

**MYTH:** Most swimming pool diving accidents occur while using a diving board.

**FACT:** According to the Spinal Cord Injury Information Network and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, less than 10% of all swimming pool diving injuries involve a diving board. Properly installed diving boards provide a visual reference, showing where the proper diving environment is located. In addition, a diving board can help clear you from the edge of the pool to ensure you will have plenty of room to dive into the deepest part of the water.

**MYTH:** It is unsafe to dive into a swimming pool.

**FACT:** According to "Review of Spinal Cord Injury Statistics Related to Diving and Diving Board Use" from the American Institutes for Research, the risk of a pool-related quadriplegic or paraplegic injury is actually less than the risk of dying by being struck by lightning.<sup>1</sup> When safety precautions are kept in mind, diving can be a safe pastime.

**MYTH:** It is safe to dive into an above ground pool.

**FACT:** Above-ground pools are never safe for diving because they are too shallow and not intended for diving. The water depth in above-ground pools is usually 42 inches, much too shallow for safe diving. "No Diving" signs should be clearly posted on all above ground pools.

**MYTH:** It is safe to dive after consuming alcohol as long as it was only a small amount.

**FACT:** It is never safe to dive after drinking any amount of alcohol. More than half of all diving accidents involve the use of alcohol. Alcohol impairs your judgment and reaction time, which makes any physical activity, including diving, extremely dangerous.

**MYTH:** Running off of the diving board is safe as long as the board clears the pool's edge.

**FACT:** Never run on or around a swimming pool or diving board. When on the diving board, walk to the edge before diving in. When running, it is difficult to adjust for mistakes, which can lead to missteps and potential injury.

**MYTH:** Diving boards can be used interchangeably in all swimming pools.

**FACT:** Diving boards come in various shapes, sizes and flexible materials. You should have your diving board properly installed by professionals. Professional installation of your diving board ensures the board is properly fit to your pool's size and shape. Diving boards should never be removed and used in another pool without proper consultation with a professional.

**MYTH:** All diving boards have the same "springiness."

**FACT:** Each diving board is different; make sure to test the springiness of each board before diving or jumping in. It is important to keep your balance and discover how much spring the diving board has before taking your first dive.

**MYTH:** If you know the depth of the water, is it always safe to dive.

**FACT:** Before diving head first, always jump into the water feet first. This allows you to gauge the board and the environment, including the water's depth and the configuration of the pool bottom. If your preconceptions of the pool and board were wrong, your feet and legs will be the first to feel the impact rather than your head or neck.

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<sup>1</sup> Solomon KA 1993. *Swimming Pool Risks: How Do They Compare to Other Accidental Risks*, National Swimming Pool Foundation, San Antonio, TX.

**MYTH:** It can be safe to dive alone.

**FACT:** It is important to always dive and swim with a partner. If there is an accident while participating in water activities, it is essential that someone is there to assist with the situation.

**MYTH:** Diving into the shallow end of a swimming pool is safe as long as you dive shallow.

**FACT:** 57.2% of all swimming pool diving accidents occur in water four feet deep or shallower, while only 4.8% of swimming pool diving accidents occur in water eight feet or deeper, according to "Review of Spinal Cord Injury Statistics Related to Diving and Diving Board Use" from the American Institutes for Research. Always dive in the deep end of a swimming pool because the shallow end does not give you enough water depth to steer up. Never dive from the sides of the pool.

**MYTH:** It is just as safe to dive off the side of the pool as to dive from a diving board.

**FACT:** It is not safe to dive off the side of the swimming pool. A diving board clears you from the edge of the pool and ensures that you do not come close to making contact with the side's edge. When you dive from the side of the pool you may not clear the edge and it is possible to injure yourself.

**MYTH:** As long as the water is deep enough it is as safe to jump off other equipment, as it is to dive off of a diving board.

**FACT:** External equipment, including rooftops, lifeguard stands, slides and ladders are extremely unsafe to dive from. This equipment was not designed for diving and it is not appropriate to dive off anything other than a diving board because serious injury can occur.

**MYTH:** Diving off any side of the diving board is safe.

**FACT:** Injury is more likely to occur if someone dives off the side of the board. The design of a diving board is specifically for divers to exit the board straightforward, rather than to the left or right.

**MYTH:** Trick dives can be safe if done from a properly installed diving board.

**FACT:** Trick dives are hazardous and should not be attempted in a residential pool. According to the American Institutes for Research, 16.8% of all diving accidents occurred from attempting an unusual dive. Someone attempting a trick dive might not clear the diving board or they may not be able to steer themselves up properly from that dive. Keep your dives simple to be safe.

**MYTH:** Most diving accidents occur in or around residential pools.

**FACT:** According to the American Institutes for Research, 57.1% of all aquatic related accidents occur in natural bodies of water such as lakes or rivers, while only 30.8% occurred in swimming pools and the remaining 12.1% were reported as unknown. Make sure to take extra precautions in circumstances involving natural bodies of water by testing the water's depth and always remember that natural occurrences can affect the water's depth.

**MYTH:** Diving down deep into the water can be safe if the water is deep enough.

**FACT:** Make sure to immediately steer up as soon as you submerge yourself in the pool. If you dive deep into the pool, it is always possible to hit the bottom, so dive shallow and steer up.