

SWIMMING TO KEEP AFLOAT

Swimming is a necessary part of the bluejacket's store of knowledge. He lives a great deal of his time in and around the water. He must learn to master the water and all its phases. In many places swimming will be his best means of recreation and, oftentimes, the only means of saving his life. Every recruit must learn to swim. Eventually, he may find it necessary to be able to swim or keep afloat for a long period of time until rescued. The Navy is interested in teaching every bluejacket to swim to keep afloat.

Teaching the recruit to swim involves two factors--water and the human body. The recruit will find that he must make many physical adjustments when he enters the water. The water pressure will affect a change in his circulation. The temperature of the water will be a strange sensation. Temperature and water pressure plus the fact that the beginner is in a new medium may cause what is commonly called the "fear complex." This fear is closely related to the body changes which the recruit undergoes in adjusting to the water. It is physical as well as psychological. As he learns to adjust himself by working in the water, he can control much of this fear. It will be necessary for him to learn to breathe differently in the water than he has on land. When he has mastered the problem of breathing, and has adjusted himself to the water, his fear will be largely overcome.

The beginner must learn to relax and not to struggle in the water. Nature means to have man unsinkable and if nature is given the slightest cooperation, man won't sink. The beginner who fails to relax in the water and tenses his muscles will react in the same way as a proverbial stone. Floating depends on relaxation. Therefore, the accent