

Swimming

Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).

Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on September 29, 2026.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
Links marked "ScoutSmarts" open the matching part of Cole's guide. This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Do the following:

(a) Review with your counselor how Scouting America's Safe Swim Defense guidelines anticipate and deal with common drowning situations such as unfenced residential pools, nonswimmers entering deep water, risky behaviors, medical impairment in the water, drop-offs, cold water, murky water, river currents, rip currents, and surf.

Scouting America resources: Safe Swim Defense (website) · Rip Current Survival Guide (website w/ video) Safe Swimming Area (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1a explained

Safe Swim Defense and drowning situations

Situation	How Safe Swim Defense anticipates and deals with it
unfenced residential pools	
nonswimmers entering deep water	
risky behaviors	
medical impairment in the water	
drop-offs	
cold water	
murky water	
river currents	
rip currents	
surf	

(b) Discuss the prevention and treatment of health concerns that could occur while swimming, including hypothermia, dehydration, sunburn, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, muscle cramps, hyperventilation, spinal injury, stings and bites, and cuts and scrapes.

Scouting America resources: 10 Common Summer Safety Emergencies (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1b explained

Health concerns while swimming

Concern	Prevention	Treatment
hypothermia		
dehydration		
sunburn		
heat exhaustion		
heatstroke		
muscle cramps		
hyperventilation		
spinal injury		
stings and bites		
cuts and scrapes		

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete the Scouting America swimmer test, found in the Swimming merit badge pamphlet.

Scouting America resources: Swimming Merit Badge Pamphlet (PDF) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2 explained

Swimmer test passed on _____ Witnessed by _____

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Correctly perform the following strokes:

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 3 explained

(a) Demonstrate the front crawl or the trudgen using good form.

Scouting America resources: Learn To Swim Freestyle | A Simple Step-by-Step Guide (video) · How To Swim Front Crawl? (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(b) Demonstrate the back crawl using good form.

Scouting America resources: How To Swim Backstroke (video) · How To Swim Backstroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(c) Demonstrate the sidestroke using good form.

Scouting America resources: How To Swim Side Stroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

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(d) Demonstrate the breaststroke using good form.

Scouting America resources: How To Swim Breaststroke Properly! (video) · How To Swim Breaststroke (video)
The Elements of Breaststroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

(e) Demonstrate the elementary backstroke using good form.

Scouting America resources: Learn To Swim Elementary Backstroke (video)

Date _____ Notes on my form _____

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Swim continuously for 150 yards in a strong manner using each of the following strokes in any order; front crawl or trudgen (25 yards); back crawl (25 yards); sidestroke (25 yards); breaststroke (25 yards); and elementary backstroke (50 yards).

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4 explained

150-yard swim

Stroke	Yards	Date
Front crawl or trudgen		
Back crawl		
Sidestroke		
Breaststroke		
Elementary backstroke		

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Do the following:

(a) Demonstrate water rescue methods by reaching with your arm or leg, by reaching with a suitable object, and by throwing lines and objects. Explain why swimming rescues should not be attempted when a reaching or throwing rescue is possible, and explain why and how a rescue swimmer should avoid contact with the victim.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5a explained

Date _____

Rescue methods I showed, and what I used

(b) With a helper and a practice victim, show a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer. The practice victim should be approximately 30 feet from shore in deep water.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5b explained

Date _____ Helper _____ Practice victim _____

☐ As tender
☐ As rescuer

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Do the following:

(a) Float faceup in a resting position for at least three minutes with minimal movement.
Scouting America resources: How To Float on Your Back for Beginners | Watch This Before You Give Up (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6a explained

Date _____ Time floated _____

(b) Demonstrate survival floating for at least five minutes.
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6b explained

Date _____ Time floated _____

(c) While wearing a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket, demonstrate the HELP and huddle positions. Explain their purposes.
Scouting America resources: PFD's H.E.L.P. & Huddle Positions (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6c explained

Date _____

What the HELP and huddle positions do

(d) Explain why swimming or survival floating will hasten the onset of hypothermia in cold water.
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6d explained

Why swimming or survival floating speeds up hypothermia in cold water

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. In water over your head, but not to exceed 10 feet, do the following:

(a) Use the feetfirst method of surface diving and bring an object up from the bottom.
Scouting America resources: How To Do a Feetfirst Surface Dive (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 7a explained

Date _____ Where and how deep _____

(b) Do a headfirst surface dive (pike or tuck), and bring the object up again.
Scouting America resources: How To Do a Headfirst Surface Dive (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 7b explained

Date _____ Where and how deep _____

(c) Do a headfirst surface dive to a depth of at least 5 feet and swim underwater for three strokes. Come to the surface, take a breath, and repeat the sequence twice.
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 7c explained

Date _____ Where and how deep _____

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

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8. Following the guidelines set in the Scouting America Safe Swim Defense guidelines, in water at least 7 feet deep, show a standing headfirst dive from a dock or pool deck. Show a long shallow dive, also from the dock or pool deck. Note: If your state, city, or local community requires a water depth greater than 7 feet, it is important to abide by that mandate.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 8 explained

Date _____ Location and water depth _____

- ☐ Standing headfirst dive
- ☐ Long shallow dive

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Explain the health benefits of regular aerobic exercise, and discuss why swimming is favored as both fitness and therapeutic exercise.

Scouting America resources: What Happens to Your Body When You Swim? (video) · 10 Health Benefits of Swimming (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 9 explained

Health benefits of regular aerobic exercise

Why swimming is favored as fitness and therapeutic exercise

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: Swimming merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Swimming merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Swimming Merit Badge Guide, Part 1 · Swimming Merit Badge Guide, Part 2

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
Spot an error or a requirement change? Tell me at scoutsmarts.com/contact.
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