

# ICE MYTHS & COLD REALITIES

**1) Myth: Waterlogged clothing pulls you down in the water and makes you drown.**

**Reality:** Actually, air trapped in your clothing will help keep you afloat temporarily. Once the clothes are soaked with water, they will be heavier, making moving and swimming more difficult.

**2) Myth: The better you swim the better your chances of rescuing yourself if you fall through the ice.**

**Reality:** Swimming proficiency plays only a small part in ice-related rescues. After as little as five minutes, cold water begins to rob you of your ability to move your limbs. This makes it very difficult for you to get out of the water, no matter what your swimming ability.

**3) Myth: Snow on a frozen lake or river makes the ice surface stronger.**

**Reality:** Snow acts as an insulating blanket, actually hindering ice formation and growth.

**Be Water Smart® in summer, and winter! Always check the ice before you go on it, measure clean hard ice in several places and be wary of varying temperature conditions. Here are some myths and realities to remember:**

**4) Myth: If the weather has been cold, the ice must be solid and safe.**

**Reality:** Other factors that are largely independent of air temperature (e.g., wind, a layer of snow on the ice, currents and fluctuating water levels) can weaken ice and make it unable to bear weight. A sudden drop in air temperature, which is actually more dangerous than a sudden rise, can create cracks in the ice.

**5) Myth: Thick ice is stronger than thin ice.**

**Reality:** Even thick ice may be weak if it is "rotten" or contains layers of water. Rotten ice has frozen and thawed repeatedly, making it potentially fragile even when it appears solid.

