

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. When is a good time to start swimming? Do you have to be a fast swimmer to make the team?

Anytime! The short course begins in September and the long course season begins in mid-March, so those would be the BEST times to begin; however, you are always welcome and can start up at any time!! LYONS is open to anyone with an interest in swimming. New Swimmer Evaluations take place in September, and upon request throughout the course of the year. Placement depends on skill level, age, experience and commitment level. Please contact one of our coaches to schedule an evaluation at any time throughout the season. Although some swimmers will go on to swim in college and at national meets, many others will simply have a lot of fun, get great exercise and compete against other swimmers at the same level as themselves!

## 2. Do I have to be registered with USA Swimming?

Yes, **USA Swimming** is a non-profit organization based in Colorado Springs, CO. It is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States and selects the Olympic swimming team and its coaches. Becoming a registered member of Lyons Swim Club automatically makes you a member of USA Swimming. **Illinois Swimming, Inc.** is the division of USA Swimming that is the governing body for competitive swimming in the state of Illinois. Click on the following links to find more details and information on [USA Swimming](#) and [Illinois Swimming](#).

## 3. At what age should swimmers start year-round swimming? Can I join Lyons if I am already swimming for my high school and/or neighborhood summer league team?

Many athletes starting with the LYONS have been exposed to swimming with their area summer programs. This is a great way to begin competitive swimming. Most of the faster swimmers involved are also training with a United States Swimming (USA) team. This greatly enhances their stroke technique and endurance; however, this type of regimen is not for everyone. When an athlete's interest is strong enough to warrant training with a USA Team like the Lyons Swim Club, we suggest that they begin in either our Learn to Swim or Age Group Development programs. This introduction to competitive training will ease the transition between the two different platforms.

The high school and summer league seasons are too short for those that love to swim. Our programs have always had high school swimmers who train with Lyons; however, they cannot swim with both at the same time due to Illinois High School policies. Also, the majority of high school swimmers that advance to the regional and stage meets are year round swimmers.

## 4. How often should my swimmer attend practice?

Attendance is vital to the development of each swimmer at the various stages of his/her swimming career. Some swimmers may be involved in multiple extra-curricular activities that may conflict with the swimming schedule. Letting the coach know of these conflicts will go a long way in understanding the practice habits your swimmer will develop.

Each program has a maximum number of practices per week that your swimmer may attend. Your coach might suggest that your swimmer attend the maximum number per week; however, might recommend that your athlete attend fewer practices depending on ability and maturity. Younger and less experienced swimmers should probably not come to the maximum number of practices allowed each week so that they become acclimated to the regimen of the physical exercise. The number of practices is established by the coaches to maximize the effectiveness of the program. This also helps to maintain the level of development of each athlete. By adhering to these guidelines, swimmers have a better chance of not only succeeding but continuing their interest in the sport of swimming.

If you have any questions about what is best for your swimmer, please ask your coach about what they suggest.

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## 5. How do I know which training group is right for my child? What if my child does not know how to perform all the strokes well?

Training intensity and duration varies by age, skill level, maturity, commitment and experience. Everyone was a beginner at some point in their swimming career. Assessments and evaluations take place throughout the season for new members, and your swimmer will be placed in a group that meets their age specific needs.

## 6. When will my swimmer be ready to move up to the next level?

The coaching staff is currently putting into place a set of measurable guidelines that include, but are not limited to, age, physical and emotional maturity, attendance and training requirements, technical skill and competitive standards needed to promote from one program to the next.

It is important not to move a swimmer from one level to the next too quickly. Each individual swimmer will progress at different rates. Each swimmer must develop and build their confidence and knowledge of the skills in order to be ready to move to the next level.

Please feel free to contact your current coach should you have any questions about your child's placement within the program.

## 7. If I have children in different groups will I have to go to different locations for practice?

Unfortunately, yes. We are currently a very large team of 300+ members, and we are limited with our facilities. I encourage that you set up carpools with friends of those in each group to better manage time.

## 8. Will my child be required to attend swim meets?

Yes, when the swimmers are ready for competition. Your child's coach will let you know when your child is ready for competition. Swimmers must compete to be in the Red, Blue, Gold and Senior programs as competitive standards are a factor to promote to the next level. The goal is to train for the highest level championship meet. For example, Red and Blue swimmers may be training for the Conference meets, Gold swimmers may be training for the ISI Age Group Champs meet and Senior level swimmers may be training for ISI Senior Champs, Sectional, Junior Nationals or higher level USA Swimming meets.

First, Most swimmers enjoy the challenges, excitement and fun of competitive swimming. They enjoy the thrill of improving their times from one meet to the next, the fun of socializing with their teammates between races and the enthusiastic support they receive from their teammates during competition.

Second, it is a proven fact that swimmers who regularly attend meets improve more rapidly than those who do not. Each meet is an evaluation of the skill sets that the coaching staff has been working on during that micro-cycle. Mastering a specific skill within a group will assist the coach in developing new goals and challenges for the group for the next meet.

Third, attending meets rewards the swimmer for their hard work. Swimmers are goal oriented athletes that look closely to the motivational standards set by USA Swimming, Illinois Swimming and each individual team.

Finally, meets are a means of setting goals, measuring improvements in technique and understanding the racing skills we all practice to prepare your swimmer to be the best he/she can be.

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## 9. Can my child be a member of Lyons Swim Club and still participate in other extra-curricular activities like water polo, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, musical instrument, choir, dance, etc.?

Yes. We actually encourage that all children under the age of 12 expand their range by participating in various activities while they find what they enjoy most. The key is to find what THEY ENJOY most, not the parents. Once they have figured it all out, and if swimming is what they want to do most, then we will encourage a greater commitment to the sport. **Special Note:** Given that girls mature at a much faster rate than boys, it is very important that girls figure this out sooner than later. Please contact your coach should you have any questions regarding this very real issue with girls in the sport of swimming.

## 10. Do the coaches of Lyons Swim Club focus on technique, and why is it so important to stress good technique?

Yes. Stroke technique is the basis of efficient and productive strokes. By continually updating and introducing new stroke drills, athletes are more apt to perform better strokes which will result in faster times at meets. Our staff of professional coaches are constantly searching for new techniques used by coaches nationwide/worldwide as ways to improve strokes by attending clinics offered by USA Swimming, Illinois swimming and the American Swimming Coaches Association.

**Special Note:** Technique is not a one way street. Many times coaches will work on a skill in practice that the swimmer may not execute in practice or competition. The coaching staff firmly believes that the swimmer must be responsible for making the adjustments to their strokes and/or racing skills. He/She must be accountable to their efforts to place a priority on team drills and expectations in order to effectively improve their strokes and/or racing strategies.

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