

How to treat a diver underwater suffering from Acute Oxygen Toxicity

Source:- Mark Ellyatt

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If someone convulses in the water whilst with you, there is little you can do about it until the convulsions cease and the diver goes limp. If depth and gas reserves are a concern the afflicted diver should be taken shallower immediately. Convulsing divers neither breathe nor breath-hold during the convulsions. Pull the afflicted diver (ideally face down) by their tank valve or even their hand towards the surface or to an anchor rope for a more controlled ascent. Try and replace a breathing regulator as soon as is practical. The convulsions may last several minutes. Rebreather divers should be given an open circuit regulator containing bottom mix, buddies should be mindful of closing the rebreather loop before removing the mouthpiece.

While the convulsions are taking place the diver's larynx is locked in spasm and water is unlikely to be inhaled. Once the convulsions cease however, the build up of carbon dioxide in the diver's lungs will cause rapid and possibly deep inhalations, and at this stage the diver is likely to drown, so try and replace the regulator at this point and treat from here on as an unconscious breathing diver. When the convulsions stop, the diver will likely regain consciousness but will remain dazed and confused for several minutes. Maintain low po_2 's for at least 25 minutes during the rest of the ascent.