

AT FOR SWIMMING: MAKE A SPLASH



Some people consider swimming a rigorous form of exercise, while others see it as a leisurely pastime. Either way, it can be a therapeutic, relaxing, and beneficial activity. According to the [World Health Organization](#), adults between 18–64 who engage in physical activities like swimming have lower rates of common diseases and depression, exhibit a higher level of cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, and are more likely to maintain their weight.

If you are blind or low vision or have a mobility disability and would like to swim, assistive technology (AT) products may help you swim more easily. This guide will highlight some of the products available on the market. Prior to swimming, be sure to consult with your medical provider about your options.

Ramps and Lifts

Typically, a swimming facility provides a set of steps or a ladder to enter or exit a pool. You may find it difficult or impossible to use them. AT offers alternative solutions to assist you in entering and exiting a pool.

One possible option is a ramp, such as the [AquaTrek Pool Ramp](#). It is a multifunctional, water-resistant ramp that can be placed over existing pool steps to provide a gradually sloping ramp into and out of the pool. It is available in standard or long sizes, depending

on the distance between the pool's floor and deck surface. The standard ramp is designed for pools with the depth of 48 inches or less, while the long ramp is intended for pools which depth exceeds 48 inches. The AquaTrek Pool Ramp has a weight capacity of 600 pounds. Features include:

- a noncorrosive metal skeleton encased in rigid PVC;
- handrails on either side for added stability; and
- 30-inch wide treads.



Motion Trek 350

Another device that may help you enter and exit the water is a pool lift. It can be particularly helpful if you have a mobility disability. A pool lift can lower you into the pool while you remain seated. One such example is the [Motion Trek 350](#). Designed for in-ground pools, the device has an anchor that must be cemented into the pool's deck. Once it is installed, you can sit in its seat and lower

or raise yourself in and out of the pool using a remote control to operate it. The Motion Trek 350 has a weight capacity of 350 pounds. Features include:

- a stainless steel construction with a noncorrosive coating;
- a rechargeable battery that lasts approximately 90 lifts per battery charge; and
- a seat with two flip-down armrests and a footrest for stability and comfort while lowering or raising yourself into the pool.

[Water-Resistant Wheelchairs](#)

If you use a wheelchair, you may already know that some of them are designed to take you off the beaten track onto grassy fields, through woodland trails, over sandy beaches, or down snow-covered slopes. Some can also take you directly into the swimming pool.

Take, for example, the [AquaTrek Aquatic Wheel Chair](#), a completely submersible mobility aid that may be used in and around spas, showers, and swimming pools. You can use the wheelchair to assist you in getting into and out of a pool; or navigating in a shallow pool. The wheelchair is not a flotation device. Constructed entirely from furniture-grade PVC



AquaTrek Aquatic Wheel Chair

plastic with stainless steel fasteners, this lightweight aquatic wheelchair is noncorrosive and will not retain water. Weighing 40 pounds, it features:

- swing-out armrests for easy transfers both in and out of the chair;
- a retractable footrest for added comfort;
- custom-made wheel bushings specifically designed for water use;
- front and rear graphite wheels measuring 7 inches and 24 inches in diameter, respectively; and
- a padded cushion seat (with a maximum weight capacity of 350 pounds).

Another example is the [Hippocampe Swimming Pool Wheelchair](#), which allows you to float atop of the pool water. Made of stainless steel and aluminum tubing, this three-wheeled aquatic wheelchair seats you 13.8 inches above the pool water's surface. You may either propel the wheelchair forward in the pool yourself by using the rear tires, or another person can assist you by pushing the bar located on the backseat. Weighing 29 pounds, it features:

- two 14-inch wide all-terrain rear wheels and one swiveling, steerable front wheel;
- a rust-proof frame covered with a blue casing to prevent overheating and potential skin burns;
- a water-repellent seat; and
- a footrest made of fiberglass and covered with foam for comfort and to protect your skin from chafing.

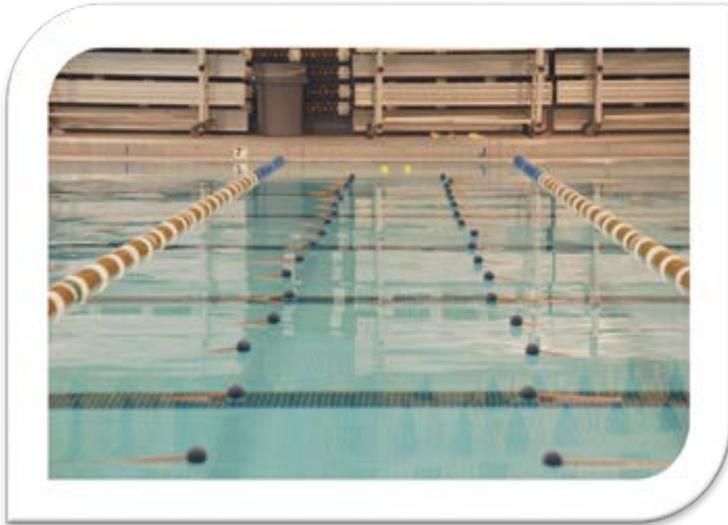


Hippocampe Swimming Pool Wheelchair

Navigation Aids

Structurally, swimming pools do not offer much in the way of navigational cues or directional markers, which can be problematic if you are blind or visually impaired. AT devices can provide you with alternative ways to navigate within the pool.

[AdaptTap](#) is designed to help you center yourself in your swimming lane. It consists of a set of flexible plastic rods with balls on one end and brackets on the other. You clamp the brackets at regular intervals down both of your swimming lane lines, resulting in two rows of floating rods and balls the length of your swimming lane. When swimming, if you feel one of the rods and balls on the left side of your body, you know to adjust to the right to keep centered in your swimming lane. Likewise, if you feel one on the right side of your body, you know to adjust left.



AdaptTap



Sensor Headphones

[Sensor Headphones](#) is a navigation aid that uses ultrasonic and Bluetooth technology to guide swimmers who are blind or have visual impairment. These waterproof headphones use audible beeps to alert you when another swimmer is approaching or when you are approximately 5 meters away from the edge of the pool. Although this device is still in development at time of this publication, the hope is that it will help you swim more independently and be increasingly aware of your surroundings while in the pool.

Flotation Devices and Swimming Supports

If you are blind or low vision or have a mobility disability, a wide variety of flotation and swimming aids are available to help you stay buoyant and swim in the water if you need the extra support. Below are a few examples.

The [Butterfly Neck Collar](#), an oval-shaped flotation aid designed to be worn around the neck, allows your body to be fully submerged underwater while keeping your head above the water's surface. This flotation aid, which can be secured around your neck using the webbed strap with a buckle, allows you to maintain a vertical position and venture toward the deeper end of the pool. It may even offer additional support as you learn how to tread water (a swimming technique that allows you to stay afloat using your hands and feet).

The [Aqua Sprinter Flotation Belt](#) is a supportive aid that may be worn around your waist when doing an aquatic workout or ambulatory exercise. It is designed to hold you securely at the waist to keep you in the upright position without tipping forward. Made of closed cell EVA foam, the Aqua Sprinter Flotation Belt is latex free and has a 60-inch adjustable belt.



Aqua Sprinter Flotation Belt

The [8729 Stabilizer Bar](#) is a swimming aid/flotation device that consists of a 4-foot-long plastic bar and attachable foam rings. How many rings you attach to either end of the bar depends on how much support you need—more rings equals more flotation and greater support. The 8729 Stabilizer Bar is designed to help you maintain your balance and equilibrium while you are in the water. You may place it under your arms to rest, or hold onto it as you practice kicking and while doing water walking/gait exercises.



8723 Sectional Raft

The [8723 Sectional Raft](#) allows you to lie down in a reclined position while staying afloat. Unlike traditional rafts that hold your body above the water's surface, this raft consists of separate sectional parts designed to more fully support and cradle your body. The head pad provides head and neck support. Its shoulder straps—which snap over the arms—provide enough room for your arms to propel your body forward and prevent your body from

rolling to the side. Also, its bottom row of sectional pieces can be folded under to allow for greater range of motion in your lower body.



Swimhorse

The [Swimhorse](#) is an adjustable support frame that allows you to swim in place horizontally without sinking. Place the Swimhorse's stable base on the pool's floor and lie on top of the upper level's foam cushion, which can be adjusted in height to accommodate your height and the water's depth. For added support, the Swimhorse features an adjustable headrest to aid you as you do backstrokes, water yoga stretches, or floating/relaxing. It also features a pommel for you to hold to help secure your positioning and prevent you from accidentally sliding off either side.

The [8728 Tri Swim](#), a wearable supportive aid, provides your body with moderate lift to help keep your body in the horizontal swim position. Designed for the slightly more experienced swimmer, the Tri Swim consists of two vinyl-covered foam sections: a triangular piece can be secured to your chest using the quick release buckle, and a connected strap can be looped around your neck for additional flotation support.



8728 Tri Swim

[For More Information](#)

[Contact us](#) at AbleData for information on these and other AT for swimming.

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