

# Drown Proofing

by

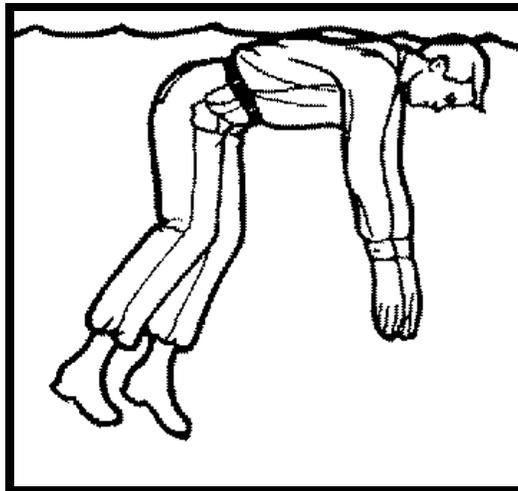
Phil Rasmussen

In a few weeks school will be out and families planning vacation trips to the oceans, lakes, ponds, rivers, and creeks. All are potential places for people to drown and die.

With little to no training, drowning can be prevented. Every family when it has reached one of the above vacation spots needs to take a moment and teach or review (in the water) the following drown proofing process. Who knows, this can save a child, grand-child, niece, nephew, or even you.

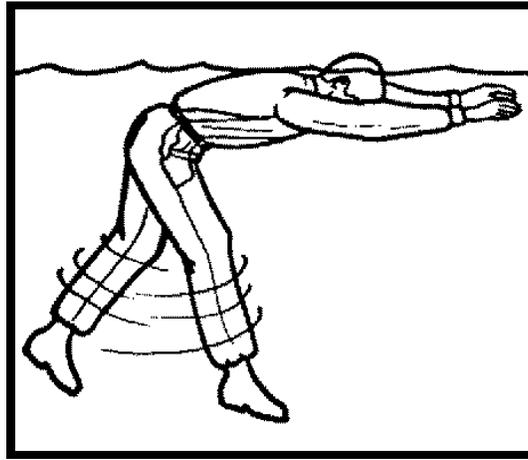
Drown proofing is based on the natural buoyancy of the human body when the lungs are filled with air. It is intended to keep anyone alive in the water indefinitely, even a non-swimmer who is fully clothed. Drown proofing saves energy for the potential drowning victim. It is much easier to do the drown proofing steps for long periods of time than to stay afloat by swimming. Each person should know drown proofing since it is an excellent way to stay afloat without a life preserver or when your life preserver is damaged. This method can best be described in five steps.

**STEP 1 — Resting Position.** The swimmer takes a deep breath and lets himself sink below the surface. The face is kept down with the back of the head even with the water surface. In this position, he will sink no deeper.



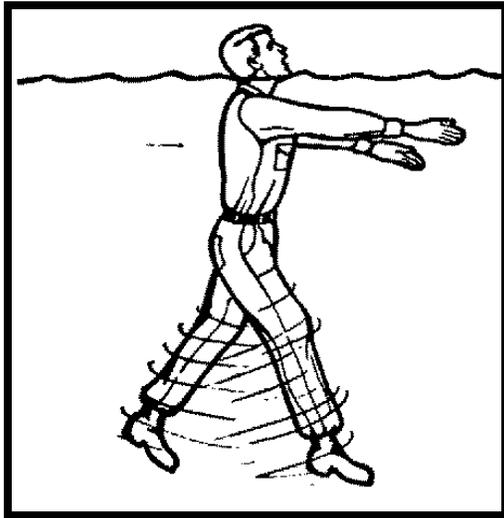
**Resting Position**

**STEP 2—Preparing to Exhale.** When ready for another breath (in about 6 to 10seconds), maintain the body and head position shown below. Slowly lift the arms to about shoulder height. At the same time slowly separate the legs for a scissors-like kick.

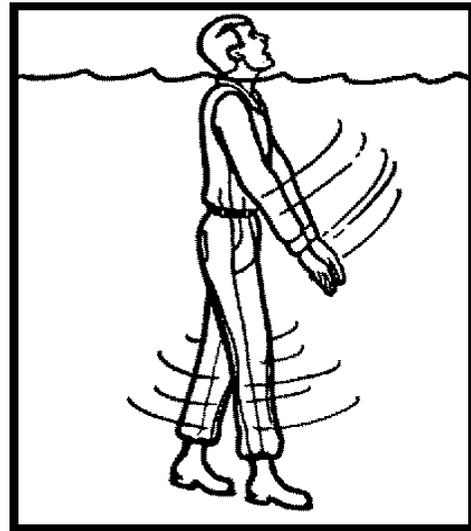


**Preparing to Exhale**

STEP 3 — Exhalation. Raise your head just high enough for your mouth to be out of the water. Now exhales through the nose, the mouth, or both. Keep your eyes open so that you can see where you are.



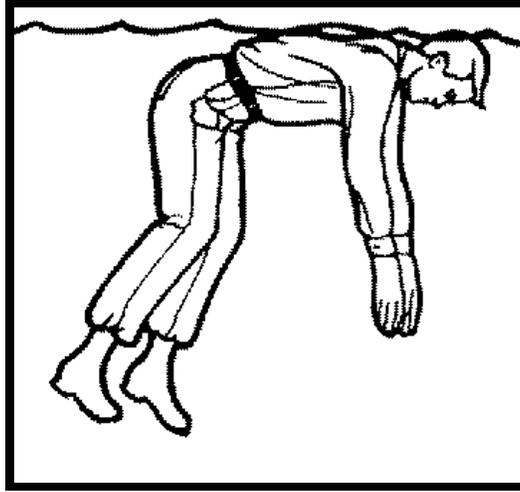
**Exhalation**



**Inhalation**

STEP 4 — Inhalation. As your head becomes vertical, press your arms downward and bring your legs together. The air is then inhaled through the mouth. The action of arms and legs should be carried out slowly.

STEP 5 — Return to Rest Position. Relax your arms, and at the same time let your legs move back to a dangling position. Your face goes back into the water and you "rest" again. The cycle is then repeated.



Another drown proofing technique that is equally effective is to use your pants as a flotation device. This method is taught to military personnel in all branches of service.

**Step 1:** Take off your pants. While you tread water or lie on your back, tie a knot in the ends of the pant legs. The US Navy recommends you tie the two pant legs together and tight enough to trap air. Oh, remember to zip up the fly.

**Step 2:** Inflate. Put the waist opening over your shoulder, then in one motion raise the open waist high over your head to scoop in air and then slam it into the water. Close the waist underneath the water to hold in the air.

**Step 2.5:** If your air pocket isn't filled enough, repeat Step 2. Or you can try to fill the pants by going underwater and breathing air into the open waist.

**Step 3:** Put your head through the inflated pant legs and hold the waist closed and underwater. Wait for help and stay calm. If and when the pants deflate, just repeat the steps.

These moves are fairly straightforward, but can be hard to get the pants to inflate by swinging them over your head. It may take a few tries. Learn the technique by practicing in a pool first. The link below shows a Navy Seal demonstrating the technique with three ways of filling the pants with air.

<https://youtu.be/oNTSoKg6xHM?t=2> Navy Seal

<https://youtu.be/C4zMUjlsMg?t=93> USMA

You may be tempted to practice or teach only one of these survival methods. Don't be tempted. Learn and teach both methods as each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

**Even if you are not planning on going near water, pass this on to someone you know who is planning to get near any body of water. Who knows, you could be saving a life without even knowing it.**



**1: TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS** and tie the legs together in a tight square knot.

Zip and button pants closed

AOM



**2: HOLD THE WAIST** of the pants open above the water line.



**3: SWING THE PANTS** over your head like a net to catch as much air as possible.



**4: PULL YOUR HEAD** between the inflated legs, keeping the waist closed and below water.



If the pants dry, they'll start leaking air.

**5: KEEP THE PANTS WET** by splashing them with water.



**6: IF YOU KNOW** you're going overboard, tie and wet your pants before you jump ship, swinging them through the air as you jump.