



Manly Nippers

U8s Transition to U9s

Nippers introduces children aged 5 to 13 to surf lifesaving and the challenges of swimming and paddling in the ocean. The move from the U8 to U9 in nippers is a significant change, mainly because:

- There are additional swim proficiency requirements
- Board paddling and surf swimming is introduced

In addition the U9s

- are encouraged to start training during the week
- can represent Manly and compete at Carnivals

Training and competing are optional, but the more competent Nippers become the more they will enjoy their time in ocean.

Each child will react differently to the increased exposure to the ocean and surf conditions. Some Nippers will love this change, others might feel a bit daunted. Some may need some additional encouragement. Remember Nippers is also about having fun and keeping fit. Some children may take some time to feel comfortable in the Ocean. Keep encouraging them.

The transition to U9s requires more involvement by parents as strict Water Safety ratios must be met. We therefore encourage Nipper parents in U8/9s to gain their Bronze certificate so that they can assist with Water Safety. At this age Nippers love to see their parents in the water wearing the orange water safety shirts. Further information can be found in the [Volunteer](#) section on our website.

Proficiency requirements

At Manly the proficiency swim increases from 50m in U8s to 200m in U9s. This must be completed in under 6 minutes. We normally use either the 50m pool at Manly Boyd Charlton Aquatic Centre or the 25m pool at Aqua Culture at the start of the season. Nippers must swim freestyle. There is also a float, an underwater somersault and a dive. After the pool proficiency has been met Nippers will also need to complete an ocean proficiency. This consists of an ocean swim of approximately 150m.

We recommend swim training once your Nipper starts spending more independent time in the ocean. Children who swim on a regular basis are much more likely to enjoy Nippers than those who don't.

Board paddling and surf swimming

On Sundays Nippers continue to enjoy beach sprints, flags, wades and take part in surf lifesaving education. They will also learn to paddle foamie Nipper boards, to negotiate the break, follow a course around 3 buoys and catch a wave to return to the beach. Learning to paddle boards is not easy at the beginning. It is a bit like learning to ride a bike! Most children have a few wipe-outs here and there but will eventually succeed with practice. The Club has plenty of foamie boards for your Nipper to use. Further information can be found in the [Equipment](#) section on our website.

U9s also learn to swim confidently in the ocean, dolphin dive through the break, identify and use rips to their advantage and catch a wave to body surf back to the beach.

Training Opportunities

Training is lots of fun and Nippers make great friends whilst taking part. At the end of training many of the kids stay and play on the boards in the water, learning to safely enjoy our greatest local playground together – the ocean. Parents hang out on the wall with a coffee or get stuck in the fun as water safety.



An overview of opportunities for new U9s is below with further details under [Training](#) on our website.

U9 Introductory board program

An introduction to foamie boards is run towards the end of the U8 Nipper season (March-April). Experienced coaches show Nippers the basic skills and techniques for paddling Nipper boards and swimming in the surf. This is a great opportunity for your child to learn some excellent board skills and quickly gain some confidence. The water is normally warm and conditions are smoothing out making it an ideal time to get started on the boards.

The training starts with an ocean swim test so the coaches can assess their swimming ability and confidence in the ocean and manage water safety. A high number of water safety are needed to help with this program – all parents with their Bronze must assist.

The rising U9s are also encouraged to join the older Nippers and attend winter board training in July. This is normally run on Sunday mornings and the winter conditions are normally perfect for beginners.

Pre-season ocean training Camp

U9s can also join a 3-day Pre-season camp in the first week of the September school holidays which focuses on ocean training and becomes a highlight of the year for many Nipper families. It is a great experience for our new U9s, significantly develops their skills and independence in the ocean and is a good opportunity to bond with other Nipper families and have some fun.

Competing in Nipper Carnivals

U8 Nipper's will have been introduced to surf sports carnivals by participating in Club Championships on Manly Beach. From U9s they can represent Manly at external carnivals. Further details can be found in the [Competition](#) section on our website.

Parent help in the U9s

In U9s parent volunteering becomes much more important to support your child's involvement and engagement. There are many different ways to get involved. Some of the main examples are listed below:

- Water safety – the club runs Bronze courses
- Carnival official – online training available
- Getting involved in training camps
- Helping out Age Managers wherever you can

Further details can be found in the [Volunteer](#) section on our website.



There are many changes in the U9s and the more you are involved the easier your child will adapt. See you on the beach.



Top Tips

- Join up to Team App & Facebook
- Wear a steamer and swim cap for winter training. Nothing drains enthusiasm faster than the cold!
- Bring 20c for a hot shower after training in the clubhouse.
- Contact admin@manlylsc.com if you don't already have a changing room passcode
- Some children may take time to feel comfortable in the ocean – keep up the encouragement.
- Ask advice from other parents with older Nippers. Many of the most competent U13s and U14s found U9s challenging!
- Talk to the parents doing water safety they have been in your shoes - they love the sport & are there because they want to help your child enjoy themselves and gain confidence in the water.