

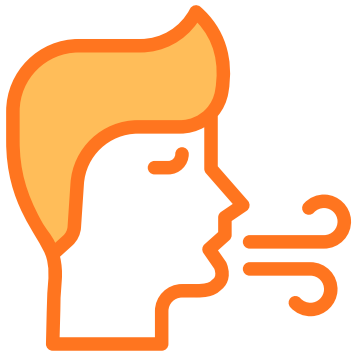
1

Infant Survival Skills

BREATH CONTROL

Teaching your child to **control** their breathing when **submerged** in water reduces the **chance** of water entering their **lungs**. This will reduce the potential **health risks** of non-fatal drowning.

This is achieved by teaching your infant to **breathe in before** submerging under water and **exhaling whilst under the water**.



1,
2,
3...



With **repetition** your child will **recognise** the **sensations** of water on their face and begin to **hold their breath**.

You can simulate this by creating a cue (**e.g. 1...2...3... under**) and pouring a small cup of water on their head.

2

Infant Survival Skills

ROLLING OVER

Infants learn to **roll over** from a very **young age**. When **in the water** it is a matter of **practicing** the rolling movement when **buoyant**.

First

Is **vertical** rotation. This is created by **lifting the chin** and **pushing it towards the surface** of the water which then allows the **intake of oxygen**. We can simulate this by a swinging/swaying movement backwards and forwards allowing the legs of the child to flow with the body.

Second

Is **Horizontal** rotation. This is created by **rotating the head to the side** turning towards **the ear** just like when a child rolls over on the ground. When they are **confident** getting their **ears wet** and being **submerged** you can **practice** this skill **in the water**.

3

Infant Survival Skills

FLOATING

Babies have a **natural** tendency to **float** due to their body composition and the fact that they spent nine months suspended in amniotic fluid in the womb. This, however, **does not mean** that they are naturally skilled **swimmers** or that they **can stay afloat** indefinitely **without assistance**.

It is incredibly **beneficial** for **babies** to develop **floating skills** in the water as it is a **necessary life skill**.

It is still important to **practice** floating in a **pool** as the **water** will move and **react differently** to that of water in a bath, tub or basin at home.



A **simple** way to **practice floating** with your child is in a **bath, tub** or basin at home **before** moving to larger bodies of water such as a **pool**.

A pistol grip which **supports** your **infant's head and neck** will provide **security** for your child as well as **yourself** when **starting out**.

4

REACHING and GRABBING

Older infants (around walking age) are **able to** be taught to **reach out** and **hold** onto the **side** of a **pool** or a **floating object**.

It is best to **practice** this **when** they are **confident** with **breath control** as it is **easy** to become **submerged** when **learning** to hold on.



It is **important** to **remember** if the **edge** of the **water** is not in the **shade** it may be **too hot** for an **infant** to **hold onto**.

Flotation devices such as **noodles** and **kick-boards** tend to have a **unique texture** which some may find **uncomfortable**. Use **sensory games** and **activities** to teach infants that they are **safe objects**, this will be **vital** in an **emergency situation**.

5

Infant Survival Skills

STAYING CALM

An **essential** part of water survival is the **ability** to **stay calm**.

An infant's **natural** reaction to shock is to **cry** out for the **attention** of their **parents**.

This, however, is **incredibly** dangerous in the case of an **accidental fall** into water, as the child will instantly fill their **lungs with water**.

This is why **routine** practice in the **water** is essential for **keeping** your **child calm** in and around **water**.



This can be **achieved** by **weekly** swimming **lessons** or routine **exposure** to **water**

It is also **important** to remember **infants** take their **cues** from the **adults** around them.

If the **adults** that they are **exposed** to are **uncomfortable** around water then they will **learn** to be **fearful** of **water** as well.