

Life Jackets Aren't Just for Boats



But, they only work when they are worn. Young children and weak swimmers should wear life jackets whenever they are in, on or around the water, even at a pool or a waterpark. Put it on at the dock, deck or shore and don't take it off until you are on dry land.

When should I wear a life jacket?

- Always wear a life jacket when boating or rafting and when using an inner tube or personal watercraft.
- Children and inexperienced swimmers should wear life jackets whenever in, on and around the water, even if a lifeguard is present.
- Wear life jackets in open water, waterparks or other challenging environments and around cold water and ice.

How do I choose a life jacket?

- When choosing a life jacket—
 - Make sure it is the right type for the activity.
 - Make sure it is U.S. Coast Guard approved. Look for the stamp on the life jacket.
 - Make sure it fits the intended user. Check the label on the life jacket for weight limits.
 - Check buckles and straps for proper function. Discard any life jacket with torn fabric or loose straps.
 - Put it on and practice swimming with it.
- Water wings, swim rings, inflatable toys and other items designed for water recreation are not substitutes for U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets or adult supervision.

What should I know?

- Know how to stay safe in, on and around the water, and how to respond in an emergency. Enroll in Red Cross water safety, first aid and CPR courses.
- Anyone who spends time in, on and around the water should know how to swim well.
- Know how to safely operate the type of watercraft you will use. Enroll in a boating safety class.

For more information or to enroll in Swimming and Water Safety courses, contact your local Red Cross chapter.



**American
Red Cross**