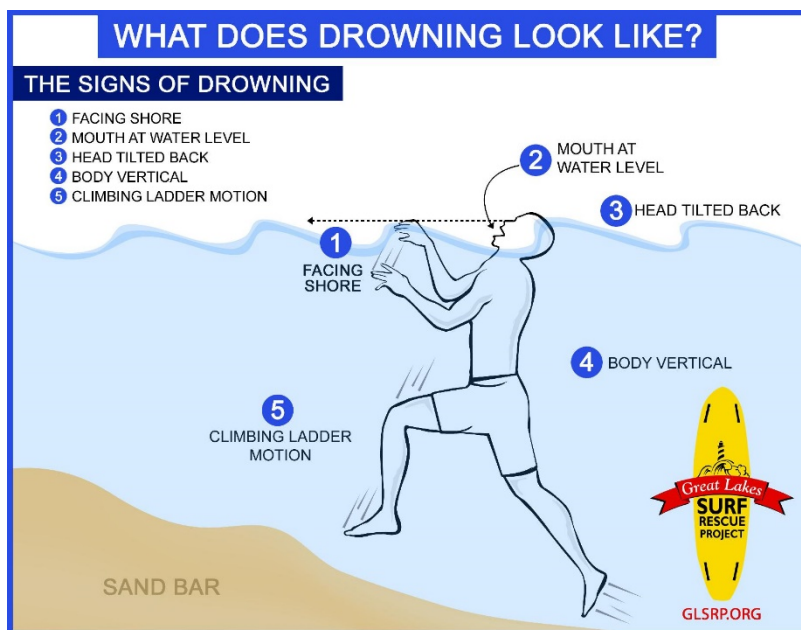




Drowning Fact Sheet

It may not be immediately apparent that someone is drowning. A person who is drowning may be very quiet as they struggle to keep their head above water. They are physically unable to wave for help or cry out.

- They will often be vertical, not attempting to kick.
- They may appear to be trying to climb an invisible ladder.
- Their gaze may become glassy or unfocused.
- Their head may tilt back and mouth will hang open very close to the waterline.
- Monitor anyone who is entering the water; periodically call out to them to assess ability to respond.
- If they are unable to respond, you may have between 20-60 seconds to respond before they go under.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- ❖ If you have identified that someone is drowning, immediately shout for help. The more people responding to this situation, the better.
- ❖ Have someone call emergency services.
- ❖ If possible, throw them a ring buoy and pull them to shore.
- ❖ Only attempt an in water rescue if you are a strong swimmer.
- ❖ If you enter the water to attempt a rescue, make sure you have something they can grab onto and that you can pull to safety. This can be a ring buoy, rope, or even just a towel.
- ❖ Do not attempt to grab the person from the front, as they may panic and push you under. If you must, grab them from behind.
- ❖ If the drowning victim is not breathing and there is no pulse, start CPR.
- ❖ Even if they seem to be fine, seek medical attention immediately. There may be residual water in the lungs, which can be fatal if left untreated.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project [Water Safety](#)