

Swimming Lesson Teaching How to Provide Buoyancy

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Opinion

The drowning survival chain has five links [1] and among them is providing flotation to drowning people before they become submerged, but in such a way that the person does not become a victim in doing so (Figure 1). Providing is a topic that can be covered in swimming lessons, with a view to preparing students to know what to do if they see someone drowning. The 1st link in the chain is prevention. You should always take precautions to prevent drowning from happening. Drowning prevention prevents premature mortality [2] and has the potential to save many more lives than rescuing or treating people who drown [3]. The second link in the chain of survival is knowing how to recognize a drowning person. If you see him, ask him to call 193. The 3rd link is to provide buoyancy-avoid submersion. After recognizing that the victim is drowning and calling the rescue service (2nd link in the chain), it is possible to help the victim, without entering the water, providing flotation before he or she sinks.

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Figure 1

This flotation can be done using a circular buoy (lifebuoy) that is sometimes available in swimming pools, rivers, lakes, dams or improvised flotation to help, with objects such as: empty plastic bottles, surfboards, balls, Styrofoam materials, various foams, wood and some large fruits such as coconuts, watermelons, melons, as they also float and can be used [4,5]. When providing flotation material, ask the victim to calm down, inform them that help has already been requested and recommend that they support themselves on the structure provided in a vertical position to avoid aspiration of water and vomiting (Figure 2). Providing flotation is a very important but underutilized strategy, despite buying valuable time for emergency services to arrive or for those helping on the scene to plan the rescue efforts needed. Most rescue actions by laypeople tend to focus on the objective of getting the victim out of the water (4th link), even if this involves a high risk to the rescuer's life. Safety devices such as lifebuoys are purposefully designed to provide buoyancy. However, they are not always available at the scene of a drowning incident.



Figure 2

It is essential that the person providing flotation takes precautions to avoid becoming a second victim when helping. The priority is to help by throwing the flotation material, without entering the water, if possible. Rescue efforts attempted by untrained bystanders often result in the death of the primary drowning victim, the rescuer, or both [3]. If there is a rope and it is possible, tie it to floating material and throw it to the drowning person to pull and remove him from the water without risking becoming a victim (Figure 3). In short, in the 5th step, if the drowning person is not breathing, start Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) with



Figure 3



Figure 4

immediate ventilation. However, if there is breathing, stay close to the drowning person until the ambulance arrives. Swimming lessons can develop attitudes and values in students that save lives without putting those who come to help the drowning person at risk. Teach your swim student how to safely provide buoyancy (Figure 4).

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