

FAQ'S FOR EVALUATIONS/JOINING THE TEAM

Below are common questions that parents have prior to joining our team

Who can join Mako Aquatics?

Children between the ages of 5 and 18 who have some swimming experience are welcome to be evaluated. Placement will be determined by your swimmer's ability shown during the evaluation and available openings in our practice groups. If your swimmer is not ready for the swim team, we will discuss options.

Who needs to be evaluated?

All New Swimmers need to attend an evaluation. All potential new team members will be evaluated to determine skill level. If swimmers are older current or recent USA Swimming or YMCA swim team members or current high school swimmers, they may not need to attend evaluations to be placed on the team. Please provide their swim history and times in the evaluation request and we will be in touch.

What is a swimmer evaluation and how does it work?

During your child's evaluation, we will have them swim to demonstrate their current skill level (they will not be asked to do something they are not comfortable trying). This helps us determine the right group for your child on our team. At the end of your evaluation, the coach will recommend the appropriate training group for your swimmer on our team and we will do our best to answer any questions you might have. After your swimmer evaluation you may start online registration.

Why are there evaluations?

A swimmer evaluation helps us place your child in the appropriate training group and figure out how to best maximize:

- Quality of instruction for each swimmer
- Amount of instruction for each swimmer
- Availability of the pool for the team

Ensuring the swimmers can compete at their age levels guarantees all swimmers are prepared for their correlating practice levels and feel comfortable swimming with their age groups.

When can my swimmer be evaluated to join Mako Aquatics?

We welcome your swimmer to join at any time during the year. We specifically hold evaluations before each season, in the fall (August) before the Short Course season and in the spring (March) before the Long Course season.

Why should my child swim?

Swimming is one of the greatest sports out there. Children that swim learn the values of hard work, discipline, integrity, sportsmanship, and dedication, all while having fun and staying healthy and physically fit. Since 2013, our Senior Group swimmers have gone to colleges and universities nationwide, encompassing Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 swimming. Swimming teaches lifelong values that help kids succeed now and, in the future, in and out of the pool. There is just no sport like swimming!

Why should I join Mako Aquatics?

Helping your child succeed in the pool and out is our top priority. We offer a program that allows your child to learn and progress at his or her own rate and we teach swimmers from the beginning levels to the elite levels. Mako Aquatics strives every day to provide the best coaching staff and program to achieve this goal.

Is my child ready for a swim team, or should we do swim lessons instead?

If your child can comfortably swim 25 yards of freestyle with their face in the water & breathing, and 25 yards of backstroke, we can do the rest. If you are not sure, set up a swim evaluation and after the evaluation we will be able to tell you for sure where the right place for your child is.

Also, read the [Difference between Swim Lessons and a Swim Team](#)

What's the likelihood of my child making the team?

There's no way of knowing this without all of the facts, but we're hopeful that the vast majority (if not all) of those attending evaluations will be ready to join the team. Key indicators will be your child's comfort and confidence in the water, demonstrating respect and discipline, listening to and executing on the basic instructions given, and ability to swim.

What should we expect at the evaluation?

Expect our awesome Head Developmental Coach to help your child feel comfortable while assessing your child's ability, willingness, and ability to execute as requested. We expect this to be anywhere from 10-15 minutes.

Our team evaluations are based upon the age of the swimmer and their swimming abilities. This evaluation will help the coach determine your child's swimming ability. Upon completion a recommendation will be provided to the parent as to whether the child is ready to join our competitive swim team, or if he/she needs swim lessons prior to joining the team. Swimmers who pass the evaluations will be invited to join our Swim Team provided there are openings in their recommended practice group.

What will the coaches look for?

Your child paying attention, following instructions, and being at ease in the water will be important factors. Additionally, the coaches will assess your child's ability to perform various swim techniques at various distances (depending on your child's age) with the major focus being on freestyle and backstroke.

What does my swimmer have to be able to do?

For all age groups, the coaches will look closely at

- The child paying attention
- The ability and willingness to follow through on instructions from coaches
- Ease in the water

The minimum requirements to be on the team are:

- 1) the swimmer needs to be at least 5 years old; and
- 2) the swimmer needs to be able to comfortably swim 25 yards of freestyle with their face in the water & breathing, and 25 yards of backstroke. Swimmers that are

older will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of breaststroke and butterfly as well.

Evaluations will include:

10 & Under*:

- An evaluation of all four competitive strokes (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle), turns and diving.
- In order to be considered for our Developmental group, athletes must be able to complete at least a 25-yard Freestyle with face in the water & proper breathing, a 25-yard Backstroke, and be comfortable in all depths of water.

11 & Over*:

- An evaluation of all four competitive strokes (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle), dives and turns.
- In order to be considered for our Developmental group, athletes must be able to complete at least a 25-yard Freestyle with face in the water & proper breathing, a 25-yard Backstroke, and be comfortable in all depths of water.
- In order to be considered for our higher-level groups, athletes must be able to demonstrate the basics of all 4 strokes

*Assessments may be altered to better understand each athlete's abilities.

These are published as guidelines only to assist parents in preparing swimmers for evaluations.

When and how will I know the evaluation results?

Parents & swimmers will receive evaluation results following their evaluation, you will be given one of three outcomes:

- your swimmer is ready to join the swim team and will be assigned to a Training Group.
- your swimmer is ready but will need to be on a waitlist as their assigned Practice Group is currently full.
- your swimmer needs to gain a few more skills and be evaluated again in the future. Information regarding specific skills needed will be shared to take to your swim lesson instructor.

An email with more information and registration details will be sent to those ready to join the team after their evaluation date.

My swimmer has previous competitive experience. Does Mako Aquatics have a place for him/her?

Mako Aquatics has many levels from Novice swimmers all the way up to Junior National qualifiers. Whether you're 5 years old and just barely ready for the team, or you have been swimming competitively for 10 years, we have a group for you.

What are your attendance requirements?

We don't have attendance requirements at Mako Aquatics except in our highest level Training Groups. We absolutely [make recommendations](#) to you about ideal attendance so that you can maintain realistic expectations of what your athlete will get out of the program, but nothing is typically required. The swimmers will get out of the program what they are willing and able to put in. We offer three to six practices a week depending on

the group in order to provide plenty of flexibility for young athletes to keep things balanced.

How often are meets? Do we have to compete?

We try to offer meets approximately 1-2 times per month. The general answer about competing is, yes, we are a competitive swim team and it is highly encouraged (and expected at our top levels). The benefits and life lessons that swimmers learn by competing and preparing to compete are extremely valuable, and we strongly encourage you to compete in the competitions on our schedule. However, our new to swimming Mako Aquatics members are encouraged to participate in Mako intra-squad or team hosted meets intended to allow our novice swimmers to experience the excitement of competition while building their confidence in a supportive and fun environment. As swimmers progress, coaches will recommend participating in local swim meets as well.

Do I have to swim year-round?

No. Many of our younger swimmers do other sports and activities. We encourage you to explore other activities, especially for younger athletes. So, if you want to stop for a season (like Long Course), and come back later in the year, (like Short Course) you just have to let us know when registration happens for the next season. They will need to be evaluated for the next season during evaluations and as long as there is still space on the team in the group your swimmer should be in, they will be able to join again.

How much does your program cost? Are there any other requirements when joining your program?

In general, there is a Mako Aquatics registration fee and monthly training fees, an annual membership with USA swimming, swim team apparel & equipment, and swim meet entry fees, which are set by the meet host team. The training fees vary with the group your swimmer is placed in and can be found in the [Registration Information](#) for the upcoming season. There is also a parent volunteer requirement.

The commitment sounds like a lot, is it worth it?

Absolutely! Competitive swimming with Mako Aquatics is not just a spot to swim, it is a place to learn life lessons and grow as a person while becoming a better swimmer. Over 80% of our swimmers who swam year-round 2 or more years leading up to graduating from high school have gone on to swim in college. The typical GPA of our graduating seniors is around 4.0, and it's pretty common to have GPA's above 4.3. Dedication, commitment, and work ethic in swimming really do carry on to other aspects in their lives.