

June 16, 2025 - LeeCARES Training Net: How to Perform First Aid on Yourself

Presented by Jason Korb, KI5ABB

How to Perform First Aid on Yourself

Emergencies can happen at any time, and it's crucial to be prepared, even when you're alone. While we often focus on providing first aid to others, knowing how to administer self-care in a medical emergency is equally important. Being able to perform first aid on yourself can make a significant difference in your outcome, especially when immediate help is not available. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore essential self-care techniques and tips for managing emergencies when you find yourself alone and in need of medical assistance.

1. Stay Calm and Assess the Situation

The first and most critical step in any emergency is to stay calm. Panic can cloud your judgment and hinder your ability to take appropriate action. Here's how you can maintain composure and assess the situation effectively:

- **Take a Deep Breath:** Begin by taking slow, deep breaths to calm your nerves. This will help you think more clearly and make better decisions.
- **Prioritize Safety:** Ensure that you are safe from any immediate dangers, such as moving away from traffic if you've been in an accident or exiting a building if there's a fire. Your safety is the top priority.
- **Check for Injuries:** Carefully assess your own injuries. Identify the most severe or life-threatening conditions first. Are you bleeding heavily? Are you having difficulty breathing? Do you feel chest pain? Once you've assessed your condition, you can determine the best course of action.

2. Call for Help

If you are capable of making a call, dial emergency services immediately. Even if you believe you can handle the situation on your own, it's always better to have professional help on the way. Here's what to do:

- **Dial Emergency Services:** Call 911 or your local emergency number. Provide the dispatcher with your location, the nature of your emergency, and any relevant details about your condition.
- **Use a Whistle or Flashlight:** If you are in a remote area and don't have cell service, try to signal for help using a whistle, flashlight, or any available communication devices. You can also create a visible signal, such as spelling out "HELP" with rocks or branches.
- **Text for Help:** In some situations, it may be possible to text for help if calling is not an option. This is particularly useful if you are in a situation where speaking might be dangerous, such as during a home invasion.

3. Address Life-Threatening Injuries First

If you have life-threatening injuries, prioritize their care before addressing other medical concerns. Life-threatening injuries may include severe bleeding, difficulty breathing, chest pain, or loss of consciousness. Seek medical attention if these conditions persist. Here's how to manage these critical situations:

3.1 Managing Severe Bleeding

- **Apply Direct Pressure:** Use a clean cloth or bandage to apply direct pressure to the wound. Apply firm pressure to control the bleeding.
- **Elevate the Limb:** If the wound is on an arm or leg, elevate it above the level of the heart to help reduce bleeding.
- **Apply Pressure:** Use clean materials to apply pressure to the wound and maintain consistent pressure to promote clotting. Avoid removing the dressing to check the cut, as this can disrupt the clotting process.

a. Severe Bleeding

June 16, 2025 - LeeCARES Training Net: How to Perform First Aid on Yourself

Presented by Jason Korb, KI5ABB

Severe bleeding is one of the most immediate threats to life. If you are bleeding heavily, you must stop the blood loss as quickly as possible:

- **Apply Direct Pressure:** Use a clean cloth, bandage, or your hand to apply firm pressure to the wound. Press firmly to help slow or stop bleeding.
- **Elevate the Limb:** If the injury is on an arm or leg, elevate the limb above the level of your heart to reduce blood flow to the area.
- **Apply Pressure:** Apply pressure to the wound using clean materials and maintain consistent pressure to promote clotting.
- **Tourniquet Use:** As a last resort, if bleeding is severe and cannot be controlled with direct pressure, you may need to apply a tourniquet above the injury. Only use this method if absolutely necessary, as improper use can cause further harm.

b. Difficulty Breathing

Difficulty breathing can quickly become life-threatening, particularly if you are choking or experiencing an asthma attack:

- **Perform the Heimlich Maneuver on Yourself:** If you are choking and alone, you can perform the Heimlich maneuver on yourself. Place your fist just above your navel and grab it with your other hand. Thrust inward and upward sharply to try and dislodge the object.
- **Use an Inhaler:** If you have asthma and are experiencing an attack, use your prescribed inhaler immediately. Take slow, deep breaths to help open your airways.
- **Position Yourself:** If breathing is difficult but not due to choking or asthma, sit down and lean slightly forward. This position can help reduce the strain on your lungs and make breathing easier.

c. Chest Pain

Chest pain can be a sign of a heart attack, which requires immediate action:

- **Take Aspirin:** If you suspect you are having a heart attack and have access to aspirin, take one. Aspirin can help thin the blood and improve blood flow to the heart.
- **Remain Calm:** Sit down and try to stay calm. Stress can worsen chest pain, so focus on slow, deep breathing.
- **Wait for Help:** After taking aspirin and sitting down, wait for emergency services to arrive. Avoid any strenuous activity.

4. Manage Non-Life-Threatening Injuries

Once you have addressed any life-threatening injuries, attend to non-life-threatening injuries or medical issues. These injuries may not require immediate emergency care, but they can still cause significant discomfort or complications if not properly managed. It is important to seek medical advice if the injury shows signs of infection or does not heal properly.

4.1 Steps to Manage Minor Cuts and Lacerations

- Clean the wound thoroughly with water to remove any dirt or debris.
- Apply an antibiotic ointment to help prevent infection.
- Apply a sterile bandage to protect the wound and aid in the healing process.

a. Cuts and Wounds

June 16, 2025 - LeeCARES Training Net: How to Perform First Aid on Yourself

Presented by Jason Korb, KI5ABB

Small cuts and wounds are common and can usually be managed with basic first aid:

- **Clean the Wound:** If possible, clean the wound gently with mild soap and water to reduce the risk of infection.
- **Apply a Bandage:** Cover the wound with an adhesive bandage or sterile bandage to protect it from dirt and bacteria. Change the dressing regularly to keep the wound clean.
- **Seek Medical Advice:** Seek medical advice if the wound shows signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or pus.

b. Sprains and Strains

Sprains and strains are common injuries that involve the overstretching or tearing of ligaments or muscles:

- **Rest the Injured Area:** Avoid putting weight on the injured area to prevent further damage.
- **Use the RICE Method:** Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (RICE) is the standard treatment for sprains and strains. Apply ice to the injury, wrap it with a compression bandage, and elevate it above the level of your heart to reduce swelling.

c. Minor Burns

Minor burns can be painful but are usually not life-threatening if treated promptly:

- **Cool the Burn:** Hold the burned area under cold, running water for at least 10 minutes. This helps to reduce pain and prevent further tissue damage.
- **Cover the Burn:** After cooling the burn, cover it with a clean, non-stick bandage or cloth to protect it from infection.

d. Allergies

If you have known severe allergies, you should always carry an epinephrine auto-injector (such as an EpiPen):

- **Use an Epinephrine Auto-Injector:** If you experience an allergic reaction, use your epinephrine auto-injector as prescribed. Administer the injection into your thigh and wait for help to arrive.
- **Antihistamines:** For mild allergic reactions, taking an over-the-counter antihistamine can help reduce symptoms like itching, swelling, and hives.

5. Stay Hydrated and Nourished

Depending on the duration of the emergency, it's essential to stay hydrated and nourished. Dehydration and lack of food can exacerbate your condition and reduce your ability to think clearly.

- **Drink Water:** If you have access to water, drink it regularly to stay hydrated. Even small sips can help prevent dehydration.
- **Eat in Moderation:** If food is available, eat small portions to maintain your energy levels. Avoid overeating, as this can lead to nausea or discomfort.

6. Document and Communicate

If possible, document your situation and condition. This can be important for your safety and can help rescuers understand your needs when they arrive.

- **Send a Message:** If you have access to a phone, send a text message to a friend or family member informing them of your situation. Include your location, the nature of your injuries, and any relevant details.

June 16, 2025 - LeeCARES Training Net: How to Perform First Aid on Yourself

Presented by Jason Korb, KI5ABB

- **Leave a Note:** If you are unable to send a message, write down your condition and leave a visible note in your location. This can help rescuers assess your situation if you are unconscious when they arrive.

7. Stay Visible

If you are in a wilderness or remote setting, make efforts to stay visible to rescuers. Being easily spotted can significantly increase your chances of being found quickly.

- **Use Bright Clothing:** Wear bright or reflective clothing to make yourself more visible.
- **Create Signals:** Use available materials, such as rocks, branches, or a mirror, to create visible signals that can be seen from the air or from a distance.

8. Seek Shelter and Stay Warm

If you anticipate a prolonged wait for help, seek shelter from the elements and stay warm. Exposure to cold or wet conditions can lead to hypothermia, which can be life-threatening.

- **Find or Create Shelter:** Use whatever resources are available to create a shelter that protects you from wind, rain, or snow. This could be a tent, a cave, or even a makeshift structure from branches and leaves.
- **Insulate Yourself:** Use blankets, clothing, or natural materials to insulate yourself against the cold. Keeping your core body temperature stable is crucial for survival.

Conclusion

Emergencies can be frightening, especially when you're alone. However, by staying calm, assessing the situation, and following these self-care guidelines, you can increase your chances of effectively managing the situation until help arrives. Remember that the primary goal is your safety and well-being, and it's essential to prioritize self-care in any emergency scenario. Knowing how to perform first aid on yourself is a valuable skill that can save your life when no one else is around to help. Stay prepared, stay calm, and stay safe.

Taken from <https://cprcertificationnow.com/blogs/mycpr-now-blog/how-to-perform-first-aid-on-yourself>