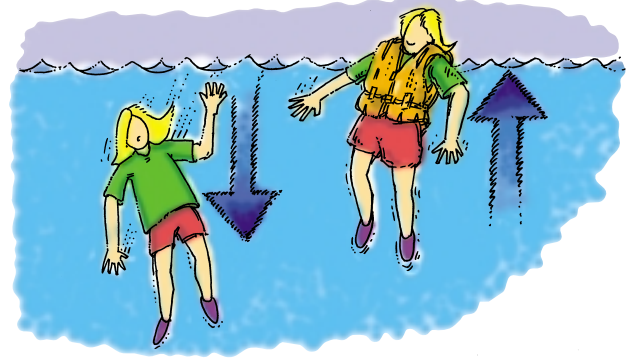


Life Jackets and the "Touchdown" Test

Boating is a lot of fun. Being a safe boater lets you have more fun. The most important thing you can do is always wear your life jacket. If you fall out or the boat turns over, a life jacket is designed to keep you afloat.

A life jacket is also called a personal flotation device, or PFD. If you go on boats often, you should have your own PFD. It is your **personal** piece of equipment. Life jackets come in a variety of colors and styles. Newer designs are comfortable to wear. Buy one that you will want to wear, and that is suited for your activities. Make sure your



PFD is the right size. Your PFD should fit snugly so it won't come off in the water.

It's probably been a few months since you last wore your life jacket. Be sure to test the jacket's fit before boating season begins. The best way to test the size is by doing the "touchdown test."

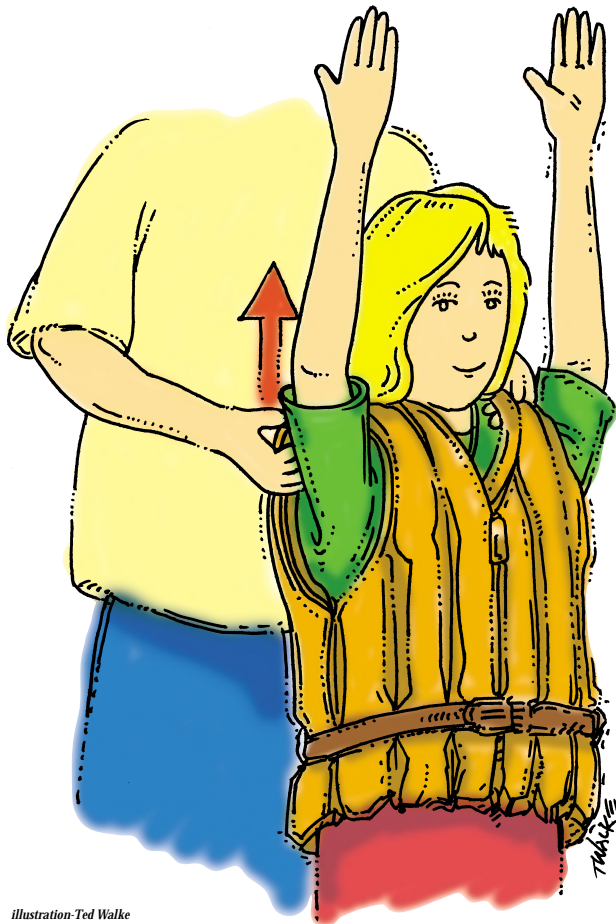


Illustration: Ted Walke

Here's how to do it.

1. Put on your life jacket.
2. Raise your arms over your head as if you were signaling a touchdown.
3. Have someone lift your life jacket straight up by the shoulders.
4. The jacket should stay in place.

If the zipper touches your nose or almost comes off, the jacket is too loose.