



First Aid Warning

Suspension Trauma

- Everybody who is suspended in a harness runs the risk of shock and unconsciousness due to blood flow insufficiency. Unconsciousness can become life threatening after only a few minutes. Shock, caused by a lack of blood flow, is due to the blood accumulating in the lower parts of the body as a result of the musculature of the legs relaxing and the so-called “muscle pump” stopping.
- In order to maintain the muscle pump, the suspended person must be reminded to keep their legs moving. In this way, blood circulation can be activated and the accumulation of blood in the legs prevented.
- **Important!** If a person has been suspended for more than a few minutes or has been suspended while unconscious they must never be laid down after being retrieved from the suspended position, not even in the stable (recovery) side position. **They must be positioned with the upper body very well raised, i.e. in a squatting or crouched posture.** All belts and clothing should be loosened. An ambulance must be called immediately.
- Laying the victim down horizontally could be life threatening. The blood that has accumulated in the legs flows abruptly into the heart creating a risk of heart failure due to overstrain. Transfer to a horizontal posture should take place only gradually. Continuous monitoring of the respiration and circulation is necessary. In the event of unconsciousness, the air passages should be kept open.”

Source: Harness suspension: review and evaluation of existing information
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