

Surf Lifeguard **BOARD RESCUE SKILLS**

It is important to know how to paddle a rescue board effectively through the surf if you are required to perform a board rescue. Paddling requires balance, strength and skill.



Paddling the board

Two paddling techniques can be used to paddle a rescue board. Lying on your stomach paddling with alternate arms, or kneeling on the board using both arms simultaneously.

Paddling lying down

- Arms should dive well into the water, not slap down.
- Arms should dive as deep as possible into the water.
- Hands and arms should pull straight down the side of the board.
- Elbows should be high during recovery, with arms along the side of the board.



Padding on knees

- Knees and feet should be placed as wide as possible, to form a stable base of support on the four points.
- Position yourself in the middle of the board, which when paddling will ensure the board is gliding across the water. The nose of the board should not be too high or low.



- Avoid bouncing of the board, as this will reduce your board speed.
- Reach as far forward as possible without losing balance to take the stroke.
- Drive arms into the water as deep as possible.



- Fully extend upper body.
- Pull and accelerate hands along the side of the board.



Positioning on the board

The position you take on the board depends on what you are doing. When attempting to catch a wave, your weight may need to be near the front or middle of the board to help you catch the wave and ride down the face.



- Once the wave is caught, having your weight at the back prevents the nose of the board diving under the water.



- You can also put your arms out to the side to assist with stability and/or steering on the wave.



When paddling in flat water, having your weight near the middle allows the board to glide through the water more efficiently and effectively.



Bunny-hopping

Bunny-hopping is used to travel through shallow water quickly.

- Run into the water holding the board on your hip.



- Put your hands on either side of the board.



- Jump with both feet pushing the board forward and putting weight on your arms.
- Lift your legs as high as possible out of the water to prevent drag, putting your weight on your arms and maximising glide.



- You may need to complete several bunny hops, making your way through the shallow water before hopping onto your board.



Eskimo roll

The eskimo roll is used to avoid large broken waves and to ensure you maintain your current position in the surf zone.

- Approach the wave with speed, either on your knees or lying down.
- Before the whitewash hits, grab both hand straps at the front of the board and roll upside down.



- Keep your body vertical under the water, as it will act like an anchor to hold you in place.



- Drive the nose of the board into the wave and down while holding on tightly, as it hits the white water.



- Once the wave has passed, roll back onto the board.



Catching waves

- Paddle to get some speed up which makes it easier to catch the wave.
- Catch the wave while it is still green.
- Keep your weight forward on the board to make the tail lift.
- Once the wave is caught, move to the back of the board by putting your hands on the rails and sliding back. You can also put your arms out to the side to assist with stability and/or direction on the wave.



Board rescue of a conscious patient

To successfully complete a board rescue of a conscious patient:

- Stop close to the patient on the shore side and verbally indicate you're there to help.



- Straddle and sit on the board towards the back (of the board) and tell the patient to take hold of the front hand straps.



- Grab the patient's nearest leg, and assist them to pull themselves onto the board.



- Assist the patient to get onto the board, lying them down (on their stomach) in a balanced position.



- Lie on top of the patient's legs and paddle.
- Instruct the patient to remain calm and hold onto the front hand straps.



- When returning to shore with the patient and catching the wave, ensure your weight is at the back to prevent the nose of the board diving under. Direct the patient to hold onto the front hand straps.



Note: Developing a high level of skill on a rescue board requires practice. Rescue boards can perform quite differently to racing paddle boards so it is advised that all surf lifeguards spend time practicing on specific rescue boards, and the different skill sets required for rescuing a patient.

Board rescue of an unconscious patient

Rescuing an unconscious patient using a rescue board can be quite demanding for a surf lifeguard. This skill should be practiced regularly in various conditions.

- Locate patient and approach carefully on the shore side.



- Flip the board upside down and grasp the patient's hand, pulling the wrist onto the far side of the board.



- While holding the patient's wrist, reach over to the far side of the board with your free hand.



- Roll the board by pulling the far side over and using your body weight. The patient will end up lying face down across the board.



- Hop back onto the board and straddle the back.
- Align and readjust the patient on the board to a balanced position, on their stomach.



- Give the 'assistance required' signal and, if appropriate, return to shore with the patient.
- If returning to shore is required, lie on top of the patient's legs and paddle.

