I jumped in the pool with my phone

By Amy Cooper

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One minute we were taking selfies to a soundtrack of Tove Lo's *Cool Girl*, inflatable flamingo in the background and floating sangria jug in front – and then: *plop*. Phone. Deep end. **Sunk**. Not even the boys from Bondi Rescue could reverse this digital disaster.

Swimming pools come with safety fences to keep the kids out, but there's nothing yet invented that can prevent the astonishingly frequent calamity of your phone taking a dip. The scenario has many variations, all equally mortifying. The most common is a phone hidden in a board shorts pocket diving along with you, but Aussie outdoor life means your little treasures are also highly vulnerable to being kicked off the deck or mistaken for a toy boat by your youngest family member (or the one who has had the most cocktails). Then there's the toilet, the kitchen sink, the heavy rainstorm – all of them ready to turn your tech Titanic.

If it's happened to you, you must be feeling so much better hearing how it happened to me. That pool selfie seemed a fine idea when the party spirit was in full flow – but the watery outcome was as inevitable as night following day. I was contrite.

Rice, everyone said. Put it in dry, uncooked rice. And that's what the internet hive mind said too, so I immersed the phone in a bag of basmati and left it overnight. Then I laid it flat on the kitchen bench for another day to air-dry. The worst thing you can do to a drowned phone, say the techsperts, is switch it on before it's fully dry inside (it fries the delicate electronics), so I held back and endured the ghastly no-phone vacuum for a full 48 hours… then booted up.

Amazingly, it was fine. I've learnt my lesson. No phone of mine will ever be invited to a pool party again.

Built for life

Privately, those involved in the manufacture of mobile devices will tell you they're far more robust than you'd think. Drowning survival stories are frequent, and phones are also remarkably resilient to dropping, crushing and shaking. But I'm not about to put that to the test again. After my phone went *Finding Dory*, I've always used protection.

For drop-proofing, the friendly guys at my carrier's local Sydney store introduced me to Tech21 protective cases, and I've never looked back – or up, or down since, because if my phone travels in any of those directions I'm pretty confident it will survive. These sleek cases look far too good to be so tough – especially my pick, the Evo Check in rose pink. It works back beautifully with my favourite Kate Spade handbag, but this baby can handle a two-metre drop. (To demonstrate, the store assistant flung a blob of its FlexShock material on the floor and it bounced like a tennis ball.)

Then we move to water resistant. Huge leaps forward have been made recently in standard smartphone protection, as phones have evolved from IP67 ratings – meaning you can feel free to splash a bit of water in it, but don't think about using it in the rain – to the current IP68 standard, which means you can use your phone as your new underwater camera, take it in the shower, or drop it in the sink for about half an hour, although if you're taking your phone into the shower you've got an entirely different set of issues to resolve. IP68 also includes total dust protection, so feel free to use your phone in a sandstorm if you ever need to.

Then there's full waterproof protection. If your idea of a day well spent involves a Spartan Death Race or Antarctic Ice Marathon – with your mobile phone along for the ride – then welcome to Lifeproof, your new best friend and probably the only companion insane enough to join you. This body armour for your Galaxy says "bring it on" to the shower, beach, snow, dirt and, yep, even the pool; the Fre case is submersible up to two metres for one hour.

Every now and then you hear about someone DIY-waterproofing a phone with a condom. It's on YouTube, and worth a watch for entertainment value alone. But here's why you shouldn't repurpose prophylactics: your phone does not like the lubricant. In fact, those oils can cause the damage you were aiming to prevent. And that's not a story you really want to explain to your repair guy.

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