



SUPPORT IN THE WATER

Sensafloat offers maximum safety for young people with severe motor impairment, and can accommodate different ages, weights and needs.

- 1 • A transverse support of the head and shoulders can enable a 'head back' and raised pelvis position to be achieved.
- 2 • The product can be folded to enable a safe 'face down' position to be experienced.
- 3 • The Sensafloat can be transformed into a 'rolled log shape' which develops confidence in the 'face down' position.
- 4 • The 'log' position also enables rotation from the front to the back to be experienced.





SUPPORT IN THE WATER 2

Different degrees of support can be obtained by folding the unit in different ways.

- 5• The 'X' shape varies the degree of support in a face down position. The front edge is folded forwards.
- 6• The 'delta wing' shape allows an air space to be formed for a face down position. This provides communication opportunities between supporting staff and the young person. The vibro-acoustic properties of the water can be utilised by making sounds in the air space, and encouraging the young person, to respond with sounds of their own.
- 7• Using the support of the Sensafloat in a 'reverse X' shape (the furthest edge is folded back), the young person can achieve a resting position or a secure position from which to explore movement. Assists particularly where 'hightone' is present.
- 8• A variation of the 'delta wing' shape offering a higher posture with the experience of 'hanging' in the water.

N.B. Trained support staff to be present at all times.





SENSATUBE

This development is the final progression.

- 9• The 'Buoyancy Link' is used here to achieve relaxation and stillness in a 'Face down' position.
- 10• As for No. 9 but with a 'Head back' position.
- 11• Floating upright with Sensatube around the shoulders and under the arms.
- 12• A wide transverse position to vary the experience and encourage 'Head back'. Pelvis up.
- 13• The Sensatube is aligned along the body to encourage 'Face down' floating.

N.B. Trained support staff to be present at all times.





MOVEMENT IN WATER

The Sensafloat is used to highlight these progressions, but these steps can be used as a guide whether utilising this device, using another aid or combination of aids, or manual support without an aid.

ENTRY AND EXIT

- A number of organisations run courses on swimming for disabled people that include practical advice on entry to and exit from the pool. These include The Amateur Swimming Association and The Association of Swimming Therapy.

BEGINNINGS

- To engender confidence and support, begin by maintaining close contact.
- Be particularly aware of the young person's breathing, not just in terms of proximity to the water, but also in relation to the effect on their respiration of head, neck, and body position. Consider too the effects of excitement and exertion on exercise tolerance.
- Adjustment to the water can begin outside the pool; use bowls of water, sponges, watering cans, sprayers.
- Alleviate negative effects of water temperature by maintaining movement and wearing light clothing.



MOVEMENT IN THE WATER 2 MOVING ON

- If possible, reduce physical support to enable the individual to experience the upthrust and buoyancy of the water.
- Tension in the supporter can create or increase rigidity in the individual. Support staff who are less confident in water should always ensure that they are in a safe and stable position themselves. Handle the young person sensitively, but with confident movements.
- A relaxed position in the water or, for example, on the Sensafloat, can facilitate passive manipulation by an experienced therapist.
- Enable the young person to experience movement in water in different positions; front, back, vertical, facing towards or away from the supporter (although regular eye contact should be maintained in the latter case).
- Vary the speed with which the young person moves or is moved through the water. Enable them to feel the water flowing over their limbs and body in different ways.
- Use music, song and games to create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.
- Encourage independent limb and body movement.



MOVEMENT IN THE WATER 3

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF MOVEMENT IN WATER

- positive effect on cardio-respiratory system
- exhalation extended through the pressure of the water
- enhanced blood circulation, including increase in blood return to the heart
- kidney function enhanced due to the density of the water
- relaxation of the limbs, with a potential increase in flexibility and range of movement
- social benefits of participating in a communal activity
- encourages emotional responses; anticipation, excitement, enjoyment.

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF MOVEMENT IN WATER

- Use group activities to promote interaction between individuals. For example, action songs, or games that involve pushing or floating or sending a ball or toy from person to person around the group.
- Promote exhalation by placing small floating objects (eg table tennis balls) where a breath may move them across the water surface.
- Some young people may be able to stand with support of assistants and the water where this may not be possible on land.





CONCEPTUAL TRAINING

Water work can be used to enhance the experience of abstract concepts. These can be reinforced by using the terms whilst moving. For example:

UP - DOWN

Moving gently up and down in the water with the young person held in a vertical position. Pressing down on the Sensafloat whilst the young person is lying horizontally.

LEFT - RIGHT

Turning to left and right in a bobbing motion, or spinning on the Sensafloat to right or left. Visit the sides of the pool corresponding to left and right, perhaps to collect objects.

OVER - UNDER

Moving over or under the Sensafloat mat, or over or under a rope tied loosely on the water surface. Or try moving over or under an extended arm.

BIG - SMALL

Collect big or small objects floating in the water. Or make big or small movements (guided by the supporter).

HEAVY - LIGHT

Play with balloons or balls of different densities.





CONCEPTS

PUSH - PULL

The supporter can push the individual away from, or pull them towards, themselves. Contact can be maintained, or the young person can be supported by the Sensafloat or other aid. Encourage the young person to push against the poolside with the feet, or pull themselves along a rope or swim aid (eg a poly log roll)

ON - OFF

Place objects on a floating aid, such as a kickboard. Encourage the young person to push these off, or to tilt the board to dislodge them. Reverse the process by encouraging the young person to place objects on a float or on the side. Grasp and release can be facilitated.

BACK - FRONT

Move the individual through the water on back or front. This can be by supported towing, or by support under the torso, or by towing the swim aid.

INFRONT - BEHIND

The supporter can move the young person in front of, or behind, floating objects, or other swimmers. The supporters themselves can move in front of, or behind, their swimmer.

BEND - STRETCH

An experienced therapist can use the warm water environment to promote passive manipulation - the individual can stretch out long or wide in the water, or bend limbs or the whole body.

