

WWE open-water swimming guidance

- Book into a supervised open-water swimming centre before attempting – this should be done May to October as the water will be warmer. It is dangerous to begin in middle of winter.
- Be aware that pool skill/experience not necessarily transferrable to open-water. Expect time spent before fatigue to effectively half (30 mins in pool = 15 mins open water)
- Wetsuits essential for warmth & buoyancy.
- Strongly advise not swimming independently, always tell someone when going. During summer, always check in with the lifeguards for advice/supervision. If lifeguards not present, check in with 2XS.
- Avoid 2XS watersports zone(s), red-flag area, strong tides & offshore winds. Always comply with signage.
- Be aware of changing depths, the sand regularly shifts.

Safety advice

Plan before you swim.

Check tidal state and currents, know your entry & exit points

Swim with others.

Always let people know what you're doing – e.g., beach lifeguards, 2XS

Don't jump in.

Enter the water slowly to prevent 'cold water shock'

Be visible.

Wear a brightly coloured cap and consider using a tow float

Float to live.

If you find yourself in difficulty. If someone else gets in trouble – dial 999 and ask for COASTGUARD



Risk Assessment

The method for determining risk, whilst numerical is dependent upon the person undertaking the assessment.

- Values of LESS THAN 20 = **LOW RISK**
- Values of 21 – 37 = **MEDIUM RISK**
- Values of 38 – 100 = **HIGH RISK**
- Values OVER 42 = must be subject to a full review and the **SWIM SHOULD NOT GO AHEAD** until the risk has been fully remediated.

Hazard	Risk	Likelihood (0-10)	Severity (0-10)	Overall Risk (Likelihood x Severity)	Control measures required?
Entering water without checking depth. Subsurface hazards e.g., stones, glass, groynes	Cuts, bruises, and breakages	5	5	25 = MEDIUM	Wear flip flops to the water's edge and consider neoprene socks. Pay attention where you put your feet and always look before you leap. Be careful of waves breaking onto groynes.
Tired muscles	Cramp	4	5	20 = LOW	Minimise the risk by learning what triggers cramp (e.g., sudden changes of pace, swimming butterfly). Swim with other people so if you do get cramp, they can help you. Consider using a tow float to rest on in case of emergency.
15-degree water or below	Cold water shock, hypothermia	4	10	40 = HIGH	Wear a wetsuit. The amount of time you can swim in cold water without suffering from hypothermia is determined by the temperature, your body size and shape and your experience. Short swims. Always swim with other people. If your stroke rate slows down or you start to shiver, get out and warm up.

UV radiation	Sunburn, heatstroke, skin cancer	2	10	20 = LOW	Limit exposure, wear sun cream, ensure you are adequately hydrated, wetsuit.
Waves, rips, extensive tidal range	Impact injuries, drowning	4	10	40 = HIGH	Always check tidal state and currents. Liaise with lifeguards. Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current and then swim back.
Tidal cut off	Becoming stuck in the water	2	8	16 = LOW	Always plan your exit before you get into the water. Be aware of local conditions and how tides and changes in water level might affect your exit from the water. Before you enter the water, check alternative exit routes if your planned exit becomes unavailable.
Seaweed, buoys, and lines	Impeded swimming, entanglement, panic, drowning	1	10	10 = LOW	Always plan your exit before you get into the water. Be aware of local conditions and how tides and changes in water level might affect your exit from the water.
Poor water quality	Waterborne illness	2	8	16 = LOW	In the sea, use beaches that meet bathing water standards.
Collision	Head, neck, and back injuries	3	10	30 = MEDIUM	Check in with lifeguards/2XS. Stay alert. Consider swimming where there's less traffic, avoid watersports & hardcraft zones. Wear a bright coloured cap. Drag a tow float behind you.

Jellyfish	Multiple stings, debilitation, anaphylactic shock	1	10	10 = LOW	Avoid if you can. The initial pain usually eases after a few minutes if you keep swimming. Seek medical help if you sense any difficulty in breathing.
Weaver fish	Sting, debilitation, anaphylactic shock	1	10	10 = LOW	Check in with lifeguards. Seek medical help if you sense any difficulty in breathing.

A brief guide to water temperature in open water

0 to 5 degrees

The preferred temperature for extreme winter swimmers. Causes pain and takes your breath away. Except for the very experienced, and only under strict supervision, swimmers should be limited to a few minutes.

5 to 10 degrees

Typical lake and river temperature in early spring. Still painfully cold and not recommended for anything other than very short swims (5 to 10 minutes) unless you are very experienced.

10 to 15 degrees

Open water starts reaching these temperatures in late spring around much of the UK. At the lower ends, it will still feel extremely cold initially, but longer swims are now possible. Experienced swimmers can manage several hours or more as the water approaches the mid-teens, but hypothermia is still a big risk.

15 to 20 degrees

The English Channel in summer. If you've only ever swum in a pool, this will feel cold but with a bit of experience and practice most people find this range comfortable, at least initially.

20 to 25 degrees

Rarely reached in the sea around the UK, but sometimes in inland lakes. Consider removing wetsuit at these temperatures to avoid overheating.