

24

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

FACT SHEET No.24

Grey Medallion

Q. What is the Grey Medallion?

A. The Royal Life Saving Grey Medallion is a water safety and lifesaving skills program for older Australians, which aims to reduce the drowning rates of older Australians and encourages a healthy, independent and active lifestyle. The program endeavours to teach participants a range of personal survival techniques, provide them with skills to deal with an emergency situation and develop confidence and competence to enjoy aquatic exercise and other water-based activities safely.

Q. Who is it aimed at?

A. The Grey Medallion has been developed for adults of all ages but is particularly aimed at Australians over 55 years who want to improve their fitness and water safety knowledge.

Q. How many people over 55 years drown each year?

A. Australians aged over 55 years are overrepresented in the drowning statistics. According to the Royal Life Saving 2010 National Drowning Report, there were 102 drowning deaths of people aged 55 years and over in 2009/10. Of the 102 drowning deaths, 77% were men.

Q. Why is the Grey Medallion needed?

A. The need to reduce drowning deaths of older Australians is a mounting challenge. With the number of Australians over 55 years estimated to reach 7 million by 2020, there is a need to act now. In 2010 the number of people over 55 who drowned were up on the 5 year average.

Q. Why are older Australians at a greater risk of drowning?

A. There are a range of risk factors which affect an older person's chance of drowning including: the use of multiple medications; drinking alcohol and then getting into the water; mental health; underlying medical problems; a lack of fitness; a lack knowledge of water safety; as well as overestimating of ability.

Real Life Story - Older Australian fishing tragedy

A man in his 70s has drowned after his tinnie capsized whilst fishing with friends. The man, who was an experienced fisherman, was out in moderately strong winds and choppy seas. His family is devastated and his wife of over 50 years is still not sure exactly what occurred. In the wake of this incident Royal Life Saving is encouraging older Australians to take part in a Grey Medallion program to refresh their skills, improve their aquatic fitness and learn valuable drowning prevention strategies for adults.

ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**
or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**



Grey Medallion Checklist:

You should enrol in a Grey Medallion program if you are aged 55 years or over and wanting to know more about:

- Improving your fitness
- Improving your water safety awareness and knowledge
- Drowning prevention strategies for adults
- Drowning prevention strategies for children
- Aquatic based exercise
- Correct swimming techniques

GREY MEDALLION:
WATER SAFETY KNOWLEDGE
RESUSCITATION AND
EMERGENCY CARE
AQUATIC EXERCISE
SURVIVAL AND
LIFESAVING SKILLS

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