

Dog Scouts of America

Water Safety Level One (Puppy Paddlers) Training Instructions

All dogs know how to swim--they just don't **know** that they know how to swim. The key is to get them accustomed to the water in a non-threatening manner.

Try going into the water with your dog. Dogs aren't stupid--they're not going to venture into somewhere that their owner isn't going to go first.

As you move from wading depth to swimming depth, make that transition a gradual one. Try to move parallel to the shore or at a slight diagonal, to make the water become deeper only a tiny bit at a time.

A favorite toy is often a good lure to make a hesitant dog overcome his trepidation about getting too wet.

Sometimes, just watching other dogs dive in and have fun is a good way to convince your dog that "swimming is cool" (peer pressure).

Whatever you do, if your dog is a first-time swimmer at camp, let your water safety instructor know about it. Puppy Paddlers is for first time swimmers and there can only be one "first time." So if your dog learned to swim at camp, you'll want to apply for the badge. If your dog was already swimming before camp, you can earn the badge by helping another dog learn to swim, and showing us that you know how to help a dog learn to swim.