

Can you swim on Shabbat?

The goal of Shabbat observance is to create an awareness that the world has a Creator and that we are obligated to do His will. By ceasing to engage in creative activities on Shabbat, we acknowledge that our creative energies come from God who created the world in six days and ceased on the seventh. There are 39 main creative activities, and not swimming on Shabbat is an offshoot of one of the 39 creative activities. Beyond the question of the nature and spirit of Shabbat, swimming on Shabbat may entail the following problems:

- Wringing: this is a Torah prohibition on Shabbat, derived from the category of activity known as treading ('dash'). Swimming may lead us to wringing the bathing costume or towel, or squeezing hair with the towel to dry it.
- Where there is no 'eruv', there is also a problem of carrying. This prohibition includes both objects that the person is carrying and the water upon his body that he takes with him when he comes out of the pool.
- In a heated pool there are two further problems (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Haim siman 326):
 1. Bathing in warm water that has been heated on Shabbat. Heating water on Shabbat is prohibited under the category of cooking.
 2. The Sages instituted a prohibition against bathing the entire body on Shabbat even using water that was heated on Friday, so as to avoid the possibility of water being heated on Shabbat for the purposes of bathing on Shabbat.
- "We do not float (Mishna Berura: that one's feet are lifted from the floor of the water) on the surface of the water (Mishna Beitza, chapter 5, mishna 2), lest a person come to fashion for himself a barrel upon which to sail" (an object used while learning to swim – like water-wings or a swimming ring today). This rabbinical enactment applies specifically to rivers that have no edge to hold on to, and whose floor is sand; not to a swimming pool.
- Fast or prolonged swimming that is undertaken for the purposes of physical fitness is prohibited like any other exercise for that purpose: "We do not exercise – i.e., exerting oneself in order that he will work [his muscles] and perspire" (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Haim, siman 328, par. 42).

Since there are so many different ways in which a person may inadvertently end up transgressing the laws of Shabbat, later halakhic authorities have ruled that one may not swim in a pool on Shabbat.

https://www.aish.com/atr/Swimming_on_Shabbat.html
<https://torahmitzion.org/learn/swimming-shabbat-5765/>

Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:2:8

Just as water goes from one end of the earth to the other, as it is written, *to the one who spread forth the earth above the waters* [Psalms 136:6], so does Torah go from one end of the earth to the other, as it is written, *the measure is longer than the earth* [Job 11:9].

Just as water is forever-living, as it is written, *a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters* [Song of Songs 4:15], so is Torah is forever-living, as it is written, *for they are alive* to those that find them [Proverbs 4:22], and also come, buy and eat [Isaiah 55:1].
[prooftexts suppressed going forward]

Just as water comes from the heavens, so too does Torah come from the heavens.

Just as the water has many voices, so too does Torah have many voices.

Just as water restores the soul, so too does Torah...

Just as water cleanses the body from tumah (ritual impurity), so too does Torah cleanse impurity.

Just as water originates in tiny drops and accumulates into mighty streams and rivers, so the Torah is acquired word by word today, verse by verse tomorrow;

Just as water covers the shamefulness (erva) of the sea, so too does Torah cover the shamefulness of Israel, as it is written, *love covers up all faults* [Proverbs 10:12].

Just as water descends drop by drop to form rivers, so too does a person learn Torah two halakhot each day until it is a flowing stream.

Just as water is not pleasing to a person who is not thirsty, so too Torah not appreciated unless a person [has struggled with it enough to be] tired from it.

Just as water leaves high places alone and runs in low places, so too Torah leaves alone someone with a haughty attitude and clings to someone with a modest self-image.

Just as water is not kept in silver or gold vessels, but the simplest [clay] vessels, so Torah is sustained by one who makes him/herself like a clay vessel.

Just as a scholar is not embarrassed to ask a student, 'pass me some water,' a scholar is not embarrassed to learn from a student a chapter, a verse, a word, or even a letter.

Just as one who does not know how to float in water will eventually drown, so too will one who cannot float on and point out (l'horot) words of Torah eventually drown.

The Sefaria Library, <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/35616?lang=bi>