

Stay On Top Of It

Top Ten Drowning Prevention Tips For Teenagers & Young Adults

Having a good time in and around the water calls for good judgement, planning ahead and doing what it takes to stay safe and have fun.

- 1 Wear a life jacket when you are in a boat, especially a small boat.** Life jackets that fit for each person on board are required by law to be in all boats. Wear one when you are innertubing or rafting, too. Weather and water conditions change quickly. You can now find life jackets that look good and are comfortable, too.
- 2 Wear a life jacket if you swim across a river or lake, or ask someone to go with you in a boat.** No matter how good a swimmer you are, being in cold, deep or moving water is dangerous. It is easy to misjudge the water or misjudge your swimming skills.
- 3 Never use alcohol or drugs while you're swimming, diving or in a boat.** Just like when you're driving a car, they distort your judgement. The negative effects of alcohol are compounded by exposure to weather, water and the constant movement in a boat.
- 4 Consider your swimming ability before you go in the water.** The best places to swim have life-guards or are designated swimming areas.
- 5 Check the water before you jump or dive in.** Make sure it is deep enough (at least 10-12 feet for diving). Check if there are objects you might hit or sudden drop-offs.
- 6 Realize that swimming in or falling into cold water can kill you.** Even in the summer, many rivers are cold enough to cool your body so fast you can't swim (hypothermia).
- 7 Find someone to teach you how to swim if you don't know how.** Call your local swimming pool for information. Ask if they have teen-only classes.
- 8 Take a safety course if you drive a boat.** Call 1-800-336-2628 for details.
- 9 Respond quickly and seriously if someone calls for help.** Teens have died from drowning because their friends thought they were joking around.
- 10 Learn what to do for a water rescue or when someone stops breathing.** Know CPR. The fire station nearest you has information about courses you can take. Ask your school to offer a class.

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