

Annex hypothermia

Recognize hypothermia

- Shivers (which may even stop after further cooling);
- Drowsy and confused response; sometimes unable to answer simple questions; impaired judgment ('No, it's still ok');
- Unconsciousness, feeling dead;
- An overall stiff feeling;
- Trouble with speech; trouble with sight;
- Reduced coordination of movements;
- Slurred speech;
- Purple blue face and lips;
- Sleepy or apathetic behaviour.

How does hypothermia occur?

Hypothermia can occur slowly or quickly (e.g. in cold water), adding the risk of drowning when in the water. The degree of hypothermia depends on, among other things, the water temperature, the air temperature, the time of exposure to the cold, the protection by clothing (survival suit), your condition and the use of alcohol and / or medication.

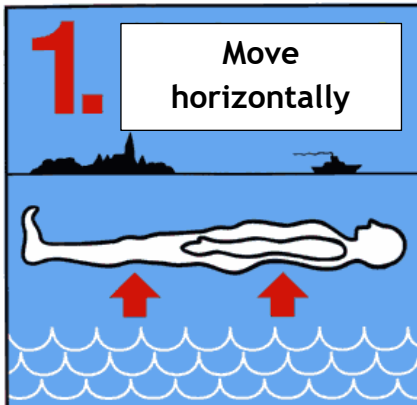
What are the chances of survival in cold water?

Chances of survival means that the cooled body can function normally again without permanent injury. At a water temperature of 33°C, the body experiences no problems and the temperature feels pleasant (because it is almost the same as the skin temperature). In water of 6°C, the chance of survival is only twenty minutes with the risk of immediate death from cardiac arrhythmias. One can swim a maximum of 200 meters and the hands turn numb and stiff after two minutes.

Moving in the water increases the heat loss due to water flow along the body. If you think you can no longer get out, you should not go swimming! Take a fetal position (make yourself as small as possible).

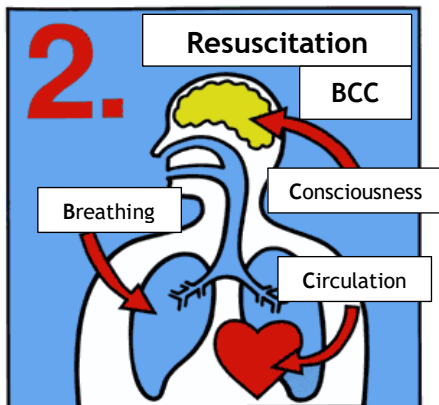
Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition. Call medical help as soon as possible so the victim can be helped under the supervision of experts.

What to do in case of hypothermia?



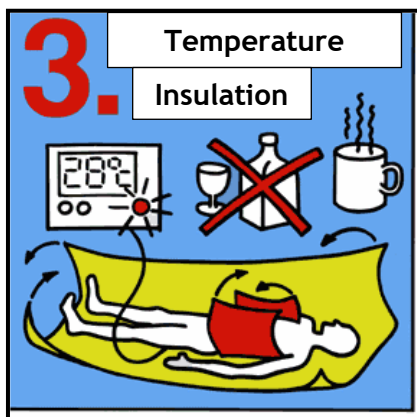
1. Move horizontally

If you would take a victim vertically out of the water, there is a chance that the blood will move from the trunk to the limbs. Consequently, the weakly functioning heart can fail.



2. Resuscitation

When breathing and / or circulation are lacking, artificial respiration or resuscitation must be performed immediately. With severe hypothermia this can be difficult due to muscle stiffness.



3. Protect against further cooling

Preferably, the trunk and limbs should be wrapped separately. This prevents the limbs from warming up too quickly, thereby withdrawing blood from the trunk. The weakly functioning heart will not be able to compensate for this change. Don't forget to especially protect the head. Humans lose most of their heat through the head. Never give an unconscious victim something to drink. Only a properly approachable victim may take hot drinks. Never give alcoholic drinks.