



MEETING PLANS & IDEAS: SWIMMING

Swimming	Information	Troop Meetings	Main Event
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OBJECTIVES

This month's activities should:

- Teach Scouts basic strokes of swimming.
- Provide a basic understanding of water safety practices.
- Demonstrate what constitutes a safe swimming area.
- Foster discussion of appropriate gear for swimming.
- Teach Scouts the buddy system.
- Build self-confidence as Scouts improve swimming skills and abilities.

LEADERSHIP PLANNING

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing swimming as your program feature during your planning meetings.

- What is our pool availability?
- What is the skill level of the participants?
- Where will we do our main event?
- Will there be a lifeguard present and available?
- If we are going to develop our own swim area, who will serve as lifeguards?
- Will there be other helpers to provide support and look out for the group?
- What swimming gear will be needed?
- Does the weather forecast impact our event plans?
- How do we incorporate Scouting skills and advancement into the main event?
- What changes should we make to the sample meeting plans that would fit our needs better?

Click above for fillable troop meeting planning form.

PREOPENING IDEAS

[Link to Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

- Have participants form buddy pairs for the evening. To enforce the buddy system, hold buddy checks every 10 minutes or so during the entire meeting.
- Meet at the pool. Change into appropriate swimwear. Review site-specific safety rules.
- Meet at the pool. Change into appropriate swimwear. Review the [requirements for the Swimming merit badge](#).

OPENING IDEAS

[Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

Safe Swim Defense

- Review Safe Swim Defense.
- Use [BSA Safety Incident Review: Swimming](#) as an attention-getting resource.

Swim Skill Test

- Demonstrate each of the [four basic strokes](#).
- Describe ability groups and swim tests.

Stroke Practice

- At poolside, review first-aid issues related to swimming, including hypothermia, dehydration, sunburn, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, muscle cramps, hyperventilation, spinal injury, stings and bites, and cuts and scrapes.

Rescues

- Present an explanation of swimming survival and basic rescue.
- Present the rescue priorities of reach, throw, row, and go.

SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS



Safe Swim Defense

-  • Tour the swimming area and point out how it complies with [Safe Swim Defense](#).

-  • Review the above information.
-  • Have Scouts draw the ideal swim area and label what makes it safe.

-  • Review the above information.
-  • Discuss the duties of a lifeguard.
-  • Practice reach and throw rescue skills.

Swim Skill Test

-  • Have Scouts warm up and take the beginner test.
-  • Explain how buddy tags and buddy checks work.

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-  • Explain how buddy tags and buddy checks work.
-  • Demonstrate a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer.

Stroke Practice

-  Demonstrate or show a video about proper stroke technique (elementary backstroke, sidestroke, and front crawl). Practice the strokes. (Videos are available in the interactive digital Swimming merit badge pamphlet.)
 - Give tips for floating; practice floating. (Note: This group is working toward the swimmer test.)
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-  Swim 150 yards in a strong manner.
 - Teach and practice headfirst dives and long shallow dives from the pool deck. (Note: This group is working on skills required for the Swimming merit badge.)
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-  Teach and practice the trudgen and back crawl.

Rescues

-  Practice Line Rescues.
 - Practice floating face up and survival floating
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-  Practice reach and throw rescues.
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-  Practice clothing inflation for survival

BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS

Getting Ready for the Main Event

- Menu Planning (as applicable)
- Duty Roster Planning (as applicable)

Preparation for the meeting's game or challenge

GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

[Library of Games and Challenges on Troop Program Resources](#)

- **Name That Safe Swim Element**

Materials: Eight cards for each patrol, listing the eight main elements of Safe Swim Defense (SSD): 1) Qualified Supervision, 2) Personal Health Review, 3) Safe Area, 4) Response Personnel (Lifeguards), 5) Lookout, 6) Ability Groups, 7) Buddy System, and 8) Discipline

Method: Give each team its set of cards. The game leader describes information contained in one of the SSD elements, and the first team to correctly guess which one earns a point. (For example, if the leader reads, "Participants should be moved from the water to a position of safety whenever lightning or thunder threatens," the correct answer is element 3, Safe Area.

Scoring: The team with the most points wins.

Note: You can make the game harder by asking direct questions about each safety element—for example, "How long do you have to wait until after lightning or thunder occurs before you can leave shelter?" The first team to answer correctly earns a point.

- **Marco Polo**

Materials: Life jackets if necessary, depending on venue and ability levels

Method: One Scout is selected to be “It” and closes his or her eyes while the others spread out. “It,” without looking, tries to find and tag the other swimmers by shouting “Marco.” They all respond by shouting “Polo,” and “It” must seek them out acoustically. If a player is tagged, that player becomes “It.”

Scoring: None—just keep track to see who becomes “It” the most and least often.

Note: You could move the game to a deeper part of the pool after a few rounds, depending on the participants’ swimming skill levels.

- **T-Shirt (or Life Jacket) Relay**

– *Materials:* One extra-large T-shirt or life jacket for each troop team

– *Method:* This is a shuttle relay with the goal of putting on a T-shirt (or life jacket), then swimming

across the pool. Start by forming two or more troop teams with equal numbers of Scouts.

Half of each team lines up facing their teammates on the opposite side of the pool. (Teams may play in deeper or shallower areas, depending

on their abilities.) The first team member puts on the shirt or life jacket, swims to the other side, takes off the shirt, and passes it to a teammate. All players must put it completely on before they can swim across.

– *Scoring:* The first team to have all its members swim to the other side wins.

– Note: Repeat as many times as desired. The choice to use T-shirts or life jackets should be based on the skill and comfort of participants. (T-shirts could make strokes more difficult.)

- **Treasure Hunt**

– *Materials:* Lots of pennies.

– *Method:* Toss handfuls of pennies into the pool and on signal, Scouts engage in retrieving them.

– *Scoring:* The individual or patrol that retrieves the most, wins.

- **Underwater Swimming Event**

– *Materials:* none

– *Method:* Scouts can take turns or swim in small numbers, as far as they can, underwater.

– *Scoring:* The farthest distances wins.

- **Swimming Races**

– *Materials:* none

– *Method:* Scouts can race freestyle individually, or patrols can race relate fashion.

– *Scoring:* Fastest racers win.

- **Noodle Race**

– *Materials:* Swimming Pool Noodles, one for each patrol, or enough for individual Scouts as desired

– *Method:* Scouts straddle their noodle and drag it along as they race from one end of the pool to the other. Can be run with individuals, or relay fashion by patrols.

– *Scoring:* Fastest racers who don’t lose their noodle, win.

CLOSING IDEAS

- [Leader’s Minutes](#)

- [Ceremony](#)

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TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[SCOUTBOOK](#)

[Scouting Forms from the National Council](#)

[ScoutCast](#)

[Scouting Magazine](#)

[ScoutStuff.org \(Retail Site\)](#)

[ScoutingWire](#)

[Sign in to MyScouting.org](#)

[Take Youth Protection Training](#)

[The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide](#)

[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

[Uniforms](#)