



Stay safe in the water

Have fun and be smart in the sea or pool this summer.

Slashing in the sea, taking a stroll along a canal towpath or fishing in a lake are fantastic summer pastimes. Not only is it great fun to be around water and among nature, it's also good for your mental and physical health. Swimming is brilliant exercise because it makes your muscles stronger and helps to keep your heart and lungs healthy. Studies also show that spending time near water is great for helping people to feel less stressed. However, it's important to know how to look after yourself. For example, if you're near a canal or lake, stick to paths and never go close to the water's edge. Here are more tips to help you stay safe around water this summer.

WOW!
Since 2001, RNLI lifeguards have saved more than 2,000 lives around the UK and Channel Islands.

WARNING!
Young children should never go near open water without an adult.



Be prepared

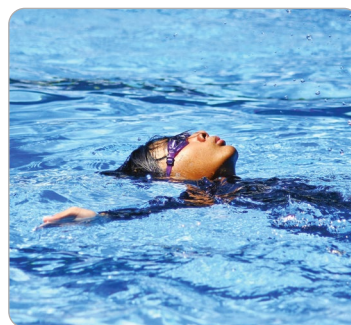
It's safest to go to a beach where a lifeguard is on duty, such as those that are patrolled by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Before you jump in, think about the temperature. Getting into cold water too fast can send your body into something called "cold water shock", which is dangerous. Get in slowly so your body has time to adjust. Also, never dive or jump into water unless you know how deep it is.

Know the risks

If you're at a beach in the UK, lots have a flag system that will tell you if it's safe to go into the water. You also need to be aware of strong currents in the sea called rip currents. They can be hard to spot but often look like a channel of choppy water. If you get caught in one don't swim against it. Stand if you can, or float, and signal for help. If possible, walk or swim sideways – parallel to the shore – until you are out of the rip tide.



Flag showing a lifeguard beach.



Float and relax

If you find yourself getting into trouble in water or you accidentally fall in, the best thing to do is float. Relax, try to breathe normally and tilt your head back. Use your hands to help you stay afloat. Once you've got your breathing under control you can call or wave for help or try and swim to the safety of the side or the shore. Always let an adult know if you are going swimming or are going to be near any open water.

If someone is in trouble

If you see someone struggling in water, follow the advice from the RNLI.

- **Call for help** – call for a grown-up or ring 999 or 112.
- **Throw them a line** – if you have anything that floats, such as a pool noodle, throw it to the person in the water to help them stay afloat.
- **Stay safe** – don't jump in; you could end up struggling too. Stay out of the water and wait for help.



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SCAN ME