

- If you are in the water with others, you should “HUDDLE”. Everyone must be wearing a PFD to accomplish this survival technique. HUDDLE together so that the sides of everyone’s chest are close, with arms around mid to lower back and legs intertwined. By doing this, your group may increase its survival time by 50 per cent. Practice is encouraged.

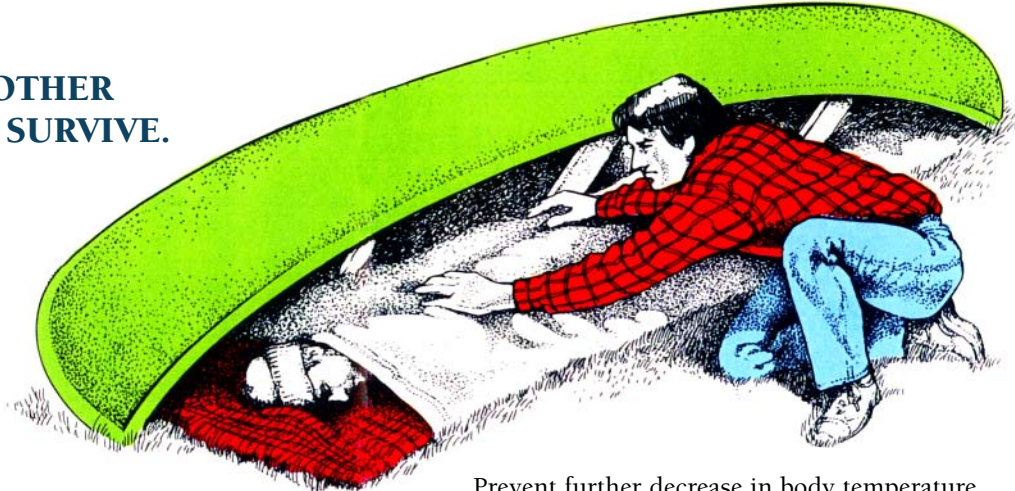
Children or elderly persons lose heat more rapidly than average. They should be put in the centre of the group.

If you didn’t wear your PFD, you cannot achieve the H.E.L.P. or HUDDLE positions. Therefore, you have significantly reduced your chance for survival.

HELPING ANOTHER OR YOURSELF SURVIVE.

Hypothermia is a more serious problem than warming a person who has been chilled. The most obvious symptom of Hypothermia is vigorous shivering. The person is still conscious and able to talk. First aid should be employed.

1. Move the person to a dry shelter.
2. Remove wet clothing only if you can provide dry coverings, or a warm environment. Otherwise, leave the wet clothing on. Put a hat on the person’s head and cover their neck.
3. To retain heat, construct a vapour barrier. Place the person in a sleeping bag enclosed in two large garbage bags, with a hole for the person’s head.



4. Rewarm gently and slowly. Place warm, dry objects, (40-45°C) near the neck and trunk. ie. Wrap water bottles or heat packs in a towel to avoid burning the sensitive skin. DO NOT RUB THE SURFACE OF THE PERSON’S BODY.

Direct body to body contact is also an effective way to warm a person.

5. If the person requests a beverage, offer warm water, milk or juice. NEVER GIVE ALCOHOL, OR HOT STIMULANTS SUCH AS COFFEE, TEA OR COCOA.

SEVERE HYPOTHERMIA symptoms include stiffening, slurred speech, or unconsciousness. Shivering may be reduced or absent.

Prevent further decrease in body temperature.
Follow the steps outlined above.

GET MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY

For additional information about Hypothermia or other Red Cross Water Safety and Small Water Craft Safety programmes, please contact your Red Cross Office.

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COLD WATER SURVIVAL



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COULD YOU SURVIVE COLD WATER HYPOTHERMIA?

It's a warm spring day. You're out relaxing on a boat. Suddenly the unexpected happens! You, and maybe your

companions, are in ice-cold water! The shock takes your breath away!

There is no time to figure things out. You know you are in serious trouble. But there is a chance. If you made the necessary preparations, if you know how to do the right thing now – you can survive.

WHAT IS HYPOTHERMIA?

It's a numbing coldness that attacks the core heat of your body.

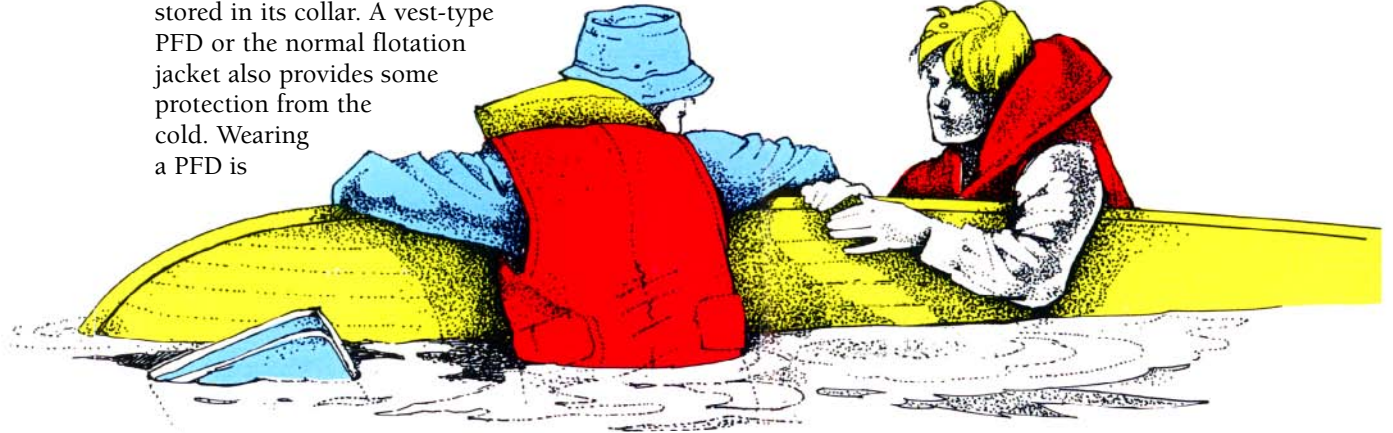
When it happens, your insides become so cold that your body's normal functions slow down. If nothing is done, they will stop!

The fastest way to experience hypothermia is to become immersed in cold water – the kind of water that is found in the lakes and oceans of Canada. If you use these waters for recreation or work, you should have a full respect for their killing temperature.



HERE ARE FIVE WAYS TO BE PREPARED.

- 1) The most important step – wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). The suggested style is a Convertible Flotation Jacket. In addition to helping you keep your head above water, it has convertible shorts. The unit traps water within insulating foam and creates a barrier to the cold. This jacket usually has a hood stored in its collar. A vest-type PFD or the normal flotation jacket also provides some protection from the cold. Wearing a PFD is



your most important survival decision. Wearing a hat is another important tip. In the water, your head can become a critical place of heat loss.

- 2) Check with the local weather office several hours before you head out. Be aware of the weather while on the water. Be alert to any change that could influence your safety. If in doubt – HEAD BACK.
- 3) Know the temperature of the water and maintain a respect for its power. A person wearing a PFD and light clothing, dumped into 10°C (50°F) water, normally cannot survive past three hours.
- 4) Know your boat and how to handle it in both calm and rough conditions. Do not overload. Be sure everyone understands the importance of keeping weight low and evenly distributed.
- 5) Avoid the use of alcohol. It cannot warm your inner core and will definitely interfere with your ability to make critical judgements.

“OH NO!” – YOU ARE IN BONE-CHILLING WATER.

If you do become wet, here are the most important actions you can take:

- Get as much of your body, as possible, out of the water or above the water. Climb onto the boat, if you can. Cold water saps your body's core heat much faster than air.

- If you can't get out of the water, protect your core heat by using the Heat Escape Lessening Position – H.E.L.P. To do this you must be wearing a PFD.

To achieve the H.E.L.P. position, cross your arms tightly against your chest. Draw your knees up close to your chest region. Remain calm and still. Do not try to swim. Unnecessary movement will use up valuable energy, which your inner core requires for survival.

You should practice H.E.L.P. before you need it. The H.E.L.P. position can increase your survival time by 50 per cent.

