

Wilderness Travel Course

Wilderness First Aid

Steve Schuster



Quickie Wilderness Patient Assessment (1 of 2)

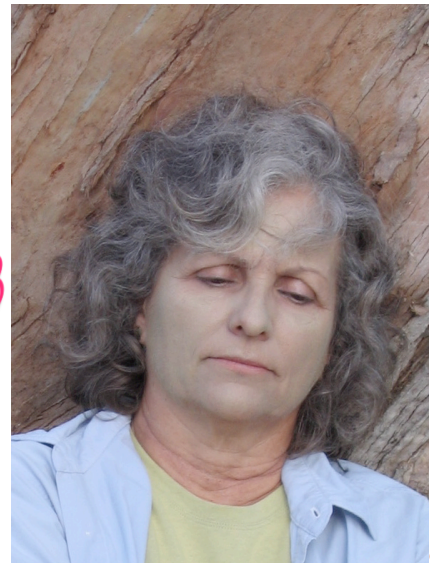
Assume our patient fell, struck her head and has a painful elbow

- Scene safety
- Check for visible bleeding (glove up)
- Introduce yourself (with qualifications) get patient name, get permission to treat
- Responsive patient → Check for bleeding
- Assess patient LOR; also, did patient black out?
- What hurts? What happened? → Patient chief complaint



Quickie Wilderness Patient Assessment (2 of 2)

- On injured extremity – circulation, sensation, motion, function
- Examine/ dress/ stabilize chief complaint
- If appropriate, palpate (examine by feeling) patient's neck and back
- Skin vitals – is the patient's skin too pale, too sweaty or too cold?
- AMPLE medical history
- Trained first aider will do physical exam



Copyright 2018



Treating Some Common Wilderness Injuries

- Wounds with heavy bleeding
- Wounds without heavy bleeding
- Possible fracture/dislocation or severe sprain (**requires splinting**)
- Less severe sprain, strain or bruise (**doesn't require splinting**)

Copyright 2018 WFAC Inc.



Patient Clothing or Ground “Wet With Blood”?



- Protect yourself - put on gloves
- Have your patient sit or lie down
- Expose the injury site - remove or cut away clothing
- Place clean gauze over the wound, and press firmly for 5 to 15 minutes
- Apply a pressure dressing, and leave in place for several hours
- Check distal circulation



Copyright 2018 WTAAC Inc.

Open Wound, Not Bleeding Heavily

- Remove or cut away clothing
- Use tweezers or gauze to remove chunks
- Do not remove impaled objects - stabilize them
- Flush the wound with clean water
- Wash with soap and water
- Apply antibiotic ointment (allergic?)
- Dress with clean gauze



COPY

The Important Decision Is Not Fracture vs Sprain/Strain

Do I need to splint?/ Can patient use limb?

- Sufficient force to break a bone (MOI)?
- Deformity?
- Patient heard snap/ felt pop?
- Counterforce on extremity
- Level of pain
- Does the patient refuse to use (insist on using) the injured limb?
- Splint = Limb not used for transportation



Copyright

Less Severe - Sprain, Strain or Contusion

- Put on gloves and expose the injury
- Evaluate and monitor the injured limb
- Apply “RICE”
 - » REST the injured limb as long as it practical
 - » ELEVATE the limb
 - » Put ICE on the injured area —or—
 - » Apply a COMPRESSION dressing
- Check distal circulation

