a helper and a practice victim, show a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer. The practice victim should be approximately 30 feet from shore in deep water.
5. Do the following:
 - a. Float faceup in a resting position for at least three minutes with minimal movement.
 - b. Demonstrate survival floating for at least five minutes.
 - c. While wearing a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket, demonstrate the HELP and huddle positions. Explain their purposes.
 - d. Explain why swimming or survival floating will hasten the onset of hypothermia in cold water.
 6. In water over your head, but not to exceed 10 feet, do each of the following:
 - a. Use the feetfirst method of surface diving and bring an object up from the bottom.
 - b. Do a headfirst surface dive (pike or tuck), and bring the object up again.
 - c. Do a headfirst surface dive to a depth of at least 5 feet and swim underwater for three strokes. Come to the surface, take a breath, and repeat the sequence twice.
 7. Following the guidelines set in the BSA Safe Swim Defense, in water at least 7 feet deep*, show a standing headfirst dive from a dock or pool deck. Show a long shallow dive, also from the dock or pool deck.
 8. Explain the health benefits of regular aerobic exercise, and discuss why swimming is favored as both fitness and therapeutic exercise.



*If your state, city, or local community requires a water depth greater than 7 feet, it is important to abide by that mandate.

Swimming Resources

Scouting Literature

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys; Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls; Deck of First Aid; Emergency First Aid pocket guide; Athletics, Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Lifesaving, Personal Fitness, Scuba Diving, Sports, and Water Sports merit badge pamphlets

With your parent's permission, visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail website, www.scoutshop.org, for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Books

- Barsky, Steven M. *The Simple Guide to Snorkeling Fun*. Best Publishing Company, 1999.
- Colwin, Cecil M. *Breakthrough Swimming*. Human Kinetics, 2002.
- Graver, Dennis K. *Scuba Diving*, 4th ed. Human Kinetics, 2009.
- Hines, Emmett W. *Fitness Swimming*, 2nd ed. Human Kinetics, 2008.
- Laughlin, Terry. *Extraordinary Swimming for Every Body*. Total Immersion Swimming, 2006.

———. *Total Immersion: The Revolutionary Way to Swim Better, Faster, and Easier*. Touchstone, 2004.

Lenihan, Daniel J. *Underwater Wonders of the National Parks*. Compass America Guides, 1997.

Montgomery, Jim, and Mo Chambers. *Mastering Swimming*. Human Kinetics, 2008.

Orr, Dan, and Eric Douglas. *Scuba Diving Safety*. Human Kinetics, 2007.

Salo, David, and Scott Riewald. *Complete Conditioning for Swimming*. Human Kinetics, 2008.

Thomas, David G. *Swimming: Steps to Success*, 3rd ed. Human Kinetics, 2012.

Organizations and Websites

American Red Cross

Toll-free telephone: 800-733-2767
Website: <http://www.redcross.org>

USA Swimming

Website: <http://www.usaswimming.org>

YMCA of the USA

Telephone: 312-977-0031
Website: <http://www.ymca.net>