

BDSM Safety Notes

NB: These notes are not a comprehensive list of safety factors when engaging in BDSM, they are merely a set of guidelines suggesting good practice. All activities are undertaken at the participants' own risk.

1) Safe, Sane and Consensual -

Safe: Don't engage in risky practices without careful forethought. Putting ropes around a person's neck, tying someone up and leaving them alone or breath play are just some examples of things that can go wrong unexpectedly. Make sure you are aware of any medical problems your subject has and you can release them quickly and safely if needed. Do not leave someone alone in bondage if there is a risk of them getting into difficulties (see Positional Asphyxia below for example).

Sane: Playing whilst either partner drunk or under the influence of drugs is not recommended. What may seem fine and enjoyable at the time may actually be damaging someone without them realising it until too late, eg pain sensations being dampened by drink or drugs. Also don't play if you're angry etc. Taking out your frustrations on someone else isn't a good idea.

Consensual: Nobody should have anything done to them or be required to do something without their consent. If you are going to try something new, make sure your subject is aware of it and can decline if they don't like the idea. Abuse is not part of BDSM.

2) Negotiation and Safe Words

Following on from Consensual, it is recommended that you and your subject discuss what is planned before you start doing it. Everyone has limits to what they will or won't do, the best time to find out what those limits are is before you play, not half way through a session.

It is also strongly recommended that a set of Safe Words are in place. One of the most common is the **Traffic Light system:**

GREEN - Go ahead (used to check in and make sure someone's ok)

AMBER - Proceed with caution, getting close to a limit.

RED - Stop what you are doing, it's over the limit.

RED RED RED - Emergency stop, end the whole scene right now. Used if someone's in serious discomfort, getting scared, getting cramp (which is not fun!) etc.

If you are using gags, you can use finger signals (one, two or three fingers for "Green", "Amber" and "Red" respectively and five fingers repeatedly for "Emergency Stop") or give the subject an object such as a bunch of keys or a bell that they can jingle or drop for an obvious sign.

Note that the Top/ Dominant Partner can, of course, also call a halt if they think things are going too far, if a whipping draws blood by accident or they are concerned for the Bottom/ Submissive's safety etc.

Rope Safety

1) Constriction - Take a rope and loop the centre around your wrist a couple of times. Pull on the ends and feel how it gets tighter, this is an example of constriction and should be avoided as it can risk cutting off the blood supply. When putting on rope bondage make sure that a tie cannot cinch down unexpectedly.

2) Positional Asphyxia - Leaving someone lying face down, especially if Hogtied (wrists and ankles bound and pulled towards each other behind the back) can cause some people difficulty in breathing. Even lying someone on a soft duvet could block their nose and mouth. Similarly, just pulling someone's arms upwards can make breathing harder so keep an eye on them at all times.

3) Neck - Putting ropes around someone's neck is very risky and is not advisable.

4) Load Spreading - Winding a single wrap of rope around eg a wrist puts a lot of pressure on a small area. Two wraps will spread the load and reduce the chances of discomfort.