Activity Guide

Swim to Survive+

An instructor guide to teaching and evaluating the Swim to Survive+ program.

Swim to Survive
Lifesaving Society
Swim to Survive+ Activity Guide

Published by the Lifesaving Society, 400 Consumers Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2J 1P8
Phone: 416-490-8844    Fax: 416-490-8766
E-mail: experts@lifeguarding.com     Web: www.lifesavingsociety.com


Copyright  2014 The Royal Life Saving Society Canada. Reproduction by any means of materials contained in this book is prohibited unless authorized by the publisher. Direct inquiries to the Lifesaving Society office at the address above.

The Lifesaving Society is Canada’s lifeguarding expert. The Society works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through its training programs, Water Smart® public education, aquatic safety management services, drowning research and lifesaving sport.

Annually, over 1,000,000 Canadians participate in our swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard and leadership training programs. As Canada’s lifeguarding expert, the Lifesaving Society sets the standard for aquatic safety and certifies Canada’s National Lifeguards.

The Society represents Canada internationally in the Commonwealth Royal Life Saving Society and we are Canada’s Full Member in the International Life Saving Federation. We are the governing body for lifesaving sport – a sport recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation.

We are a national, independent, charitable organization. We’ve been teaching Canadians how to be safe around the water since 1896.

Registered Charity No. 10809 7270 RR0001.

®Swim to Survive is a registered trademark of The Royal Life Saving Society Canada.
Activity Guide
Swim to Survive+

An instructor guide to teaching and evaluating the Swim to Survive+ program.
Canada’s lifeguarding experts
– Saving lives for over 100 years.

Almost 500 Canadians die every year in water-related incidents. Most of these are preventable and occur in unsupervised settings, which is why more Canadians need the basic swimming and lifesaving skills to save themselves in an aquatic emergency.

The Lifesaving Society has a long and proud history of teaching swimming and lifesaving to Canadians.

We trace our roots to the late 19th century in London, England where we began as The Swimmers’ Life Saving Society. In 1894, Arthur Lewis Cochrane brought the lifesaving skills he learned in his homeland to Canada. And he passed them along to students at Upper Canada College in Toronto, Ontario. In June 1896, 18 of his students were the first recipients of our distinguished Bronze Medallion award, the first award to be created by the Society. Under the patronage of King Edward VII in 1904, we became The Royal Life Saving Society.

In the 1950s, we were the first Canadian organization to adopt mouth-to-mouth as the method of choice over manual methods of artificial respiration. We started our first CPR training program in the 1960s. In the 1980s, we initiated a project to design an economical CPR training manikin (ACTAR 911™), and we launched our Water Smart® drowning prevention campaign.

In the 1990s, the Society introduced innovative new programs like Boat Operator Accredited Training, the Junior Lifeguard Club and the Canadian Swim Patrol Program, and launched our Aquatic Safety Management Services.

Since then, we’ve expanded our First Aid training programs, introduced Swim to Survive® training, launched our Swim for Life® learn-to-swim program, and revised our National Lifeguard training programs. Swim to Survive+ (Plus) is our latest drowning prevention initiative.

Today, we are known to Canadians simply as the Lifesaving Society, a national volunteer organization and registered charity. And while we’ve expanded our strengths over the past century to include research and public education, we haven’t forgotten the ideals that formed the foundation of our organization.

The Lifesaving Society has always been – and will continue to be – Canada’s lifeguarding experts.
Why Swim to Survive?

High participation in swimming
Canadians have a high participation in swimming as a recreational activity. Among school-aged children between 5 and 12 years of age, swimming is the second most popular activity in Canada after bicycling. Among those over 18 years of age, swimming is the third most popular activity after walking and gardening/yard work.

Drowning is a leading cause of death
Drowning is the third leading cause of preventable death in Canada for people 60 years of age and under. Year after year, the majority of people who drown have no intention of going in the water – immersion is sudden and unexpected.

The need for instruction
Swim skills need to be taught. Swim skills are not innate; they are acquired and very difficult to self-teach.

The Lifesaving Society estimates that only half of Canadian children ever take traditional swimming lessons.

During the 1990s, boards of education withdrew from providing basic swim instruction to elementary school children. This instruction needs to be replaced at the community level.

In Canada’s water-rich environment, minimum swimming ability is a required life skill for survival, and the Lifesaving Society’s official position is expressed in these four points:

- Acquisition of basic swimming ability is a fundamental requirement in any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada.
- All Canadian children deserve the chance to learn basic swim survival skills.
- The acquisition of basic swim survival skills by Canadian children is worthy of public and government support.
- Affordable training should be available for all children to the level of the Canadian Swim-to-Survive Standard.

The Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard is a minimum national standard of swimming skill for all children. The standard is simple, straightforward and focused and defines the essential minimum skills required to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. It is recognized that there is a wide range of aquatic training well beyond this minimum.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential skill &amp; rationale</th>
<th>Swim to Survive Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orient yourself at the surface after an unexpected entry. A fall into water is disorienting and a threat to normal respiration.</td>
<td>Roll into deep water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support yourself at the surface. Canadian waters are generally cold enough year-round to trigger a gasping reflex on unexpected immersion. The ability to tread water allows you to protect your airway while regaining control of your breathing.</td>
<td>Tread water for 1 minute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim to safety. Lifesaving Society research shows most drownings occur within 3 to 15 m of safety (dock, shoreline, pool edge). Because your ability may be impaired by cold water, clothing, etc., we use a 50 m distance as a reasonable standard.</td>
<td>Swim 50 metres.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Swim to Survive Supporters

Swim to Survive is the beneficiary of generous contributions from:

**Stephanie Gaetz KEEPSAFE Foundation**

The Stephanie Gaetz KEEPSAFE Foundation is a charitable foundation founded by Barbara Underhill and Rick Gaetz to promote education and injury prevention. The Foundation works with injury prevention professionals to support and fund safety programs for children in schools and communities across Canada.

The Stephanie Gaetz Keepsafe Foundation is the Founding Sponsor of both the Swim to Survive and the Swim to Survive+ programs.

**Government of Ontario**

The Ontario Ministry of Education has financially supported the Swim to Survive School program since 2006. The Society administers these funds through Swim to Survive School program grants to help provide thousands of Ontario elementary students with Swim to Survive skills. Ministry of Education funding is part of its Healthy Schools plan, to ensure that students develop the skills they need to lead healthier, more active lives.
Swim to Survive+

Swim to Survive+ builds on the Swim to Survive skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water: ROLL into deep water; TREAD water for 1 minute; SWIM 50 m. The Swim to Survive+ program is geared toward presenting real-life situations for children in Grade 7. The + (plus) means participants learn:

- how to ROLL, TREAD and SWIM WITH CLOTHES ON.
- how to help a friend in deep water without putting themselves in danger (TALK, REACH, THROW).
- basic physical fitness concepts through interval training and a fitness swim.

The Lifesaving Society developed the Swim to Survive+ program as a result of its drowning research and the Ontario Coroner’s recommendation for a more advanced water safety program to ensure children graduating from elementary school have basic swimming and water safety skills.

The Society is paying special attention to the growing body of research that shows that the thrill seeking, pleasure seeking part of the teen brain develops at a faster rate than the judgment and impulse inhibition skills that adults have. When combined with the fact that as pre-teens and teens get older, they become more independent spending more time with their friends and less time under adult supervision.

This risk-taking behaviour continues into adulthood: risk-taking 18-24 year olds have the highest water-related death rate of any age group in Canada at 2.2 per 100,000 (source 2013 Canadian Drowning Report).

With our Swim to Survive+ program, the Lifesaving Society provides teens with practical lifesaving skills that will prepare them for their increased independence and freedom as teens and into early adulthood.

Swim to Survive+ supporters

The Swim to Survive+ program is generously supported by:

**Stephanie Gaetz KEEPSAFE Foundation**

The Stephanie Gaetz Keepsafe Foundation is the Founding Sponsor of both Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive+ programs. The foundation’s support enabled the Society to develop and pilot the program in 2012 with more than 1,000 children and to develop and print the required support materials.
Pool People Limited

PPL Aquatic Fitness & Spa Group is one of Canada’s largest swimming pool companies specializing in the design, construction, equipping, and servicing of commercial pool and fitness facilities. The company has a recreational staffing and lifeguard supply division that provides over 60 full-time and 150 seasonal lifeguards and recreational attendants to apartments and condominiums across the GTA.

PPL Aquatic and Fitness & Spa Group contributed substantially to Swim to Survive and now provides significant funding for Swim to Survive+. For more information, visit: www.pplgroup.com

TransCanada

TransCanada is a leader in the responsible development and reliable operation of North American energy infrastructure. The company’s vision is to become a North American community infrastructure leader by collaborating to build safe and vibrant communities. In its commitment to become a trusted community partner, it is supporting the Lifesaving Society’s Swim to Survive+ program to help keep communities throughout southern Ontario safe by preventing water-related injuries and deaths. For more information, visit www.transcanada.com.

Ontario Ministry of Education

While the Ministry of Education is not financially contributing to the Swim to Survive+ program, the Society is grateful for the Ministry’s support of Grade 7 teachers delivering the in-classroom water safety lessons and facilitating communication with parents and with coordinators of the in-water sessions.
Foreword

This Activity Guide helps instructors plan, teach and evaluate the Swim to Survive+ program. This guide was designed for use with the Society’s instructor resources, which present essential teaching and learning principles. For skill descriptions and technical information, instructors should consult the Canadian Lifesaving Manual.

For each item, the Swim to Survive+ Activity Guide presents a detailed description including the following:

**Statements of Purpose:** The Purpose statements identify the objective of each item. Purpose statements define what the item achieves when performed successfully and/or specify why the item is included in the program.

**Take-Home Message:** Participants should complete Swim to Survive+ with an understanding of these messages and the value of the skills they have learned.

**Performance Requirements—Must See:** Details of the performance, which will achieve the purpose of each item, are found in the “Must See” section. Normally, “Must Sees” do not describe skills or performances. Skill descriptions are found in the Canadian Lifesaving Manual. In many instances various responses are possible.

The instructor and evaluator can use the “Must See” section as a checklist for success. If a participant performs an item with the necessary knowledge, skill, fitness, and judgment to achieve its stated purpose, then he or she is probably performing at or above the required standard.

**Notes:** The Notes present explanations or limitations of the performance of an item and cautions to the instructor regarding participant safety. References to relevant Lifesaving Society literature resources are also included here.

**Teach the Basics:** Swim to Survive+ is not swimming lessons. Skills need not be perfect. Diverse methods of achieving the Must Sees are acceptable.

**Common Problems:** These tips help instructors identify and correct common issues participants face while attempting each item.

**Teaching Progressions:** Help participants succeed by using these progressions to break down each item into manageable components of the skill.
Teaching and evaluating
Swim to Survive+

Swim to Survive+ may be taught and evaluated by Lifesaving Society Swim or Lifesaving Instructors, or National Lifeguards.

Swim to Survive+ instructors are encouraged to review “Teaching Adolescents” in the Society’s Instructor Notes (page 5).

Clothing
Some students may have participated in the Society’s Swim to Survive program. While they will be familiar with the “Roll-Tread-Swim” sequence, they will be challenged to perform it in clothing.

Treading water and swimming in clothes is harder than you think. Try the “Roll-Tread-Swim” sequence wearing clothes so you know exactly what it feels like. You’re a good swimmer – so imagine how this is going to feel for your Swim to Survive+ participants, some of whom may be weak or non-swimmers.

Give the students as much opportunity to practice as possible. For most of them, swimming with clothes will be a new and tiring experience. Safety is key. Put weak and non-swimmers in a PFD and have a buoyant (rescue) aid at the ready at all times.

Regardless of ability, all students should attempt the skills with clothes on:

- Those who require a PFD, can wear one in the deep end
- In the shallow end, they should attempt skills without a PFD while wearing clothes

Some instructors are overly reliant on PFDs leaving students without the experience of trying the skills without one.

For those who are very nervous, introduce clothing slowly – one item at a time – short sleeved t-shirt first, etc.

When possible, teach while wearing clothing yourself. This may help ease some fears and students would really appreciate seeing their instructor demonstrating the skills wearing clothes.

Don’t forget to have fun!

Teaching for success

Survival mode versus learning mode
Anxiety can have a negative effect on the learner’s readiness to learn. When attempting an aquatic skill for the first time, learners may feel their very survival
is jeopardy (e.g., “will I be able to breathe?”). If so, they may be in “survival mode” – they
cannot think about how to do the skill when they are focused only on getting the next
breath.

When considering your teaching approach, ask yourself if the learner will be operating in
“survival mode” or “learning mode”. To be in learning mode, they should feel that they are
in control of their situation; that they can take a breath whenever they want; and that they
can stop at any time.

**Using flotation aids as teaching tools**

When learning to swim, the learner must be able to solve three problems:

*Orientation*: How do I orient myself and control my body as it moves?

*Support*: How do I support myself to get a breath when I want or need it?

*Propulsion*: How do I control my movement through the water to get to my destination?

A teaching approach that initially focuses the learner on one problem at a time will reduce
learner anxiety, speed up the learning process, and increase the chances of success.

Using flotation aids as teaching tools provide support to the learner so that they:

1. Can breathe whenever they need to.
2. Get good quality practice, because they can:
   - Focus on learning the new movement
   - Follow feedback
   - Rest when they need to

Flotation aids include: lifejackets, PFDs, kickboards, flotation belts, empty bleach bottles
or noodles.

**Going PFD-free**

If students are concerned about being able to perform the skill without assistance, the use
of personal flotation devices (PFD) or other buoyant aids will help support their bodies
while they determine how best to use their legs. When the student is ready, he or she can
attempt the skills without a buoyant support, but this decision should be the learner’s not
the teacher’s.

To help the student recognize that they are ready to try a skill without support
an instructor can:

- Give lots of positive and encouraging feedback.
- If the student appears afraid, offer encouraging support.
- Assist the student rather than having them do it on their own.
- Use progressions – have the student attempt the water skills in shallower water.

*We recommend that all students attempt the swim without a PFD at some point.*
Easing students’ fears

Students who are afraid of water need time to get “the feel of it” – learning to trust how their body responds to water’s buoyancy. For some, learning to walk through water, use of controlled breathing skills and then progressing to front and back floats and standing up after these floats are major accomplishments.

Always start fearful students with lifejackets on, keep the tasks simple and within their comfort level. Stay close, always within arms’ reach.

Each student will work at his/her own pace. Fearful students need to have a sense of control of how quickly new skills are introduced. Introducing a new skill that seems “risky” to the student requires patience and well thought out progressions. When skills are introduced properly, the student will find that the task was not as difficult as first imagined.

Students with disability

An individual who has a disability can easily participate in Swim to Survive+. The unique teaching approach in using flotation aids creates two opportunities. The student can easily participate within a group and the flotation aid provides any extra buoyancy that they may require.

Due to the flexible nature of the evaluation criteria (any method that allows the learner to get to safety is acceptable) makes it easy to accommodate the student’s special needs.

For more information, see Instructor Notes, page 7.

Safety considerations

Area required for the activity

- Is the water depth adequate?
- Is there adequate space for each student?
- Is there a buffer area between students and other classes or hazards (e.g. drop-offs, lane ropes, diving boards, etc.)?

Ability of the students

- Do the students have the appropriate lead-up skills?
- Do the students understand the activity to be performed?
- Is the activity appropriate for the physical ability of the students?
- Is the activity flexible to accommodate differences in levels of experience and skill?
- Does the activity allow observation of each person at all times?
Entry

- Encourage students to roll out and away from the poolside.
- Plan safety routines that keep students from accidentally landing on someone.
- Back rolls should not be taught or practiced.

Tread water

- Always practice a new skill in shallow water or in PFDs before moving to deeper water.
- Plan safety routines that keep students from bumping into each other.
- Always let the student decide when they want to remove the PFD to attempt the skill without it.

Swim

- Practice new skills in shallow water or in PFDs before moving to deeper water.
- Weak or non-swimmers will need time to explore swimming skills and using their PFD before attempting to swim in deeper water.
- Plan safety routines that keep students from bumping into each other.

Always let the student decide when they want to remove the PFD in deep water to attempt the swim without it.

Top 10 safety rules

1. Keep all swimmers in front of you and supervise them at all times.
2. Have a buoyant aid available at all times.
3. Carry a whistle.
4. Perform regular head counts.
5. Ensure swimmers enter shallow water feet-first every time.
6. Outline the safety rules before beginning the activity.
7. Set boundaries.
8. Do not force students to do any skill they don’t want to.
9. Deal with misbehaviour immediately in private.
10. Have fun!
Planning

Groups with diverse skills
Each lesson should include practice activities for each of the Swim to Survive+ skills.

When planning for your class, follow these steps:

1. Always screen your students to determine their individual abilities.
2. Always demonstrate the skill.
3. Provide plenty of practice for each skill.
4. Allow for each student to practice skills at their own pace.
5. If time allows and the students are ready try the Challenge Activities.

After the students have been screened and more than one instructor is available, divide the students by the number of instructors available. Groups can be divided:

- By pool space – shallow group / mid-group / deep-end group
- By ability – beginner / intermediate / advanced
- By skill – set up stations each focused on a skill. Students move from station to station

Evaluation

Swim to Survive+ is a survival training program – not a swimming program. There are no stroke standards here. Any method that allows the learner to achieve the standard is acceptable. There is no “right” solution.

A key component of the teaching strategy is a problem-solving approach to help the learner find an effective solution.

Recognition

Every Swim to Survive+ participant receives a recognition card completed and signed by the instructor.

Challenge items

It should be explained to parents/guardians that regardless of the items achieved on the card, the Lifesaving Society encourages all children to learn to swim beyond this minimum standard.

The Swim to Survive+ program offers three “Challenge Items” for use with a class of skilled participants who have mastered the six Swim to Survive+ Items. Challenge Items are particularly useful when you have participants with diverse abilities and skills. Introduce the Challenge Items to the more advanced students while you continue to work on the basic Swim to Survive+ skills with the others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Skills</th>
<th>Assists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roll into deep water wearing clothes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talking assist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll into deep water wearing long pants, t-shirt and shoes (preferred)</td>
<td>From the deck, call for help while encouraging a “victim” to kick to safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wearing minimum of long pants and t-shirt</td>
<td>• Student remains on deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Head-first entry (simulated fall) into water without assistance</td>
<td>• Call for help – may include 911 or obtaining assistance from adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> If I fall into water I will be disoriented and need to blow and follow bubbles to the surface.</td>
<td>• In a loud voice, encouragement for “victim” to kick to safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tread water wearing clothes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talking &amp; throwing assist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to support nose and mouth above water for one minute</td>
<td>From the deck, call for help and throw a buoyant aid to a “victim” while encouraging him or her to kick to safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wearing minimum of long pants and t-shirt</td>
<td>• Rescuer remains on deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nose and mouth above surface</td>
<td>• Call for help – may include 911 or obtaining assistance from adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control of breathing</td>
<td>• Aid thrown within 1 m of “victim”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unnecessary clothing removed (especially shoes)</td>
<td>• In loud voice, encouragement for “victim” to kick to safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look for nearest point of safety</td>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> Talk. Throw. Lie down. If you get in you can drown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tread for one minute or better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Look for safety.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swim wearing clothes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talking &amp; reaching assist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to swim 50 metres through water on front and back wearing clothes</td>
<td>From the deck, call for help and extend an aid to a “victim” while encouraging him or her to kick to safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Swim in clothes (t-shirt and pants) without touching bottom</td>
<td>• Rescuer remains on deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Controlled transitions from front to back and back to front</td>
<td>• Call for help – may include 911 or obtaining assistance from adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minimum distance met</td>
<td>• Aid thrown within 1 m of “victim”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> Swim. Rest. Swim. Get there.</td>
<td>• In loud voice, encouragement for “victim” to kick to safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fitness swim</strong></td>
<td>• Reaching aid extended with rescuer lying down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an interval swim (4 x 10-15 m) on front or back with 15-30 second rests with pulse check</td>
<td>• “Victim” pulled to side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> Talk. Reach. Lie Down. If you get in you can drown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repetitions completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pulse checked at each interval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> Know yourself. Pace yourself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Swim to Survive Sequence wearing clothes

Wearing clothes, perform the following sequence: roll into deep water; tread water one minute; swim 50 m

**Must See**

- Minimum of long pants and t-shirt
- Item completed as a continuous sequence

**Key Take Home Message:** The Swim to Survive sequence is the minimum required swimming ability to survive an unexpected fall into deep water.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge Activities</th>
<th>Remove clothes and swim 25 m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underwater swim</strong></td>
<td>Remove clothing in deep water and swim 25 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim underwater for at least 3–5 m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum distance completed in chest-deep water</td>
<td>Removal of one piece of clothing at a time: footwear first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Take Home Message: Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Swim.</td>
<td>Distance completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fitness Challenge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Take Home Message:</strong> If your clothing is weighing you down take it off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim intervals (8 x 25 m) on front or back with 15-30 second rests with pulse check</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must See</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetitions completed</td>
<td>Pulse check at each interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Take Home Message: Wear your PFD, it buys you time for rescue and reduces cold water shock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

Roll into deep water wearing clothes............................................16

Tread water wearing clothes ......................................................18

Swim wearing clothes..................................................................20

Swim to Survive sequence .........................................................22

Fitness swim................................................................................24

Talking Assist...............................................................................26

Talking and throwing assist........................................................28

Talking and reaching assist .........................................................30

Challenge Items

Underwater swim..........................................................................32

Remove clothes and swim 25 m..................................................34

Attempt to don PFD in deep water ..............................................36

Fitness challenge..........................................................................38
Roll into deep water wearing clothes

Roll into deep water wearing long pants, t-shirt and shoes (preferred).

Purpose

To provide a realistic approximation of an unexpected fall into deep water after which swimmers must surface and orient themselves. Most drownings occur after sudden and unexpected immersion. This is a disorienting experience in which individuals can swim in the wrong direction (towards bottom) or have difficulty getting their airway above the surface.

Take-Home Message

If I fall into water, I will be disoriented and need to blow and follow bubbles to the surface.

Must See

- Wearing minimum of long pants and t-shirt
- Head-first entry (simulated fall) into water without assistance
Teach the Basics

Swimmers don PFDs and:

1. Crouch at poolside, knees bent, feet at edge.
2. Cover back of head with hands, tuck chin into chest, elbows close to body.
3. Take a deep breath and hold.
4. Roll out and away from poolside into the water.
5. Surface, lift head to breathe, return to poolside.

Common Problems

Lifting head

• Keep chin tucked into chest.

Water up nose

• Gently exhale through the nose during roll.

Teaching Progressions

1. Try somersaults in shallow water.
2. Try simple jumps into deep water for orientation and surfacing.
3. Practice somersault rolls on a mat on the deck.
4. Try somersault rolls from a floating mat in deep water.
5. Try somersault rolls entry from the deck onto a mat in deep water.
6. Try somersault roll entry from the deck into deep water without mat.
Tread water wearing clothes

Demonstrate the ability to support nose and mouth above water for one minute while clothed.

Purpose

To develop the ability to support the nose and mouth; to protect the airway while regaining control of breathing; and to look for nearest point of safety.

Take-Home Message

Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Look for safety.

Notes

Safety:

- Always practice a new skill in shallow water or in PFDs before moving to deeper water.
- Always let the student decide when to attempt the skill without a PFD.
- Prevent students from bumping into each other.

Must See

- Wearing minimum of long pants and t-shirt
- Nose and mouth above surface
- Control of breathing
- Unnecessary clothing removed (especially shoes)
- Look for nearest point of safety
- Treading for one minute or better

Reference:
Canadian Lifesaving Manual 3-4, 3-5, 3-6
Teach the Basics

1. Enter chest-deep (or deeper) water.
2. Sweep hands and arms at a slight back angle, back and forth just below the surface.
3. Use any kicking method or combination of kicks.
4. Put the two skills together. Keeping the lungs as full as possible will maximize upper body buoyancy.

Teaching Progressions

1. Practice arm and feet action separately.
2. Stand in shallow water and sweep hands and arms back and forth like spreading jam on a large piece of bread.
3. Use PFDs for support while practicing in deep water.
4. Explain when to remove clothing.
5. Have swimmers get into tuck position and remove one shoe at a time.
6. For kicking action – position learners in deeper water so they can clear the bottom during the kicks.
7. Practice arms and legs together to increase endurance.
8. When swimmers can support themselves at the surface, experiment with scissor and eggbeater kick.

When to remove clothing:

- if clothing is weighing you down and creating difficulties.
- in cold water only if wearing it threatens survival.
- never take off your PFD to remove clothing.

Common Problems

Trouble maintaining body position
- Alter head position (back or forward).
- Modify position of the arm action.

Sinking
- Ensure swimmer is sculling (i.e., using a continuous and smooth feathering action of the hand).
- Increase sculling speed and/or amplitude.
- Alter arm position (broader or narrower).
- Use a more propulsive and harder kick.
- Encourage big breaths while removing one item of clothing at a time.
Swim wearing clothes

Demonstrate the ability to swim 50 metres through water on front and back wearing clothes.

Purpose

To demonstrate the ability to swim to a point of safety. Most drownings occur within 15 m of safety (dock, shoreline, pool edge, boat, etc.). The 50 m distance simulates swimming in open water where water temperature, waves, etc. adversely affect swimming ability. Students learn to roll onto their backs to catch their breath or rest, to prevent fatigue and help ensure survival.

Take-Home Message


Must See

- Swim in clothes (t-shirt and pants) without touching bottom
- Controlled transitions from front to back and back to front
- Minimum distance met

Notes

- Long-sleeved shirt and shoes preferred but not required.
- Students may begin on front or back.
- Students may roll from back to front to see point of safety.

Safety:

- Practice new skills in shallow water or in PFDs before moving to deeper water.
- Weak or non-swimmers need time to explore swimming skills while wearing PFDs before attempting to swim in deeper water.
- Always let the student decide when to attempt the swim without a PFD.
- Prevent students from bumping into each other.

Reference:

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 9-2; Instructor Notes; Swim for Life Award Guide
Teach the Basics

Swimmers don PFDs and:

1. Enter waist-deep water.
2. Manoeuvre into horizontal body position (front or back, head in or out of water).
3. Propel themselves forward using any method. Arms may recover above or below the surface.
4. Any kick is acceptable.

Teaching Progressions

1. Encourage students to put their faces in water practicing breath control.
2. Move to submerging the face and/or body and opening eyes underwater.

Swimmers put on PFDs (if required) and:

1. Attempt floats on front and/or back.
3. Practice (front or back) glides with kicks (any form of kick).
5. Attempt propulsion using arms (in any fashion – on front or back, head in or out of water).
6. Add breathing using a regular pattern (if possible).

When ready, students attempt a distance without a PFD (in shallow water at the very least).

Common Problems

Body position
- Change head position (lift up or down).

Arm mechanics
- Proper arm recovery and pull.

Kick mechanics
- Pointed toes (flutter kick); flexed foot (whip kick).
Swim to Survive sequence

Wearing clothes, perform the following sequence: roll into deep water; tread water one minute; swim 50 metres.

**Purpose**

To simulate a real-life situation emphasizing the minimum required skills to survive an unexpected fall into deep water, while clothed. Most drownings occur after an unexpected fall into water.

**Take-Home Message**

The Swim to Survive standard is the minimum required swimming ability to survive an unexpected fall into deep water.

**Must See**

- Minimum of long pants and t-shirt
- Item completed as a continuous sequence

**Roll**

- Head-first entry (simulated fall) into water without assistance

**Tread**

- Nose and mouth above surface
- Control of breathing
- Unnecessary clothing removed (especially shoes)
- Look for the nearest point of safety
- Tread for one minute or better

**Swim**

- Swim without touching bottom
- Minimum distance met
- Controlled transfer from front to back and back to front

**Notes**

- Long-sleeved shirt and shoes preferred but not required.
- Students may begin the swim on front or back
- Students may roll from back to front to see point of safety.

**Reference:**

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 5-9 and 9-2; Instructor Notes; Swim for Life Award Guide
Teach the Basics
Allow swimmers to practice the sequence before evaluation.

Common Problems
\textit{Swimmers tire during the sequence}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Encourage students to pace themselves (this is not a race).
  \item Roll onto back to rest.
\end{itemize}

Teaching Progressions
Teach items 1, 2, and 3 separately before attempting this item.
Fitness swim

Demonstrate an interval swim (4 x 10-15 m) on front or back with 15-30 second rests with pulse check.

Purpose

To practice fitness skill development. While most drownings occur within 3-15 m of safety, individuals will often swim “all out” to get to that point. Understanding speed versus endurance, rest, power, and personal fitness level is valuable in an emergency situation.

Take-Home Message

Know yourself. Pace yourself.

Notes

- Use of buoyant aid optional.

Safety:

- Place weaker swimmers in the shallow end.
- Prevent students from accidentally colliding with one another.

Must See

- Repetitions completed
- Pulse checked at each interval

Reference:
Instructor Notes, p. 37; Canadian Lifesaving Manual 10-7; Teaching Swim for Life, p. 54
Teach the Basics

1. Use a timer to control rest intervals.
2. Teach swimmers to be aware of and to control their pace during training.
3. Teach swimmers to take their pulse at each interval and refer to appropriate target heart rate.

Common Problems

*Inability to read a time clock*
- Instructor keeps pace time for the class.

*Students run out of steam*
- Stress that this is not a race. Do not sprint.
- Attempt to complete each interval at the same pace.

Teaching Progressions

1. Students may use any body position or combination of body positions.
2. Students may use any combination of kicks (e.g., flutter, whip or scissor).
Talking Assist

From the deck, call for help while encouraging a “victim” to kick to safety.

Purpose

To prevent loss of life in an aquatic emergency with minimal risk to the rescuer. Weak and non-swimmers in trouble have the strength to endanger an untrained individual who gets too close. It is important to teach safe ways to help someone in trouble while minimizing personal risk.

Take-Home Message

Talk. Don’t go. If you get in, you can drown.

Notes

- Stress that students should always use the method that involves the least amount of risk to themselves. Talking and shouting may encourage a distressed swimmer to kick to safety.

Safety:

- Need not be in the deep end. Practice in chest-deep water.
- Prevent students from accidentally colliding.

Must See

- Rescuer remains on deck
- Call for help – may include 911 or obtaining assistance from adults
- In a loud voice, encouragement for “victim” to kick to safety

Reference:
Canadian Lifesaving Manual 4-4 – 4-6, Instructor Notes
Teach the Basics

1. From a dry, safe position talk to the “victim” and encourage him or her to safety.
2. Student provides positive verbal support with clear, simple instructions.
3. Have students lay face-down at the edge and use expressions such as, “watch me, keep your head up, kick your feet, and grab the side”.
4. Reinforce the need for positive encouragement and to avoid putting themselves at risk or in danger.
5. Identify a person to call 911 and report back.

Teaching Progressions

1. Discuss situations where students might experience the need to assist someone in trouble.
2. Discuss/brainstorm ways to prevent getting into trouble in the water.
3. Demonstrate and practice helpful expressions and use of loud, clear voice on deck or in shallow end of pool.
4. Set students up to practice with partners or small groups.

Common Problems

*Rescuer too quiet*

- Practice “outside” or “pool” voices.
Talking and throwing assist

From the deck, call for help and throw a buoyant aid to a “victim” while encouraging him or her to kick to safety.

Purpose

To prevent loss of life in an aquatic emergency with minimal risk to the rescuer. Weak or non-swimmers in trouble have the strength to endanger an untrained individual who gets too close. It is important to teach safe ways to help someone in trouble while minimizing personal risk.

Take-Home Message

Talk. Don’t go. If you get in, you can drown.

Notes

• This skill is primarily for victims who are a short distance way. Teach students to throw buoyant objects that are common in a variety of aquatic settings (e.g., ring buoys, PFDs, noodles).
• Students should always use the method that involves the least amount of risk.

Safety:
• Need not be in the deep end. Practice in chest-deep water.
• Choose appropriate aids for practice.
• Control the number of aids being thrown at once.
• Prevent students from accidentally hitting someone.

Must See

- Rescuer remains on deck
- Call for help – may include 911 or obtaining assistance from adults
- Aid thrown within 1 m of “victim”
- In loud voice, encouragement for “victim” to kick to safety

Reference:
Canadian Lifesaving Manual 4-4 – 4-6; Instructor Notes
Teach the Basics

1. From a dry, safe position talk to and encourage the victim to safety.
2. If the “victim” is a short distance from shore and a suitable buoyant object is available, throw the object so the victim can grasp it for support.
3. Teach students to be careful not to hit the person with the object.
4. Remember that wind and waves make it harder to throw with accuracy.
5. Students lay face-down at the edge and use expressions such as, “watch me, keep your head up, kick your feet, and grab the side”.
6. Identify a person to call 911 and report back.

Teaching Progressions

1. Discuss situations where students might experience the need to assist someone in trouble.
2. Discuss/brainstorm options of buoyant aids.
3. Demonstrate and practice helpful expressions and use of loud, clear voice on deck or in shallow end of pool.
4. Demonstrate how to throw underhand.
5. Have students practice with a target.
6. Set students up to practice with partners or small groups.

Common Problems

- *Rescuer too quiet*
  - Practice “outside” or “pool” voices.

- *Poor aim*
  - Practice with partners, short distances only.
Talking and reaching assist

From the deck, call for help and extend an aid to a “victim” while encouraging him or her to kick to safety.

Purpose

To prevent loss of life in an aquatic emergency with minimal risk to the rescuer. Weak and non-swimmers in trouble have the strength to endanger an untrained individual who gets too close. It is important to teach safe ways to help someone in trouble while minimizing personal risk.

Take-Home Message

Talk. Don’t go. If you get in, you can drown.

Notes

- This skill is primarily for victims who are a short distance away.
- Students should always use the method that involves the least amount of risk. Emphasize the risk involved with contact and discuss the types of reaching aids such as paddle, shepherds hook, branch or towels.

Safety:

- Need not be in the deep end. Practice in chest-deep water.
- Choose appropriate assists for student practice.
- Prevent students from accidentally colliding.

Must See

- Rescuer remains on deck
- Call for help – may include 911 or obtaining assistance from adults
- In loud voice, encouragement for “victim” to kick to safety
- Reaching aid extended with rescuer lying down
- “Victim” pulled to side

Reference:

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 4-4 – 4-6, Instructor Notes
Teach the Basics

1. From a dry, safe position talk to the person and encourage them to safety. If you can find a suitable item, extend it and pull the person to safety.
2. If the person is close enough, a towel may work.
3. People farther away may require a pole, branch, etc.
4. Use buoyant objects (e.g., noodles, PFDs); they will support people in the water.
5. Students lie face-down at the edge and use expressions such as, “watch me, keep your head up, kick your feet, and grab the side.”
6. Identify a person to call 911 and report back.

Teaching Progressions

1. Discuss situations where students might experience the need to assist someone in trouble.
2. Discuss/brainstorm options of reaching assists.
3. Demonstrate and practice helpful expressions and use of loud, clear voice on deck or in shallow end of pool.
4. Demonstrate how to reach out with emphasis on low body position.
5. Set students up to practice with partners or small groups.

Common Problems

Rescuer too quiet

- Practice “outside” or “pool” voices.

Students fail to keep their body low

- Emphasis on lying down.

Students get pulled into the water

- Emphasis on lying down.
Underwater swim

Swim underwater 3–5 metres.

Purpose

To develop breath control and the ability to swim underwater. As individuals swim to safety they may experience waves or water conditions that cause them to go underwater. They need to be comfortable with that sensation.

Take-Home Message

Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Swim.

Notes

- Underwater swim may be executed at any depth as long as the entire body is submerged throughout.

Safety:

- Prevent students from hyperventilating.
- Ensure students have their hands in front of their head when picking up object.
- Encourage students to pick up objects away from the pool edge.
- Prevent students from accidentally gliding into someone.

Must See

- Minimum distance completed in chest-deep water

Reference:
Canadian Lifesaving Manual 9-16, 9-17; Swim for Life Award Guide
Teach the Basics

1. Practice rhythmic breathing.
2. Practice touching the bottom of the pool.
3. Retrieve an object from a stationary point.
4. Encourage students to push off the wall.

Teaching Progressions

1. Go underwater and open eyes.
2. Retrieve an object from the bottom from a stationary point.
3. Swim at surface in a glide position with kick.
4. Experiment with different arm pulls (e.g., breast stroke arms, doggy paddle).
5. Experiment with different kicks (e.g., flutter, whip, scissor).
6. Gradually increase distance (if not met initially).
7. Swim underwater for 5-10 m.
8. Recover small object (e.g., water filled water bottle, hockey puck, ring).

Common Problems

*Can’t touch the bottom*

- Modify head position (tuck chin).
- Exhale breath.
- Proper body position (legs in water).
- Arch or flex at the waist.

*Water up nose*

- Gently exhale through the nose.
Remove clothes and swim 25 metres

Remove clothing in deep water and swim 25 m.

Purpose

To practice removing unnecessary clothing in deep water before a 25 m swim. Most drownings occur unexpectedly. Learning how to remove bulky and unnecessary clothing is valuable in an emergency.

Take-Home Message

If your clothing weighs you down, take it off.

Notes

Safety:

• Ensure all students use proper fitting PFDs.
• Encourage students to attempt this near the pool edge.
• Prevent students from accidentally bumping into others.

Must See

○ Removal of one piece of clothing at a time: footwear first
○ Distance completed

Reference:

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 3-5
Teach the Basics

1. Practice in the shallow end first.
2. Practice in chest-deep water, then move to the deep end.
3. Remind students to NEVER take their clothes off if they’re wearing a PFD.
4. Remove clothing in cold water only if wearing it threatens your survival.

Teaching Progressions

1. Footwear – students get into tuck position and remove shoes one at a time.
2. Jacket – in a back float position, students use both hands to unfasten and remove jacket.
3. Pants – if necessary, unfasten the pants while treading water in a vertical position or while floating on the back. Then, in a tuck position, slide pants off.
4. Shirt with buttons – in either a back float or a backward leaning position, unfasten and remove the shirt.
5. Pullover shirt or sweater – grasp the base of the shirt or sweater with crossed arms, and pull it over the head and arms in a single movement.

Common Problems

*Clothing gets stuck*

- Remind students to remove only heavy, bulky clothing that interferes with swimming. If an item of clothing is too difficult to remove and doesn’t interfere with swimming ability, it may be left on.
Attempt to don PFD in deep water

Wearing clothes and within 20 seconds of entry, attempt to don a PFD in deep water.

Purpose

To demonstrate in the challenge and difficulty of donning a PFD after an unexpected fall into deep water. Regulations require a PFD that fits for each individual in a boat – but it doesn’t require people to wear it. Individuals need to understand how to don a PFD in water and how difficult this is under ideal (pool) conditions without waves, currents, in the dark or cold water.

Take-Home Message

Wear your PFD: it buys you time for rescue and reduces cold water shock.

Must See

- PFD thrown into water
- Wearing clothes, enter water and swim to PFD
- Attempt to don PFD within 20 seconds of entry

Notes

- Stress the importance of wearing a PFD in any boat; the difficulty of donning it in the water; and the likelihood of it floating out of reach if you’re not wearing it.

Safety:

- Ensure that all students use proper fitting PFDs.
- Encourage students to attempt this near the pool edge.
- Plan safety routines that keep students from accidentally landing on someone.

Reference:

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 2-2 and 2-3; Instructor Notes; Swim for Life Award Guide
Teach the Basics

1. Choose an appropriate fitting PFD.
2. Have the PFD float open in front of the student, neck closest to student.
3. Student places arms in arm holes and lifts the PFD over the head.
4. Have students lie on their back to fasten the PFD correctly.

Common Problems

*Head going under*
- Encourage stronger, bigger kicks.

*Upside down/inside out PFD*
- Re-emphasize proper placement.

*Water up nose*
- Gently exhale through the nose during roll.

Teaching Progressions

1. Try this in the deep end while making waves.
2. Try this while wearing goggles.
Fitness challenge

Swim intervals (8 x 25 m) on front or back with 15-30 second rests with pulse check.

Purpose

To practice fitness skill development. To challenge deep-end swimmers.

Take-Home Message

Challenge yourself.

Notes

• Buoyant aid optional.

Safety:

• Weaker swimmers should practice in the shallow end.
• Prevent students from accidentally colliding with one another.

Must See

- Repetitions completed
- Pulse check at each interval

Reference:

Instructor Notes page 37, Canadian Lifesaving Manual 10-7; Teaching Swim for Life page 54
Teach the Basics

1. Use a timer to control rest intervals.
2. Teach swimmers to be aware of and to control their pace during training.
3. Teach swimmers to take pulse at each interval and refer to appropriate target heart rate.

Common Problems

*Inability to read a time clock*

- Instructor keeps pace time for the class.

*Students run out of steam*

- Stress that this is not a race. Do not sprint.
- Attempt to complete each interval at the same pace.

Teaching Progressions

1. Students may use any body position or combination of body position.
2. Students may use any combination of kicks (e.g., flutter, whip or scissor).