



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA CAMP SLOPER

Swim Tests and FAQ About Swim Testing

This document was designed to help you as the parent and as the camper understand the ins and outs of swim testing at YMCA Camp Sloper.

Our Philosophy

Swimming is a wonderful life skill and a popular activity here at camp and it is also the area of camp that we are strictest about. Sloper Pond and our waterfronts are considered to be the most dangerous spots at camp, simply for the potential life threatening scenarios that can occur. With this in mind, we are the most cautious and strict on rules and expectations when it comes to our waterfronts and keeping kids safe.

Our swim tests are designed to make sure that we know that all campers swimming will be safe and are capable of swimming without assistance in the deep end. Why are we so strict when it comes to our swim tests?

1. Our pond is **dark water**, which means that if someone goes underwater they will not be able to be seen after they go under after just a few inches. A pool has clear water and is much easier to spot kids underwater. For this reason, we do not allow breathe holding games.
2. Our deep end swimming areas are much larger than pools, where a pool's edge is not within a few yards of a swimmer at all times.
3. The deep ends have varying depths and are not linear when it comes to depths from shallow to deep end. Our shallow end lane line is roughly 3ft-3.5ft deep, but after that it can vary from 4ft-6ft right away.
4. Living in Connecticut doesn't allow for year round swimming sometimes, so we want to make sure our campers and staff have the endurance to stay afloat when needed (head above water)

Our number one priority is to keep kids safe above all else. YMCA Camp Sloper will always air on the safe side if a child is teetering on the edge of passing or failing the swim test.



Swim Tests

Since the pond is dark water, it is extremely important that campers are able to swim *confidently* and *continuously*.

EAST COAST SWIM TEST PROCEDURES *(what the guards look for)*

Below are all of the components that are expected of your child to be deemed as a 'deep end' swimmer.

- Swim 10 yards in the shallow end with their arms coming fully out of the water and feet kicking (and not touching the bottom of the pond). This swim should be a 'freestyle' or 'forward crawl'.
- Swim 5 yards in the deep end with their arms coming fully out of the water and feet kicking (and not touching the bottom of the pond). This swim should be a 'freestyle' or 'forward crawl'.
- Climb up the ladder in the deep end and exit the water.
- Jump into the deep end section from the dock. When doing this, the jump must be feet first and facing towards the beach.
- Tread water for 15 seconds, then swim to the shallow end.

*** When doing this, lifeguards are looking for that endurance - that a child is able to do these things without needing to take a break or looking very exhausted. ***

WEST COAST SWIM TEST PROCEDURES *(what the guards look for)*

Below are all of the components that are expected of your child to be deemed as a 'deep end' swimmer.

- Swim ½ of the shallow end with their arms coming fully out of the water and feet not touching the bottom of the pond. This swim should be a "freestyle" or "forward crawl".
- Swim the entire length of the deep end with their arms coming fully out of the water and their feet not touching the bottom of the pond. This swim should be a "freestyle" or "forward crawl".
- Climb up a deep end ladder to exit the water.
- Jump into the deep end section from the back dock. This jump must be feet first and facing the beach.
- Tread water for 30 seconds OR tread water for 15 seconds and float on their back for 30 seconds, then return to the shallow end.

*** When doing this, lifeguards are looking for that endurance - that a child is able to do these things without needing to take a break or looking very exhausted. ***



FAQs

- **Why are the Swim tests different for each coast?**
 - East waterfront has different depths for the deep ends as well as the waterfronts themselves are vastly different sizes. The East Coast is nearly 3 times the size of the West Coast waterfront, but the west coast waterfront is deeper in the shallow and deep ends.
- **Can my Sloperian swim in the deep end?**
 - All Sloperians are deemed shallow end swimmers. The first time they are allowed to swim in the deep end is when campers become Explorers.
- **My child took the swim test and did not pass. Are they shallow end for the whole summer now?**
 - That is okay! They are still able to swim with their group in the shallow and deep ends. The only thing that we ask is that they wear a lifejacket in the deep end.
 - The majority of swimmers on the East Coast Waterfront have been deemed 'shallow end' swimmers - so do not worry about your child being the only person in their group listed as this.
- **Can my child retake the swim test?**
 - We retest campers every Monday during their scheduled swim periods. We retest on Monday's to allow a child to develop better swimming skills throughout the week. This gives the camper time to practice and build endurance for the next test.
- **What can my child do if they pass?**
 - By passing the swim test, your child will be allowed to swim in the deep end without a life jacket. Your child will also be allowed to go on our water elements (coast dependent) such as the Waterslide, Waterpark, and Rope Swing. In addition, your camper will be able to take out their own kayaks or paddle boards (coast dependent).
- **What can my child work on at home to help them pass next time?**
 - Although each camper is unique, most suggestions relate to building up their endurance and energy levels. Stay active throughout the year and each week will help keep your child in swimming shape. Activities like running, biking, jumping, and climbing are all great ways to build muscle and endurance.

If you have any questions about any of the information above or about something that wasn't specifically addressed, please contact the main office at 860-621-8194.