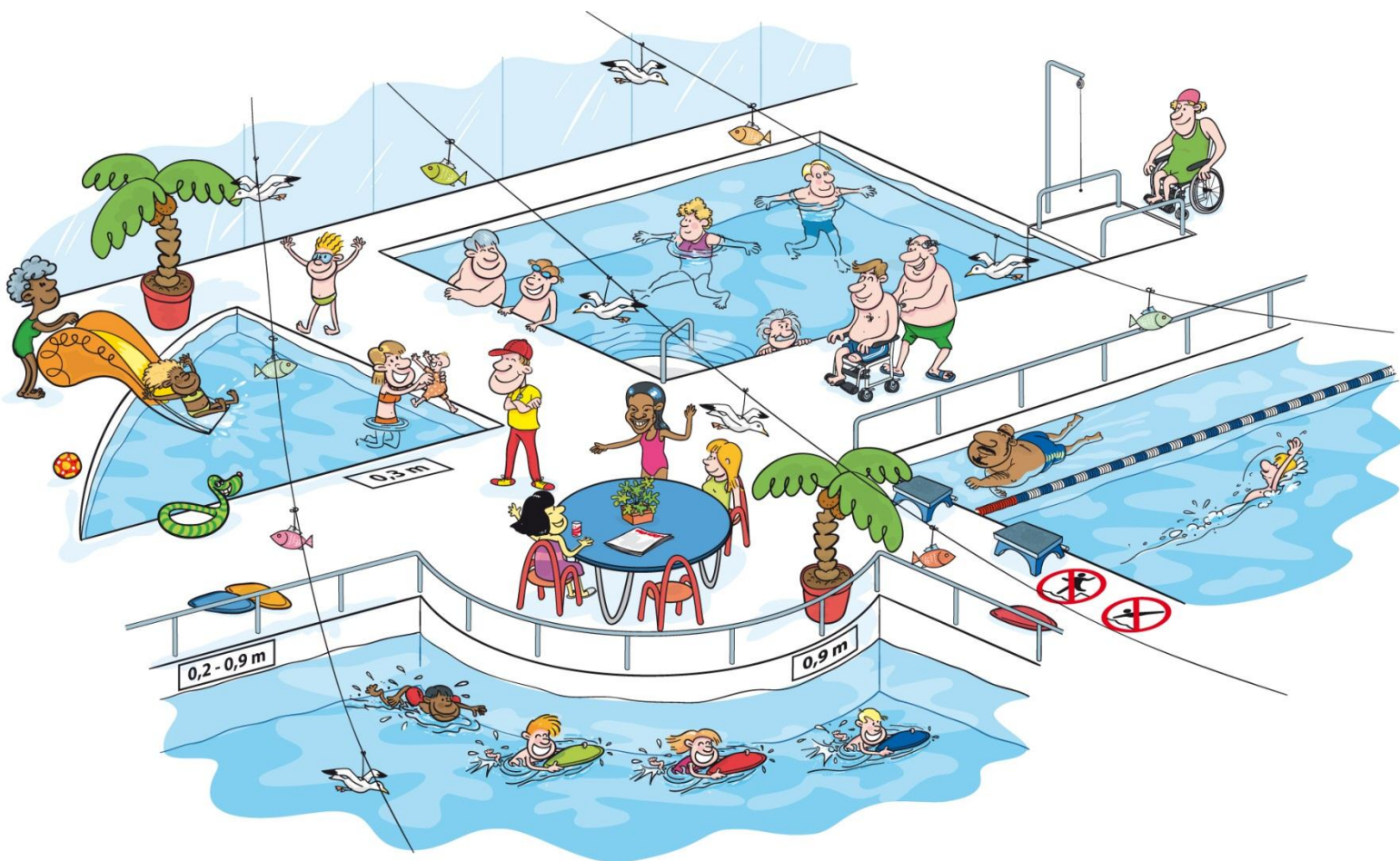


Welcome to the swimming hall!

A guide for visitors to swimming halls



Welcome to the swimming hall!

A guide for visitors to swimming halls

This guide has been prepared by the Finnish Swimming Teaching and Lifesaving Federation (FSL) with the help of financial aid granted by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Sports Division of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the office and the swimming hall committee of the Finnish Association for Swimming Instruction and Life Saving, and representatives of immigrant organisations, disability organisations, swimming halls and other parties that are otherwise familiar with the topic of this guide have contributed to the preparation and commenting on the guide.

Many thanks to all contributors!

Who is this guide intended for?

This guide is especially aimed at visitors to swimming halls.

The aim of this guide is to **guide personnel, visitors and organisations** so that swimming hall services are suitable for everyone, offered to everyone and used according to safety and hygiene requirements.

The purpose is **to increase the personnel's understanding of different cultural backgrounds and to offer support for service providers if there are problems in the use of a swimming hall.**

In addition, the guide is intended to serve as **an aid for organisations** so that they know how to **emphasise the importance of swimming ability and the amount of exercise that is sufficient for good health**, and to **guide** people from different cultural backgrounds **in using swimming halls.**

The guide also highlights **arrangements and space solutions that should be taken into account by building developers, planners and persons in charge of maintenance** and that can generally improve the usability of swimming halls.

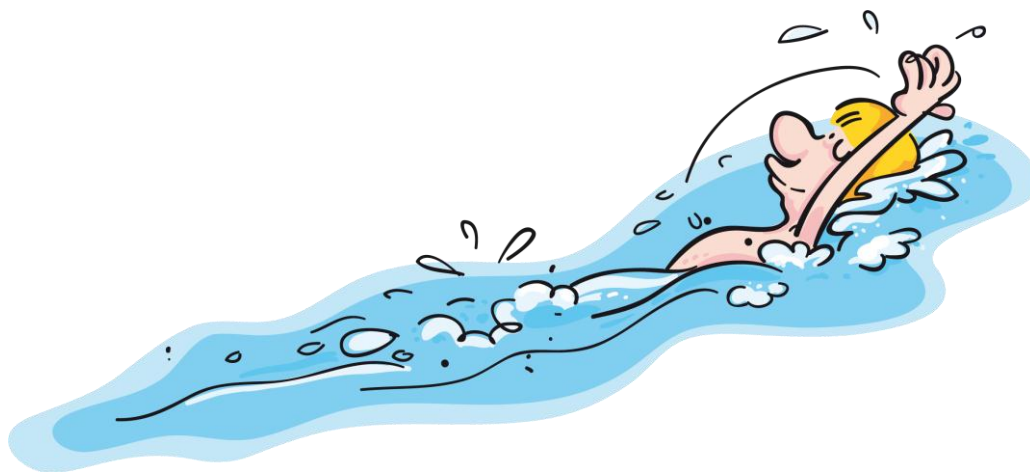
Swimming ability is a skill everyone should have

As Finland has plenty of rivers, lakes and sea areas, **swimming ability is of particularly great importance for your safety and the safety of others.** The phrase "Swimming ability is a skill everyone should have" is extremely appropriate in Finland. More and more often, this vital skill is acquired in a swimming hall.

Swimming hall services should be available to everyone, regardless of physical fitness, life circumstances or cultural background.

Physical exercise is important for maintaining the ability to function. One significant reason for the increase in lifestyle-related diseases is that people exercise less. **Swimming and other water exercises** are suitable for nearly everyone and **are important forms of health-promoting exercise and rehabilitation.**

Mental alertness helps you to cope. **Water exercise and social contacts** related to a visit to a swimming hall **increase mental alertness** that helps you to cope with everyday life.



Visiting a swimming hall

(See also the pictures on the page 9)

Swimming ability and health-promoting exercise play leading roles

In Finland, there are plenty of lakes, rivers and sea areas that are suitable for learning to swim, but they can only be used during the short summer season. As a result, 200 swimming halls have been built in Finland during the past 60 years or so, with the primary purpose of offering **facilities for teaching swimming and swimming as a hobby**. As the decades have passed, **the importance of exercise that is sufficient for good health and suitable for all** has also been emphasised in sports policy because lifestyle-related diseases increase and the population ages. Water exercise opportunities offered by swimming halls are suitable for nearly everyone, regardless of age or physical fitness.

A fee is charged for entrance

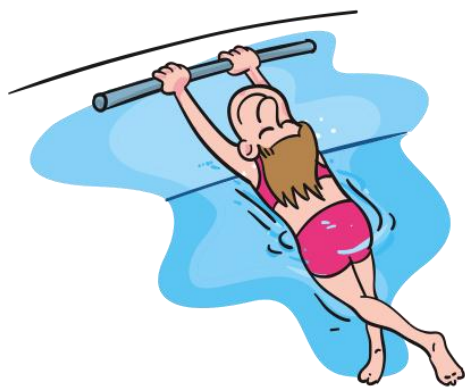
Almost without exception, swimming halls are owned by municipalities, either directly or through a limited company owned by the municipality. A fee is charged for visiting a swimming hall. The aim is to ensure that swimming hall services are available to all, so efforts are made to keep the level of the entrance fee low. A single-visit entrance fee for a swimming hall usually varies from EUR 4 to EUR 8. In addition, there are season tickets which make the price of a single visit lower. There are reduced entrance fees for children, pensioners and unemployed persons. A separate participation fee is usually charged for instructor-led activities (such as swimming school and water aerobics classes).

The municipality pays a large part of the swimming hall operating costs, which makes it possible to keep the entrance fee low.

The manager of a swimming hall may present visitors with **requirements related to safety and hygiene, the aim of which is to keep the swimming hall operating costs and entrance fees low**.

In the lobby of the swimming hall, there is a cash desk (or a payment machine) where you pay the entrance fee. Depending on the swimming hall in question, the cash desk gives you a key, a wristband or a card. With a wristband and a card, you usually enter the dressing rooms through a gate.

The lock on the locker can be opened or locked with a key or a wristband. If you have been given a card, enter the card in the lock of the locker. After this, the key on the locker can be used normally. Take the key or the wristband with you to the swimming pool.



In the pictures: a swimming school student and people attending a water aerobics class

Swimming time is restricted to give all visitors an opportunity to swim

Nowadays, swimming halls offer various forms of water exercise in addition to swimming, and the range of pools has been complemented with multi-use pools and wading pools for small children, for instance.

Thanks to their suitability for a wide range of users and the increasing number of different forms of water exercise, swimming halls are very popular and sometimes even crowded sports facilities. Because of this, **swimming time at swimming halls is usually restricted to 1.5–2 hours**. Each swimming hall may define independently the applied swimming time which must be observed by all visitors.

Cleanliness and hygiene are important

Swimming halls offer an opportunity to learn to swim and to practise swimming and other water exercise as a hobby. **The dressing rooms, shower rooms and pool areas of the swimming hall are intended only for changing clothes, washing and water exercise. A high level of hygiene is an absolute requirement that ensures the safety of swimmers.**

Quality requirements for pool water have been defined in legislation and they should always be met. Careful **washing** by swimmers, **a clean swimsuit or swimming trunks intended especially for swimming** and **the regular and professional cleaning of the premises** ensure good hygiene and consequently no compromises are made in them.

The most important issues to be taken into account are listed below. The symbols are intended to support the text.

You can find the descriptions of the symbols on page 10.

Do not eat in the dressing rooms, shower rooms or pool areas. You can buy and consume refreshments at the cafeteria. However, you can give water or juice to a child in a dressing room.



Before going to the sauna and swimming, wash without a swimsuit or swimming trunks. This is important for ensuring good hygiene.



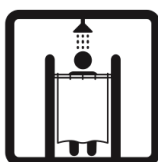
A swimsuit or swimming trunks may not be taken into the sauna. When necessary, you can enter the sauna wrapped in a towel. In this case, it is a good idea to take two towels with you to the swimming hall. **You should wash after the sauna as well as after going to the toilet.**



Men and women have separate dressing rooms, shower rooms and saunas. Facilities may be cleaned by a cleaner of the opposite sex, too, or may be visited by a lifeguard of the opposite sex in case of a disturbance, for instance. Generally, the aim is to organise this so that it causes as little inconvenience as possible for visitors to the swimming hall. A cleaner's work is professionally demanding and important for maintaining a high level of hygiene, and a lifeguard is responsible for general safety at the swimming hall. Cleanliness, hygiene and safety are in everyone's interests. (The dressing room, shower room and sauna symbols in this section: the Helsinki for All project)



If you need **additional privacy when dressing and washing, contact the personnel to inquire** about the opportunity to arrange this. When using a dressing booth, an accessible dressing or shower room, toilet facilities and other similar facilities, remember that you cannot reserve them for your own use for the entire duration of the visit to the swimming hall – instead, **clothes should be kept in a locker.**



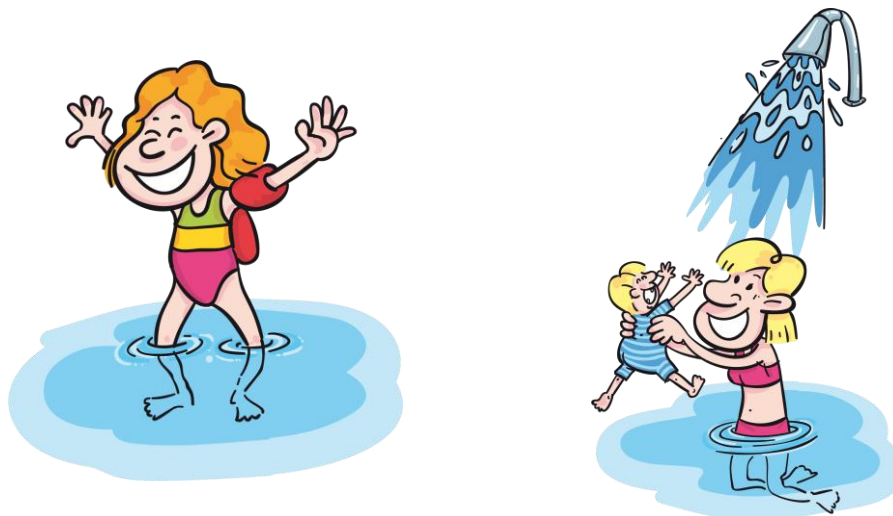
Chlorine is added to pool water at swimming halls. **Swimsuits or swimming trunks should be made of material that does not bring lint, dirt or any other substances into the pool.** Swimsuits or swimming trunks **should not have pockets** in order to prevent any paper, lint or dirt in the pockets from getting into the pool. **It is prohibited to use underwear under a swimsuit or swimming trunks.** Swimsuits or swimming trunks should be **close-fitting** in order to avoid getting caught in the pool equipment (such as pool lane ropes, railings, steps and ladders). Close-fitting swimsuits or swimming trunks do not collect water inside them or between swimsuit or swimming trunks and the body. If a swimsuit or swimming trunks have legs and sleeves, these should be tight-fitting. Instead of using a hooded swimsuit, **a swimming cap** is suitable headgear for swimming. **Put your swimsuit or swimming trunks on only after washing at the swimming hall,** not at home. Nearly all swimming halls prohibit using shorts, loose-fitting swimming shorts and other similar garments as swimming trunks. They are better suited for outdoor activities and beaches than for swimming halls.



Before going to the sauna and swimming, wash carefully. When going to the sauna, take off your swimsuit or swimming trunks.

Parents look after the safety of their children

Safety is a key issue. In the pool area, there is at least one lifeguard who focuses on guarding general swimming safety. A lifeguard cannot act as the guard of a single person or a certain group. **Parents are responsible for their children at the swimming hall.** Instead of their parents, children may also visit the swimming hall with a guardian. A person who has been approved by both the swimming hall and the parents, who knows how to swim and who knows his/her responsibility for the safety of the children may act as the guardian. **Parents or guardians are responsible for keeping watch over their children for the entire duration of a visit to the swimming hall.** Children may not be left alone in the swimming hall. If you are in the swimming hall with small children who cannot swim, only use shallow pools intended for children. Children's inflatable armbands, swimming floats or floating swimsuits are no replacement for swimming ability. The parent or the guardian should be within arm's reach of children who cannot swim.



Go into the deep pool only if you can swim

In a swimming hall, there are deep pools that are intended only for those who can swim. Deep pools are not suitable for children or persons who cannot swim. Aquajogging belts are not life-saving equipment, so before doing aquajogging, you should ensure you have appropriate swimming ability. **Swimming ability offers you a substantially wider selection of swimming hall services.**

Wet surfaces may be slippery

Although the floor surfaces of swimming halls are covered with anti-slippery tiles, **wet floor surfaces may still be slippery.** In particular, watch out for puddles.

In swimming hall premises, you should behave calmly and considerately. Swimming hall visitors include elderly people, people with poor sight or hearing as well as people who have difficulty in moving or who move slowly. **Running and making noise do not belong in a swimming hall.**





In swimming hall premises, you should behave calmly and considerately.



It is usually forbidden to jump into the pool.

If jumping into the pool is allowed, take other users of the pool into account.

Jumping into the pool is allowed at designated places only, not from the edges of the pool.

A checklist for visiting the swimming hall

Swimming halls are intended for learning to swim and to practise swimming and other water exercise as a hobby.

A fee is charged for entrance to the swimming hall.

In most cases, swimming time at swimming halls is restricted to 1.5–2 hours.

Wash before going to the sauna and before swimming.

Before going to the pool, wash carefully and put on a clean swimsuit or swimming trunks suitable for swimming hall use.

You should also wash after going to the toilet.

Do not eat in the swimming hall dressing rooms, shower rooms, saunas or pool areas.

Do not shave in the swimming hall dressing rooms, shower rooms, saunas or pool areas.

Parents or guardians are responsible for keeping watch over their children for the entire duration of the visit to the swimming hall.

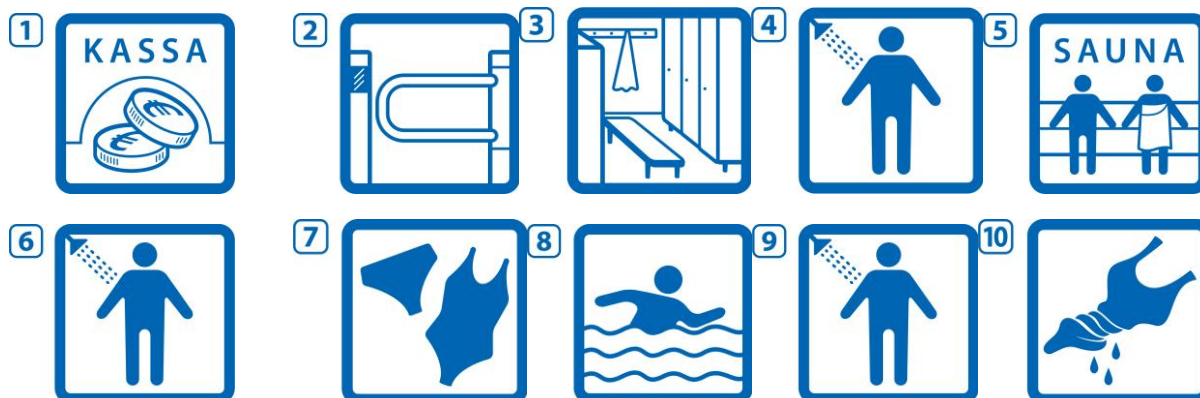
Deep pools are intended only for those who can swim.

Polite and considerate behaviour improves comfort and safety.



Lifeguards focus on guarding general swimming safety.

How the swimming hall works



1–2

In the lobby of the swimming hall, there is a cash desk (or a payment machine) where you pay the entrance fee. Depending on the swimming hall in question, the cash desk gives you a key, a wristband or a card. With a wristband and a card, you usually enter the dressing rooms through a gate. Swimming time is usually restricted to 1.5–2 hours.

3–4

The lock on the locker can be opened or locked with a key or a wristband. If you have been given a card, enter the card in the lock of the locker. After this, the key to the locker can be used normally. Take the key or the wristband with you to the swimming pool. Wash carefully before going to the pool. Also remove any make-up. Rinse your hair with water or use a swimming cap.

If you need additional privacy when dressing and washing, contact the personnel to inquire about the opportunity to arrange this. Some swimming halls may have dressing and shower rooms for groups, separate accessible dressing and shower rooms, dressing booths or showers with curtains. When using a dressing booth, a separate dressing or shower room, toilet facilities and other similar facilities, remember that you cannot reserve them for your own use for the entire duration of the visit to the swimming hall – instead, clothes should be kept in a locker.

Do not eat in dressing rooms, shower rooms, saunas or pool areas.

Do not shave in dressing rooms, shower rooms, saunas or pool areas.

5–6

If you go to the sauna, wash before and after the sauna.

If you wish to use a seat cover in the sauna, bring a small towel with you to the swimming hall to be used as a seat cover. There are usually no seat covers available at the swimming hall. Take the seat cover with you when you leave the sauna. Please note: Disposable seat covers should always be put into a waste bin! A swimsuit or swimming trunks may not be taken into the sauna but you can wrap a towel around you, when necessary. If you wish to use a towel in the sauna, it is a good idea to take two towels with you to the swimming hall.

7–8

When swimming, you should wear a clean swimsuit or swimming trunks suitable for swimming hall use. Parents or guardians keep watch over small children and children who cannot swim for the entire duration of the visit to the swimming hall. Deep pools are intended only for those who can swim. It is usually forbidden to jump into the pool. If jumping into the pool is allowed, take other users of the pool into account. Jumping into the pool is allowed at designated places only, not from the edges of the pool.

9–10

After swimming, go to the shower. Rinse the swim suit or swimming trunks and wring them dry so that dressing rooms stay as dry as possible.

Guiding, warning and prohibition symbols

The symbols used in this guide are **intended to support the comprehension and readability of the text**. The aim of the symbols is to highlight issues that are essential for hygiene and safety. The symbols can be downloaded from www.suh.fi/symbolit

Symbols used in the guide and their descriptions:



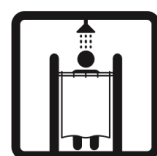
Wash before swimming
Wash before the sauna



No swimsuit or swimming trunks in the sauna
No swimsuit or swimming trunks in the shower



You can enter the sauna wrapped in a towel



Shower equipped with a curtain or a door



Do not run



Floor may be slippery



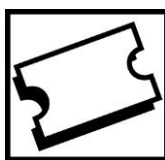
Jumping into the pool is prohibited



Do not eat in dressing rooms, shower rooms or pool areas

For your information:

The Helsinki for All project has published general guiding symbols that may be used in swimming halls. The Helsinki for All symbols can be found at www.hel.fi/helsinkikaikille



Ticket sales



Dressing room women/men



shower room women/men



Sauna

For your information:



A person wearing this badge has the right to wear a swimsuit or swimming trunks in the sauna and shower rooms of the swimming hall due to illness or disability, for instance.