



SWIMMING LESSONS: Pool Safety for Your Dog

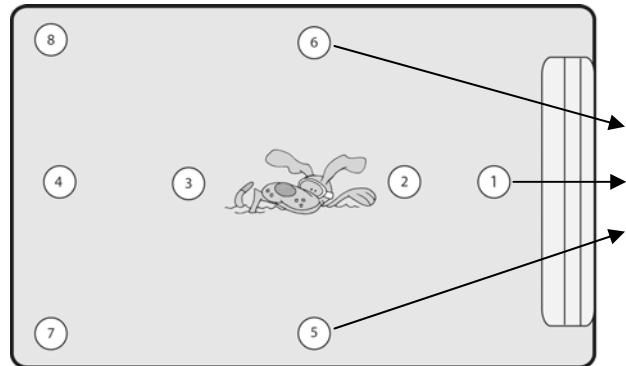
Every year, dogs and puppies drown in swimming pools because they either jump in or fall in but don't know how to get out. The following steps can help to prevent tragedy.

1. Restrict access to the pool when your dog is not supervised. **Do not leave your dog in a crate or otherwise restrained anywhere near a swimming pool.** Dogs can move crates or become tangled in ropes. There have been many tragic incidents of dogs drowning when they were unable to free themselves of crates, restraints or temporary fencing.
2. Purchase a special pet ramp to provide an additional exit for your dog (dogramp.com)
3. Teach your dog how to find the exit, no matter where he might fall in.

The steps below are general guidelines for teaching your dog pool safety. The results may vary depending on your dog's comfort level in the water.

Start with one person in the pool with the dog and another outside on the steps. This person is the "catcher."

- A. The catcher stands outside the pool next to the steps while the swimmer gets in the pool with the dog and moves to position 1.
- B. The catcher calls the dog out of the pool and rewards with a treat or game with a toy.
- C. Repeat this exercise with the catcher moving to various positions outside the pool steps until the dog is consistently using the steps to reach the catcher.
- D. When your dog is consistently exiting the pool using the stairs (at least 8/10 times, the swimmer moves the dog to the #2 location).
- E. Repeat Steps A-D for each number on the pool below. The swimmer will move to each location and repeat until the dog is consistently exiting the pool from the steps from that location.



Keep your training sessions short, 15 minutes or less, to ensure a positive experience. Repeat this training twice a year to keep your dog's mind refreshed.

Have a safe summer!

Note of Caution: Do not try this training method with dogs that are fearful of the water. While fearful dogs run a greater risk of panicking should they fall in, forcing them into the pool runs a great risk of behavioral fallout ranging from a negative association to the person forcing them into the water to biting. Consult a trainer if you would like more information on teaching your fearful dog pool safety.