

Diving Safety: How to Treat Stings From the Most Common Jellyfish

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Apart from sharks, the sea is home to other marine life that poses a potential danger to divers. Jellyfish or jellies, for starters, is one of the most common aquatic animal to cause discomfort. These carefree organisms effortlessly roam the seas, in their translucent (sometimes almost invisible) and mesmerizing bodies, attracting attention even from a distance. But not to be fooled by their beautiful exterior, jellyfish can cause severe pain and injuries when come in contact with. If you're a water buff or an avid diver, it's best that you learn the different types of jelly fish and how to deal with their stings so you may perform self-relief treatments immediately. *Be very careful, stings from the pacific box jellyfish (Sea Wasp) can be deadly and medical care should be sought immediately.*



In case of a jelly fish attack, here's a step-by-step guide on how you can treat a common jelly fish sting:

1. **Put on Gloves** - You can be stung even though only the tentacles are present, and you do not want to become a victim as well.
2. **Stay calm** – As hard as it may sound, it's necessary that the victim stay calm and alert upon realization that he/she's been stung. Being level headed at a time of a crisis can help prevent the problem from escalating, and you can think of effective ways to abate the situation. If the victim starts to complain of difficulty breathing, or pains elsewhere, contact your local Emergency Medical Service ASAP.
3. **Get out of the water** – To keep the jelly fish from causing more damage, the victim must get out of the water immediately after being stung. The venom may impair the diver's ability to swim, and getting out of the water may be more difficult and problematic.
4. **Remove stingers** – Use sand to scrape off the stingers from the affected area. If the hotel room is near, ask someone to bring a shaving cream and razor to remove the nematocysts
5. **Stop it from stinging again** – To pee or not to pee, that is the question. Deactivate the venom by splashing sea water (never fresh water) to the wound or for best results, use vinegar (except with Portuguese Man-o-War, which will cause the nematocysts to continue to fire). Although research have said that urine is also an effective tool in relieving jelly fish stings, recent studies however discounts its effectiveness in treating jelly fish stings. But when none of the aforementioned are available, you may try and use urine to abate the pain.
6. **Decontaminate affected area** – Make a paste by mixing water and baking soda. Apply this solution to the wound using a soft cloth to remove the venom.
7. **Care for the wound** – Soak the affect area with hot water every 15 to 20 minutes to stop the effects of the venom, remove the affected area and if pain still persists, soak again.

After a sting, it is always recommended you follow up with medical advice. This blog is for informational purposes only, and is not a substitute for professional medical care.