



SHALLOW WATER BLACKOUT PREVENTION



Shallow Water Blackout can affect **ANYONE** who holds his or her breath while swimming or practicing breath-holding underwater. Those who breath-hold in pools are at risk of “passing out” due to lack of **oxygen**. **This phenomenon is commonly referred to as shallow water blackout (SWB)** and it is the result of a **SEVERE LACK OF OXYGEN TO THE BRAIN**.

How It Happens

- To hold their breath longer, people will often **hyperventilate** to get the most lung capacity.
- **Hyperventilation** forces the CO₂ (carbon Dioxide) out of your lungs and lowers the level of CO₂ in one’s lungs
- CO₂ is what triggers our brain to return to the surface for air
- Shallow Water Blackout typically occurs because of low carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in ones lungs
- With low CO₂ levels, our bodies are robbed of their built-in mechanism to protect us and tell us to breathe before unconsciousness happens
- One may experience Shallow Water Blackout **even without hyperventilation** before breath-holding
- **One basically “blacks out” in the water, the moments leading up to the blackout feels euphoric to most people**
- **For some**, their lungs will take on water leading to drowning
- Some others simply **suffocate** or **die** of other causes brought on by the **breath-holding**.
- **Death can also be a result of the prolonged breath-holding even if not from so called “Shallow Water Blackout.”**



How to avoid Shallow Water Blackout

- **DO NOT PRACTICE prolonged breath-holding.** The ARC, YMCA and USA Swimming now ban hypoxic training and prolonged underwater swimming although far too many still practice it
- **NEVER SWIM ALONE**
- Underwater breath-holding should never be encouraged, but if practiced the rule of thumb for safety is **ONE Breathe-hold, One Time, One Lap, Only.**
- **NEVER HYPERVENTILATE**
- Repetitive breath-holding increases the risk of SWB. If breath-holding under water, a buddy must be next to you on your shoulder so you can signal that you are OK. Their total focus needs to be you and your safety. They should never breath-hold with you. **Do not rely on lifeguards.** SWB is difficult to detect above water.
- For free diving and spear fishing safety guidelines and safety courses visit www.DiveWise.org and www.immersionfreedivin.com



Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to prevent senseless deaths from shallow water blackout through awareness and education

Besides preventing Shallow Water Blackout by awareness and education our goals are:

1. To **ban prolonged breath-holding from pools** unless one is safety-trained in freediving
2. For children to be raised under the knowledge that under water breath holding is dangerous and should not be encouraged.
3. To have **warning labels of the dangers of prolonged breath-holding** and the dangers of under-water blackouts on all spearfishing equipment, advocating safety courses in free diving.
4. Ideally, to have **spearfishing licensed separately from saltwater fishing**, similar to a hunting license, which requires a safety course.

If you have any questions regarding Shallow Water Blackout, please email shallowwaterblackoutprevention@gmail.com or call 855-787-5600 Shallow Water Blackout Prevention, 5125 Peachtree Industrial Blvd