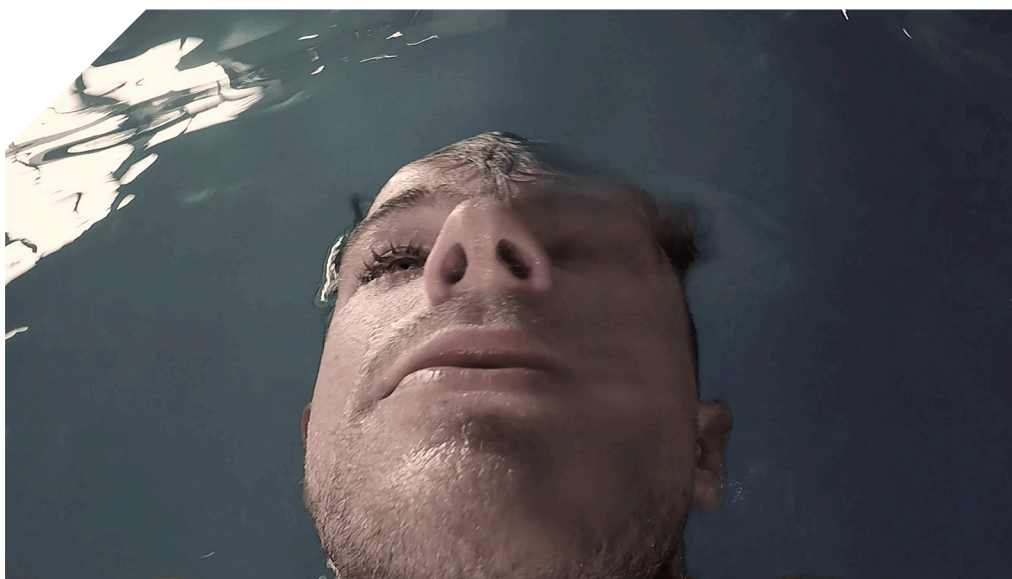


FIGHT OR FLOAT?



5 minutes

WHAT YOU NEED

- A timer
- An enthusiastic bunch of students

HOW IT WORKS

This simple, short exercise gives the students an idea of the lifesaving differences between fighting against cold water and floating to live.

1. Divide the class into two groups and set a timer for 90 seconds.
2. Tell one of the groups that they will be moving about as much as they can – jumping around and shaking their arms and legs. Tell the other group that they will be staying perfectly still, while breathing deeply and calmly.
3. ...2 ...1 ...go!
4. Once the 90 seconds are up, let them see the differences between the two groups – one exhausted, one relaxed.
5. Ask the students how it would feel if they fell into cold water and what they would do? Now is time for the big reveal! Tell the students that their natural instinct if they fall into cold water will be to thrash about, but then they'll end up like group 1 – exhausted. This will make them much more likely to swallow water. The best chance of survival is to do as little as possible, like group 2. Floating for just 60-90 seconds allows the effects of cold water shock to pass.

Now watch our short film at [RNLI.org/educationrtw](https://www.rnli.org/educationrtw)

GROUP DISCUSSION

Here are some things you could chat to your students about after the film.

What is cold water shock?

Describe the body's response to being suddenly immersed in cold water – gasping for air, rapid breathing, a feeling of panic, and increasing blood pressure that can cause a heart attack. You can find out more about cold water shock at [RNLI.org/safety/know-the-risks/cold-water-shock](https://www.rnli.org/safety/know-the-risks/cold-water-shock)

Staying safe around cold water

Talk about where's safest to enter the water at a beach, or near open water, and the importance of telling people where you are. Here are a couple of stats that might prove handy:

- Around half of the people who die at the British and Irish coasts each year don't even mean to go into the water, a lot of people accidentally slip, trip or fall.
- The average temperature of British and Irish coastal waters is 12-15°C, cold enough to cause cold water shock.

How to float

Take them through these simple steps:

- Fight your instinct to swim hard.
- Lean back in the water.
- Push your stomach up, extending your arms and legs.
- Gently move your hands and feet to help you float until you've controlled your breathing.
- Swim to safety or call for help.

Find out how many pupils think they can float and how many can't. Discuss why some people may be able to float easier than others, and advise your students to practise in their local pool.

Seeing someone else struggling in the water

It's simple – they just need to dial 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard. Remember, they should never put themselves at risk by entering the water.

Pass it on

Encourage your students to share this life-saving advice with their friends and family. Could they present the film in an assembly or show it to a youth group outside school?

National Curriculum Reference:

Aim: To teach children how to stay safe and potentially save their life in and around the water

Objectives:

To find out how floating can increase your chance of survival if you fall into cold water.

Learning outcomes:

England

- How to recognise and reduce risk, minimise harm and develop strategies for getting help in emergency and risky situations.
- How to find sources of emergency help and how to perform emergency first aid, including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Understand and manage risk within the context of personal safety, especially accident prevention and road and cycle safety.
- Personal safety and protection, how to reduce risk and minimise harm in different settings (including social settings, the workplace, the street, on roads and during travel).

Northern Ireland

- Develop preventative strategies in relation to accidents in the home, school and on the road, for example, safe practices in relation to appliances and equipment, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, road safety; knowing what to do in the event of cuts, burns, fire and emergency first aid etc.
- Develop strategies to promote personal safety, for example, responding appropriately to different forms of bullying, abuse, physical violence; developing safe practice in relation to the

internet, getting home; understanding and managing risk, the place of rules and boundaries etc.

Republic of Ireland

- Examine ways of keeping safe.
- Be aware of appropriate responses to a variety of threats to personal safety.
- Examine the potential hazards in travelling to and from school.

Scotland

- Learn to assess and manage risk, protect themselves and others, and reduce the potential for harm when possible.
- To know and demonstrate how to travel safely.
- Ability to demonstrate how to keep themselves and others safe and how to respond in a range of emergency situations.

Wales

- Accept personal responsibility for keeping the mind and body safe and healthy.

To find out more go to RespectTheWater.com to see our cinema ad and discover more about floating.