



Rope Studio

Workshops, Classes and Events

Danger of Compromise or Damage

In our simplest practice, we have minimal risk to nerves and blood vessels. As we add complexity and increase risk, we create situations in which compromise and damage are highly likely.

Compromise

During a scene or tying session we will place rope under tension that exerts pressure on the skin. If our partner is sensitive to such pressure, it might be that we cause Patechial Haemorrhaging - the bursting of blood capillaries close to the surface of the skin. For some, that is a pretty pattern proving they've had a lovely rope experience. For others, it is hard to explain and can make life difficult at work or even at home. Such small things aren't an immediate danger during our session, but they can certainly be a compromise in the life of our partner.

Even with the best awareness and communication possible between partners, an acceptable or expected change in skin pallor might not be the usual situation. People say they have circulation issues and it's normal for them to exhibit dramatic colour changes from healthy to dark purple, yet we can never truly be sure how much damage we are doing or if we are truly seeing a 'normal pattern' as we compromise the circulation of blood in their skin.

Over time we learn how rope affects our partner, building an understanding with them. That does not mean we should rely on them to tell us when things are good. They can guide us, but we must still protect them from what we can see happening, even with their reassurance that nothing is compromised. Motor nerves do not give the same feedback to the brain as sensory nerves do. We seem to assume that motor nerves will be fine, if sensory nerves are still functional. Part of our safety check during a tying session must be to confirm muscle regions can still move. How we manage that depends entirely on the kind of tie we've done. We might only be able to test our partner's movement or range of movement when we remove all the rope. If we have caused a compromise it might already be irreparable damage.

Damage

Blood vessels can be restricted or squashed, reducing or stopping the supply of blood. They are likely to recover when restriction is removed, as they are pressurised. However, the part of the body that they were supplying is likely to suffer damage as the supply lessens. The most disturbing organ that could be damaged in this way is the brain. Restricting such important blood flow for any length of time is something we must avoid.

Nerves can suffer temporary compromise as the Myelin Sheath becomes aggravated and swollen. If this pressure is reduced in a timely manner, the nerve is likely to recover. However, nerves are fibrous and can be torn. If there is sufficient tearing the nerve may take some time to recover or might not recover at all. Tearing is usually caused by torsion or over extension. In a tying session, this usually happens during a time when the body is being moved or manipulated. There is no warning, such as tingling or numbness, as the damage can be quick and immediately compromise the nerve function.

How do we minimise or avoid the dangers?

Active Communication

Tying can be done as a solo activity. If we self-tie, we are going to keenly listen to our bodies, not take too long in a particular position and ensure that we maintain consciousness. If we apply the same logic to tying with another person, we can actively communicate with them, don't take too long with them in a position or overall time in the tie, and ensure that we keep them from becoming unconscious. Talk before the session. If the way they talk is different as tying progresses (slower, less focused) is it a sign that they've been long enough in the rope?

Keep Monitoring

It is unlikely your partner can give you more than an idea of their sensory condition. They might feel fine for the entire tie. However, you can see the changes that are happening in their body. You can tell if their breathing is as it was when they began. You can see changes to the blood flow in their skin and also comprehend where ropes could be in compromising positions. You must constantly monitor all aspects of your partner's situation.

Be Cautious

Protect your partner by erring on the side of caution. Don't say they're okay, if they say they aren't. Don't push for another picture when they are finding it difficult to continue. Don't assume everything will be alright when you can see something is wrong. Stop the tie and get them into a safe and stable condition.

Break their trust and they may never tie with you again.

Please Note - Not the work of a medically trained person, neurologist or neuroscientist.