



Swimmer Safety Tips

- **Prepare before you go:** Check tnstateparks.com for alerts and the weather forecast before you leave home. Do not go into any body of water if you hear thunder or see lightning. If you are already in the water, get out immediately.
- **Leave no trace:** If you bring items with you, pack them in a small backpack to keep your hands free. Take out anything you brought in, including your trash.
- **Wear proper footwear:** If you are traveling to a river, lake or swimming hole, it is best to wear sturdy shoes, rather than flip-flops or sandals.
- **Hydrate yourself:** Swimming is a tiring physical activity and you do sweat while swimming, so make sure to drink plenty of water.
- **Stretch before swimming:** Stretching before any physical activity helps prevent cramps, which have been known to cause swimming accidents.
- **Wear a life jacket:** If you cannot touch the bottom flat footed, put on a properly fitted life jacket. Bring one with you or ask the park ahead of time if they have any available.
- **Be a buddy:** Do not leave young children unattended at any given time near a body of water or rough terrain. If you see someone struggling in the water, it is best to hold out an object they can grab (i.e. a sturdy branch, a towel, a pole). Never jump in after them unless you are in shallow water and have a life jacket with you.
- **Swim sober:** Do not swim while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. You may not be able to act quickly in the event of trouble.
- **Know your limits:** If you are having a difficult time swimming or become tired, turn over and float on your back until someone can reach you or you regain strength to kick your way into shore.
- **Ask for help:** If you witness an accident or injury, call for help immediately. Every state park has trained staff available to help you and your group.