

Never Too Early/Late To Get In The Swim

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Young or old, swimming is a fun way to stay fit. But it's important to know how to stay safe in and around the water.



With summer starting, beaches and pools everywhere seem to be a lot more crowded, even in Hawaii, where swimming is a year-round activity.

The YMCA offers swim classes for babies (6 months and up) to adults, as well as Aqua Zumba, H2O (a nonweight bearing, low-impact exercise and resistance class), private swim lessons, Aqua Boot Camp, a novice youth swim league and more.

“There are many health benefits of swimming,” says Omar Zaldana, YMCA aquatics director. “Overall, it improves mobility and your cardiovascular system, and helps with weight loss and to maintain an active lifestyle. It’s also a great option for seniors because it doesn’t put much strain on their bodies.”

Some swim tips Zaldana offers are: kids. If you ever go around water, don’t take for granted that they know what they’re doing or that they’re not going to get into trouble. there’s no lifeguard on duty, make sure you go with a buddy. posted or any warnings that you’re given by lifeguards or signs.

According to YMCA of Honolulu, drowning is the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years old. In Hawaii, only 41 percent of our population can swim, and 70 percent of children who drown are in the care of one or both parents at the time.

To help children learn basic swimming skills and water safety practices, YMCA of Honolulu has been offering its free SPLASH (Swim, Play and Learn Aquatic Safety Habits) program at its Nuuanu, branches to fourth-graders in area schools for the past few years. The Y provides swim-suits, goggles and rash guards for participants; and the program is funded by generous donors such as Island Insurance Foundation and Hawaii Moving Ahead (for the Nuuanu branch), Waipahu Community Foundation (for the Leeward branch) and ABC Stores (for

In addition to swimming, there are many simple exercises you can do in the water, such as jogging and sculling using water barbells.

“Water exercise is a great way to mix up your fitness routine this summer,” notes Erin Berhman Farmer, YMCA of Honolulu senior program director. “Water exercise has been proven to improve cardio respiratory endurance, body composition, and enhance muscular strength, endurance and flexibility.”

For more information or to join a class at the YMCA, visit ymcahonolulu.org.