

KNOT WITHOUT RISK

A Guide To Safer Shibari v1

Shibari Is Wonderful

Shibari might be a form of communication, it might be a technical challenge, it's beautiful. It's not for everyone, but Shibari has exploded in popularity for good reason.

Unfortunately, behind the mystique and creativity, there are risks that aren't obvious. You could get hurt (or hurt someone else), you could sustain a long term injury without even realising it. We want to help you to understand the most common risks & how to manage them.

This isn't a replacement for a well-rounded rope education - it's a list of the common pitfalls and how to avoid them.

01. NERVES ARE SENSITIVE

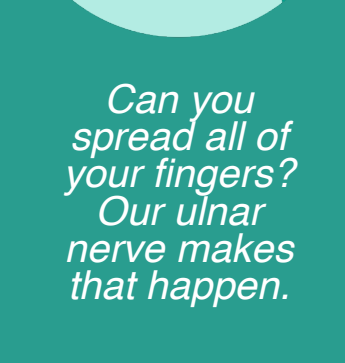
Your nerves allow you to move your body and feel sensations. Rope can put pressure onto your nerves (especially in suspension) and many folks have experienced nerve damage because of this.

Fortunately, if you know how nerves work, you can check for signs of damage during a tie. The nerves that move your hands, start at your spine, emerge out of your arm pits, and spiral down to your fingertips.

This is bad news because it means that rope squeezing your arms, can cause you to lose use of your hands. On the **bright side**, it means that you can get a warning that one of the three sets of nerves in our arms is experiencing a problem by checking these hand movements.



Can you make an OK sign? Our median nerve allows us to do this.

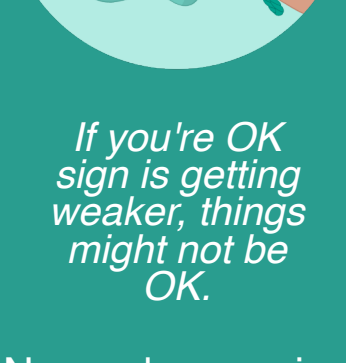


Can you spread all of your fingers? Our ulnar nerve makes that happen.



Can you make a stop sign? Our radial nerve raises our hand and fingers.

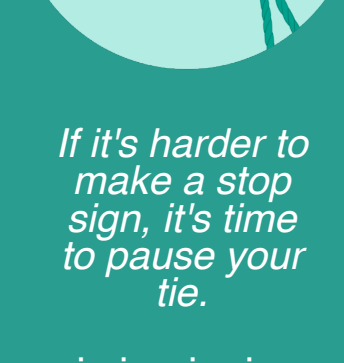
We can **improve** on these movement checks by testing if we are losing the strength to hold these positions. This gives us an earlier sign that there's a problem. This is easiest to do with your tying partner testing your resistance.



If you're OK sign is getting weaker, things might not be OK.



If spread digits get easier to push inwards, change plans.



If it's harder to make a stop sign, it's time to pause your tie.

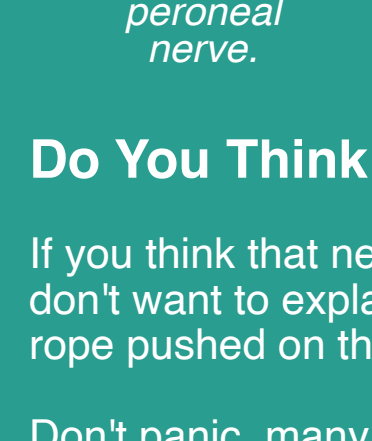
Nerve damage is cumulative. The longer that bondage rope is impinging a nerve, the worse the damage will get. You should act quickly, because this means your hands will be less able to move, possibly for up to several months. If you don't want to end the scene:

1. Take the pressure off of the rope: stop pulling on it, quit leaning on it, cease hanging from it. 2. Move the rope to a different position.

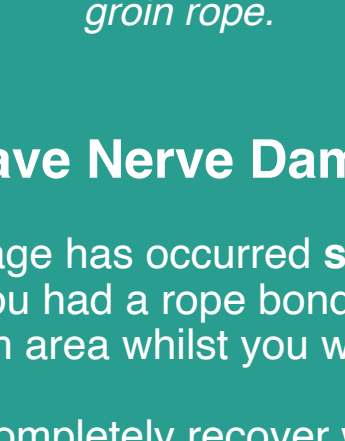
If none of this works, remove the rope completely.

What About Legs?

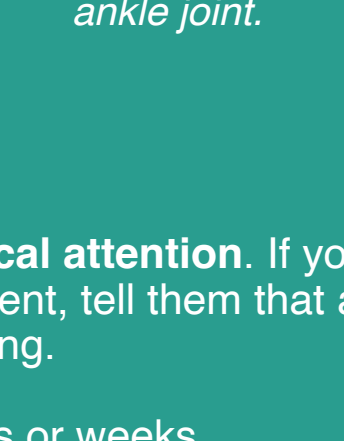
Our legs are harder to check for signs of nerve damage, but thankfully they're stronger and less sensitive. Here are some areas we need to avoid tying tightly...



Avoid tying the knee joint and peroneal nerve.



Your femoral nerve doesn't like tight groin rope.



Avoid pushing pressure into the ankle joint.

02. SHOULDERS ARE EASY TO DAMAGE

If we had a penny for every time we heard about someone causing a shoulder injury because they pulled their partner's arms behind their back in an *anatomically unwise* way, we'd have a lot of pennies.

Kink people like having their arms tied behind their back, it's great.

However, your rotator cuff isn't chill about being yanked behind your back, it needs some love and care. Don't pull someone's arm away from their back, especially if it's bent. Be careful, move **slow**, give plenty of time to identify an issue.

If you're interested in ties or suspensions that involve the arms behind the back, seek out specific training.



A very risky way to move arms.



Move arms in a slow, close and controlled way.

03. USE THE RIGHT TOOLS



The type of rope you tie with will depend on your personal preferences. However, it should be soft enough that it isn't damaging skin.

Your rope needs to be strong enough to do it's job. Natural fibre rope, such as hemp and jute is popular, but it isn't weight rated. This means that we can't rely on it to suspend a human being's weight. Many rope breaks happen during suspension because of this, leading to models being dropped onto the floor and sustaining injuries.

1. Metal clips and carabiners may look sturdy but they need a weight rating to be considered safe.
2. Look for the KN rating on straps and carabiners. The CE rating confirms it was made to European standards.
3. Don't trust the seller (no matter how big), check the product.
4. Inspect your equipment & retire anything that looks worn or has imperfections.

04. BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

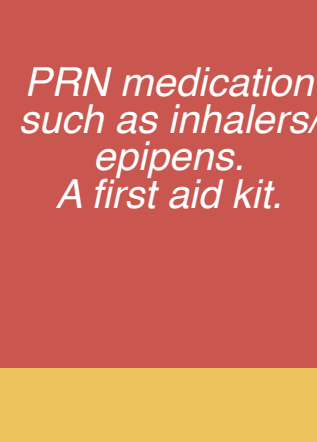
Unpredictable things happen. When one person is tied up, we have to be ready to manage risks with unusual challenges. Sorry to be depressing, but...What if your partner faints? What if there's a power cut? What if there's a fire? You can't prepare for everything but some extra measures will mean you can fend off a wider range of disasters.



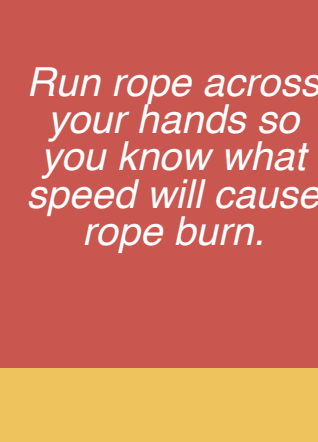
EMT Safety shears will allow you to cut through rope (without stabbing your partner.)



Have your phone close by in case you need help. A spotter if you're trying something new.



PRN medication such as inhalers/epipens. A first aid kit.



Run rope across your hands so you know what speed will cause rope burn.

05. ARE YOU ON THE SAME PAGE?

Rope appeals to people for different reasons. This is great, but it also causes recurring problems when people have different expectations for a what's going to happen during a scene. You can imagine the amount of distress that's caused when people assume just one of the following examples...

1. Shibari is sexual
2. Shibari scenes should include BDSM.
3. A rope scene is the start of a relationship.
4. Rope bondage must involve pain.

It's not wrong to want any of these things, but we need to identify what we want and communicate that. People have ruined their lives and other's by making assumptions without gaining consent. Consent is complicated, but think about the following as a minimum...

Discuss what you want/expect beforehand. Be ready to communicate problems whilst you're tying. Talk afterwards about what worked and what didn't.



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