

# Surviving if You Get Buried in Snow

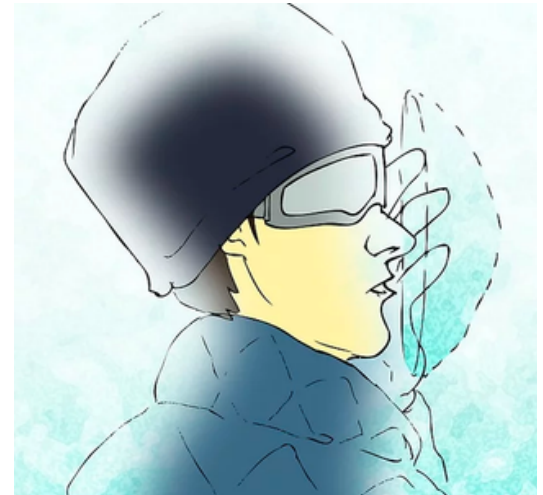
## Hold one arm straight above your head

It should be pointed in the direction of the snow's surface. This will help you figure out which way is up since it's easy to get disoriented once you're buried. It may also help rescuers locate you. Spitting out a small amount of your saliva can also help with figuring out which way is up because the fluid will run down.



## Dig a pocket around your face

- Once the avalanche stops, the snow settles in as heavily as concrete. If you're buried deeper than a foot or so when it sets, it will be impossible to get out on your own. Your only hope then is to ward off asphyxiation long enough for people to dig you out. Use either your free hand or an avalanche shovel to dig an air pocket near your nose and mouth. When the avalanche slows down. With a small air pocket to breathe from, you should have enough air to last at least 30 minutes.
- Take a deep breath before the snow settles. Right before the snow settles, inhale deeply and hold your breath for a few seconds. This causes your chest to expand, giving you some breathing room when the snow hardens around you. If you don't have this breathing room, you may not even be able to expand your chest to breathe while you're buried.



## Conserve air and energy

Try to move once the snow settles, but don't jeopardize your air pocket. If you're very near the surface, you may be able to dig your way out, but otherwise, you aren't going anywhere. Don't waste precious breath by struggling against the snow. Remain calm and wait to be rescued.

- If you hear people nearby, try to call them, but don't keep it up if they don't seem to hear you. You can probably hear them better than they can hear you, and shouting just wastes your limited air supply.



## Wait for rescuers to come

If you hit the slopes with an avalanche beacon and probe, and your fellow skiers did the same, someone will be able to find you and dig you out. Stay calm and wait.



# Increasing Your Chances of Survival

## Take survival equipment, in case of an avalanche, always

Never hit the slopes without it. There are a few pieces of equipment that greatly reduce people's risk of dying in an avalanche. Invest in the following items:

- An avalanche receiver and probe. The receiver puts out a signal to show where the person is buried, and the probe is used to locate the person and start digging. Every person in your party should carry both.
- A small shovel. This is used to dig an air pocket around the face.
- A helmet. Many avalanche-related fatalities happen because of the initial impact of the snow knocking people off of their feet.
- Skier's airbags have become more popular in recent years. They help to keep your body toward the surface of the snow, so you're less likely to get buried.



## Take an avalanche training course

Avalanches happen frequently enough that many organizations provide intensive training courses to coach skiers and snowboarders on how to avoid avalanches, save themselves, and rescue each other. If you're traveling to an avalanche country, it's worth taking a course.



**SOURCE: [wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com)**