

# FIVE MYTHS ABOUT STRANGULATION

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**1**

**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.

**4**

**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.

**5**

**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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