

# HOW TO SURVIVE IF YOU ARE BURIED ALIVE

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## **1** Conserve your air supply.

If you are buried in a typical coffin, you will have enough air to survive for an hour or two at most. Take deep breaths, then hold for as long as possible before exhaling. Do not breathe and then swallow, which will lead to hyperventilation. Do not light a match or lighter. Combustion will quickly use your available oxygen. It is safe to use a flashlight if you have one. Do not yell. Yelling will lead to panic, which will increase your heart rate and lead to fast breathing that will rapidly consume your air supply.

## **2** Press up on the coffin lid with your hands.

An inexpensive “pine box” (chipboard coffin) or a recycled paperboard coffin will have some give to it, so it will be relatively easy to break through. If you feel flex in the coffin lid, continue to step 3. A metal-clad or hardwood coffin will be impossible to pierce. In this case, your only hope is to signal for rescue. Use a metal object (ring, belt buckle, coin, flask, pen) to signal that you are alive. Tap SOS, the international distress signal, on the coffin lid: three quick taps, followed by three slower taps, followed by three quick taps. Continue to repeat the distress call until someone hears you.

## **3** Remove your shirt.

Cross your arms over your chest, then uncross your arms so that your elbows are bent and your hands are at your shoulders. Pull your shirt up and off your head from the shoulders, do a partial sit-up (as much as you can in the space available), then pull your shirt over your head and off.

## **4** Tie the bottom of the shirt in a knot.

The shirt should have only one large opening, at the neck, as does a bag.

## **5** Place your head through the neck hole.

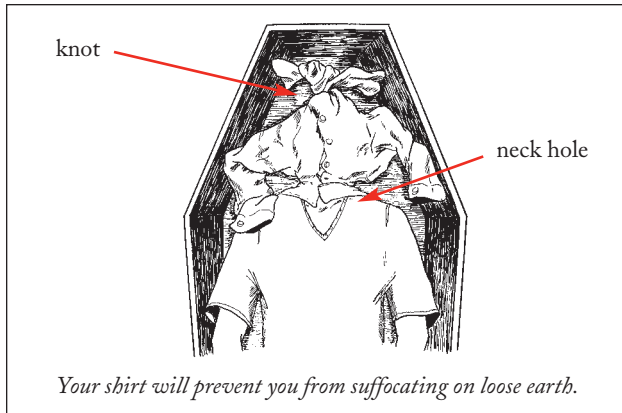
The knot should be on the top of your head. The shirt will prevent you from suffocating on loose earth.

## **6** Break through the coffin.

Using your feet, begin kicking the coffin lid. A cheap coffin may have already split from the weight of the earth above, making your job easier. Break apart the lid with your hands and feet and let the loose dirt rush in.

## **7** Use your hands to push the dirt toward your feet.

There should be some space at the bottom end of the coffin, below your feet. As the dirt rushes in, work quickly but calmly to fill the space at your feet. When this space fills up, push dirt to your sides. Breathe slowly and regularly.



**8 Sit up.**

As you move to a seated position, the loose earth above will move to fill the space you just occupied. As the dirt falls, continue to push it into the coffin until you can stand up.

**9 Stand.**

Once you are standing, you should be able to push the dirt above you up and out of the grave. When you have cleared all the dirt above you, climb out.

**Be Aware**

- A recently interred coffin will be covered with loose earth that is relatively easy to dig through.
- Escaping from a coffin interred during a rain storm will be difficult. The compacted weight of the wet earth will make digging almost impossible.
- The higher the clay content of the soil, the more difficult your escape will be.

**WORST-CASE  
SCENARIO.**