



The mechanics of a rip current.

When the shore is hard in one place with a sandy area next to it, incoming waves are elevated over the rock part and the elevated water will naturally flow back through the lowest path. Where you see no waves breaking, there are no rocks close to the surface, but there could be a sand channel where rip current will arise. There is no such thing as an “Undertow”. People who get in a rip current and try to swim back the way they came become exhausted and get into trouble.

To escape a rip current, just swim across it, and come back in where you see waves form next to the rip. They will help you come in.

Three beaches here, South Casa, Children’s Pool, and Shell Beach all have natural rip currents, strong when surf is high. They are all one-sided, unlike the portrayal above. The sand channel exit at South Casa is on the South side. The rip exit at Children’s Pool is a wide one, out the middle. The sand channel exit at Shell Beach is just on the north side of Seal Rock. At Children’s, the rip is started as surf curls around the sea wall, elevated by the reef behind it. This seawall tip is the favored exit where scary looking waves bounce up over rock and will carry tired swimmers into the Pool.

If you don’t feel good, tired, confused, stop trying to fight any current. Raise your hand and someone will come and get you.