

Advice for Rope

By Topologist

Note: Everyone is encouraged to read all sections regardless of identification

Tops

When looking for new partners:

- DON'T** touch anyone without their clearly expressed verbal permission (or touch their toys, garments, etc.)
- DON'T** invite yourself into in-progress play
- DON'T** assume that if you saw someone do something with someone else, they'd like to do it with you

When playing with somebody new:

- DO** talk about limits and goals before playing
- DO** ask your bottom about their medical history
- DO** advise your bottom of all possible risks
- DO** establish safe words/signals
- DO** establish check-in procedures
- DON'T** use techniques you are unsure of on bottoms you don't know well

Whenever playing with rope:

- DON'T** exceed your ability
- DON'T** play intoxicated or with impaired judgment
- DON'T** push bottoms too far beyond their experience and comfort levels
- DON'T** ignore warning signs of tingling / numbness / discomfort or requests to loosen / adjust / remove a tie
- DON'T** make bottoms feel bad if a tie isn't working out; take responsibility for tying in a way that is appropriate for the individual you are playing with
- DON'T** keep playing if your bottom reports light-headedness, seeing spots, or ringing ears, develops a cold sweat, or becomes incoherent; they are likely about to pass out and/or throw up

- DO** have safety shears within reach at all times
- DO** educate yourself about nerve safety and anatomy
- DO** check periodically for normal feeling and strength in your bottom's extremities
- DO** get expert instruction when learning suspension

- DON'T** ever leave a tied bottom unsupervised
- DON'T** allow anyone to join your play unless negotiated in advance with all parties
- DO** protect bottoms from external interference while playing and immediately after play

- AVOID** rope across the front of the neck
- AVOID** ties on the upper arms (until experienced)
- AVOID** hardpoints you can't fully inspect (especially anchors into concrete ceilings)

- ALWAYS** consider what would happen if your bottom loses consciousness, the electricity goes out, and the building catches on fire

Bottoms

When looking for new partners:

- DON'T** assume that someone knows what they're doing just because they sound experienced / have a big toy bag / taught a class once
- DO** check references (and be sure they are reliable)

- IGNORE** any assertion that "a true submissive would ..."
or that you need to be submissive in order to be a good rope bottom, or that bottoming makes you submissive
- AVOID** tops who don't want you to have a safeword, limits, or independent interaction with the community

- SPEAK UP** if someone makes you uncomfortable or violates your boundaries – if you're at an event, promptly advise the host

When playing with somebody new:

- DO** ask a friend who knows your limits to observe
- DO** use safecalls if you must play in private

- DO** let your top know what your needs are for before, during, and after play
- DO** tell your top about any medical conditions, injuries, or physical limitations
- DO** advise your top ahead of time if there is anyone you would want to join in while you are playing
- DO** make sure you know how to safeword, including non-verbally if you may be gagged

Whenever playing with rope:

- DON'T** leap into difficult ties without experience
- DON'T** play when dehydrated, hungry, exhausted, or sick
- DON'T** play intoxicated or with impaired judgment
- DO** warm up and/or stretch before playing

- DO** communicate when something doesn't feel right
- DON'T** ignore what your body is telling you to avoid ending play; ask to do something different or take a break
- DO** learn about your body so that you know what is safe for you and can recognize danger signs
- DO** talk with others about how they experience rope and how they stay safe while rope bottoming
- DON'T** rely solely on your top's judgment for safety; determine for yourself whether an activity/situation is safe, and insist any concerns you have be addressed

- ALWAYS** pay attention for warning signs of nerve compression: tingling, numbness, and loss of strength/motion should be taken seriously even if not painful; lasting damage can occur quickly and without discomfort at the time of injury