



Sam's Army's Mission 1 Life

Water safety

Open-water safety: what could save a life

Open water can look calm and inviting while hiding bitterly cold water, sudden depths and currents that overwhelm even strong swimmers in seconds. Please take a few minutes to learn what could one day save your life, or someone else's.

If you fall in: Float to Live

- 1 Fight your instinct.** Don't thrash or try to swim straight away. Cold water makes you gasp and panic, and that is what's dangerous.
- 2 Lean back.** Tip your head back with your ears in the water. Spread your arms and legs out like a star.
- 3 Float.** Float until the cold-water shock passes, usually 60 to 90 seconds, and your breathing settles.
- 4 Call or swim.** Once you are calm, call for help or swim to safety if you can.

Why open water is so dangerous

- **Cold-water shock.** Even in summer the water is often only 10 to 15°C. The cold makes you gasp uncontrollably and can stop you swimming within seconds.
- **Hidden hazards.** Sudden drop-offs, weeds, rubbish and machinery you cannot see from the bank.
- **No lifeguards.** Most lakes, rivers and reservoirs have no one watching the water.
- **It saps your strength.** Cold tires you quickly, and the far bank is usually further than it looks.

If someone else is in trouble: how to use a throwline

- 1 Shout to them.** Tell them help is coming and to grab the line.
- 2 Stand well back.** Kneel or sit at the edge so you cannot be pulled in.
- 3 Throw across them.** Aim just beyond and across the person so the line lands within reach.
- 4 Pull them in steadily.** Bring them to the side. Never go into the water after them.

In an emergency, call 999

- Ask for the **Fire Service** at inland water (lakes, rivers, reservoirs), or the **Coastguard** at the coast.
- Throw something that floats: a throwline, a ring, or anything buoyant.
- Tell them to float on their back and stay calm.
- Never enter the water yourself. Most would-be rescuers get into trouble too.

Please share this with the young people in your life. It could be the thing they remember.