

# Basic Water Safety

This document is only a very brief introduction to a very important topic: self-survival in water. A high proportion of drownings occur within feet of safety. Cold water (such as that found in the sea, rivers, lakes, canals and reservoirs of the UK) quickly leads to hypothermia in children. Please read the following information, but also supplement this with a visit to the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) website, where further information and resources are available.

The first and cardinal rule:

**DO NOT LET YOUR CHILDREN SWIM ALONE AND UNSUPERVISED.**

Be aware and make your child aware of **THE WATER SAFETY CODE**

(See [rospa.com](http://rospa.com))

Advice for one who falls into water clothed and with no visible assistance available:

1. Allow yourself to float upwards back to surface.
2. Float and orientate yourself (LOOK FOR SAFETY).
3. Only take off very heavy clothing (ex: shoes, overcoats).
4. Either:
  - a. Swim to nearest safe point (if such an exit point is available)
    - Swim using an efficient and energy-saving stroke – ideally one where arms are underwater
    - Do not attempt to swim too fast
    - Sometimes you may HAVE to swim fast (ie in fast-flowing water). If possible swim *across* and *with* (diagonal to) the current.

Or:

- b. Use Safety Float technique (HELP float {Heat Escape Lessening Position}).
    - Use any floating object available to assist with floating
    - Tuck up knees and tuck-in arms – conserve heat
5. When arriving at the side, ALWAYS GET OUT OF THE WATER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE – Potential hypothermia is now the biggest problem!