

You want to explore kink?



In order to keep the text more fluid, these symbols represent elements that are mentioned throughout the pamphlet:

 High Risk

 STI Transmissibility Level

 Required Knowledge Level

 Myth Busting

 Possible Blood Contact


 Toy Sharing Discouraged


 Toy Sharing Possible



 Discouraged Use

 Recommended Care

 Beware of nicks and scratches

The risks  are estimated for practices that do not involve contact with bodily fluids.

If the skin surfaces involved in the practices show signs of lesions, add  to the estimates displayed in this pamphlet.

If your practice involves contacts with genitals, add   to the estimates displayed in this pamphlet and consider taking workshops to understand the particularities of genital BDSM play.

So, you want to explore kink! Before going further in this adventure with people you trust, there's some essential information for you to know in order to navigate this world without overstepping your own limits. In the next few pages, you'll find an overview of the most common practices, some security tips to explore them with minimal risks and ways to get started discovering each of them.

Note that the safest way to explore these practices remains to be accompanied by people who have more experience than you, who can guide and reassure you. Some of the practices described here shouldn't even be attempted without the support of such a mentor; that being said, even with the best support system around you, some security notions on the practices you want to explore are invaluable to know in order to prevent accidents. It can also help you sort through the advice other players might give you to determine which works best for you and your partners.

You'll probably notice that genitals aren't mentioned much in this pamphlet: it's because they're not essential to **BDSM** practices. The next few pages offer you to explore sexuality in another way than genital sex, through sensuality and power exchanges. Allow yourself to be surprised by the pleasures your body can give you, in different ways! Feel free to add genital sex in your kinky practices; after all, the **STI** risks when genitals are involved into **BDSM** play are more or less the same than in vanilla* sex.

*vanilla: refers to practices and people that are not kinky

Consent

Consent is at the heart of a fun and safe experience, as it is with any intimate encounter. Consent should always be:

- **Precise**: What do I want to do, in detail?
- **Free**: Do I really want to do it, without fear, pressure or coercion?
- **Informed**: Do I know enough about what I'm about to do in order to do it safely?
- **Enthusiastic**: Would I rather be doing something else instead?
- **Revocable**: What can I do to tell you I'd like to stop?

Beyond this base, which applies to any intimate interaction, consent within **BDSM** context requires specific measures to make sure you and your partners stay safe, physically and psychologically. You should feel you can trust your partners enough to be comfortable discussing in great details the following elements:

- **Precise**: Discuss specifically, without ambiguity, the practices you'd like to try, to which intensity you'd like to try them and your level of comfort with bodily marks and bruises. This allows you to build a menu from which you and your partners can pick while playing. It's important that you also discuss your expectations (types of dynamics, level of commitment, intensity) to make sure no one will be disappointed.
- **Free**: Make sure that you are in the mood and that you don't feel like you have to do something because of the existing dynamic with your partners, for example feeling like you have to say yes because you have a submissive role in your relationship or to avoid losing your partners. Even within a long term dynamic, it's important to plan regular out-of-play moments to review the agreements.

- Informed: It's important that you have enough knowledge about what you're getting into and what to observe to preserve your own well-being. You should discuss your own limits as well as your partners' so they are explicit:

Do you have any mental or physical health issues that should be taken into consideration while playing? An injury that could limit what you can safely do? Bad memories that could surface if certain words or practices are used?

Did you take alcohol or drugs (prescription or not) before playing? What impact can it have on your play?

Do you and/or your partners have enough experience and knowledge about the practices you want to do? Are you able to help each other or get support from another person while you explore together?

- Enthusiastic: Make sure your intentions are positive throughout the scene (the point is not to pass aggressivity on your partners nor to prove yourself or make yourself look good).
- Revocable: Agree on ways (safeword, tap out, etc.) to let each other know you want to slow down or stop what you're doing. Make sure you trust your partners enough to be comfortable using these methods and be respected in the limits they express.

To have the best possible experience, it's also important to discuss your needs after a scene, which is called aftercare. Do your partners' and your needs fit together? If not, how and with whom can you make sure to get them fulfilled?

Psychological Play

Often the first thing someone tries out when interested by BDSM practices, psychological play is the eroticisation of the roles and interactions between players. It involves temporarily changing our relationship to ourselves and to others. The vast majority of BDSM practices involve one form or other of psychological play.



As psychological play can be done entirely without physical contact, it usually doesn't have any risk of STI transmission in itself. If you add other practices to your psychological play, you should consider the risks associated with these practices.



All forms of psychological play require a high level of trust and excellent communication between partners; even though they don't leave physical marks, the potential impacts shouldn't be taken lightly. These practices can have dramatic consequences on mental health if done negligently or with ill intentions. You should be able to welcome and take into consideration your partners' worries and be confident that yours will be too.

Role Play



Embodiment of a different role during a scene. It can vary from a stereotypical role - police officer, nurse, naughty student - to the construction of complex scenarios and/or the adoption of a character that can become an alter-ego.

BUSTED

The roles someone adopts are not necessarily static: the same person can appreciate different roles depending on the contexts or partners.



Role play doesn't involve technical learning, but communication and boundary affirmation abilities are important to develop.

Discipline



Practices revolving around rules, learning to obey them and getting punished when not, such as obedience training, life habits control, etc.

BUSTED

Punishment doesn't have to be physical; just think about orgasm denial.



Practicing discipline with someone requires sensitivity to be able to recognize, value and support them within the limits of their capacities.

Where to start

- Simple rules that are beneficial for the person obeying them (i.e. having breakfast every morning with picture proof)
- Rules that reinforce the established dynamic (i.e. use of honorific titles to refer to the Dominant person)
- Beware not to want too much, too fast; remembering and obeying many rules requires time

Humiliation



Practice that aims at generating shame, shyness or degradation within the submissive person.

BUSTED

These practices can be done both in public and in private.



There's a very fine line between erotic humiliation and psychological abuse: you need to stay aware of your intentions during play to minimize negative impacts. You should also be ready to support your partners in case some of the practices have harmful consequences on them, even if it wasn't your intention.

Where to start

- Agree on what can and cannot be used as humiliation leverage

Sensation Play

The most accessible form of physical play is sensation play. These practices use the erotic potential of the senses by amplifying or minimizing them.

Even though you can play by adding sensations, sensory deprivation is also part of sensation play and sits at the junction with psychological play.



As sensation play can be done entirely without direct physical contact, it usually doesn't have much risk of STI transmission in itself.

Cold



Playing with ice cubes, cold water or refrigerated toys, cold can serve to awaken the senses.



Know what signs to look for in order to avoid frost bites, and take into account the colour of the skin which might show different signs of reaction to cold.

Where to start

- Experiment with ice cubes
- Put metal, glass or ceramic toys in the refrigerator (not the freezer!)
- Cold or frozen food (i.e. berries, chocolate) should be kept only for external use
- Start with shorter skin-contact time and build up slowly
- Be careful with the frost bites that could be caused by putting a cold toy in direct contact with humid skin

Stimulation & Deprivation



Practices where you play with the expectations, provoke surprise or anticipation, even scare, by varying the sensations added (tickles, scratches, pinching, textures) or taken away (ear plugs, eye mask).

BUSTED

The brain is the most developed sexual organ of the human body - and the most neglected in intimacy!



Take into consideration that depriving one sense might amplify the intensity of perception of the others.

Where to start

- Creativity is the only toy you truly need for stimulation and deprivation play

Wax



Use of candle wax or melting crayons to create sensations of intense heat on the skin.



Learn to use the distance so the heat is intense without causing harm. A drop of wax falling from farther has more time to cool off before hitting the skin.

Where to start

- Protect your play space, wax is hard to clean on fabric
- Have a cold water cloth or some water on hand in case the sensations get too intense
- Be careful when choosing your wax: type and colour affect the melting temperature, white paraffin remains the safest choice
- Beware: do NOT use beeswax

Electro Play

Electro play is often considered as part of the sensation play or medical play categories. Each person reacts a little differently to electric stimulation. Lots of accessories can be used with a Violet Wand or a TENS Unit. These toys and the matching accessories are rather expensive, so it can be a good idea to try during a workshop before investing.

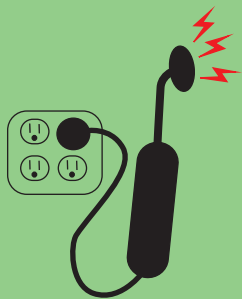
Other gadgets can be used for electrical play, but as they aren't usually made for human use, the intensity of the current is different and can be more dangerous, using such an improvised toy requires knowledge and experience.



As electro play can be done entirely without direct physical contact, it usually doesn't have much risk of STI transmission in itself.

Violet Wand

Stimulation of the skin with static electricity.



BUSTED

The Violet Wand only stimulates the superficial layers of the skin and creates sensations ranging from pinching to tickles.



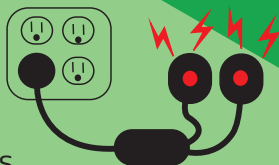
It's recommended to carefully read the instructions and get used to the toy before experimenting with partners.

Where to start

- Take off jewels or any clothing that has metal pieces on it
- Beware of implants (prosthetics, pacemaker) and health issues

TENS Unit

Stimulation of the muscles with a low intensity electrical current. This device was first developed for medical treatments and some models have been adapted for erotic play.



BUSTED

Except when it is medically contraindicated, the TENS Unit has too low of a voltage to electrocute someone when used correctly.



It's recommended to carefully read the instructions and get used to the toy before experimenting with partners. Considering that the TENS Unit can deliver a rather intense stimulation, knowledge of first aid is advised. It's hard to predict the reaction your body will have, even if you are fully healthy. A good knowledge of the nervous system is significantly helpful to play safely.

Where to start

- Take off jewels or any clothing that has metal pieces on it
- Beware of implants (prosthetics, pacemaker) and health issues
- If you use insertable accessories, take into consideration that the current will feel a lot more intense
- Never place the electrodes on opposite sides of the torso or head
- The electrodes' stickers are single use
- In case of problem, the most efficient solution is to start by unplugging the toy from the wall socket
- If you have cardiac problems, it is extremely dangerous to play with electrical current

Impact Play

Impact play consists of all the sensation practices that involve hitting your partners or being hit by them. Before starting a scene, it's important to discuss the potential bodily marks (bruises, scratches) that can result from these practices and to mention if you'd like to have some or not, and if so, where on your body and to what intensity.

Spanking



Practice of impact delivered bare handedly on various body parts. The scene is created by changing intensity, rhythm and localisation on the body of each slap.


BUSTED

Stereotypically depicted as slaps on the butt of someone who's bending over, spanking can also be practiced on any muscular part of the body (thighs, calves, arms, abdominal and lateral muscles).



This practice is relatively safe to learn on your own, but it can be fun to learn some techniques to vary intensity without hurting your own self.



Spanking generally involves almost no STI transmission risk, unless you have skin lesions. 

Where to start

- Beware: spanking on a bone (elbow, hipbone, etc.) is just as painful and unpleasant for the person giving (top) than receiving (bottom)

Flexible Toys

Impact practice done with flexible toys (floggers, crop, dragon tail, etc.)



BUSTED

Contrary to popular belief, there's no risk of hurting the kidneys with most flexible toys; they are protected under the lower part of the ribcage, the superficial impacts of flexible toys aren't strong enough to get to them.



Flexible toys require precision and control, which takes a lot of practice to develop before experimenting on a partner.



As flexible toys can be used entirely without direct physical contact, it usually doesn't have much risk of STI transmission in itself.

Where to start

- Explore the sensations with pervertible objects of everyday life (dish cloth, belt) before investing

Rigid Toys

Impact practice done with inflexible toys (paddles, canes, etc.).



Similar to spanking, but with the added difficulty of handling the toy itself.



This type of impact has a higher risk of skin lesions.

Where to start

- Explore the sensations with pervertible objects of everyday life (wooden spoon, paint mixer) before investing

Whip

Impact practice with a whip, which involves an important psychological component of fear.



BUSTED

Contrary to what one could think, the whip barely ever touches the skin of the bottom when practiced safely. This toy is less of an impact toy and more of a fear and surprise inducing toy, with the power of the noise it makes, and even the softest of touch creates very intense sensations.



Properly and safely handling a whip requires a lot of practice.



As soon as the whip touches the skin, the speed at which it does inevitably creates lesions.

Where to start

- It's almost impossible to play with a whip without causing some form of body marks, it's important to discuss that before getting started
- Considered edge play, many public or semi-private play spaces (dungeons) don't accept whip during their events because of the intensity of the noise it makes
- Even if you play at home, take noise into consideration (think about your neighbours or roommates!)
- A whip is rather expensive, it can be a good idea to try it in an event or workshop before investing

Fun fact:

The noise we hear is created by the tip of the whip breaking the wall of sound!



Wrestling & Rough Body Play

Includes a wide variety of physical practices of higher intensity, ranging from consensual erotic wrestling to intense bare handed impacts (fists, kicks, bites, martial arts submission holds).

Most forms of primal play fall into this category as well. These practices rely more on instinct and put emphasis on physicality; some people might become non-verbal during a primal play scene.

BUSTED

The strength of the impact isn't necessarily the goal of these practices; surprise of a sudden and loud impact can play on fear without it being particularly painful.



Control martial arts techniques can provide a clear advantage when exploring these practices; if you don't have any, a deep understanding of anatomy is essential to play safely.



These practices involve sustained physical contact and a much higher risk of bodily fluid exchange (sweat, saliva, blood, tears). You should pay attention to skin lesions before and all the way through the scene.



Where to start

- It can be interesting to start kneeling or on all fours, this way you won't fall from too high
- Make the environment kid-safe: put away all fragile objects, cover surfaces that could cause injuries (i.e. furniture corners)
- Take off all jewels and clothing that could hurt you, trim and file your nails (toenails too!)

Bondage

Bondage is a practice of movement restriction, ranging up to constraining someone in a specific position.



As bondage can be practiced with limited physical contact, it usually has little risk of STI transmission in itself. The risks are higher when the material used is in contact with bodily fluids  or with skin lesions. 

BUSTED

Logic dictates not to tie the restraints too tight to allow more comfort for the bottom; that can actually make the risk of injuries higher.

Some safety rules are common to all restriction practices and are essential to know:



- Never leave a bound person unattended
- Pay attention to signs of fatigue (muscle weakness, tingling, temperature change)
- Once free from your bonds, you may feel temporarily weak



Knowing these rules isn't sufficient to practice safely.

Restriction



Practice that aims at limiting movement with dedicated (handcuffs, spreader bar, etc.) or improvised toys (tie, stocking, etc.).



The toys that are made for restriction are easier to use, if you follow the basic safety rules of bondage. That being said, even the dedicated toys carry risk of nerve damage, it's important to remain careful and to know the first signs of such injury to prevent them.

Restriction with Rope



Practice that aims at limiting movement with ropes made of natural or synthetic fibers.

BUSTED

Bondage with rope (with or without suspension) looks like a rather innocent practice, but it's probably one of the most risky practices presented here because of the nerve damage risk, which can cause irreversible injuries.



A deep knowledge of anatomy is invaluable to prevent injuries; it's also essential to take specialised workshops.

Where to start

- Have safety scissors (penny shears) in case of problem or emergency
- Explore the fibers; some are better suited for certain practices than others
- Shibari and kinbaku practices require a specific training

Suspension

Restriction practice that allows someone to stay partially or completely off the ground while being tied with natural fibers ropes.



BUSTED

Even though shibari and kinbaku involve suspension practices, not all suspension derives from these traditions.



Suspension is a very advanced practice, don't improvise it. Surrounding yourself with people who have experience with this practice is a safer way of learning and experimenting. Find someone to teach, guide and supervise you.



A suspension that doesn't go well can cause serious and sometimes irreversible injuries, and even death.

Play Piercing

Use of needles to create sensations on the bottom's skin.



BUSTED

It's not because the play piercings are temporary that they require any less knowledge than permanent piercing to be done safely.



You should have the equivalent knowledge base as if you were a piercing professional to practice safely. This should include anatomical knowledge, as well as learning how to use and dispose safely of your needles.



Considering the needles are hollow, they should always be single use because it's impossible to sterilize inside them.

Where to start

- This practice cannot be improvised: take trainings and workshops on this specific practice to do it safely
- Take a workshop so you can differentiate between an exciting fantasy and one you'd like to fulfil in real life
- Considered edge play, many public or semi-private play spaces (dungeons) don't accept play piercing during their events because of the biomedical hazard inherent to this practice
- If you play in a dungeon and you can't find containers to dispose of sharp objects, make sure to have one yourself and use new needles each time

Knife Play



Use of blades, sharp or not, to simultaneously play on fear and on sensations.

BUSTED

Even with a sharp blade, these practices don't necessarily involve cutting; it can be a form of psychological more than physical play.



Some knowledge of anatomy is required. You should also know how to care for and sterilize your reusable blades, and how to safely dispose of the single use blades.



If you don't have access to a professional autoclave machine, sharing blades should be avoided as soon as the smallest of scratches is caused during a scene.

Where to start

- If you are curious about this practice, start with blades that aren't sharp, a butter knife for example, or plastic or wooden knives, this way you can explore gradually and safely before committing to learning about it
- Considered edge play, many public or semi-private play spaces (dungeons) don't accept knife play during their events because of the legal status of knives as weapons

Breath Play



Breath play involves two different types of asphyxia practices: the temporary restriction of the respiratory capacity with toys (gas mask, gag that limits to nose

breathing, etc.) and the short term restriction of the blood flow to the brain by applying pressure on the neck arteries. These practices can cause fear and near-fainting sensations which, for some people, contribute to arousal. Completely fainting isn't necessary nor desirable for most people who enjoy this practice.

BUSTED

Regardless how mainstream this practice is in the media and memes, breath play is an



extremely risky practice: a few seconds can be



enough to go from pleasure to long term cerebral damage, or even death.

At least two of the following are essential abilities to have in order to sufficiently limit risks while practicing breath play:



- Up-to-date cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class
- Advanced martial art experience involving choking holds
- Advanced anatomical and medical knowledge (nursing, paramedic, medicine)

On top of these, specific workshops and a mentor who can guide you in your exploration of erotic asphyxia is essential.



As breath play can be practiced with limited physical contact, it usually has little risk of STI transmission in itself.

Where to start

- Considered edge play, many public or semi-private play spaces (dungeons) don't accept breath play during their events

Important to know



When doing choking practices in breath play, it's important to be wary of where the pressure is applied: only 32 PSI can crush the larynx, which can cause a trauma that leads to suffocation and eventually death if there isn't an immediate medical intervention. By comparison, it takes less pressure to crush a larynx than it takes to crush an empty soda can: all the more reasons to remain cautious!

As for the practices of reducing blood flow, it's important to have sufficient experience or to be guided by someone who does: the dizziness caused by the reduced blood flow can cause a variety of reactions in people and you need to know how to react to them.

In Canada, this practice is considered assault and could lead to criminal charges, even when practiced between consenting adults. It's essential that you play with people you know you can trust. Complete immobilisation (arms and legs tied behind the back), spitting on someone and any practice that leaves physical marks (bruising, scratches, etc.) have the same legal status as forms of assault: take that into consideration when planning a play scene!

Material

All the toys that could be used for the practices mentioned up until now have different risk levels depending on the material used in their creation. Here's a summary of the main materials for toys.

Leather



Leather is a “living” material, made of tanned skin. When properly cared for, good quality leather can last for centuries.



The type of leather defines the type of necessary care, inform yourself on the treatment (oil or not) of your leather piece. For dyed leather, a solution of water and vinegar allows to keep the colour vibrant. For non-dyed leather, soft soap or saddle soap is perfect to clean. For oil-treated leather, saddle soap is the most recommended. After any cleaning or when the leather seems stiff, you should hydrate it with a conditioner made from natural resins and for the treatment type of your leather.



As leather is porous, it's impossible to completely sterilize after being in contact with bodily fluids, so it has transmission risk.

External use



As long as the leather pieces aren't in contact with bodily fluids (clothing, toys that don't get into contact with genitals or skin lesions), they can be shared without too much risk.

Internal use



Wood



Wooden toys should always be varnished or sealed.



Directly after use with water and soft soap, cloth dry the piece right away.

External use



When properly sealed, there's very little risk.



If there's nicks or scratches, the risk rises significantly.

Internal use



Sharing wooden toys that have been in contact with bodily fluids is discouraged.

Latex



Type of treated rubber that is stretchable as well as temperature and vibration conducive. It's a relatively frequent allergen.



Directly after use with water and soft soap; to store away, make sure that the pieces aren't in direct contact to one another as they could fuse, apply talcum powder to reduce the fusion risk. Lubricate when wearing it so it stays flexible.

External use



When not in contact with bodily fluids.

Internal use



Even though latex forms a strong barrier that won't let bodily fluids pass through it, this material naturally presents microscopic indentations which retain the fluids and makes it impossible to sterilize completely.

Metal

Many types of metals are possible to create toys from, but stainless steel is the safest one. A tip to validate if a metal toy is safe to use is to pass your hand on it: if your hand is dirty or smells metallic, it means that the humidity of your skin retained particles of metal and that this toy isn't safe to use.



Directly after use with water and soft soap, cloth dry the piece right away because some metals have a tendency to rust fast. With stainless steel, it's possible to boil or put the toy in the dishwasher to sterilize more efficiently.

External as well as internal use



For properly sealed stainless steel, there's very little risk.



If there's nicks or scratches, the risk rises.

Glass & Ceramic



There's many types of glass, but the safest to use for toys is pyrex (borosilicate). Ceramic toys with a porcelain finish have similar properties. These materials retain temperature, so they are great toys for sensation play.



Directly after use with water and soft soap; it's possible to boil or put the toy in the dishwasher to sterilize more efficiently.

External as well as internal use



When properly sealed, there's very little risk.



If there's nicks or scratches, the risk rises.

Natural fiber ropes



For bondage ropes, the best fibers are natural ones. The most common are hemp, cotton, sisal and burlap: they all have different properties, learn about their specificities before choosing yours.



Except cotton, which you can simply toss in the washing machine in a laundry bag, most natural fibers are hard to clean.

External use



For cotton that isn't in contact with bodily fluids.



Other fibers can cause superficial skin lesions more easily.

Internal use (mouth, genitals)



As natural fibers are porous, they are impossible to completely sterilize after being in contact with bodily fluids, so there is transmission risk.

Synthetic materials



Plastic by-products (PVC, pleather, ABS, nylon) used to create clothes and toys.



Directly after use with water and soft soap. Regular cleaning is necessary, but accelerates wear of the material. Beware, certain plastics degrade when in contact with vinegar or alcohol.

External as well as internal use



When properly cared for, there's very little risk.



Fragile material.



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