Red Cross Poll Shows Many Americans Lack Swim Safety Skills

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Looking to hit the pool this Memorial Day weekend? Be careful. Even though most Americans think they can swim just fine, a new survey by the Red Cross shows that up to 44 percent of people fail key water competency tests, Time.com reports.

The organization considers someone safe in the water only if he or she can perform the following five core skills: Jump or step into water that's over one's head; return to the surface and float for 60 seconds; circle around in water and identify an exit; swim 25 yards to the identified exit; and then get out of the water.

What's more, the survey also showed that even though 86 percent of Americans polled said they could swim, only 56 percent were able to perform all five tasks.

In response to these dire statistics, the Red Cross hopes to teach 50,000 Americans across 19 states the proper way to swim.

The organization's new swim safety initiative will take place during the next three to five years. Its goal is to cut the drowning rate in 50 cities by half.

Every day, an average of 10 people in the United States die by drowning. For more information on pool safety, click here.

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