

# Before You Go in the Water

National Weather Service · Source: NOAA / National Weather Service

How to survive a rip current at a surf beach: what rip currents are, why you should not swim against them, and how to escape by swimming along the shore. For beachgoers and swimmers.

## READ WITH CARE

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<https://www.weather.gov/safety/ripcurrent-surviving>

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# Before You Go in the Water

## Surf/Rip Resources

Know BEFORE you enter the water what rip currents are, and how to escape them

Rip currents are channelized currents of water flowing away from shore at surf beaches. Typically, they form at breaks in sandbars, and also near structures, such as jetties and piers, as well as cliffs that jut into the water. Rip currents are common and can be found on most surf beaches, including the Great Lakes and Gulf of America. Take a few minutes to learn more.

### How to Survive a Rip Current:

- Relax. Rip currents don't pull you under.
- A rip current is a natural treadmill that travels an average speed of 1-2 feet per second, but has been measured as fast as 8 feet per second -- faster than an Olympic swimmer. Trying to swim against a rip current will only use up your energy; energy you need to survive and escape the rip current.
- Do NOT try to swim directly into to shore. Swim along the shoreline until you escape the current's pull. When free from the pull of the current, swim at an angle away from the current toward shore.
- If you feel you can't reach shore, relax, face the shore, and call or wave for help. Remember: If in doubt, don't go out!
- If at all possible, only swim at beaches with lifeguards.
- If you choose to swim on beaches without a lifeguard, never swim alone. Take a friend and have that person take a cell phone so that person can call 911 for help.

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