

Survival swimming



Lifesaving education programs

In this activity, participants will practise the skills to survive an unexpected fall into deep (open) water, including entry/exit techniques, floating, gliding, sculling and treading water.

Outcomes:

- Demonstrate the skills to survive an unexpected fall into deep (open) water, including entry/exit techniques, floating, gliding, sculling and treading water

Equipment:

- ☐ Flotation devices (i.e., lifejackets, kickboards, noodles, balls etc...)

Key messages:



Never swim or recreate alone
Always swim with a friend



Know what to do in an
emergency situation



Call for help



Be aware and be prepared



Always wear a lifejacket
when boating or rock fishing



Survival swimming

Instructions:

Ensure you know your participants' skills and ability for this activity, and work with water safety personnel as required. Remind participants of safety rules and how to call for help.

1 Entering and exiting the water

- In calm, shallow water, practise entering and exiting the water, starting no higher than ankle depth. Build up to knee/waist height if/when participants are capable and confident.
 - Walk in or wade
 - Slide in
- Discuss if there are alternative areas to enter (i.e., pool edge, ladder, sand bank).



2 Floating

- Ask a participant to demonstrate floating.
- In waist deep water, encourage participants to practise floating on their back. Support with a hand under their shoulders or with a pool noodle if required.
- Practice floating with different types of flotation devices:
 - Lifejacket, kickboard or noodle, balls etc...



3 Gliding

- Demonstrate a glide to participants at your location (i.e., pushing off the side of the pool or the bottom of the shore/river). Allow all participants to have a go.



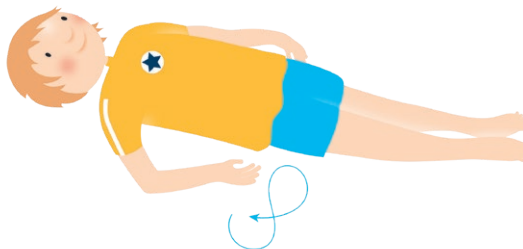
4 Treading water

- Start participants on an edge (pool edge, riverbank, chair) and get them to practice their cycling/egg beater leg action. Then add in a sculling arm action.
- Move into the water and practice treading. Position a pool noodle under the arms for support, if required.
- Practice moving or turning in different directions.



4 Sculling

- Explain and demonstrate the different sculling techniques on your back and discuss when to use different sculling techniques:
 - Head first – energy preservation.



- Feet first – to protect the head in case of objects in the water.
- Participants can first practise the hand sculling action standing still, then while floating. Position a pool noodle under their back, if required. Participants can use a kicking action to aid with propulsion, before trying without kicking.
- Start with headfirst sculling, before moving to feet first sculling for more competent participants.

Video demonstration



Key questions:



Q. Why would you use a feet first entry into deep water?

A. Diving, especially into a shallow water, brings with it the risk of injury to the face, head, neck, and spine. There may also be unseen objects under the water such as rocks, branches or even trolleys.

Q. When would you use a feet first sculling action?

A. To protect your head when there are objects in the water, or when you are travelling down a current.

Q. Why is floating a key skill to learn?

A. It is easiest to breathe when you are on your back with your mouth clear of the water. Floating helps preserve energy.

Extension: Survival sequence

Once participants have practised all of the individual skills, they can then practise these in sequence. E.g. Enter the water safely, glide, tread water, float and then scull back to safety.