

## Personal Survival Theory

**You will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the principles behind Personal Survival techniques. The information below will help you to develop your knowledge:**

Much research has been carried out recently into survival in cold water. In providing the survival awards, the ASA has taken note of this research. The awards emphasise education for survival and are not intended as a means of measuring the aquatic prowess of participants. There are plenty of other awards for this purpose. The three most important activities are treading water, plus the "H.E.L.P." and "HUDDLE" positions.

From the outset, those participating in water sports must be made aware of the prime importance of wearing a lifejacket and should be given the opportunity of practising the skills outlined whilst wearing one.

The "HUDDLE", as the name suggests, involves participants in huddling together around flotation aids in order to conserve heat. The aim should be to pack tightly in groups of three or more. The "HUDDLE" is also most effective when lifejackets are being worn but other flotation aids may be used in an emergency. After being taught the principles, participants should be encouraged to work out for themselves the most effective methods of using any flotation aids.

The whole emphasis on survival in cold water must be directed towards retaining body heat. For this reason, movement in the water must be kept to a minimum and those areas of the body which lose heat most quickly, i.e. the head, sides of the chest and the groin, must be given maximum protection.

The first step towards preserving the heat is the retention of clothing. Only heavy outer, waterlogged clothing should be removed.

Treading water must be performed using the gentlest of movements from the legs, using the arms to assist the leg action as necessary.

"H.E.L.P." is the Heat Escape Lessening Posture for individuals using a flotation aid - ideally a lifejacket. Other articles that might be used are plastic containers, buckets, bowls, inner tubes, wood, etc. In the "H.E.L.P." position, the head should be clear of the water. The casualty keeps the legs pressed tightly together and allows them to float into a comfortable position keeping the arms pressed closely to the sides.