

Introduction to Drowning and Cold Water

Drowning in the UK and Ireland

On average, **312** people accidentally drown in the UK and Ireland every year.

Many more have non-fatal drowning experiences.

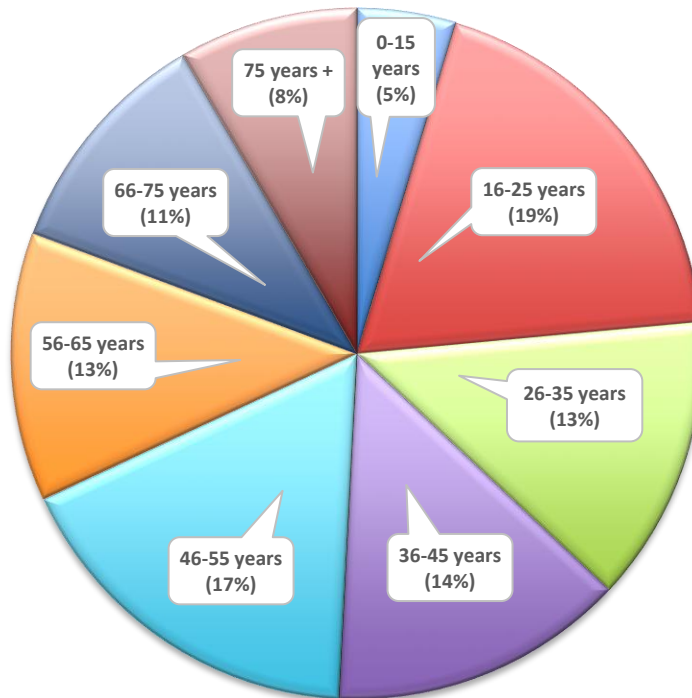
What do you know about drowning?

So who drowns?

Enjoy Water **Safely**

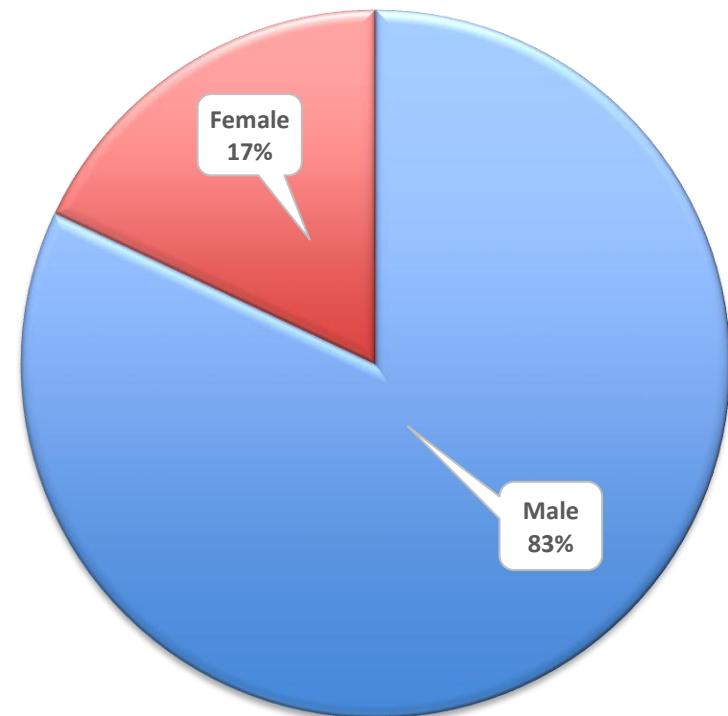


At what age do you think you are most at risk of drowning?



Why do you think people aged 16-25 years are the most likely to drown?

What percentage of people who drown do you think are male?



Why do you think males are more likely to drown?

Take a look at these two real drowning cases:

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Richard Fellows, 15, drowned after swimming with friends near Arrow Valley Country Park in Redditch. The emergency services rescued him about two hours after the alarm was raised.

His family was left devastated, his dad said “there’s a hole in our lives that can’t be filled”.



Dylan Ramsay, 13, drowned after swimming at Hill Top Quarry in Lancashire. The emergency crews were called to the site but he was pronounced dead at the scene. Dylan’s mother paid tribute to her son who she described as a “bright young man who enjoyed life to the maximum and was a thrill seeker.”

She also said “I want people to know that he was a strong lad and a very capable swimmer, despite this he still found himself in trouble and unable to swim a short distance to safety. This message is to highlight the dangers of open water and the devastation it can bring to any normal family.”

Why can a strong swimmer drown?

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Why do you think these, and many other strong swimmers, drown every year?

There are lots of hazards to be aware of, particularly at places such as rivers, lakes, quarries, and the beach...

...but one of the biggest risks might be cold water shock.

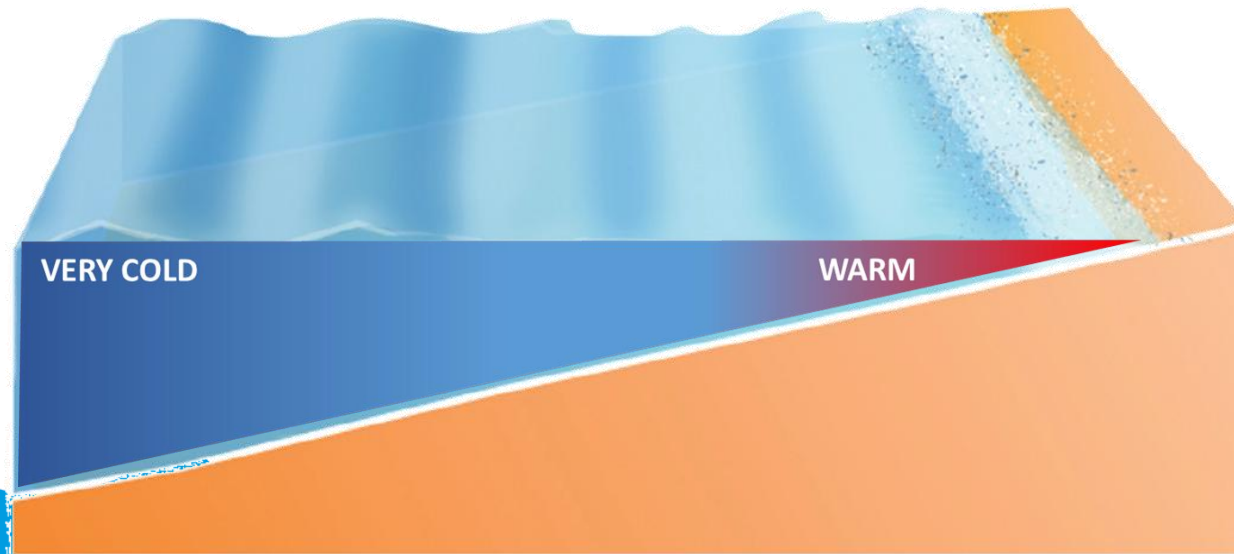
Why do people drown?

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Water in rivers, lakes, and the sea around the UK and Ireland is always cold, rarely getting warmer than 15°C (swimming pools are 30°C).

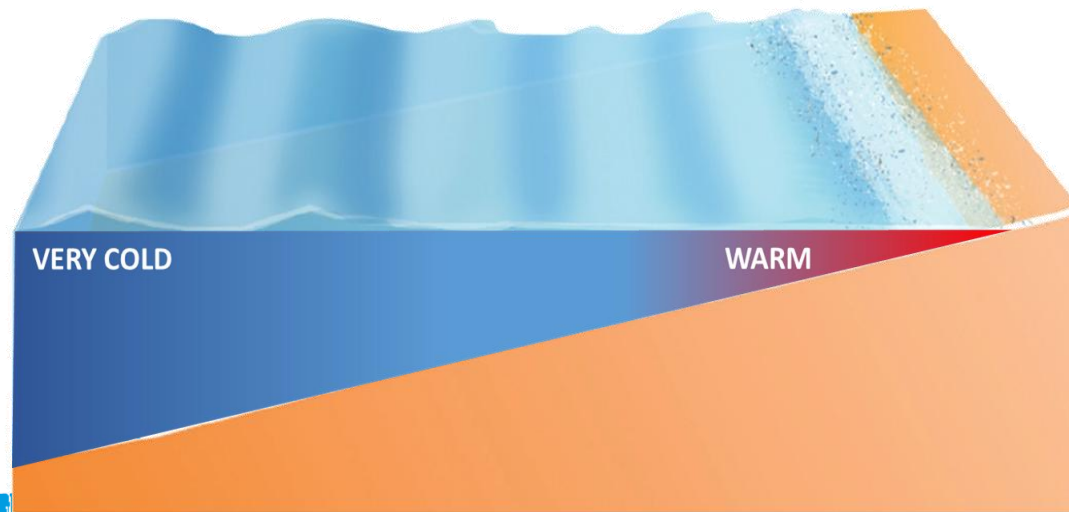
The shallows get warm in the sun, but deeper water just metres from the shore stays very cold.



Royal Life Saving Society UK – www.rlss.org.uk

If you jump in, from a bridge or cliff, the affect of the cold water can get you straight away, or if you walk in from the shallows it can get you when you are just out of your depth.

This is what happens...



When the cold first hits you

In the first 0-3 minutes you will experience...

Dr Gordon Giesbrecht, Professor of Thermophysiology, is a leading researcher in how entering cold water can quickly start the drowning process...

[When the cold first hits you video 1](#)

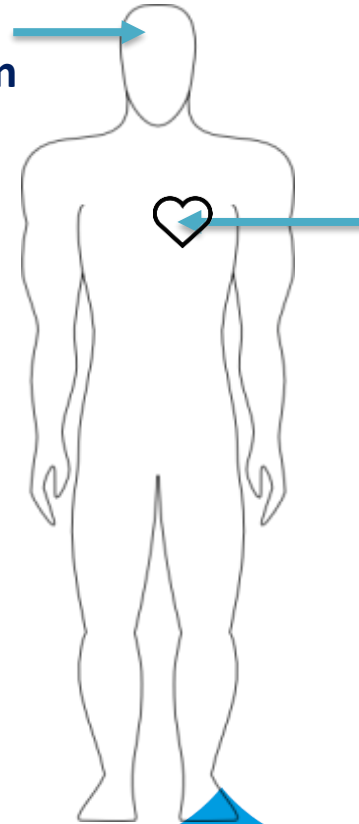
When the cold first hits you

Summary

Big gasps followed by hyperventilation

- Causing dizziness and panic
- If you inhale water you'll start to drown

[When the cold first hits you video 2](#)



Increased blood pressure and heart rate

- Can trigger heart attacks in people with medical conditions

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After the gasping, muscle cooling

Once your breathing is under control, this starts to happen after 1 minute...

[After the gasping, muscle cooling video 1](#)

After the gasping, muscle cooling

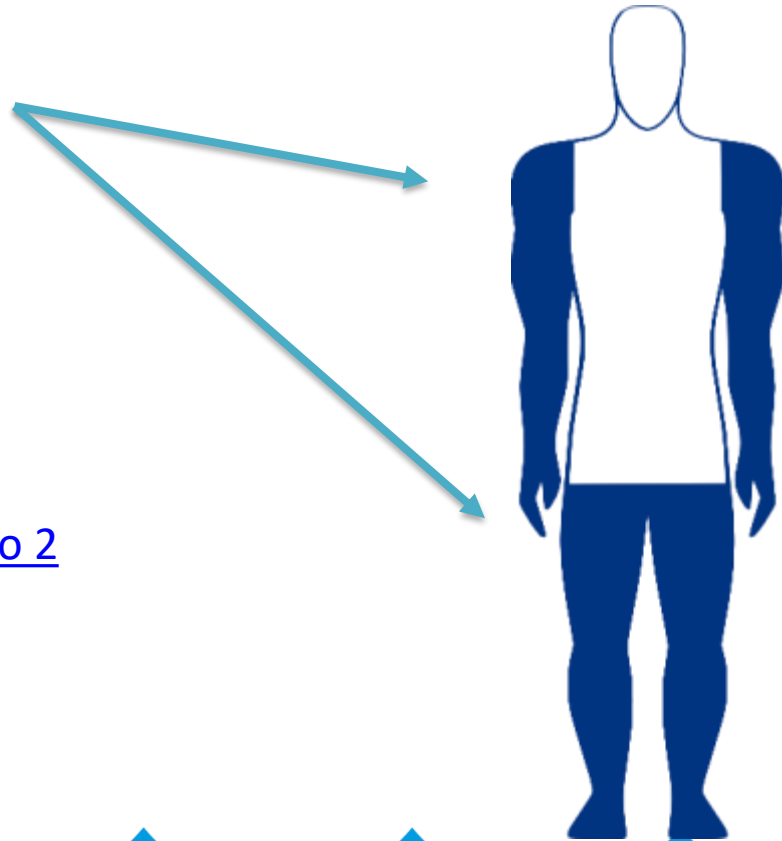
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Summary

Muscle cooling in your arms and legs

- Loss of strength
- Loss of endurance
- Loss of coordination
- Loss of ability to swim = drowning



[After the gasping, muscle cooling video 2](#)

Make the most of the water

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Not taking too many risks doesn't mean it's boring




There are loads of great ways to enjoy open water.


Head to a lifeguarded lake or beach.

[Make the most of the water video](#)





Or sign up for something more extreme with an organised group



Based on what you have just seen and discussed,
what would you consider before going into open
water?

 Update Status |  Add Photos/Videos |  Create Photo Album



Create a Facebook post to share with your friends the essential information that they need to know to stay safe around water.

 Public ▼ 

Other sessions to look at

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Introduction to
Drowning and Cold
Water



Inland Water
Sites

Coastal and
Beach Water
Sites

Orienteering –
Hazard Hunt

Witness
Statement