

Bulldogs Can Learn to Swim

Don't just throw your dog into the water, though.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. Is it true that Bulldogs can't swim? I was informed of this recently, and it is hard to believe. It may have been another breed that was in question.

A. Although most Bulldogs would probably sink right to the bottom if thrown into the water, they can learn to swim. Short-legged, large-bodied dogs are not exactly built like Michael Phelps, and are not designed to swim. It is difficult for their little back legs to hold up and propel their chunky bodies.

However, with patience and a gradual shoreline or shallow pool, almost any breed of dog can learn to swim. Gradually entice your dog in a little deeper each time, using rewards, gentle coaxing, and occasional back leg support.

Water dogs and retrievers often are ready to swim as early as 6 weeks. With webbed feet and a longer, streamlined body, they might as well be wearing a Speedo.

It is important not to introduce your dog to the sport of swimming by throwing him into the water. This will induce panic, and a future aversion to swimming that will take a lot of time and effort to reverse.

For swimming and summer safety tips, [click here](#).