



Dementia and swimming

This fact sheet covers how you are able to participate in swimming if you are living with dementia.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a common condition that affects about 850,000 people living in England. Your risk of developing dementia increases as you get older and the condition usually occurs in people over the age of 65.

Dementia is a syndrome associated with an ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. This includes problems with memory loss, thinking speed, mental agility, language, understanding and judgment.

What you need to know about dementia and swimming

- Swimming can offer a sense of mental wellbeing, something which cannot be easily measured but is often anecdotally mentioned by other participants.
- It clears the mind, encourages positivity and builds a sense of self-worth.
- Swimming can soothe agitation and reduce anxiety, relax the body and support the body in a relatively weightless environment.
- Swimming pools are meeting points, which can reduce loneliness, introduce you to friends and offer opportunities to socialise.

Additional advice

The Dementia Friendly Swimming Hub:
www.swimming.org/dementiafriendly

Tips for swimming with dementia

These tips are for any participant living with dementia, or for your carer.

Do:

- ask for a familiarisation session at the pool where you want to participate. This will allow you, or your carer, to ask all the questions you need to
- take part in swimming if you can't be active because of joint pain as it's a low impact form of activity, so it's easy on your joints
- seek the advice of a medical professional if you have any concerns.

Don't:

- feel that because of the diagnosis, that you should stop doing activities you enjoy or try new things.