

Table 7.1: The Signs, Symptoms and Management of Heat Exposure

TYPE OF HEAT EXPOSURE	SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES
<b>Heat Cramps:</b> Painful muscle cramps of the limbs and abdomen, either while resting or exercising.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Weakness, tiredness</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Moist cool skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cool the cramped muscles for 15 to 20 minutes and gently stretch them.</li> <li>• Give water and salty snacks to replace fluid lost through sweating.</li> <li>• Massage may relieve pain.</li> <li>• Rest until conditions are cooler.</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Exhaustion:</b> Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweating</li> <li>• Raised body temperature</li> <li>• Pale, cool and clammy skin</li> <li>• Thirst</li> <li>• Dizziness and weakness</li> <li>• Rapid pulse</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace lost fluids (electrolytes and water) – 1 litre every hour in small sips.</li> <li>• Place casualty in the shade with head low and feet raised.</li> <li>• Keep patients body temperature stable. Cooling may worsen the condition. A sleeping bag may be more appropriate to avoid shock.</li> <li>• If unconscious, place casualty in coma position.</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Stroke:</b> Failure of the body's temperature regulating system. If untreated, the victim will die due to brain damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No sweating</li> <li>• A rise in body temperature to 40°C or more</li> <li>• Hot, dry or still sweaty skin</li> <li>• Possible seizures and twitches</li> <li>• Rapid pulse with fast, shallow breathing</li> <li>• Low level of consciousness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressively cool the patient – wet cotton clothing, vigorously fan the person.</li> <li>• Place casualty in the shade.</li> <li>• If the person is conscious, give water. Do not give aspirin.</li> <li>• Evacuate by stretcher once stabilised, or bring transport to victim.</li> <li>• The casualty is extremely fragile and should not exercise at all.</li> </ul>



Figure 7.11: Managing heat stroke

## Prevention of Hyperthermia

In order to minimise the chances of hyperthermia:

- always be aware of reliable water sources and seek cooler, shaded routes in hot weather.
- do not overextend the capabilities of the group during the early stages of a trip.
- wear sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat and loose, light-coloured cotton clothing which is permeable to sweat - preferably a long sleeved shirt and pants.
- ensure group members are drinking sufficient fluids, preferably more than they need. Be prepared to collect rainwater.
- know the warning signs of impending heat illness, such as dark-colored urine, dizziness, headache and fatigue.