



Save yourself!

Make a set of ice rescue claws.

Instructions for making Ice Claws

1. Get two 4" pieces of wooden doweling the size of a broom handle or a little larger. Whatever material you select, it should float in case you drop the claws while struggling.
2. Drive a stout nail into one end of each dowel. This should be a hardened 16 penny or larger concrete nail.
3. Use a file to sharpen the nail heads to a point.
4. Drill a hole into the dowels (in the end opposite the nail) and tie a length of strong cord through the hole so a pick is on each end "jump-rope" fashion. You may also drill a hole in the ends alongside the nails so the nail on the other pick can nest in the hole, keeping both points covered. Keep the picks in your pocket for quick emergency access if you or a companion do break through.

If you do break through, try to remain calm.

1. Turn in the water towards the direction you came from - that is probably the strongest ice.
2. Dig the points of the picks into the ice and while vigorously kicking your feet, pull yourself onto the surface by sliding forward on the ice.
3. Roll away from the area of weak ice. Rolling on the ice will distribute your weight to help avoid breaking through again.
4. Get to shelter, heat, warm dry clothing and warm, non-alcoholic, and non-caffeinated drinks.

Call 911 and seek medical attention if you feel disoriented, have uncontrollable shivering, or have any other ill effects that may be symptoms of hypothermia, (the life-threatening drop in the body's core temperature.)

If your buddy breaks through, first tell them to "Stay calm" and that "We'll get you out of there in a second." Then throw them the picks and explain how to use them. Remember that by kicking their feet, the thrust of the kicks can help push them back onto the solid ice.