

# IN-WATER ACTIVITIES

## LIFE JACKETS: FUN WITH A PURPOSE.

Much of what a person learns takes place while involved in an activity. A presenter or instructor should recognize this teaching opportunity and try to include an activity in every appropriate presentation. When presenting a lesson on life jackets, one basic goal is to promote awareness of the importance of wearing a life jacket while involved in boating and water-related sports. They must know how to use them correctly and feel comfortable with their use. If a person feels comfortable in the life jacket and is familiar with what it can do, chances of survival increase. Remember, particularly with in-water activities, a life jacket should

NOT be considered a substitute for swimming ability. A life jacket is an aid to buoyancy. Swimming skills are still the basic ingredient to water safety.

The following in-water activities can be adapted for different situations with different age groups. Use your imagination to modify the activities and make up others. Permit the group to get comfortable in the water before starting the activity. You should always be in a position to observe everyone in the pool, or you may assign others to be safety observers. These are activities the participants will want to join.

### ***In-water activity #1*** **Survivor—** **Not the T.V. Series**

*Sally shows the H.E.L.P. (Heat Escape Lessening Posture) used in the event you are thrown overboard. When thrown overboard, the first rule is to try to get back in the boat or in the event the boat capsizes, stay with the boat. In the event neither one of these is possible, keep all your clothing on and assume the H.E.L.P. position.*



**Activity:** The activity is to find out who the “survivor” is when in the water. One person using the H.E.L.P. position wears a life jacket and another person uses the H.E.L.P. position without a life jacket. At the sound of the whistle a third person keeps time with a stopwatch. As the activity continues, the contestants are paired up and given the choice to wear or not to wear a life jacket. After the initial matchup, most will agree that in order to be a “survivor,” one must wear a life jacket.

**Purpose:** To show and have the participants experience the difficulties of flotation without a life jacket and the necessity to wear one in order to be a survivor.

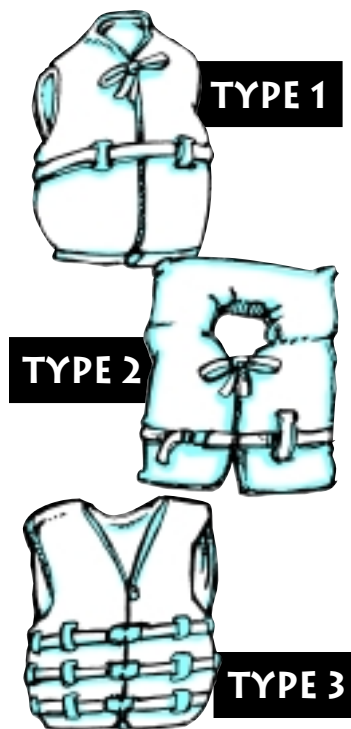


### ***In-water activity #2*** **The Life Jacket Aquatic Fashion Show**

*Abby shows how a properly worn life jacket should fit. It should fit snug, not loose and you must remember to buckle-up!*

**Activity:** Having a Life Jacket Aquatic Fashion Show is a great way to demonstrate the importance of a properly fitted life jacket. Have a variety of life jacket styles and sizes ready for the participants to select. Assist and instruct each of the participants on the correct way to put on the life jackets, but keep their selection particularly of sizes random. An important lesson will follow and be reinforced through example.

Once everyone is in the water (preferably only waist deep), depending on the variety or type of life jackets, have those wearing Type I life jackets first come forward. As a continued process of identifying types of life jackets, proceed with Type II, Type III and possibly Type V. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type. Have students model the Type I, II, III, and V life jackets. Demonstrate how to read the label and point out how some students might have selected inappropriate sizes. Show how a loose fitting life jacket “rides-up” and how a life jacket that is too small can impair buoyancy. Proceed to have the students move to deeper water. At this point the disadvantages of their random selections should become apparent.



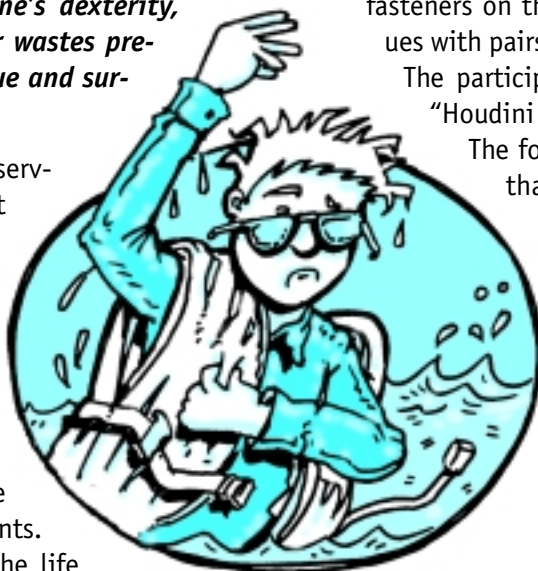
A Life Jacket Aquatic Fashion Show can be a masterfully done activity if you get the assistance from a marine dealer or dealers with a good selection of different life jackets. You will want to get a group of individuals who enjoy modeling or “hamming it up” (some local celebrities as models can make it an extra newsworthy event) and have them model the life jackets. Whether this is a major public event or a small class of children, it provides the awareness of the variety of life jackets that are available to today’s and tomorrow’s boaters.

**Purpose:** To demonstrate the need for and recognize a properly-fitted life jacket and the different types of life jackets.

## In-water activity #3 Houdini in Reverse

**Seth shows what our next in-water activity is about—putting a life jacket on in water isn’t easy. Aside from wet clothing interfering with one’s dexterity, putting on a life jacket in water wastes precious time and energy when rescue and survival are most important.**

**Activity:** With plenty of safety observers and participants with competent swimming abilities, select only two contestants at a time. After the participants are in the water, instruct them they are in a race for their lives. They’ve just fallen overboard and were not wearing life jackets. At the sound of a whistle, life jackets are thrown three to five feet in front of the participants. Each participant must first, get the life jacket; second, put it on; and third, have it



properly buckled. To promote a level playing field, it’s recommended each participant have the same type and same fasteners on their life jackets. The challenge continues with pairs of contestants and their posted times.

The participant with the lowest time is crowned “Houdini of the Pool.”

The follow-up to this crowning is the lesson that as a matter of survival when thrown or falling overboard, trying to put a life jacket on in water is a tremendous waste of time, energy and not something everyone is athletically-inclined to accomplish.

**Purpose:** To show that an integral part of boating safety is to...boat smart from the start and ALWAYS wear your life jacket.

[www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org)



[www.boatingsidekicks.com](http://www.boatingsidekicks.com)

