

How to Use WMTC's Wilderness Medicine Handbook

The Wilderness Medicine Handbook has a unique indexing system based on the Mechanism of Injury — or MOI — that permits you to find information quickly. There are three MOI and each are evaluated differently; they are: Trauma, Environmental, and Medical. In the Contents the Trauma problem list is colored pink; the Environmental problem list, green; and, the Medical problem list, blue. Note that each colored section has it's own Index written in red print at the top with a page number.

Trauma, Environmental, & Medical Indexes

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Medical Abbreviations & Symbols inside back cover

Evacuation Guidelines, SOAP Notes, & Medical Abbreviations & Symbols

Evacuation Guidelines and Patient SOAP notes are in the back of the book; and, Medical Abbreviations & Symbols are on the inside of the back cover. The book uses LOTs of acronyms and it takes a little while getting used to them.

If you know the name of the problem you are looking for first identify the MOI and then scan the topic list in that section for the problem. Once you find it turn to the page number for a brief explanation of the pathophysiology and bulleted prevention, signs & symptoms, and treatment guidelines.

If you don't know the problem and are trying to figure it out:

If your patient was hit by or hit something then the MOI is trauma and turn to the **Trauma Index** on page 2. Identify the part(s) of the person body that was hit and follow the index across from left to right to identify the possible problem(s) then turn to that page and see if the signs and symptoms of that problem match those of your patient. If they do, then follow the treatment guidelines for that problem.

Identify the body part hit and follow left to right to the possible problem



Body Part	System	Component	Possible Pxs	Page
Head	Nervous	Brain	Concussion	3
		Spinal Cord	Increased ICP	3
	Circulatory	Blood	Cut or Pressure	5
			Volume Shock	4
Chest	Respiratory	Lungs & Pleura	Respiratory Distress	4
	Musculoskeletal	Vertebrae	Unstable Spine	5
Abdomen		Circulatory	Blood	Volume Shock
	Extremities		Musculoskeletal	Bones & Joints
		Simple Dislocation		12
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Skin & Soft Tissue	Integumentary	Skin & Soft Tissue	Wounds	28
			Infection	34

For EXAMPLE:

If your patient was hit in the head they may be suffering from increased ICP (see page 3), a concussion (see page 3), and/or they may have damaged a vertebrae and a bone fragment has cut or put pressure on their spinal cord (see page 5). Identify the problem by its signs and symptoms and then follow the treatment guidelines for that problem.

IF your patient wasn't hit or their signs and symptoms don't match any of the traumatic problems, then turn to the **Environmental Index** on page 36 and match the current environmental conditions or specific mechanism with the environmental mechanisms listed in the left column. Once you find a match, move to the second column for a list of all the possible problems related to that MOI then turn to that page and see if the signs and symptoms of the problem match those of your patient. If they do, then follow the treatment guidelines for that problem.

It's cold out
or your
patient is
cold.



ENVIRONMENTAL INDEX

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For EXAMPLE:

If it's cold out but above freezing your patient may be suffering from Hypothermia (page 46) and or a Non-freezing Injury (page 49). Identify the problem by its signs and symptoms and then follow the treatment guidelines for that problem.

IF your patient wasn't hit, their signs and symptoms don't match any of the traumatic problems, there's no environmental MOI or their signs and symptoms don't match any of the traumatic problems then turn to the **Medical Index** on page 76. Because Medical problems can be very difficult to diagnose, you turn to page 77 for a general assessment and treatment based on "Red Flags."

Turn to page 77 to assess and evacuate based on "Red Flags."

MEDICAL INDEX
General Assessment & Tx of Medical Pxs page 77

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Major S/Sx & Hx	Possible Dx	Page
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	Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)	79
	Cardiogenic Shock	79
	Heart Burn	80
	Aortic Aneurysm & Dissection	80
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Infectious Disease Index Abdominal Pain & Tenderness Diagnostic Charts

If no "Red Flags" exist, then see if you can identify the problem by matching the patients primary signs and symptoms to those in the first column. Once you find a match, move to the second column for a list of all the possible problems related to that MOI then turn to the corresponding page and see if the signs and symptoms of the problem match those of your patient. If they do, then follow the treatment guidelines for that problem. Turn to the diagnostic charts on pages 109-111 to help identify the problem associated with abdominal pain and tenderness; and pages 124-126 if you suspect an infectious disease.

Follow the general rule: "When in doubt, take them out."

With practice you will be able to navigate the handbook VERY quickly. Consider purchasing small colored plastic dividers to mark the three index pages and two diagnostic charts to make them even easier to find. Use red for the Trauma Index, green for the Environmental Index, and blue for the Medical Index, the Abdominal Pain & Tenderness diagnostic charts, and the Infectious Disease Index.