

Pool Obstacle Course

What's a fun way to challenge your kids to have fun and be fit? A pool obstacle course, of course! Here's a guide to help you and your kids create an innovative course with ordinary pool toys and household objects. You can use just about anything to design your course, from hula hoops to beach balls to rafts. So get creative with your design and build an exciting course for all ages!



What You Need:

- Hula hoops
- Rafts
- Pool noodles
- Other pool items like baskets or buckets, water balloons, dive-and-relay sticks, beach balls, etc.
- Stopwatch (optional)

What You Do:

1. Start by creating your obstacle course! Set up two identical obstacle courses in and around the pool. Leave enough room between the obstacles for children to navigate safely. (If the pool is not large enough for two courses, set up one course and have the kids time themselves instead.)
2. Be sure to vary the number and difficulty of the obstacles based on the ages and the skill levels of the swimmers.
3. Some examples of pool obstacles and activities are below:
 - Dive through, jump through, or swim up and through a hula hoop
 - Ride noodles or rafts from one point to another
 - Collect items like dive-and-relay sticks from the bottom of the pool
 - Throw beach balls into a bucket or basket from a distance
 - Try to hit a target with water balloons
 - Swim in a particular style (i.e. front stroke, breast stroke, back stroke, doggie paddle) from one point to another
 - Toss rings onto a noodle
 - Perform a cannonball
4. Now play the game. Divide the players into two teams. If there was no room for two courses, use a stopwatch to time each team individually.
5. Have each player take a turn navigating the obstacle course. The next player in the team can start the course only when the one before him is finished with it.
6. The team whose players finish the obstacle course first—or in the shortest time—is the winner!

Variation: The leader can have children play this game individually as well. In this case, time each player as he travels through the obstacle course. A player can go multiple times with the goal being to improve upon his own best time.

Adapted with permission from 101 Cool Pool Games for Children: Fun and Fitness for Swimmers of All Level's by Kim Rodomista, illustrated by Robin Patterson. Hunter House Publishers (2006).

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