

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

Swimming



NB: This is not a word for word transcript

Rob: Hello, I'm Rob...

Callum: And I'm Callum.

Rob: And this is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. Today we're talking about swimming. Now, Callum, how old were you when you started to swim?

Callum: I suppose, before ten. Before I was ten, I think.

Rob: Quite young.

Callum: Yes.

Rob: Well, swimming is a very popular activity in the UK. According to a recent survey, one in five adults in the UK cannot swim. What's more, millions of children in the UK can't swim a length of a pool. I think most people recognise that swimming is very important for safety and good for fitness. But maybe some people weren't introduced to the water early enough and they don't have the confidence to start swimming later in life. In a moment we'll hear from some people who coach swimming for adults and children, but first I have this week's question for you, Callum.

Callum: I thought you might.

Rob: In 2007, the Slovenian swimmer Martin Strel broke his own world record for long-distance swimming. But what distance did he swim?

Was it:

- a) 3, 268 kilometres
- b) 4, 268 kilometres
- c) 5, 268 kilometres

Callum: 4, 268 kilometres. I say that. But I really don't know.

Rob: OK, well, we'll see if you're right at the end of the programme. First let's hear from the BBC reporter Sophie van Brugen. She went to a swimming pool to find out more about swimming classes for adults and children. Let's have a listen to the clip; how many children does she say have taken swimming classes in the last year?

Sophie van Brugen, BBC

Not everybody's confident in the water, and many of us learn to swim later on in life. And in fact experts now say that the best time to learn is when we're babies and children. And in the last year alone, over 300,000 little ones have gone through classes.

Rob: She says that over 300,000 little ones have taken swimming classes.

Callum: By 'little ones' of course she means children or toddlers. **Toddlers** are children who are just learning to walk – usually when they're about 2 years old.

Rob: That's right. And the best time to learn how to swim is when you're a baby.

Callum: That makes sense. I think a lot of babies are natural swimmers, so it's good for them to be in the water from an early age.

Rob: As long as they've got the proper supervision!

Callum: Definitely! **To supervise** means to watch over something. The noun **supervision** is when someone watches over someone else, like a parent watching over, taking care of a child.

Rob: It really is natural for babies to be in the water. As long as they have the proper supervision, babies as young as three months old can start swimming. We have a clip from baby swimming teacher Jenni May. She says that if babies spend time swimming from the earliest opportunity, it becomes second nature for them to be in the water.

Callum: **Second nature.** This is when you do something so often that it becomes totally natural to you. So when a child starts to swim very early on, swimming becomes second nature to them.

Rob: OK, let's listen to the clip. Listen out for the phrase **second nature**, and see how she uses it in context.

Jenni May, swimming teacher

When they're under six months it's just almost a natural thing for them to be under the water. And then it just becomes second nature to them so as they're older, they don't know any different than being under the water and being wet.

Rob: So if a baby starts swimming early enough, it becomes second nature to them and they don't know any different from being under water and being wet.

Callum: But what about people who *don't* learn to swim when they're young? The one in five British adults who can't swim – what can they do?

Rob: Ah, well there are a number of schemes to encourage people to swim, including the BBC's 'Big Splash' campaign, which celebrates swimming and wants to get more people into the water, whether they're adults or children.

Callum: The Big Splash campaign. A **splash** is the sound that's made when something hits water. You can hear the word making the same sound –Splaassssh!

Rob: It's a great word. And there are lots of classes for adults to learn how to swim! Vicki Carter, who teaches swimming to adults, told the BBC about some of the techniques she uses to encourage people to swim.

She suggests diving down for bricks and going through hoops as two methods to make swimming more fun.

Callum: **To dive** here means to go under the surface of the water. And it can also mean to jump head-first into water. And a **hoop** is a circular band, usually made of metal or plastic. So she suggests diving down for bricks or swimming through hoops as a way to make swimming more interesting.

Rob: Right, it's time to go back to today's question, Callum. The Slovenian swimmer Martin Strel broke the world record for long-distance swimming in 2007. But what was his record-breaking distance? Was it:

d) 3, 268 kilometres

e) 4, 268 kilometres

f) 5, 268 kilometres

Callum: Well, I chose 4, 268 kilometres but it's just a guess. They are all extraordinary long distances.

Rob: Well, he actually swam 5,268 kilometres along the length of the Amazon River to break his own world record. Incredible! OK, well we're almost at the end of

the programme, so Callum could you remind us of some of the vocabulary we've heard in today's programme?

Callum: Of course! We had:

Toddlers

To supervise

Supervision

Second nature

Splash

To dive

Hoops

Rob: Thanks, Callum. If you've enjoyed today's programme, why not write to us about your favourite places to swim, or ways to make swimming more interesting, for children and adults. See you next time!

Both: Bye!

Vocabulary and definitions

toddlers	children who have just learned to walk
to supervise	to watch over a person or an activity they are doing and make sure it is done correctly
supervision	the act of supervising people or their activities
second nature	something which you can do easily and naturally
splash	the sound made when something hits the water
to dive	to jump into water, usually head-first
hoops	large rings made of wood, metal or plastic

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