

Open Water & Coastal Safety

UK open water (rivers, lakes, and the sea) remains very cold even on hot days, increasing the risk of cold-water shock. Always follow these core safety rules:

Float to Live: If you unexpectedly fall in, fight the urge to thrash. Lean back, extend your arms and legs, and gently move them to float until you control your breathing.

The best way to float is to tilt your head back with your ears submerged. Try to relax and breathe normally. You can gently move your hands and legs to help you stay afloat if you need to. Spread your arms and legs out to improve stability – and it's OK if your legs sink, we all float differently. Once your breathing is under control, call for help or swim to safety. Practise floating in a supervised location like a swimming pool.

This advice is useful to everyone; however you use the water. It has helped save the lives of more than 50 people in all sorts of situations. From children in rip currents to runners falling into canals, from people swept out by waves, to fisherman falling overboard.

- **CALL:** Dial 999 immediately. Ask for the **Coastguard** if you are at the coast, or the **Fire and Rescue Service** if you are inland.
- **TELL:** Shout to the person to stay calm and instruct them to float on their back (like a starfish) to conserve their energy.
- **THROW:** Throw them any floating object nearby—such as a life ring, a throw bag, an empty plastic bottle, or a football.

Help emergency services find you fast

If you ever find yourself in an emergency - like someone struggling in the water or lost in a remote spot - **what3words** can be a lifesaver.

Go to [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com) to find out more.

Be Mindful of Your Surroundings:

Stick to lifeguarded beaches and designated swimming areas and look for local safety boards that offer emergency throw bags or equipment.