

Be River Safe

Survival Swimming

Fact Sheet

SURVIVAL SWIMMING

If you end up being swept down a river you need to Survival Swim using the Whitewater Position.

To Survival Swim using the Whitewater Position:

- float on your back
- face downstream with your feet and toes just at the surface
- have your arms by your side free to scull if required
- keep your head up
- turn your hips slightly to one side so that if you bump over rocks your butt cheeks hit the rocks, not your tailbone.

When you see a place to get out of the river plan early to:

- propel yourself toward the exit point with your arms
- change to swimming or side swimming strongly to get over the eddy line and reach the river bank.

The Whitewater Position allows you to:

- see where you are going
- push off rocks with your feet
- see waves and take a breath before they hit you in the face
- use your arms, if necessary, to steer and manoeuvre or to slow you down
- conserve your energy
- move to the side of the river ready to swim out of the river.

When you are Survival Swimming:

- keep your feet up off the bottom so you don't get trapped
- do not try to stand up in moving water. Your feet can easily be caught under rocks. The force of the river may then push you down to the riverbed and hold you there
- do not abandon the Whitewater Position because you are getting bumped or hurt by rocks. It is better to get a few bruises than get caught on the river bed.



Be River Safe ... *learn to swim and survive*