

FIVE MYTHS ABOUT STRANGULATION

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MYTH

STRANGULATION AND CHOKING ARE THE SAME THING

FACT

STRANGULATION is the external application of physical force that impedes either air or blood to or from the brain.

CHOKING is an internal obstruction of the airway by a foreign object.

SOLUTION

Use a diagram.

Compare to the flow of electrical current.

Compare to the flow of air/water through a closed system (fish tank).

2

MYTH

STRANGULATION ALWAYS LEAVES VISIBLE INJURIES

FACT

Studies show that over half the victims of strangulation lack visible external injury. A victim without visible external injury can still die from strangulation.

SOLUTION

Demonstrate cutting off blood flow to your fingertips by squeezing your wrist with your other hand. Upon release of the grip, you will likely have no identifiable marks. If you do, they will be very short in duration.

3

MYTH

IF THE VICTIM CAN SPEAK, SCREAM, OR BREATHE, THEY ARE NOT BEING STRANGLING

FACT

Since strangulation involves obstruction of blood flow, a person can have complete obstruction and continue breathing until the moment they die from lack of oxygenated blood flow to the brain.

SOLUTION

Again, grab your wrist and squeeze. You can still breathe, yet blood flow is obstructed to the fingertips. If this was the victim's neck, they could still have an open trachea (windpipe) but have lack of blood flow to the brain.

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MYTH

STRANGULATION CANNOT BE HARMFUL BECAUSE MANY PEOPLE PRACTICE IT (MARTIAL ARTS, MILITARY, LAW ENFORCEMENT)

FACT

Martial arts are a form of combat. The military and law enforcement use strangulation as a lethal form of force.

RISK

There are numerous incidents of death resulting from strangulation. This can even occur during otherwise supervised events, such as sporting events, law enforcement training, etc.

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MYTH

STRANGULATION VICTIMS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETAIL THEIR ATTACK

FACT

Trauma impacts the brain's ability to store memory. In addition, the hippocampus (part of the brain where memory is stored) is the most sensitive to oxygen deprivation.

When a victim is strangled, both factors can impact the ability to recall.

SOLUTION

Give the example of how limiting the flow of electricity to a digital recording device will prevent it from recording.



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