

JUMPING IN AT THE RIGHT DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE (JANE MARSDEN)

Understanding a child's developmental stage has a huge impact on how they learn to swim. An example is how some children are frightened to jump or dive from the side of the pool.

From birth we grow in two ways: from the head down to the toes; and from the inside out. This is why a toddler has a huge head and tiny legs; and (as the internal organs grow first) a distended stomach, with the feet and fingers being among the last body parts to grow. This growth pattern, according to *SwimTips* (Nov/Dec 2007), is why children learn gross motor skills before fine motor skills. They don't have full control of their feet and hands for the first few years of life, and their larger upper body is supported by a tiny lower body, which makes jumping difficult. Also, they lack the coordination, balance and spatial awareness of older children.

Toddlers tend to jump with one foot after the other instead of with two feet landing at the same time. From about three years of age, they can spring from two feet and land with two feet in a controlled manner.

When children are asked to enter water from a height, by jumping or diving, their body and minds might not be prepared through properly planned, sequential experiences. They also need a lot of trust when jumping from a height that they will be okay when they land in the water.

As parents and swim instructors, we can't expect young children to jump instinctively from the pool-side without having first offered them progressive fun experiences. These include sitting on the side of the pool, safety entries (feet first) and performing skills from raised surfaces in the water (so the height is not so overwhelming). Once comfort and trust is achieved, they can try sitting on the side and falling into their parents' waiting arms (Humpty Dumpties or Crocodiles) and then kneeling or standing on the side and doing the same.



Young swimmers need practice entering the water from a platform, which reduces height. Here teacher Lisa has fun with Dhruv, Oliver, Elliott and Josephine.

QUALITY COFFEE & MERCHANDISE AT TURF CITY!

Our covered, heated swimming-pool at Turf City (behind 7-11, see maps below) is proving very popular. Please try our nice coffee and hot chocolate (\$2 each) and ask Joanna, our full-time administrator there on weekdays, if you need to purchase any swimming-related merchandise. On weekends, the reception desk will be manned by Melissa (Saturday mornings) or Doris (Saturday afternoons and Sundays). Please note the number for the mobile phone at Turf City is 96650328.

TERM 1 DATES

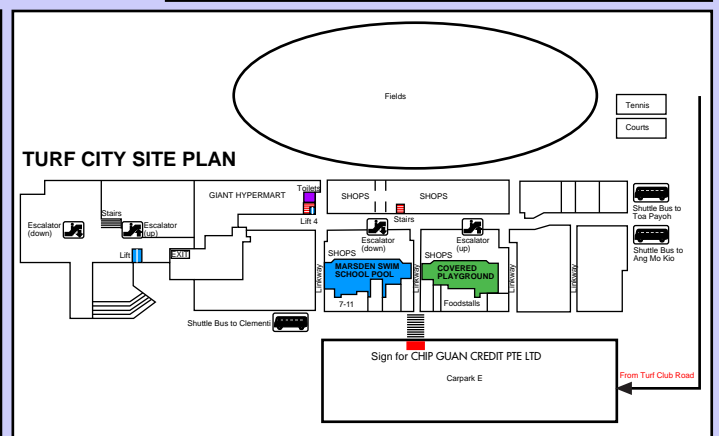
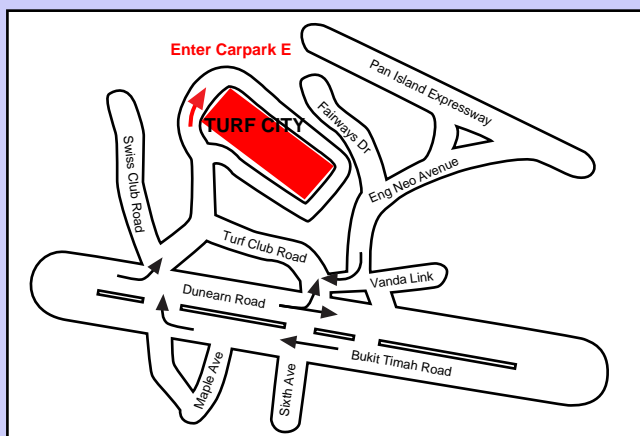
Classes at Holland Road:
January 7-March 22, 2008 except February 5-8 and March 21
(classes will go ahead on February 9 from 9am to 12 noon and from 3pm to 6pm but NOT 12 noon to 3pm)

Classes at Turf City:
January 7-March 23, 2008 except February 7-10 and March 21

Classes after school at AISS:
January 21-March 19, 2008 except February 4-6

Classes on Sundays at AISS:
January 13-March 23, 2008 (Paula's half-hour classes will go ahead on February 10 but NOT Jason's or Wendy's)

Squad at Queenstown & AISS:
January 13-March 23, 2008 except February 4, 5 & 7



PLEASE COME TO SWIMMING EVEN IF IT IS RAINING UNLESS WE RING YOU!

MARSDEN SWIM SQUAD (JASON MARSDEN)

The Marsden Swim School/Squad Swim Meet on December 9 was a really fun afternoon. We had a turnout of over 50 swimmers, many of whom had never been in a race situation before. I am glad to report that, once again, many people entered events on the day that they thought they would NOT want to do before the meet began. Many swimmers achieved personal bests. Other swimmers were just very proud, and rightly so, to have the guts to enter into a competitive situation. The main thing is that each swimmer tried their best and had a really good time! The coaches at Marsden Swim School are very proud of their efforts. The times of each individual at the meet are posted on the website (www.marsdenswimschool.com), as are the photos we took. The next meet will be held in June. In the meantime, swimmers need to remember their personal best times (which we have discussed in squad!) so that they can keep challenging themselves to improve.



William, Oliver and Thomas Mulhearn with their medals after the swim meet.

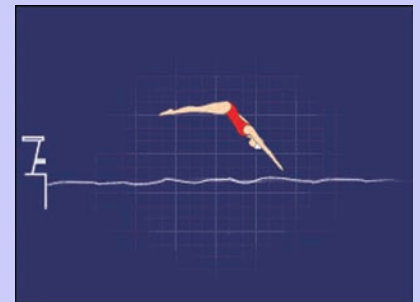
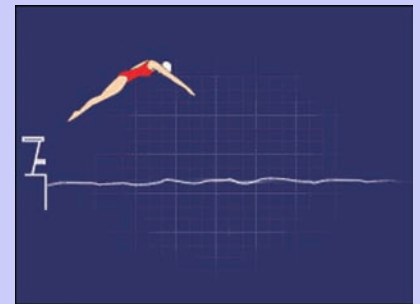
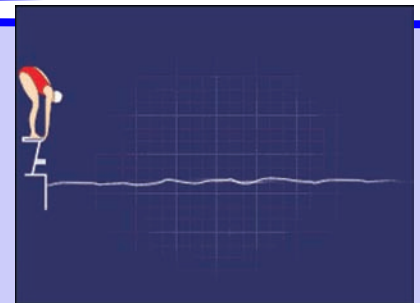
Squad next term will still focus on the swimmer as an all-rounder. In other words, we will keep working on technique in all strokes, fitness and enjoyment. Once again a gentle reminder to bring drink bottles to the squad sessions and swim in appropriate swimwear (NO boardshorts and baggy rash tops if you can avoid them please!). The coaches are doing their best to make the sessions a mixture of hard work and fun so please try to be enthusiastic in your approach. Many swimmers this last term, even though not really into swimming, commented how their fitness and physique had improved and had helped them in their other sporting pursuits. So let's get the most out of each session!

HOW TO BE A BETTER DIVER (JASON MARSDEN)

As our fun diving clinic on January 9 revealed, there's more to diving than most swimmers think – and it is incredibly important in racing. Here are the basic steps:

1. Step up onto the block and get a feel for the block's size and stability. This is the time to clear your head and focus on the race you are about to swim. Go over your race strategy one last time, relax and focus.
2. Find your footing.
3. Bend your knees slightly and reach down to touch (or grab) the block when the starter gives the signal, "Swimmers take your mark". Your weight is on the balls of your feet and your entire body is poised to leap up and out.
4. Swing your arms forward and push off with your legs, your feet and even your toes at the sound of the starter (usually a gun or a horn). Aim for the opposite side of the pool.
5. Extend your arms over your head, with your shoulders up by your ears, and your legs together and toes pointed.
6. Enter the water at slightly less than a 45-degree angle with your body streamlined. Your head is between your shoulders and looking down (this will keep your goggles on). Try to enter the water with almost no splash.

Feet Position: The proper position for your feet varies. Some people like both feet on the front of the block, separated a couple of inches, with their toes over the edge. Others like to put one foot further back on the block and do a "track start". Experiment with a couple of different stances to find what works best for you. If you feel that you are faster with a track start, try not to lean back and pull forward. Instead, bend forward, pull your arms and kick hard with your feet. Try to go in like a "port hole" rather than "hitting the whole surface". Also, diving puts momentum in your stroke; as soon as you breathe you kill that momentum. So it's especially important that you hold your breath for as long as possible after a dive.



MAKE-UP POLICY

Please check our website under Terms & Conditions for our make-up policy. Only two make-ups per child per term will be offered and only if you let us know your child is sick by ringing us BEFORE the class. Also, make-ups for ad hoc holidays of which we were not informed before term begins will not be allowed. Please notify us in writing before term begins when you will be away during the next term and we will not invoice you for missed classes. Thanks for your understanding.

PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO C LICENCE PTE LTD

113 HOLLAND ROAD, SINGAPORE 278556 • 6473 8353 • marsdenswim@pacific.net.sg • www.marsdenswimschool.com