PREVENT SHALLOW WATER BLACKOUT

The practice of hyperventilating and extended breath-holding is prohibited at Navy MWR Aquatics facilities.

Shallow Water Blackout: How it Happens



Hyperventilation Overbreathing, either consciously or as a result of overexertion, artificially lowers carbon dioxide (CO2) levels.

As the breath-hold

begins, oxygen is metabolized

the breath-hold continues, the

and CO2 levels increase. As

body becomes starved of

 \mathbf{O}_2 Drops

oxygen.

3 Unconsiousness Under normal circumstances, increased CO2 would trigger a **4 Drowning** Once the swimmer loses consciousness, the body reacts and forces a breath. That causes the lungs to fill with water, and without an immediate rescue, a drowning death is all but certain.

[Diagram courtesy of Aquatics International]

breath. But because CO2 levels were so low on submersion (due to hyperventilation), there is not enough to initiate a breath, and the swimmer loses consciousness.

PREVENT SHALLOW WATER BLACKOUT:

- Never hyperventilate before swimming or diving.
- Swim with a buddy who is closely supervising you and not working out at the same time. If it isn't during an official training evolution, don't rely on a lifeguard to spot your shallow water blackout.
- Give your body enough time to recover, and catch your breath between sets. This will allow oxygen levels to return to normal.

[Source: Human Performance Resources by CHAMP (HPRC) at the Uniformed Services University]

See a Navy MWR Aquatics professional for more information.



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