

## **Name/Title:** Life/Death Situations (Swimming)

**Purpose of Event:** For students to learn to deal with different water emergencies: 1. To learn "survival floating" by using various pieces of clothing to maintain buoyancy. 2. To practice using a life preserver to pull others to safety.

**Suggested Grade Level:** 8-12

**Materials Needed:** 1 pair of old jeans and a life preserver or other reaching tool for each pair of students

### Description of Idea

"Today, our warm up will cover a review of previous lessons as well as an introduction to today's topic. We will also be discussing various ways of surviving in a water life/death situation. We have gone over various **swimming strokes**. For the first 10 min. of class, I want you to perform one of those strokes continuously in the pool. You will swim from one width of the pool and back without stopping until you hear the signal. I want you to use good judgement as to which stroke to use; I suggest you use the stroke that is easiest to perform and uses the LEAST amount of energy."

After approximately 10 minutes, signal for students to stop and stand in the shallow end of the pool, or sit on the deck. "I would like everyone to catch their breath while I talk for a moment. I saw many of you using various strokes. If you are in a life or death situation it is important to maintain **buoyancy** and conserve energy until help arrives. Many of you may have discovered the elementary backstroke is probably the best stroke to use when trying to conserve energy in the water. When I say go, I would like everyone to put on a pair of jeans from the side deck and return to the water....hold onto the side when in the water. Go."

Once students are assembled, demonstrate how to make the **jeans** into a floating device: first, while taking off the jeans, tread water to maintain buoyancy. Once the jeans are off, tie the bottom of the pant legs into a knot. Once they are in a **knot**, reach the pants up and catch air in the legs. Hold the pants underwater upside down (the legs should be out of the water and the jean opening facing the bottom of the pool). You can then use the jeans as a means to maintain buoyancy until help arrives.

Now, I would like everyone to try another way to use jeans to keep buoyant in the water. For this technique, you **tie the jean legs together**. The jeans will now be in the shape of a circle. As you breath, when you **exhale**, breath into the jean opening. Eventually, the legs will fill with air. As they fill, place the jean legs around your torso area. They will then act as a life preserver until help arrives."

When done, ask students to freeze. "I would like everyone to exit the pool, remove the jeans, get with a partner and return to the pool with a partner for my demonstration on how to use a life

preserver."

For 1-2 minutes, demonstrate how to use a life **preserver or other reaching tool** to save someone in the water. Show how the object should be thrown close to the person in the water, so they can grab hold of it. Once the person has caught the preserver, pull them in to safe ground.

Be sure to show students how a stance with a low center of gravity should be used in order to avoid being pulled in the water by the person in trouble. Also, remind students to **NEVER** enter the water if you can save them by throwing a preserver or if your life will be threatened by being in the water. Then give students the opportunity to use the life preserver to pull their partner to safe ground (approx. 7-8 min.), observing and giving feedback as necessary. When done, review important concepts and follow up with written assessment later as appropriate.

**Important Note:**

A lifeguard should be on duty at all times in case of a water emergency.

---

Submitted by **Jason Williams**. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 9/22/2001**.  
Visit [S&S Discount](#) for all your physical education equipment and supplies!