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# HISTORY OF AQUATICS AT THE Y

From 1885 when the first pool was built to 2002 when the book "YMCA Aquatic Management: A Guide to Effective Leadership" was released, this timeline covers the major events in YMCA aquatics history.

**1885** The first YMCA swimming pool was built in the Brooklyn YMCA in New York.

**1904** The first YMCA lifesaving corps was organized in 1904 at Camp Dudley in upstate New York.

**1910** George Corsan used group teaching methods instead of teaching individuals. He taught crawl stroke first, contrary to the practice of the day. The YMCA and the Red Cross (U.S.A.) commenced co-operatively to promote first aid. Shortly afterwards, the Red Cross hired Commodore Longfellow to study the drowning situation, and Longfellow developed a lifesaving corps in the YMCA (Baltimore, Maryland). From this point, both organizations proceeded to develop their own life-saving programs.

**1912** The National YMCA Lifesaving Service was organized.

**1923** The first YMCA swimming championships were held at the Brooklyn YMCA.

**1938** The new YMCA aquatics program was published. Swimmers at varying degrees of ability were known as Minnows, Fish, and Sharks.

**1956** The YMCA introduced the idea of "Learn to Swim Month."

**1959** The YMCA Scuba program was developed.

**1964** The National YMCA Aquatic Conference adopted the Porpoise and Springboard Diving programs.

**1972** The Progressive Swimming and Springboard Diving Program manual was published. The new program used the "whole-part" rather than the "part-whole" method of instruction. Activities were pupil-centered rather than teacher-centered, and problem solving was emphasized rather than skill instruction and drills. Tadpoles, a preschool program, was introduced. Polliwog and Flying Fish were added to the Progressive Swimming program. A synchronized swimming program was also introduced.

**1973** The YMCA began its first national emphasis on aquatic activities for the disabled.



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- 1975** The National YMCA Swimming and Diving Championship became the largest swimming championship in the world, with over 1,500 participants.
- 1981** A new level of the progressive swim system, Guppy, was introduced.
- 1982** The National Physical Fitness Through Water Exercise and the Arthritis Foundation YMCA Aquatic programs were launched. The Aquatic Facility Manager course was adopted as a certification course.
- 1987** The YMCA of the USA adopts the Pool Operator on Location course. The manual was published in 1989.
- 1988** Y's Way to Water Exercise was released as a new manual and specialty instructor course certification.
- 1992** The YMCA operated over 1,700 pools. The YMCA of the USA maintained records of over 25,000 lifeguards and instructors.
- 1994** On the Guard II: The YMCA Lifeguard Program was introduced. This edition emphasizes the decision-making skills needed to prevent accidents and how to safely and most effectively perform rescues. Aquatic Safety and Aquatic Personal Safety and Survival are two programs included in the lifeguard program to be used when teaching a variety of groups about water safety and accident prevention. YMCA Synchronized Swimming Instructor and YMCA Wetball (Water Polo) Instructor/Coach were introduced through the cooperation of the U.S. Olympic Committee and the national governing bodies of the sports.
- 1995** The 12th National Aquatic Conference was held in Ft. Lauderdale to celebrate the 110th anniversary of YMCA swimming.
- 1996** YMCA Splash, a community-based learn-to-swim program was released. This program's purpose was to help people of all ages, especially children and families, learn some basic swimming skills and water-safety practices.
- 1999** Four new books were released as the foundation for the new Y Swim Lessons Program: Teaching Swimming Fundamentals, The Youth and Adult Aquatic Program Manual, The Parent/Child and Preschool Aquatic Program Manual, and YMCA Swim Lessons Administrator's Manual. A new instructor training program was also released.
- 2000** The YMCA Water Fitness for Health program and manual were released in conjunction with an instructor training program for water fitness and active older adult water fitness.
- 2001** On the Guard II (4th ed.) was released. The new participant manual included a CD-Rom with video clips of skills. The instructor manual was also updated and released.
- 2002** YMCA Aquatic Management: A Guide to Effective Leadership was released, along with a new training program for aquatic professionals. The Arthritis Foundation YMCA Aquatic program was updated and new manuals were released.