



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Timonium Aquatic Center

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What are pool temperatures?

The temperature of the Main Pool (82 degrees) is not by coincidence. MAC maintains that temperature as a “happy medium” to meet the needs of all our members, including lap swimmers (their ideal temp is 78-80) and folks who take aquatic group exercise classes (ideally taught in 82-84 degrees). The Lifestyle and Therapy Pools are 92 degrees based on recommendations by The Arthritis Foundation and experts in the physical therapy community. The Hot Tub is 104 degrees, which is the highest allowed by Maryland State pool operation guidelines.

Why does the MAC have saltwater pools?

The MAC has chosen to use salt as our sanitizer because salt is converted into the most natural form of chlorine—making both the water and air quality healthier. The salt converts to chlorine when it passes through the salt generator and mixes with water. This most natural form of chlorine is less drying to our hair and skin. Chlorine produced this way also has a neutral ph which also reduces the eye irritation.

MAC keeps our salinity levels between 3,000-3,500 parts per million (ppm), which is equal to one heaping teaspoon of salt in 1 gallon of water. By comparison, human tears have 2.5 times more salt than our pools. The ocean’s salinity is 36,000 ppm, which is 12 times the level of salinity in our pools.

LANE USAGE

Lap lanes in the Main Pool and Lifestyle Pool are used for a variety of activities, including lap swimming, water walking, running/jogging, personal training, group exercise classes, masters swimming, spinal traction, isometrics, and swim lessons (Main Pool only).

How do I share a lane in the Main Pool if someone else is using it?

It’s easy. Just alert the other member before you enter the lane. (The guard can assist with this, if you prefer.) With two (2) members, **each person stays on one side of the lane** as they travel from one end of the pool to the other (as opposed to following each other in a counter-clockwise direction.)

What if there are already two (2) people in the lane?

Because of the variety of exercises performed in our pools, it is sometimes difficult to share a lane with more than two individuals. In the event that all lanes are in use, we suggest **waiting on the edge of the Hot Tub** (rather than the other side of the pool near the parking lot) until lanes become available.

Is “circle swimming” permitted?

We designate one lane for circle swimming. This lane is in effect whenever there is not a group exercise class taking place. When there are three (3) or more persons using this designated lane, you will be asked to circle swim in a **counter-clockwise** direction. Lifeguards may designate a circle swimming lane during other times when necessary.

May I swim laps in the Lifestyle Pool?

Absolutely! Lap swimming is encouraged in our Main Pool, but we recognize that some of our members need the warmer water for therapeutic lap swimming. Therefore, the **middle lane** of the Lifestyle pool may be used for lap swimming. However, it is also used for a variety of other water exercises (including walking) and chest-deep aquatic therapy. So it's important for members to work together to determine the best way to share the space. For member safety, we do not permit lap swimming in the largest area of the Lifestyle Pool where the underwater parallel handle bars are located.

When can I use the deep lane or jet in the Lifestyle Pool?

Due to the turbulence caused by the jet and other types of activities, we ask members enjoy the deep lane and jets only when there are no classes or programs scheduled in the Lifestyle Pool. Of course, you're always welcome to join in the class yourself, or use our other warm-water pool for independent exercising while classes are in progress.

What is MAC's policy regarding thunder and lightning?

The MAC takes our members' safety and well-being very seriously. We follow the National Lightning Safety Institute's recommendations for indoor/outdoor pool safety. According to this group, lightning behavior is random and unpredictable, so preparedness and quick responses are the best defenses against a lightning hazard. Therefore, at the first sign of thunder and lightning, MAC elects to close all of our pools (including hot tub and steam room) and clear the decks. The Aquatic Facility re-opens 30 minutes after the last sign of thunder and lightning.

AQUATIC GROUP EX CLASSES

MAC offers a variety of free group exercise classes in our Main Pool and Lifestyle Pool. Members may drop in to any of these daily classes daily to experience the benefit of aquatic exercise! For the complete class schedule, visit our website at macwellness.com.

Are lap lanes still available in the Main Pool during group classes and masters swim practice?

Group exercise classes take up only half the pool for 45 minutes at a time. However, all other lap lanes are still available for general use and enjoyment during this time. Lanes for lap swimming are not available during masters swim practice on Monday and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 a.m. and on Saturdays from 7:15 to 8:15 a.m.

AQUATIC EQUIPMENT

A variety of equipment (barbells, kickboards, noodles, etc.) are available for use by members.

What is the difference in the barbells?

We have several different colors and styles of barbells. The main difference is the amount of resistance and buoyancy they offer. Here's a cheat sheet:

- **White/black barbells** are the most buoyant and used for building core stability.
- **Blue barbells** are more buoyant and are easier to use than the yellow/blue barbells or hydrobells.
- **Yellow/blue barbells** offer greater resistance and are more effective in working major muscle groups.
- **Hydrobells (yellow/black)** are the least buoyant and provide the most resistance. They should only be used by those who are injury-free and looking for the maximum workout.

Do I need to “check out” or reserve equipment ahead of time?

Not at all. Our equipment is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. We encourage individuals to seek advice if they are unsure how to use equipment for best results. Ankle weights may only be used if prescribed by a physician, physical therapist or one of our Aquatic Personal Trainers. Members of our aquatics staff will be happy to assist you in this process.

SWIM LESSONS

MAC offers various types of swim lessons (private, semi-private, group, and create-your-own group) throughout the day and evening—primarily in our Therapy Pool and also in the first lane of the Main Pool.

Where can I obtain information about swim lessons?

Just look for the flyers around the MAC or visit our website at macwellness.com. As always, feel free to ask a MAC team member for assistance and guidance.

How young can children begin swim instruction?

At the age of 6 months, children can begin to explore the water with adult supervision under the guidance of an instructor in our Infant/Toddler Program. Generally, children begin group swim lessons at age 3, however, younger children may be ready for one-on-one instruction.

Is there a time when I can swim with my children so they can practice the skills they are learning during swim lessons?

The MAC offers a Family Swim time on Friday evenings from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and also on Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. This is an excellent opportunity for families to enjoy swimming together and for swim lesson participants to practice skills introduced during swim lessons. Swim lesson participants may purchase a Family Swim Pass at a reduced fee, good for

the six weeks they are enrolled in swim lessons. This pass may be used for the Saturday and Sunday Family Swim only.

Why are swim lessons taught in the Therapy Pool and not the Lifestyle Pool?

The Therapy Pool offers warm water, benches for young children to safely wait their turn, and a variety of depths critical to the initial learning phases of swimming. The Lifestyle Pool is reserved as an adult-only environment exclusively for warm-water exercise and therapy.

What determines when a lesson moves to the Main Pool?

As our beginning swimmers progress, endurance and independent practice becomes necessary, so they move on to the Main Pool.

May I swim in the Therapy Pool while swim lessons are in progress?

This decision is made by our qualified swim instructors based on the number of lesson participants and the instructor's planned curriculum. A sign indicating whether members are allowed to share the space will be posted on the deck between our Hot Tub and Therapy Pool. At times, a lane divider may be used to provide additional order for members and swim lesson participants. All of our instructors are trained to be sensitive to the needs of members using the pool for therapeutic reasons during swim lessons.

Why are jumping and diving encouraged as part of swim instruction?

It is important for children to learn how to enter the water and surface safely. In addition to this being an exciting and fun skill to learn, it is also an important water safety skill.

Does the MAC offer adult instruction?

Absolutely! MAC offers one-on-one swim instruction to adults of all levels, from complete beginners to competitive tri-athletes. Instructors are paired with adults based on individual goals.