

Directions and Safety Guidelines for Leading the Two **“ASSUME THE POSITION!”** Exercises that Should Preface **EVERY Restraint Asphyxia Program**

1. Alrighty, then! **EVERYBODY STAND UP** and **QUICKLY** spread out about the room!
Come on, People! QUICK, LIKE BUNNIES!
Lets go! Move it! Move it! Move it! ...

People **MUST** move **QUICKLY**, especially at the beginning of the exercises! It is safe for them to move quickly while they're rested. So, this is the **ONLY** place where you can minimize the amount of time it takes to perform these two exercises.

2. If you are in **the SECOND or THIRD trimester of PREGNANCY**, please return to your chair and **SIT BACK DOWN NOW!**
 From your chair, you will **OBSERVE** those performing the exercises.

This *always* gets a great **LAUGH** because at least **ONE GUY** (sometimes more) will begin heading back to his chair! But, this also is a very important **SAFETY PRECAUTION!**

Women in the 2nd or 3rd trimester of pregnancy **SHOULD NOT** perform these exercises!

3. **Everyone ELSE**, find some space on the floor and **GET DOWN on your BELLY!**
Come on, People! QUICK, LIKE BUNNIES!
Lets go! Move it! Move it! Move it! ... DOWN ON YOUR BELLIES!

4. IF you have a **NECK INJURY ... SHOULDER INJURY ... BACK INJURY ... HIP INJURY ... or KNEE INJURY**, your **TASK** during this first exercise is to

**STAY on your BELLY,
PRESS YOUR SHOULDERS TO THE FLOOR,
and KEEP your SHOULDERS PRESSED TO THE FLOOR.**

OBESE INDIVIDUALS often will include themselves in this “JOINT-INJURED” group, even when they DO NOT have any kind of joint injury. **DON’T WORRY ABOUT THAT!**

When merely placed PRONE, obese individuals will experience far greater breathing restriction than those who are not obese. Thus, obese individuals who are unwilling to perform the “grab your ankles” part of the first exercise, STILL will learn the “lesson” of how prone restraint interferes with breathing.

HOWEVER! OBESE INDIVIDUALS often require “encouragement” (**ORDERS!**) to **KEEP THEIR SHOULDERS PRESSED TO THE FLOOR.**

It will be uncomfortable for them to do so, even under “normal” circumstances.

ORDER OBESE INDIVIDUALS TO PRESS THEIR SHOULDERS TO THE FLOOR, AT LEAST AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EXERCISE!

After that, if they get back up to their elbows, leave them ALONE, asking only that they **STAY ON THEIR BELLIES (in a PRONE POSITION)!** They may have gone back up to their elbows because they **TRULY COULD NOT BREATHE** while they were pressing their shoulders to the floor!

[HEY! These exercises are meant to be HELPFUL – not LETHAL!]

5. If you do **NOT** have a **NECK INJURY ... SHOULDER INJURY ... BACK INJURY ... HIP INJURY ... or KNEE INJURY, BEND YOUR KNEES! ... REACH BEHIND YOUR BACK and GRAB YOUR ANKLES!** If you can’t reach your ankles, grab the back edge of your shoes ... or, grab your socks ... or, grab your pant legs.

When participants are *attempting it*, but are having TROUBLE grasping their ankles (or shoes, or socks, or pant legs); gently ASSIST them to grab something *near* their ankles.

IF SOMEONE DEVELOPS A LEG CRAMP while reaching for their ankles (or whatever), have them EXTEND that leg. Then, YOU should grab their foot, FLEX it, and cue them to PUSH against your hold on their foot. This maneuver will relieve the leg cramp. Thereafter, they can move more carefully into the “grab your ankles” position.

BTW: If a participant is wearing a DRESS, or a SKIRT, or a SUIT, or a UNIFORM; she/he is NOT exempt from exercise participation!!!

Those wearing dresses/skirts should lay with their feet pointing toward a WALL, or some other area where NO ONE is BEHIND them! This will protect them from “flashing” anyone.

Those in a suit or uniform should simply find the cleanest possible floor space, and **GET DOWN ON IT!** (*Really!* I’ve put military types with TONZ o’ “BRASS” on their uniform down on the floor. You simply have to *VERY STRONGLY ORDER THEM* to get with the program!)

6. Our **FIRST EXERCISE** consists of the following:

While maintaining this position we are going to

LOUDLY and **SLOWLY**,

all together – IN UNISON – count from

ONE–ONE–THOUSAND, to **TWENTY–ONE–THOUSAND**.

By “**LOUDLY**” I mean that EVERYONE will be **YELLING**

– as **LOUDLY** as possible – while counting together, as a group!

I’ll get you started ... Yelling and Counting with you until we reach **THREE–ONE–THOUSAND**.

After that, I will STOP yelling and counting with you.

At that time, YOU will CONTINUE YELLING AND COUNTING, as a group, while I wander around the room assessing the **VIGOR!** ... and the **VOLUME!** ...

with which EACH INDIVIDUAL is yelling and counting.

During my wandering, if I discover ANY INDIVIDUAL who isn’t yelling and counting with **sufficient VIGOR & VOLUME**, **EVERYONE** will have to **START OVER** at **ONE–ONE–THOUSAND!**

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THESE INSTRUCTIONS AS I HAVE PROVIDED THEM TO YOU?!?!?!!

If the ENTIRE GROUP does not **LOUDLY** respond with

“YES, MA’AM!” or “YES, SIR!” (or “YES DRILL SERGEANT!” LOL), you should **YELL OUT:**

Apparently, only THREE (“5” – “9” – whatever!) PEOPLE have understood these instructions!

Since I don't want to repeat all these instructions unnecessarily,
I'll ask AGAIN;

**DO YOU UNDERSTAND THESE INSTRUCTIONS
AS I HAVE PROVIDED THEM TO YOU?!?!?!!**

At this point, ALL participants should WAKE UP and yell out, "YES!"

CADENCE NOTE:

The count of "ONE-ONE-THOU-SAND" should be performed so as to take at least ONE SECOND.

Additionally, there should be NO LONG PAUSE (to allow for "comfortable" breathing) between yelling

"ONE- THOU-SAND" and yelling the next number.

The count should be regularly rhythmic, and should FLOW TOGETHER without more than a VERY BRIEF PAUSE (a quick GASP for breath) between the numbers:

**"ONE-ONE-THOU-SAND (and)TWO-ONE-THOU-SAND
(and)THREE-ONE-THOU-SAND"** and so on.

7. Alrighty, then! Let's BEGIN Exercise NUMBER ONE!

"ONE-ONE-THOUSAND!" ...

"TWO-ONE-THOUSAND!" ...

"THREE-ONE-THOUSAND!" ...

Thereafter, you can stop counting with them, and commence your wandering about the room, listening and observing.

As needed: Remind people to

"Hang on to those ankles!" ... or,

"Keep pressing those shoulders to the floor!" ... or, exclaim,

"I can't HEAR YOU Mr. / Ms. So-and-So!" ... or,

"I CAN'T HEAR YOU, PEOPLE!" ... or

"SLOWER, PEOPLE!" ... or

"LOUDER, PEOPLE!" ... or

"Do you WANT to start over, PEOPLE?!" ... and the like.

Once the Counting is DONE, keep them in the position!:

8. **HOLD THE POSITION!!!**

- o This exercise allowed you to *SAFELY* experience a teeny, tiny TASTE of the effort required to breathe

when someone is simply placed in a PRONE position – even when that person is *healthy and rested*, like YOU were when we started.

- The YELLING and COUNTING exercise we performed while in this position lasted ONLY about **30 SECONDS!**
Imagine how you'd feel right now if this prone-positioned yelling and counting exercise had lasted ONE MINUTE ... or THREE MINUTES ... or EVEN LONGER!
- By lying on your belly and grabbing your own ankles, the majority of your ENTIRE BODY WEIGHT was focused onto your torso.
Your arms and legs were NOT extended OUT from your body, thus your extremities were not allowed to distribute portions of your body weight AWAY FROM your torso.
But, while in this position, only YOUR OWN BODY WEIGHT was being focused on your prone torso.
- Imagine how you'd feel right now if one or more OTHER PERSONS had been applying portions of THEIR body weight on top of your torso, during your 30 seconds of YELLING exertion.
- LASTLY; imagine how you'd feel if one or more OTHER PERSONS had been applying portions of THEIR body weight on top of your torso, while you were exerting yourself to **YELL *and* to STRUGGLE AGAINST** their weight and force application for ONE, or THREE, or MORE minutes!

By keeping participants in this position while you explain THE REASONS FOR THIS EXERCISE, participants have an opportunity to truly FEEL how tired they became after only 30 seconds of “loud-recitation” performance while in the

prone position – also allowing them to physically experience how difficult it is to “recover” from even extremely MINOR exertion, while STILL in the prone position.

9. Now! Let go of your ankles and relax your shoulders.
CAREFULLY roll onto your BACK –
 Please don't roll into your neighbor or the furniture!
10. **EXERCISE NUMBER TWO** is a two-part exercise.

Everyone bring your knees up toward your torso.
 Reach BENEATH your knees and grasp your own wrists.
 BENEATH your knees and grasp your own wrists.
 BENEATH your knees and grasp your own wrists.

As you repeat the cue about grasping “BENEATH” the knees, walk around and make sure everyone is holding their legs up from BENEATH their knees. Some participants may be slightly confused, and it may take a while before they get it right.

If a participant cannot grasp their own WRISTS beneath their knees (many will NOT be able to!), just make sure they are grasping the UNDERSIDE of their knees.

11. When I cue you to start **Part One** of this exercise
 – something I am NOT doing at this moment –
 You will PULL your knees UP and IN toward your torso,
 pulling your knees as CLOSE to your torso as you can get them,
 and then you will HOLD THEM THERE.

You will KEEP pulling your knees in tightly toward your torso
 as we perform **Part Two** of the exercise.

Part Two will consist of, everybody, all together as a group,
 taking a SLOW, DEEP breath INNNNNNNNNN,
 holding it for a moment,
 and then letting it OUT,
 while STILL KEEPING your knees pulled in,
 TIGHTLY toward your torso.

We will perform our breathing exercise in this position for at least three slow, deep breaths.

Do you understand these instructions as I have provided them to you?

If EVERYONE doesn't immediately reply with some form of, "YES!", just repeat the Drill Sergeant "Do you understand" question to re-focus folkz. Usually, by now, a repeat of that question it is NOT required!

12. Very Good.

Begin Part One!:

Pull your knees UP and IN toward your torso,
TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT toward your torso,
and HOLD them there!

TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT toward your torso,
and KEEP them there!

13. Now, everyone together, **Begin Part Two!:**

Slow, Deep Breath INNNNNNNNN ...
And let it OUT – Keeping those knees in
TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT toward your torso!

Slow, Deep Breath INNNNNNNNN ...
And let it OUT – Keeping those knees in
TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT toward your torso!

Slow, Deep Breath INNNNNNNNN ...
And let it OUT – Keeping those knees in
TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT toward your torso!

Well done, everyone!

Let go of your knees. Let your feet fall to the floor.

PLZ NOTE!: YOU need to take a VERY QUICK, deep breath in after EACH TIME you've yelled, "Keeping those knees in TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT toward your torso!"

You don't breathe WITH the participants, because you are cuing them during their breaths.

14. Everyone got their knees fairly CLOSE to their CHEST ...

Some of you are more limber than others!

BUT!

Was anyone COMPRESSING their CHEST with their KNEES?

Usually, at least ONE person will indicate an opinion that they were "COMPRESSING" their CHEST with their knees. However, even the most LIMBER person is physically incapable of "COMPRESSING" their own CHEST with their knees.

SO! HAVE THAT INDIVIDUAL SHOW YOU (demonstrate) the position they were in during this second exercise.

YES. Your knees are VERY close to your chest.

But, **NO**, your knees are NOT actually

"COMPRESSING" your chest.

At his time, I grasp the soles of the shoes of the person who is demonstrating how they think they were "compressing" their own chest with their knees, and then I BRIEFLY (just a quick "push") apply a TINY bit of force to the soles of their shoes, causing their knees to ACTUALLY compress their chest!

Be CAREFUL! Only a TINY bit of force is required during that quick push! And be sure that you do not HOLD THE FORCE THERE – release the force immediately!

[Thankfully, no one for whom this brief "push" of light chest compression MIGHT be "dangerous" is limber enough to get their knees TO their chest!]

AS I perform the Quick Light Push & Release maneuver, I explain,

"THIS is what chest COMPRESSION feels like."

Then I ask the participant,

"Were you compressing your CHEST with your knees?"

The answer is always, "NO."

Next, I ask, "Does anyone ELSE think they were compressing their CHEST with their KNEES during our second exercise?"

Usually, no one else will claim to have done so.

If someone DOES, just repeat the same Quick Light Push & Release maneuver (and questions) with them. Then, ask again, “Anyone ELSE?”

15. So. We’ve established that NO ONE was COMPRESSING their CHEST with their knees. But, was it easy to BREATHE in that second exercise position?

NO! It was NOT!

Why not? Your chest wasn’t being compressed while you were in that position.

So, WHY was it so DIFFICULT to BREATHE while in that position?

Ad lib for a bit, if you need to!

“What was the ONLY part of your body being restricted?”

... “Exactly! ONLY your abdomen!” ...

“Yes! Your BELLY was restricted by your in-drawn KNEES!” ... and so forth and so on.

16. **The LESSON of these two exercises is this:**

Whether performed on someone in a prone position, OR a SUPINE position, ANY form of forceful restraint that interferes with **ABDOMINAL EXPANSION**, will INTERFERE with BREATHING!

17. Very Good! Well done, people!

Now, everyone SIT UP.

Take a DEEP BREATH INNNNN ... [pause]

and let it OUT. [pause]

This deep breathing pause is to prevent participants from getting up too quickly!

Now. Carefully Stand Up and Return to Your Seat.

If, at ANY time, you begin to feel Queasy or Light-Headed, STOP where you are and SIT BACK DOWN on the floor!!!

[NOW, You Can Begin Your Restraint Asphyxia Presentation!]

SAFETY NOTE:

Because no one is ever actually “restrained” from *discontinuing either exercise position* if they become too uncomfortable – and no one participating in these exercises is pregnant ... or “ill” (“unhealthy”) ... or has engaged in any extreme physical exertion prior to participation – ***NO ONE is at risk for dying due to RESTRAINT ASPHYXIA during performance of these two exercises!***

If performed (led) correctly, the *only* time there is a potential “danger” for INJURY during these exercises, is when participants are RETURNING TO THEIR SEATS! If they get up and start walking too quickly, individuals who vigorously participated may become lightheaded, and may even FALL OVER! This problem can be entirely avoided if you adhere to the following TWO RULES:

1. Get participants INTO the first exercise position QUICKLY ...
2. Get participants back to their seats (after the second exercise) SLOWLY!

SPECIAL NOTE:

Recently, it was suggested that participants would experience an even more dramatic – even more **kinesthetically impressive** – sense of how seriously forceful-prone-restraint (or supine abdominal restraint) interferes with breathing, if they were **PHYSICALLY EXERTED BEFORE** they performed the “Assume The Position” Exercises.

Brief and controlled methods of PRE-EXERTION were suggested – such as several laps of “brisk-walking” around the classroom’s perimeter ... or, one minute of “Jumping-Jacks” performance ... or, performing 50 Fast Sit-ups ... and, the like.

I spent a great deal of time thinking about that entirely “VALID” suggestion. Here are the things I considered, and the CONCLUSION that I came to:

- If the “Assume The Position” exercises were augmented with a controlled period of PRE-EXERTION, there certainly would be NO danger of Restraint Asphyxia occurring in class.

1. The **Chan et al.** types have scientifically proven that **healthy persons**, exercised in a controlled manner for 4 minutes, do not experience a “clinically significant” decrease in oxygenation when placed in a prone position. [In fact, that is the ONLY thing that **Chan et al.** have ever “scientifically proven”!]]
2. **More importantly, PRE-EXERTED classroom participants STILL would not be “restrained” from “escaping” either of the exercise positions while they performed them.**

Should any participant become seriously uncomfortable (or “distressed”) during either exercise, she/he could simply roll to a lateral (side) position, or release his/her hold on her knees, immediately FREEING her/his BELLY from any form of restriction – immediately being ABLE TO BREATHE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY!

- If the “**Assume The Position**” exercises were preceded by controlled-exertion, the participants CERTAINLY WOULD experience a significantly GREATER degree of breathing difficulty.

HOWEVER!

I seriously worry that prefacing the “**Assume The Position**” exercises with any kind of “EXERTIONAL ACTIVITIES” might encourage participants to **Entirely BLAME the PRE-EXERTION Phase** for the breathing difficulty they experienced during their performance of the “**ASSUME THE POSITION**” exercises.

After all, many of us “**breathe hard**” after doing only a few Jumping-Jacks, even when we are *comfortably positioned* afterwards!

- Thus, when **PRE-EXERTED-“Assume The Position”-Educated** responders encountered an altered-level-of-consciousness victim “running amuck”, they MIGHT be inclined to think,
**“We JUST got this call ...
 So, this person probably hasn’t been exerting himself (herself) for ‘very long’ ...
 Prone positioning didn’t kill ME after a LITTLE bit of exertion ...
 So, it’s probably safe to use forceful-prone-restraint on this person –
 at least for a few minutes.”**

SUCH THOUGHTS WOULD BE VERY, VERY WRONG!!!

- **SEIZURES** (especially when followed by violent post-seizure physical exertion) can exhaust an individual’s *entire body* within as few as 2 to 5 minutes after the SEIZURE ONSET!
- ANY person suffering from **HYPOGLYCEMIA** (low blood sugar) – whether or NOT the victim is a “Diabetic” – will suffer **ENTIRE BODY EXHAUSTION** within as few as 2 to 5 minutes after the ONSET of violent hypoglycemic physical exertion activity!
- And! Even though someone “**JUST CALLED 911**”, that is **NO INDICATION** of the ACTUAL amount of time that the altered-level-of-consciousness-victim has

engaged in extreme exertional activity *PRIOR TO* the 911 CALL being made!

- **LASTLY:**

I believe that the “**Assume The Position**” exercises MOST DRAMATICALLY effect participants when they begin the exercises while **COMPLETELY RESTED**.

- Once they’ve experienced the breathing difficulty caused ONLY by YELLING for approximately 30 seconds while in a prone position –
- Once they’ve experienced the breathing difficulty caused ONLY by their BELLIES being obstructed by their own legs (even when in a SUPINE position) –

I believe that participants can easily and accurately IMAGINE how much *WORSE* it would feel if they HAD “exerted themselves” BEFORE or DURING performance of these very simple “**Assume The Position**” exercises.

MY CONCLUSION:

PLZ, do NOT augment the two “Assume The Position” exercises with ANY method of PRE-EXERTION!

Such augmentation is entirely UNNECESSARY, and may even be DETRIMENTAL to the “**LESSON**” that needs to be learned!

FINAL NOTE:

AFTER you’ve become well-acquainted with the reasons for my exercise rules and directions, as well as EXPERIENCED in leading these exercises, feel free to alter the “scripted” phrases to better fit your own personal teaching style or service needs.

***HOWEVER!* Do NOT *EVER* alter the basic “content” of the exercise directions, and do NOT *EVER* alter ANY of the exercise performance “RULES”!**