SWIM TO SURVIVE
ACTIVITY GUIDE

LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
The Lifeguarding Experts

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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 initiatives, water-incident research, aquatic safety management services, and lifesaving sport.

Annually, well over 700,000 Canadians participate in the Society's swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard, and leadership training programs. The Society sets the standard for aquatic safety in Canada and certifies Canada's National Lifeguards.

The Society is an independent, charitable organization educating Canadian lifesavers since the first Lifesaving Society Bronze Medallion Award was earned in 1896.

The Society represents Canada internationally as an active member of the royal Life Saving Society and the International Life Saving Federation. The Society is the Canadian governing body for lifesaving sport - a sport recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation.

SWIM TO SURVIVE

ACTIVITY GUIDE

LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

The Lifeguarding Experts

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. 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 methods 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 including Boat Operator Accredited Training, the Junior Lifeguard Club and the Canadian Swim Patrol Program, and we launched our Aquatic Safety Management Service. We expanded our First Aid training programs and completely revamped the Bronze medal and the National Lifeguard training program to suit the needs of the new century.

In 2001, we defined the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard and subsequently launched our Swim to Survive program to teach Canadians the minimum essential skills they need to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Our learn-to swim program – Swim for Life® – 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.

Contents

Introduction

The Swim to Survive® Activity Guide provides you with the information to facilitate the Swim to Survive experience. It includes everything you need to teach Swim to Survive® at a pool or waterfront to all ages. The Guide includes: Swim to Survive messages, teaching concepts, and lesson plans for Swim to Survive® Activities for delivering the program to participants.

60% of children in Canada don't have the opportunity to take swimming lessons. Like fire safety and bike safety, everyone deserves to have access to the life skills that Swim to Survive® provides. Swim to Survive®'s unique approach opens the doors for all ages.

The Swim to Survive Experience is intended to provide Canadians with the information to be able to help themselves and others in respect to sudden situations like immersion, attempting to eliminate drowning in Canada. The skills taught in the activities provide participants with the necessary education for basic swim and survival skills in a simple and affordable way. Swim to Survive provides the opportunity to have fun, be safe, and stay fit.

Swim to Survive provides simple, basic swim survival training. Swim to Survive does not replace traditional swimming lessons; rather it provides the essential self-rescue skills to enable a person to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Swim to Survive focuses on achieving a single skill sequence (roll into deep water, tread water for one minute and swim 50 metres). There is no "one right" way to do the sequence, any method that gets them to safety meets the Canadian Swim to Survive Standard. Swim to Survive is easy to learn and can be taught in as little as three hours. Any parent, teacher or swim instructor can teach Swim to Survive.

The Swim to Survive Activity Guide is full of various activities aimed at basic swim and survival training in water related situations. These activities follow an experiential model of learning (Demonstrate, Discuss, Do), giving participants clear experiences that reinforce "why" they should make safe choices in the future.

The Swim to Survive Activity Guide is only the beginning. You will bring it to life, creating a dynamic opportunity to reach out to the community. In so doing, you and the aquatic facility are active partners with the Lifesaving Society in meeting our health and safety mandate for drowning, injury prevention, sport, and recreation active living.

Swim to Survive®

At-a-glance

All Canadians deserve the chance to learn basic swim survival skills.

Most drownings are preventable and occur in unsupervised settings. Year after year, the majority of people who drown have no intention of going into the water. Immersions are sudden and unexpected, often silent and within easy reach of safety. The Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive® program gives Canadians the ability to protect themselves from this situation.

Swim to Survive® is a safety program, just like fire prevention, bicycle safety and seatbelt awareness. In order to make any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada, every Canadian must have a basic swimming ability. Swim to Survive® was developed for exactly this reason – to provide basic swim survival skills in a simple and affordable way.

Swim to Survive® is unique in that it focuses solely on achieving a single skill item, the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard. It defines the essential skills required to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. The standard includes a sequence of three essential self rescue skills: roll into deep water + tread water + swim to safety. Any method that will allow the learner to achieve the standard is acceptable. A key component of the teaching strategy is a problem solving approach to help the learner find an effective solution that will get them to safety. There is no single, "right" solution expected.

Why Swim to Survive®?

Basic swimming ability is a fundamental requirement in any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada.

- The Society believes swimming is a life skill that everyone needs to learn. It's no different than fire safety or street-proofing.
- The Society estimates about half of Canadian children never take traditional swimming lessons – even though "swimming" is the second most popular activities (after bicycling) in Canada among school-age children between five and 12 years of age. The Lifesaving Society wants to ensure every child has the basic skills to survive.
- Swim skills are not innate – they need to be taught – and all Canadians deserve the chance to learn.
- Affordable training should be available for all children to the level of the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard - and is worthy of public and government support.

Our research shows that most drownings occur close to safety. If every child in Canada could pass our Swim to Survive® Standard, we would reduce the number of drownings by half.

Swim to Survive® Program

Learning the self-rescue skills taught in the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive® program is an important first step in being safe around water. Swim to Survive® could make the difference between life and death when immersion in water is sudden and unexpected.

Swim to Survive® Program

Swim to Survive® provides simple, basic swim survival training. Swim to Survive® does not replace traditional swimming lessons, rather it provides the essential self-rescue skills to enable a person to survive an unexpected fall into deep water.

Swim to Survive® focuses on achieving a single skill sequence (roll into deep water, tread waterfor one minute and swim 50 metres). There is no "one right" way to do the sequence, any method that gets them to safety meets the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard.

Swim to Survive® is easy to learn and can be taught in as little as three hours. Any parent, teacher or swim instructor can teach Swim to Survive®.

Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard

A minimum national standard of swimming skill for everyone.

Essential Skill and Rationale	Task
Orient yourself at the surface after an unexpected entry. A fall into water is disorienting and a threat to normal breathing	Roll into deep water.
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.	Tread water for 1 minute.
Swim to safety. Lifesaving Society research shows most drownings occur within 3-15 metres of safety (dock, shoreline, pool edge). Because your ability may be impaired by cold weather, clothing, etc., we use a 50m distance as a reasonable standard.	Swim 50 metres.

As two thirds of all drownings take place within 15 metres of safety, we want to teach people to "go the distance" - dog paddle or swim on their backs. No specific technique or style is required, students just need the confidence to stay relaxed in the water.

Swim to Survive
Evaluation Criteria

Purpose

To develop the minimum skills required to survive an unexpected fall into deep water

Notes

- Swim to Survive® does not attempt to describe the ideal appearance of the skills in the sequence. Any method that achieves getting the head out of water, supporting the head out while treading water and then some form of forward progress for the required distance is acceptable. it is acceptable to pause and rest by treading water during the swim.
- Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard: roll into deep water, tread water for 1 minute and then swim 50 metres to safety.

Must See

Entry

- Rolling or tumbling entry such as side or forward roll into deep water
- Must be able to get head above the surface and avoid breathing water

Tread Water

- Minimum time met - 1 minute
- Able to breathe while supporting self at surface
- Any method of support is acceptable

Swim

- Minimum distance completed - 50 metres
- Swim should be completed without the use of aids, standing on the bottom or stopping to hold onto the wall
- Any method of swim movement is acceptable

Sequence

- All 3 skills are completed as a continuous sequence in the following order: entry, tread water and swim

Target Groups

Flexible and simple to provide, Swim to Survive® can meet even the tightest time frames and budgets. Swim to Survive® can be offered as a stand alone program or as part of the Lifesaving Society Swim Program continuum. The program can be used in the following ways:

1. With Non-swimmers: Non-swimmers will find that learning Swim to Survive® skills is easy. The unique teaching approach used in Swim to Survive® will help them gain the confidence and skills needed to meet the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard.

2. For groups that have a wide range of skill level within their participants: Ideal for groups with limited time or budgets wanting to teach their members self-rescue/swim skills. The unique teaching approach and structure of Swim to Survive® helps to teach participants to accomplish the Swim to Survive® skills and Standard in the shortest time possible. Examples of different groups are:

- School groups (School Board, Charter Schools, Home School, etc.)
- Youth Groups (Church, Cadet, Boys and Girls Clubs and other leadership groups)
- Summer Day Camps (organized through Parks and Recreation departments)
- Special Interest groups (Special Olympics, etc.)

3. Safety preparation for groups/individuals: Have participants take part in a Swim to Survive® program so that group leaders can be confident that the participants have the necessary safety skills for outdoor trips that involve open water, i.e. canoe courses, rafting trips.

4. As the "swim test": Swimming pools or waterfront camps can use the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard as their "swim test" that allows children access to deep water sections of their facility. The "swim test" could also be used as the basis for when children can gain admission into public swims without parent/guardian supervision.

Teaching Concepts
Teaching for Success

Survival Mode vs Learning Mode

Swim to Survive® skills are the foundation for being able to be comfortable in the water, but 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 in 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 because 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 lifejackets/PFDs 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 anytime 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 floatation aids (i.e. PFD/Lifejacket) as teaching tools provide support to the learner so that they:

1. Can breath whenever they need to,
2. Get lots and lots of good quality practice, because they can:
    - Focus on learning the new movement
    - Follow the feedback given by the instructor
    - See how well they are performing the new skill
    - Rest when they need to

Other buoyant aids include: kickboards, floatation belts, bleach bottles or noodles.

Going PFD Free

When the learner 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. The student should always control the decision about when to try skills without the PFD. To help the student recognize that they are ready to try a skill without the lifejacket, an instructor can:

- Ask questions that help him recognize how well he is doing.
- Give lots of positive and encouraging feedback.
- If she appears afraid, let her know that this is natural and OK.
- Tell him how you can assist him (i.e. supporting him with your hands).
- Have her try the swim or treading water skills in water that is at her chest or shoulder depth.

Easing a student's fear

Those students who are afraid of water need time to get "the feel of it" - learning to trust how

Teaching Concepts

Students with Special Needs

their body responds to water's buoyancy. For some, learning to walk through water, use controlled breathing skills and then progressing to front and back floats and standing up after these floats are major accomplishments.

Always start a fearful student with their lifejacket on, keep the tasks simple and within his or her comfort level. The instructor needs to stay close, either touching or within arms reach, while the student's trust level increases with them and with the lifejacket. There are many different kinds of support systems, use anything that gives the student more sense of security (i.e. nose plugs or goggles, aqua belts, etc.)

Each student will work at his or 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. Introduced properly, the student will find that that the task was not as difficult as first imagined. At each step they will see a gradual increase in self-confidence.

Students with a disability

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

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 person's special needs. No specific technique or style is required. They just need to feel confident and relaxed in the water to be able to attempt the standard. The certificate recognizes all levels of achievement, including completing all of the skill sequence with a lifejacket on or having just practiced the Swim to Survive® skills.

Teaching concepts
Safety

The safety of the participants is paramount. Most participants in the Swim to Survive® Program will be non-swimmers or swimmers with minimal skill. Instructors must exercise direct supervision over participants at all times - this means they are never left unattended and are in view at all times. Instructors must also exercise good judgment about when to introduce participants to deep water. Teaching a skill in deep water that learners have not previously mastered in shallow water may not only be counterproductive, it may be unsafe.

Safety Considerations

The area required for the activities.

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

The ability of the students.

- Do the students have the appropriate lead-up skills?
- Do the students understand the activities to be performed?
- Is the activities appropriate for the physical ability of the students?

The ability of the individual learner.

- Is the activities flexible to accommodate differences in levels of experience and skill?
- Does the activities allow observation of each person at all times?

Top ten safety Rules

Here are the top ten rules that must be followed to ensure swimmer safety.

1. Keep all of the swimmers in front of you and supervise them at all times.
2. Have a buoyant aid when the water is more than chest deep for anyone (you or the swimmers).
3. Perform regular head counts.
4. Never ask the swimmer to perform a skill in deep water without either putting him in a PFD or having him try the skill successfully in the shallow water first.
5. Swimmers should enter feet first into shallow water (less than 2.5 m) every time.
6. Deal with misbehaviour immediately in private.
7. Set the safety rules and precautions for the swimmers before starting the activities. Forexample, tell them to walk on deck slowly before moving the class from the deep end to the shallow end.
8. Set boundaries when you give the swimmers choices. For example, if you are letting them choose how to get into shallow water, remind them that the entry must be feet first; or when playing a game they must stay within the given physical boundaries.
9. Positively encourage swimmers to attempt skills they are ready for. Don't force them if they don't think they are ready.

Teaching concepts
Class Management

The safety of the participants is paramount. Most participants in the Swim to Survive® Program will be non-swimmers or swimmers with minimal skill. Instructors must exercise direct supervision over participants at all times - this means they are never left unattended and are in view at all times. Instructors must also exercise good judgment about when to introduce participants to deep water. Teaching a skill in deep water that learners have not previously mastered in shallow water may not only be counterproductive, it may be unsafe.

Top strategies

The following points are top strategies for safe and successful lessons:

- Keep the swimmers active. The cause of many behaviour problems is boredom.
- Keep yourself close to those swimmers who might misbehave. They are more likely to behave when they know you are there.
- Swimmers should know what they are expected to do and what the consequences are if expectations are not followed.
- Give the swimmer a choice as to what he may be able to do when there is a choice available.

Moving from one space to another

First one in, Last one out: The instructor must get into the water before the swimmers and must get out of the water only when all of the swimmers are out. The swimmers follow the instructor walking on deck to the next area.

Formations

Choose formations that maximize the number of swimmers who can safely practice a skill at the same time.

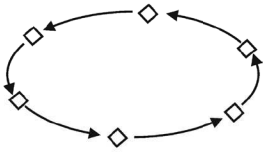

Fig. 1(a) ***Circle or Loop.*** Possible uses include continuous swimming.

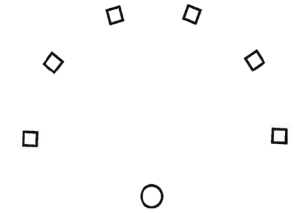

Fig. 1(b) ***Semicircle.*** Possible uses include land demonstrations, discussion, explanations, and giving instructions.

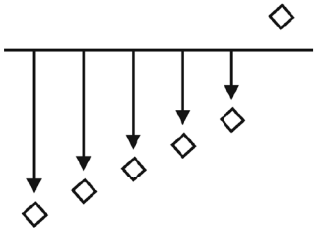

Fig. 1(c) ***Staggered Wave.*** Possible uses include providing individual feedback to learners about entries, strokes, etc.

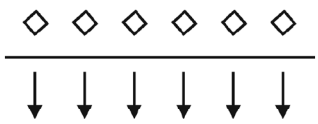

Fig. 1(d) ***Wave.*** Possible uses include entries, teaching strokes, races and relays, and demonstrations.

Using lanes as practice space

The objective is to organize the group in a way that allows for effective practice while minimizing the risk of collisions. A few simple rules can make sharing a swimming lane or space a productive and safe activities.

- Use a start cue, i.e. count to 10 before going or wait until the swimmer before you reaches a certain point.
- Place the fastest swimmer at the front of the group followed by the next fastest swimmer.
- Have the students swim in large circles where they can swim along the outside of the lane leaving the center of the lane empty for passing if necessary.

Planning Your Sessions

Groups with Simillar Skill Level

Teaching to an individual or group of students with similar skills levels:

Each lesson should include practice activities for each of the Swim to Survive® skills (Swim/ Tread Water/ Entry). Each activity listed in the Swim to Survive® Activity Guide has a variation that meets the needs for three different levels of skill: "Non-swimmer", "Weak Swimmer" or "Swimmer" (see definitions - pg. 12).

When planning for your class, follow these steps:

1. Use the Screening Process (pg. 12) to determine which level of skill the student(s) has.
2. Always start with Activity #1 when introducing each of the three skills in Swim to Survive.
3. When the student(s) is ready move on to the Practice Activities provided, choose the variation that meets the student(s) skill or comfort level.
4. If time allows and the student(s) are ready – try the appropriate Challenge Activity.

NOTES:

- Those students who are seen as "Swimmers" may be able to skip Activity #1.
- If there is no way to separate the different skill levels into their 3 different groups, divide theWeak Swimmers' based on their abilities to join either the 'Non-Swimmer' or 'Swimmer' groups.

Groups with diverse skills

Teaching to a group of students with a wide range in skill levels:

Each lesson should include practice activities for each of the Swim to Survive skills (Swim/Tread Water/ Entry). Each activity listed in the Swim to Survive Activity Guide has a variation that meets the needs for three different levels of skill: "Non-swimmer", "Weak Swimmer" or "Swimmer" (see definitions - pg. 12). These variations have been designed so that everyone in the group (independent of their skill or comfort level) can participate in the same activities at the same time.

When planning for your class, follow these steps:

1. Use the Screening Process (pg. 12) to determine which level of skill the students have.
2. Always start with Activity #1 when introducing each of the three skills in Swim to Survive.
3. When the students are ready move on to the Practice Activities provided, have the weaker students work on one variation, while the more skilled members of the group try the more difficult version of the same activity.
4. If time allows and the students are ready – try the appropriate Challenge Activity.

Activity 1

Screening Process
Activity

Screening a group of students will help place students into groups with similar skill and comfort

Outcome

The instructor will be able to determine if a student is a "non-swimmer" a "weak swimmer" or a "swimmer". The instructor can then choose appropriate activities to use.

Discuss

Discuss the following terms:

Non-swimmer:

A non-swimmer is someone who has little or no swimming skill. They may be quite afraid of the water and be hesitant to go in the water. Some non-swimmers are quite unaware of the dangers, and be willing to try something that is well beyond their skill level.

Weak Swimmer:

A weak swimmer is someone who has limited swimming skills and may be self-taught. Some may be cautious in their approach to learning something new, especially in deep water. Others will lack confidence which will improve as their skill level increases.

Swimmer:

A swimmer is someone whose skill ranges from basic ability to being able to swim a recognizable stroke. These individuals may be very comfortable trying something new in the water or not. Some may be over-confident and be willing to take greater risks beyond their skill.

Do

While on deck ask the following questions: Who has had lessons? Who likes to swim in the deep water? Who can swim a full length of the pool? Divide the group based on their responses, for example:

- Non-swimmer: May not have had lessons, will not like deep water, and may be able to propel themselves up to 5 meters.
- Weak Swimmer: May not have had lessons, may like deep water, and may be able to swim up to 10 metres.
- Swimmer: Probably has had lessons, is somewhat comfortable in deep water, and will be able to swim at least 15 meters.

Screening Process
Activity

Outcome

The instructor will be able to determine if a student is a "non-swimmer" a "weak swimmer" or a "swimmer." The instructor can then choose appropriate activities to use.

Do

Based on the responses from Screening Activity #1. Divide your group and have them do the following activty.

- Non-swimmer: Have students show you what they like to do in shallow water.
- Weak Swimmer: Have students show you how they like to swim 10-25 metres in shallow water. With their PFD on, get into deep water - do floats and treading water.
- Swimmer: Instructor demonstrates the Swim to Survive® standard. Have the students do part of or all of the entire standard with their PFD on and then without.

Swim 50 Metres
Activity

Swimming to safety requires a propulsive movement, and an ability to orient on a point of safety.

Outcome

Swim 50 metres – no specific technique or style required, they just need to 'go the distance'.

Discuss

Highlight the components of the skill; demonstrate the skill; practice the skill – with emphasis on lots of practice (not lots of talking). Demonstrate in shallow water before progressing to deep water.

Do

Enter waist-deep water.

1. Encourage students to put their face in water, practicing breath holding and controlled exhalation.
2. Move to submerging the face and/or body and opening the eyes underwater.

Swimmers put on PFDs and then:

3. Attempt floats on front and/or back.
4. Try streamlined glides with kicking on front or back using any form of kick (flutter, whip, scissor).
5. Next try propelling themselves forward using any arm stroke. Arms may recover below the surface (e.g., sidestroke, dog paddle, breaststroke) or above the surface (e.g., front crawl, back crawl).
6. Add breathing using a regular pattern (stress blowing out underwater with mouth and/or nose).
7. When ready, encourage the student to try without a PFD.

A "wave" formation is useful for swim skills with learners in a line beside each other and the intructor positioned to observe all learners. Using a "circle" formation allows for continuous practice time for students as well. When swimmers are comfortable in deep water, practice the swim without PFDs.

- Always practice a new skill 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 lifejacket before attempting to swim in deep 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 swim without it.

References

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 9-2;

Activity 1

Lifesaving and Swimming Instructor Handbook;
Lifesaving Society Instructor Notes, pages 59-71

Swim 50 Metres
Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activity #1, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

What is your favorite way to swim?

Have each student pick a method of swimming. Have students count how many kicks or arm strokes (if the person is swimming a full stroke) it takes to go short distances 10-25 m.

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of propulsion with PFDs on.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of propulsion with or without PFDs on.

Swimmer: Have them do this activity using a recognizable stroke, or arms or legs only with or without PFDs.

Swim 50 Metres
Practice Activity

Activity 3

Once the students have completed Activity #1, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

What kind of swimming takes the least effort?

Have students swim the different ways they know anywhere between 10–25 meters. Ask them which way was easiest? Which one took the least effort/energy to go that distance? Which one will get you to safety, conserving the most energy?

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activity with PFDs on.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activity with or without PFDs on.

Swimmer: Have them do this activity with or without PFDs.

Swim 50 Metres
Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activity #1, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

Swims that protect the airway.

Cold water makes it very difficult to breathe when swimming. Strokes that keep the airway out of the water are easier to do in cold water, and can ensure your survival (i.e. swim either on your back or head up). Have students try various ways to swim on their back and with their head out of the water.

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activity with PFDs on, and focus on a way that takes little effort.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activity with or without PFDs on, and focus on two or three methods of swimming which takes little or no effort.

Swimmer: Have them do this activity with or without PFDs and develop efficiency in two or three methods of swimming.

Swim 50 Metres
Practice Activity

Activity 5

Once the students have completed Activity #1, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

Ways to Keep Kids moving Workouts are a great way to challenge multiple skill levels within the same group and to keep them moving. The following suggestions can be done separately, or as part of a longer workout. Any drills used should involve short distances. The emphasis is on practice, practice, practice. Try to change up the activities to give students a variety.

- Legs only: On front, On back, On their side (flutter kick, dolphin kick, whip kick)
- Arms only:
  - Arms recover under the water: elementary backstroke or breaststroke arms; dog paddle, sidestroke, sculling.
  - Arms recover above the water: back crawl or front crawl.
- Full stroke: Swimming to safety requires coordination of arms and leg action ane breathing.
- Do any of the above with a 15 second rest after each length

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of propulsion with a PFD or other floatation assist; try a shorter distance (i.e. 10 m); or only do one set for the workout; use skill drills to develop efficiency.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of propulsion or with a recognizable stroke with a PFD or other floatation assist; doing a medium distance (i.e. 15 m); doing 1-2 sets for the workout; using skill drills to develop efficiency.

Swimmer: Have them do this activity using any recognizable stroke with minimal to no floatation assist; doing a long distance (i.e. 25+ meters); doing 2-3 sets for the workout; using skill drills to develop efficiency.

Tread Water 1 Minute
Activity

Activity 1

Treading water is a survival skill that helps the swimmer keep his mouth and nose above the surface while gaining control of their breathing and looking for the nearest point of safety.

Outcome

Support oneself at the surface for 1 minute, by any means.

Discuss

Highlight the key skill components; demonstrate the skill; practice the skill – with emphasis on lots of practice (not lots of talking). Demonstrate on land, practice in shallow water before progressing to deep water.

Do

Swimmers put on PFDs and then:

1. Enter chest deep water.
2. Use a broad, flat sculling action - sweep hands and arms back and forth just below the surface, the hands are at a slight angle and slightly cupped. The continuous downward pressure of this sculling action provides lift to support the body at the surface.
3. For kicking action, position learners in deeper water so they can clear the bottom during the kicks, experiment to see what kick works the best.
4. Practice arms and legs separately and together to increase endurance.
5. When swimmers are comfortable in deep water, attempt treading without PFDs.

A "semi-circle" or "scattered" formation with the instructor positioned to observe all learners will maximize group practice and correction. The instructor can position themself on the outer edge with students closer to the edge or the instructor may choose to observe and give direction from the pool edge.

- Always practice a new skill in shallow water or in PFDs before moving to deeper water.
- Students need to feel safe in deep water before attempting treading water in deep water. Weak or non-swimmers will need time to explore treading water skills and/or floating and using their lifejacket before attempting to tread in deep 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.

Notes

Common Problems: Trouble maintaining body position – alter head position (back or forward), modify position of the arm action.

Sinking – check to see if the swimmer is sculling (using a pushing and pulling action of the hand); increase sculling speed or increase the amount of surface area of the scull action; alter arm position (broader or narrower); try using bicycle kick or imagery of climbing stairs.

References

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 3-4, 3-6, 9-9;

Lifesaving Swimming and Instructing Handbook.

Tread Water 1 Minute
Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activities #1 of the Treading Water Activities, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

How long can you tread water?

Set a maximum time limit of 2-5 minutes.

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of support with PFDs on.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of support with or without PFDs.

Swimmer: Have them do this activity using arms or legs, with or without PFDs for 3-5 minutes.

Tread Water 1 Minute

Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activities #1 of the Treading Water Activities, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

How High?

How high can you get your shoulders out of the water, and how long can you keep them up?

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of support with PFDs on.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activity using any means of support with or without PFDs.

Swimmer: Have them do this activity using arms or legs, with or without PFDs for 3-5 minutes.

Tread Water 1 Minute
Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activity #1 of the Treading Water Activities, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

Strong Scull Skills

Try sculling while in any of the following positions. Once the students know the positions have them try to turn/spin 90º or travel forwards or backwards. These skills can also be done as part of an obstacle course or relay race.

- a back float, with both knees tucked to the chest, arms sculling beside the hips.
- a back float, holding a ball between their feet, move the ball through a hutla hoop.

Non-swimmer: Have them do some of the above positions with PFDs on.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do some or all of the above positions with or without PFDs on.

Swimmer: Have them do all of the above positions without PFDs on.

Tread Water 1 Minute

Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activity #1 of the Treading Water Activities, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

Cooperative Games

Divide the whole group into two teams. Some game ideas:

- Volley games: Use 1-3 beach balls. How long can the group keep the ball(s) in the air?
- Passing games: Pass the ball three times before you can score a goal.

Non-swimmer: Plays with their PFD on.

Weak Swimmer: Plays with or without their PFD on.

Swimmer: Plays with or without their PFD on.

Roll Into Deep Water
Activity

Activity 1

Roll entries equip swimmers with the ability to get their head above the surface and orient themselves after an unexpected fall into deep water.

Outcome

Perform a roll (front or sideways) into deep water.

Discuss

Highlight the components of the skill; demonstrate the skill; practice the skill – with emphasis on lots of practice (not lots of talking). Roll entries might be attempted on land (if an appropriate surface is available) and then while standing in the water before progressing to a roll entry from the poolside into deep water. Learners should perform the roll only in water that is a minimum 2.5 m deep.

Do

Swimmers put on PFDs and then:

1. Crouch at the poolside, knees bent, feet at the edge.
2. Cover back of head with hands, tuck chin to chest, with elbows close to body.
3. Take a deep breath and hold.
4. Roll out and away from the poolside into the water.
5. Surface, lift head to take a breath, return to poolside.
6. When swimmers are comfortable in deep water, attempt the entry without PFDs.

A "wave" formation with students lined up beside each other along the pool edge (with the instructor positioned to observe all learners) will maximize group practice and correction. A "single file" formation with learners lined up behind one another provides controlled individual practice. The instructor is positioned beside the learner for one-to-one instruction.

- Students should perform the roll only in water that is a minimum 2.5 m (8ft 4in) deep encourage students to roll out and away from the poolside.
- Students need to feel safe in deep water before attempting entries that involve jumping in or rolling in. Weak or Non-swimmers will need time to explore treading water skills and using their lifejacket before attempting entries.
- Plan safety routines that keep students from accidentally landing on someone.
- Back rolls should not be taught or practiced as the student can hit their head on the wall while under the water.
- If the instructor is in the water, they should either wear a PFD or carry a floatation aid to pass to a student if they panic.

Notes

Common Problems: Lifting head – keep chin tucked to chest (imagine having your chin glued to your chest).

Water up nose – gently exhale through the nose during roll or pinch nose with fingers.

References

Canadian Lifesaving Manual 5–9;
Lifesaving Swimming and Instructing Handbook;
Swim for Life Award Guide.

Roll Into Deep Water
Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activity #1 from the Roll Into Deep Water section, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

Show what you know - Feet First Entries

To find out the students level of confidence when entering deep water, have them show you their favorite way to enter feet first into the pool.

Non-swimmer: Have them wear their PFDs and ask them to get into the water.

Weak Swimmer: Give them the option of either leaving the PFD on or taking it off and have them show 3 ways to enter the pool feet first.

Swimmer: With or without PFDs have them show 3 ways to enter the pool feet first.

Roll Into Deep Water
Practice Activity

Once the students have completed Activity #1 from the Roll Into Deep Water section, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

Side Rolls or Forward Rolls

Quickly explain that most people who drown don't plan to enter the water. They tend to tumble into the water, in much the same way a roll does.

Non-swimmer: Leave them in their PFDs and following the Discuss, Demo, Do model of teaching, have them attempt a log roll or forward roll. Students must first be comfortable jumping in while wearing their PFD.

Weak Swimmer: Give them the option of either leaving the PFD on or taking it off and following the Discuss, Demo, Do model of teaching, have them attempt a log roll, forward roll or side/shoulder roll.

Swimmer: With or without PFDs and following the Discuss, Demo, Do model of teaching; have them attempt a forward roll or side/shoulder roll from a height no more than 1.0 meters.

Roll Into Deep Water
Practice Activity

Activity 4

Once the students have completed Activity #1 from the Roll Into Deep Water section, choose variations of these practice activities based on the skill and comfort level of the students.

Do

How many different entries can you do?

Have each student explore different ways to enter deep water – give them safety guidelines.

Non-swimmer: Leave them in their PFDs and have them invent or show 3 ways to enter the pool including one that rolls.

Weak Swimmer: Give them the option of either leaving the PFD on or taking it off and have them invent or show 6 ways to enter the pool, including variations of front and side rolls.

Swimmer: With or without PFDs have them demonstrate 10 ways to enter the pool that includes entries from a height and variations of front and side rolls.

Notes

The minimum safe depth should be 2.5m or 8ft.4in.

Use the "Lock hands, lock head and steer up" approach for diving

Achieving the Swim to Survive Standard

The Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard mimics the sequence of events that occurs when someone unexpectedly falls into deep water. Striving for the standard allows the student to have 'practiced' what to do, so that they can remain calm in this kind of emergency.

Strive for the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard

Non-swimmer: Attempts the standard with their PFD on.

Weak Swimmer: Attempts the standard with or without their PFD on.

Swimmer: Attempts the standard without their PFD on.

Swim to Survive Relay

Have students participate in a relay race that involves elements of the Swim to Survive® skill sequence.

Non-swimmer: Does part of the Swim to Survive® skill sequence with their PFD on.

Weak Swimmer: Does part of the Swim to Survive® skill sequence without their PFD on.

Swimmer: Does part of the Swim to Survive® skill sequence without their PFD on.

Obstacle Course

Create an obstacle course that involves elements of the Swim to Survive® skill sequence. Variation: Include a mix of skills that add a fitness or fun factor to the obstacle course.

Non-swimmer: Does the Swim to Survive® skill sequence with their PFD on.

Weak Swimmer: Does the Swim to Survive® skill sequence with or without their PFD on.

Swimmer: Does the Swim to Survive® skill sequence without their PFD on.

Challenge Activity - Swim

When the individual is ready and if extra time is available teach beyond the Swim to Survive® Standard. Once the student can perform the different Swim to Survive® skills, be prepared to give the student extra practice by using challenge items.

Activity #1

Clothing Swim – meet the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard

Try the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard using clothes such as t-shirts, shorts, long sleeveshirts or pants - avoid jeans and sweat shirts unless the individual is capable of handling a challenge as they are the hardest to swim in. Variations: do any part or combinations of the three skills of the whole Standard.

Non-swimmer: Attempts the standard with their PFD on.

Weak Swimmer: Attempts the standard with or without their PFD on.

Swimmer: Attempts the standard without their PFD on.

Activity #2

Currents

Have students form a circle and hold hands in a corner of the shallow water. Have them all run in the same direction. Once a good current is going have all of the students let go of hand and try to swim or walk against the current. NOTE: watch that students are not too close to pool edges and/or drop offs (especially for the weak or non-swimmer).

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activities using any means of propulsion (including walking against the current) and in a PFD.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activities using any means of propulsion with or without a PFD.

Swimmer: Have them do this activities using a recognizable stroke without a PFD.

Activity #3

Keep Them Moving

Instructors should be prepared to keep challenging their students by increasing the level of difficulty or by working on skills in preparation for entry into other swimming lessons. Examples include:

- Longer swim: 75 m, 100 m
- Swim the distance on only one side
- Propulsive flutter kick
- Underwater swims (for distance or to pick up an object)
- Fitness workouts with basic skill drills
- Front or Back Crawl progressions (if requested)
- Breaststroke or Elementary Backstroke progressions (if requested)

Challenge Activity - Tread Water

When the individual is ready and if extra time is available teach beyond the Swim to Survive® Standard. Once the student can perform the different Swim to Survive® skills, be prepared to give the student extra practice by using challenge items.

Activity #1 **Object Carry**

Tread water with an object. Lay out various objects in a line on deck near the edge of the pool. Have the student choose what object they want to hold up for 1-2 minutes. Variation: Hot Potato – students are in a circle and one or two similar weighted objects are passed around.

Non-swimmer: Start with objects that float, and have the students wearing PFDs.

Weak Swimmer: Start with objects that float or 2.5 lb weight, and have the students do this with or without PFDs.

Swimmer: With or without PFDs start with 2.5 lbs and move up to 5, 10, and 20 lbs weights.

Activity #2 **Scull Tug O' War.**

Partner up students and set up finish lines. While on their back, students hook their feet in hula hoops and try to pull their opponent across the finish line to win the tug o'war. Variation: Students face each other, putting their feet together - then they try to push the other past the finish line.

Non-swimmer: Plays with their PFD on.

Weak Swimmer: Plays with or without their PFD on.

Swimmer: Plays the game with or without their PFD on.

Activity #3 **Waves**

Have some students make waves using kick boards from the deck. Have the other students practice treading water in the waves. Variations: Try treading with clothes on or attempt swimming through the waves.

Non-swimmer: Have them do this activities using a PFD, instruct the group to make gentle waves.

Weak Swimmer: Have them do this activities with or without a PFD on, instruct the group to start with gentle waves and then gradually increase the wave intensity.

Swimmer: Have them do this activities without a PFD on, instruct the group to start with gentle waves and then gradually increase the wave intensity.

Challenge Activity - Entries

When the individual is ready and if extra time is available teach beyond the Swim to Survive® Standard. Once the student can perform the different Swim to Survive® skills, be prepared to give the student extra practice by using challenge items.

Activity #1 **Feet First, First Time**

Over 90% of all spinal injuries occur in less than 1.8m (6 feet) of water. Safe diving depth is 2.5m (8 feet 4 inches). Pick spots around the area where you will test the water depth with your students. The key message is to have them check the depth each time. As a group, have the students check the depth and determine where it is safe to slip in, jump or dive. Consider also, outdoor situations (i.e. moving water, variable bottom depths, lack of water clarity).

Non-swimmer; Weak Swimmer; Swimmer:

This activities is done on land so there are no variations for the different swim skill levels.

Activity #2 **Exploring deep water entries**

How many entries can you do in a certain amount of time? Limit your time period between 2-5 minutes. If you are doing this as a team activities, you can extend the time period.

Non-swimmer: Leave them in their PFDs and have them do only the following entries: log roll, jump or slip in.

Weak Swimmer: Give them the option of either leaving the PFD on or taking it off. Teach any or all of the following entries: log roll, forward roll or side roll, stride entry.

Swimmer: With or without PFDs have them choose one of the following entries: stride entry, dives, forward roll or side roll, or jumps from a safe height.

- When teaching dives, the minimum safe depth should be 2.5m or 8ft.4in.
- Use the "Lock hands, lock head and steer up" approach for diving:
  - Lock Hands: The diver puts one hand over top of the other and locks them together.
  - Lock Head: The diver squeezes his ears in between his arms while keeping his elbows locked.
  - Steer Up: The diver points his fingers up during the dive to steer away from the bottom.

Frequently asked Questions

Why is any method of performing the Swim to Survive® skills accepted?

Our objective is to provide learners with a solution that allows them to acquire these minimum self-rescue skills in the shortest time possible. Once they achieve the standard, teaching can focus on helping them become more efficient.

Doesn't using PFDs to teach swimming send the wrong message about supervision?

PFDs are not a substitute for the direct supervision of non-swimmers – by instructors or parents. The PFD is a useful teaching tool that supports the learner at the surface and allows them to keep their hands and feet free to experiment with methods for propulsion and support.

The teaching activities use only PFDs, can I use other kinds of floatation assists?

You can use a host of support systems to help your students. PFDs have proved most useful as they stay securely on the learner. Other buoyant aids include: kickboards, floatation belts bleach bottles, pool noodles, etc. Using a variety of aids allows you to adjust the amount of support that the student relies on.

Should I be teaching boating safety if I use PFDs?

In Swim to Survive®, the focus is on self-rescue skill acquisition. PFDs (or other buoyant aids) are merely a tool for helping non-swimmers learn these skills. That said, instructors might introduce appropriate Water Smart® ("wear a PFD") education – but only if it does not interfere with the skill learning priorities of Swim to Survive.

Should I teach about Water Safety during a Swim to Survive® session?

Swim to Survive is about teaching essential self-rescue swim skills. Adding activities that teach about Water Safety are done once the students have achieved the Swim to Survive® Standard. The Water Smart® Activities Guide is full of activities aimed at teaching people to make better, safer choices in, on and around water and ice. All 47 activities in the Guide are interactive fun where students learn by doing. A perfect fit for Swim to Survive. Download the Water Smart® Activities Guide from www.lifesaving.org.

Everyone Gets Recognized

In Swim to Survive® everyone gets rewarded for their participation. With the Swim to Survive® certificate, each student's efforts are recognized whether they achieved the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard, performed the Standard while wearing a lifejacket, or had simply practiced these lifesaving skills.

Contact the Lifesaving Society, (experts@lifesaving.org) to get a supply of certificates or to receive an electronic file to print your own. The Lifesaving Society provides a full range of low cost recognition items, such as stickers, wristbands and temporary tattoos.

Publications of the Lifesaving Society are available from any Branch office. Inquiries from outside Canada should be directed to the National Office.

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