

# Impact Play Risk Mitigation Guide

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### Disclaimer:

This is a basics guide and does not replace any in-real-life classes and online, demonstrations and lessons in impact play.

We are not liable for any injury or harm caused by individuals who engage in impact play after reading this guide. It is the responsibility of the reader to ensure they undertake additional education, including courses, online videos, and lessons on safe and effective impact play and how to correctly use instruments correctly and as safely as possible.

## **What Is Impact Play?**

Impact play is a form of BDSM that involves striking one or both parties for enjoyment or sexual release. It can be done with parts of the body such as hands, feet, or knees, or with objects like paddles, floggers, or canes. Impact play is usually done between a Dominant and a Submissive or, in the absence of a power exchange, between a Top and a Bottom. It is a popular kink and is often used in dungeon parties. Spanking, whether OTK or done in another way, is the most common form of impact play, but there are several others.

## **Why do people engage in impact play?**

Engaging in a particular type of play is often a highly personal experience, and the reasons why someone enjoys it can vary greatly. Those who partake in it may enjoy it for reasons such as the need for emotional release, escapism, and the feeling of empowerment that can come from overcoming a traumatic experience. As long as the activity is consensual, the reasons for an individual's enjoyment of it is entirely their own. Furthermore, there are some people who specifically enjoy the roles of sadist and masochist, or sadomasochism, and within the subculture, they are usually referred to as "switches," as they switch between the two roles.

## **What are the different types of impact play toys?**

Impact play is a form of BDSM that involves the use of physical sensation to create pleasure. Toys such as crops, floggers, paddles, and canes can be used to create a stinging or thud sensation on the skin. Additionally, body parts such as hands and feet may be used to create the same sensations. This type of play requires a strong physical connection between the Top and bottom to create the desired effect.

## **Isn't impact play just physical abuse?**

Impact play is a kink activity which involves one person striking another, and is only done with the mutual consent of all adults involved. To ensure safety, it is important to negotiate and agree on the level of intensity and any potential permanent marks that may be left on the body. Without consent, impact play should not be done.

## **What if I don't like impact play?**

Not feeling an attraction to pain or impact play doesn't mean you aren't kinky. In fact, it is more common than many people realize. There are a variety of kink activities that don't involve impact play, such as sensual play, breath play, bondage, power exchange, and needle play. Each person's journey through kink is unique and it is important to remember that it is ok to explore activities that appeal to you and that make you feel comfortable.

### **Common Risks:**

- Tissue injury (welts, bruising etc)
- Bone Damage
- Internal Injury

### **Key Requirements:**

- Negotiation
- Safe word or gesture

### **Considerations for Play:**

If you are new to impact play, it is important to start out slowly and patiently. A great introduction is to gently spank the sub/bottom. You can then try 'thuddy' and 'stingy' toys depending on your preference. It is helpful to practice on inanimate objects, such as a pillow, to get better aim with crops, canes, paddles, and whips. It is essential to communicate any high-risk areas, such as old injuries and emotionally triggering areas, to avoid any serious injuries in the scene. You can use a body map of touch and impact zones to clearly show what is good and off-limits.

When engaging in impact play, it is important to focus on fleshy, fatty areas such as the buttocks, thighs and calves, to avoid the risk of injuring underlying areas. It is especially important to avoid any impacts near internal organs, as these can cause serious damage to the kidneys, central nervous system, intestines and beyond. After a scene, it is essential to take the time to allow your body to heal properly. Repeated impact without adequate healing time can cause more serious damage, and it is important to look after ourselves to ensure we can continue to enjoy kink safely.

## **Before the Scene**

Prior to any scene, the Dominant and submissive should thoroughly inspect any implements that will be used, such as canes or wooden paddles. If there are any cracks, splits or other signs of damage, they should be discarded as there is a risk that they could break during the scene. Both the Top and the bottom should be allowed to inspect any implements before play begins. Additionally, it is important to note that neither the Top nor the bottom should be under the influence of any drugs or alcohol, as this can affect their perception, pain tolerance, balance, and consent.

For a successful scene, both Tops and bottoms should be in a good mental state before beginning. Tops should not participate in play if they are feeling angry or agitated, as this could lead to aggression. Bottoms should not participate if they are severely depressed or anxious, to avoid triggering an episode or pushing them too far into subspace. It is important to remember that the goal is to hurt, not harm. To maintain control, some implements, such as whips, feature a strap attached to the handle, which can be looped around the Top's wrist. Bottoms should also be aware that they may move during the scene and should be restrained if needed.

Before and after each use, it is important to disinfect non-porous toys. Leather toys such as floggers and whips can be wiped down with a slightly damp cloth and immediately dried. In the case that an implement breaks the skin, it should not be used on anyone else. To get an understanding of what a toy feels like, both the Top and the Bottom should test it out on themselves. This allows for both people to explore the tool in a safe manner while getting to know the risks associated with it.

## **During the Scene**

Communicating with your Dominant/Top is a key factor in ensuring a successful and fulfilling BDSM experience. By politely expressing what feels good and what does not, you can help them find the perfect spots to take you to those amazing places you want to go together. Additionally, expressing more of the positive sensations can help make the experience more enjoyable. Pay attention to the sensations and use as many senses as possible to get the most out of the experience. Start with gentle strokes and gradually move to more forceful strikes.

Exploring impact play can be a way to engage your senses and heighten the experience. If you are an auditory person, you may enjoy the sound of a whip or a puddle before being struck. Alternatively, if you are visual, you may want

to set up a mirror or a lamp so you can see the motion of the tool. For an even more intense experience, you can use blindfolds and noise cancelling headphones to focus on the sensations. Depending on your skill level and comfort with the activity, you can also implement gags and restraints. It is important to make sure you have negotiated safe words and gestures with your partner prior to engaging in impact play.

### **Safely Striking the Body**

When engaging in impact play, it is important to ensure that you are standing on a level, non-slippery surface. Additionally, you should consider the orientation of the bottom before you strike. Common and safe areas to target are the buttocks, thighs, calves, upper back, shoulders, and chest or breasts. However, it is important to avoid striking the breasts before the bottom's mammogram exam, as bruises and contusions can skew the imaging results. Impact to the abdomen is acceptable, but areas to avoid include the neck, hips, knees, kidneys, tailbone, and head, as striking these areas can result in serious injury.

When engaging in impact play with floggers and whips, it is important to consider how the implement used will affect the bottom. Wrapping, which is when the implement makes contact with the intended target, but the additional length wraps around the bottom's body and impacts a non-targeted spot, should be avoided. Depending on the implement and how it is used, the bottom may experience scrapes, welts, bruises, and in some cases, bleeding.

The sensations produced by impact play can range from 'stingy' to 'thuddy', with stingy sensations provoking sharp pain on the surface of the skin and thuddy sensations providing a localized, deep tissue pain.

Both the Top and the bottom should take frequent breaks and use cool water to stay hydrated and monitor the bottom's well-being throughout the scene.

### **Recognition of Risks and Post-Scene Care**

Participants in impact play should be aware of the risks and take precautions. A responsible Top should always be prepared to end the scene if the bottom becomes non-verbal or unresponsive, and should only engage with trusted partners. Both the Top and bottom have the right to end a scene for any reason. Wounds should be cleaned and dressed aftercare to minimize infection, and further impact play should be avoided until healing is complete.

To reduce risks and ensure a positive experience, we recommend reviewing our risk mitigation guide on impact play.

### **What is aftercare, and how do I practice it properly?**

After engaging in BDSM activities, such as impact play, it is important to practice aftercare. This involves checking in with each other after the scene to make sure both parties are feeling comfortable and secure. This includes providing the submissive partner with food, water, a blanket, and ice for any bruises. It is also important to ask how each partner is feeling and discuss how to improve the next time. Aftercare is not just applicable to BDSM; it is important to practice aftercare after any sexual activity to ensure both partners are feeling taken care of.

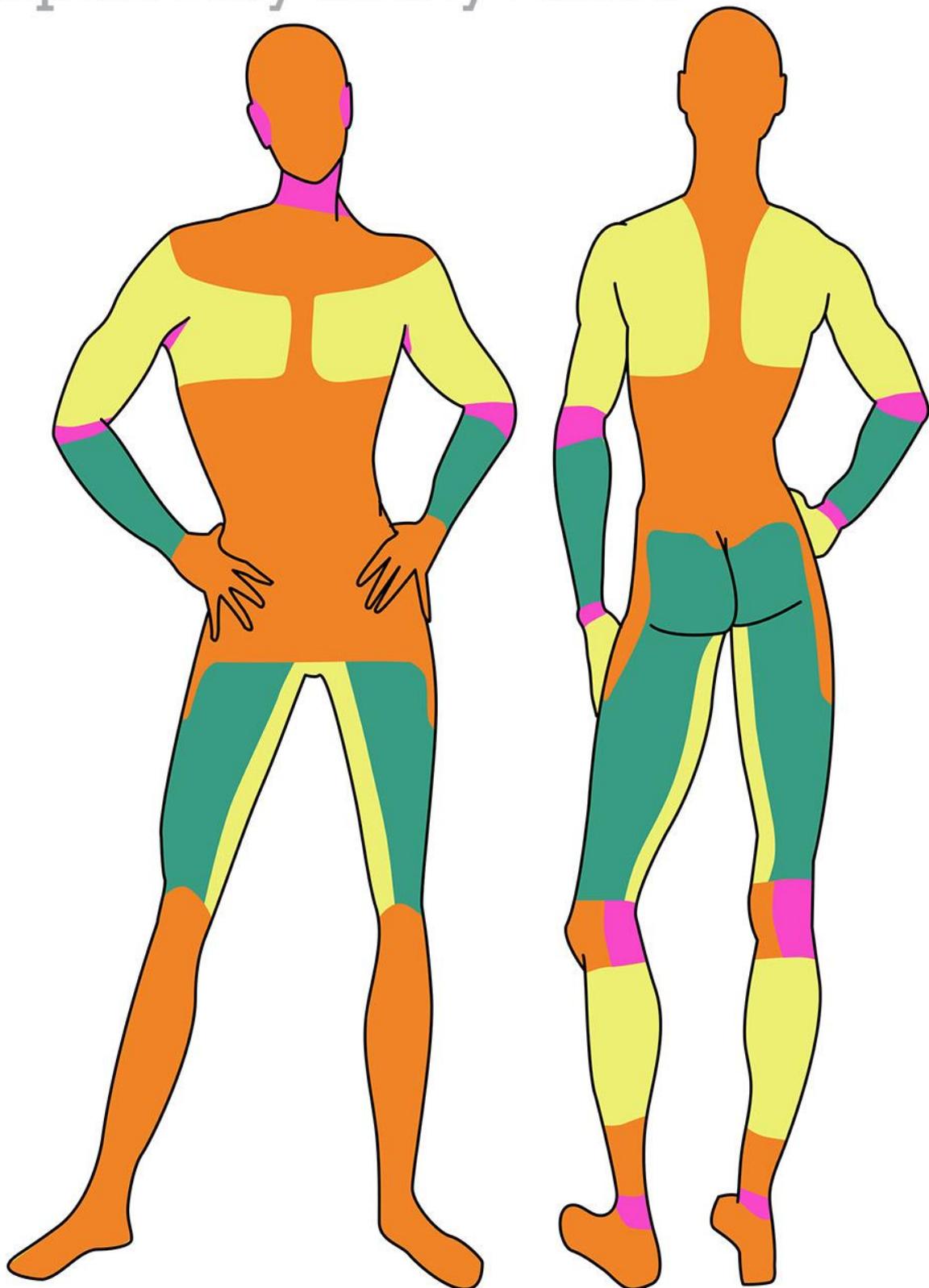
### **Impact play safety zones**

It is essential to be aware of the areas of the body that should not be subjected to impact play. These areas are represented by the orange and pink markings on the diagram. If impacted, these parts of the body can be subject to extensive and potentially life-threatening harm.

- **KIDNEYS** - These are located in the back, below the ribcage and above the butt. If you have a whip or a flogger you'll be using the back as a nice broad target but you should be leaving this entire area alone. The kidneys are extremely delicate and it doesn't take much to impact them, so consider this area a definite no-fly zone.
- **TAILBONE** - While you're avoiding the kidney area, keep clear of the tailbone too. It's at the base of the spine and although a whip is unlikely to break it, it's certainly possible. It's also very uncomfortable when it's bruised.
- **SPINE** - The spine in general, top to tail, should be avoided. It's easy to bruise because there's not much protecting it, and it's made up of disks that could be dislodged or impacted.
- **HIPS** - The sciatic nerve and several other nerves run through the buttocks and across the bony outer part of the upper thigh/hip. They're fairly well protected by fat and muscle in your butt, but there's not very much protection in the hip area. If you've ever known anyone who's had a pinched or impacted nerve here, you'll know it's not nice.

- **NECK** - Along with your airways, your neck is a major superhighway of arteries, tendons and glands. There are things you can do in BDSM with the neck, but hitting it should never be one of them.
- **FACE** - I'm not going to tell you not to face-slap, but if you are going to do it, do it safely. Use your other hand to support the head and focus on what you are doing. A sudden rush of air pressure can damage the eardrums, so ears are a no-go area.

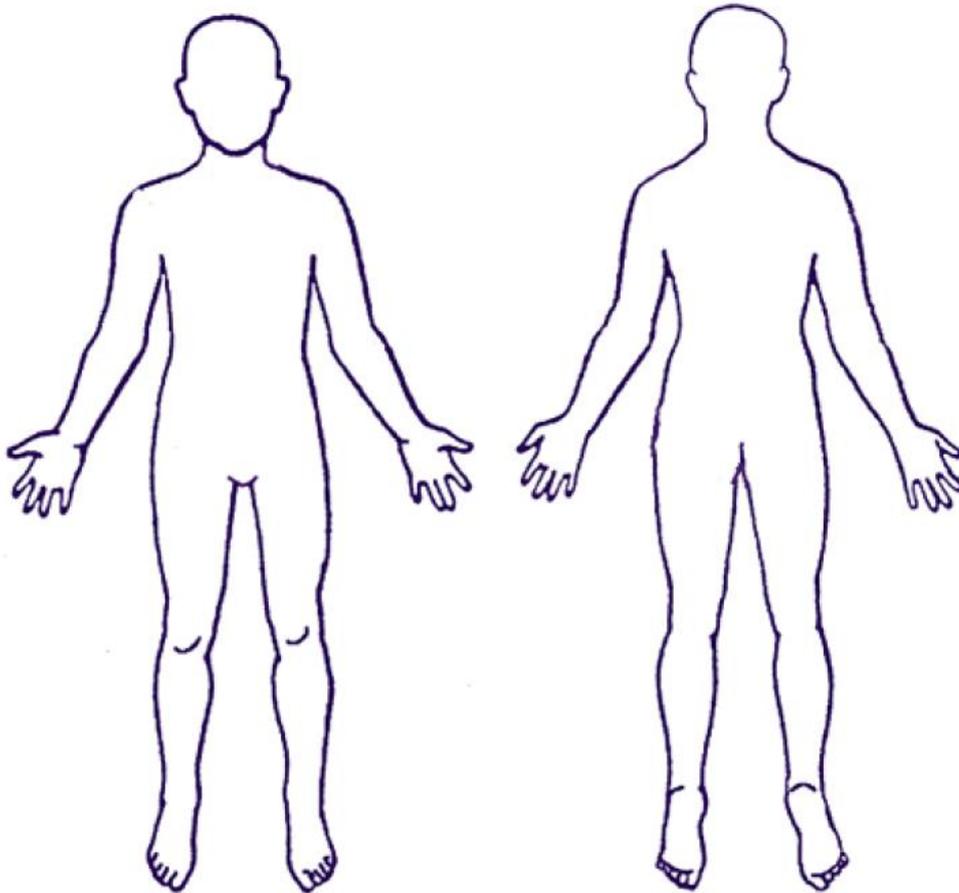
# Impact Play Safety Zones



 Safe Zone     Low Risk Zone - Be Cautious     High Risk Zone - There are important bones, nerves and organs under here with little muscle protection. Anything more than a light slap is potentially dangerous.     Don't go here!

## Impact Zones Diagram

When discussing and negotiating impact play, ensure you negotiate which parts of the body you are comfortable with. This diagram can help you identify the parts of the body that you want your partner to engage in impact play, and which parts are no go zones for you.



Using coloured markers or pencils colour in the places on the drawing above to indicate safe zones for touch and impact play. Clearly circle any body part where a pre-existing condition exists ie. low back pain.

**Green** =safe zone    **Yellow** = use caution    **Red** = No go zone

## Impact Play Toys

### **Floggers**

Floggers are a popular choice for those looking to explore BDSM as they have a long history of use in inducing trance-like states or allowing individuals to achieve a sense of release. The weight and material of floggers can vary, resulting in different levels of intensity. Heavier floggers, for example, can produce a significant impact, while rope or cord floggers will typically have a milder sting. Additionally, those made from animal hide can have heavy tails that are soft when dragged across the skin.

## **Paddles**

Paddles are one of the most commonly used impact toys in sensation play. They come in a range of materials including wood, metal, rubber, leather, and silicone. They can be thick and solid, thin and flexible, padded, textured, covered in fur or plush, and can even be home objects like hairbrushes, spatulas, ping-pong paddles, and the soles of slippers. It's important to choose a sturdy paddle as some materials like plastic or makeshift objects can break if used.

## **Straps**

When looking for quality in striking toys, such as belts or whips, check for smooth and finished edges. Additionally, make sure they are made from a single piece of material, such as real leather, rather than multiple layers of leather or other materials.

## **Whips**

There are two major types of whips used in BDSM play: single-tailed and multi-tailed. Single-tailed whips have one long, braided tail that creates a dramatic sound when snapped. These may have variations with a tail extending from a long, less flexible shaft, or hybrids that have two or three tails. Multi-tailed whips, commonly called floggers, have a handle with multiple falls made from materials such as suede, leather, rubber, latex, chain, rope, or mylar. The sound of the whip cracking is not safe to attempt on someone's body, and is actually created by the tip moving fast enough to create a sonic boom. Due to the variety of whip types, it is advised to buy your first whip in person from a store or vendor who can provide information and advice. Avoid cheaply priced whips from costume stores, as they are not made from body-safe materials and will not hold up to actual use. Good quality whips start at around \$45-50.

## **Crops**

Riding crops are a common toy used in kink and BDSM. They have a stiff or slightly flexible shaft and a tress, usually a short cord or a leather loop or tongue. The length and colour of the toy can vary, and many tresses come in creative shapes like a star, heart, or rose. Riding crops are great for those who want to experience impact play on the chest, genitals, or inner thighs. The tress provides a smaller, focused striking area and the shaft can also be used as a cane. When selecting a riding crop, look for one with a tightly-sewn tress, a flat and smooth leather braiding along the shaft, and edges of the tress that are finished and not rough.

## Canes

Canes are a popular tool for impact play. Canes can be made out of wood, glass, metal, or acrylic and usually have a handle for a secure grip. The canes can come in a variety of thicknesses and flexibilities, from thin, whippy ones to thicker, rigid ones. Some people may use a switch from a tree branch, however, this is not recommended due to the potential for splinters, dirt, germs, and broken pieces. It is important to practice and learn about safe use of canes for impact play, as improper use can cause skin or bone damage. When buying a cane, it is recommended to buy it in person from a reputable source to ensure quality and to ask questions.

## Batons

Batons are a form of impact play toy similar to canes, but with a larger shaft that provides a more intense thud. They can be made of wood, foam, or other materials and resemble police batons. As with canes, they should be used with caution and after practicing and learning proper technique. To ensure safety, look for batons from reputable kink toy manufacturers or experienced artisans within the BDSM community.

## “Pervertables”

Kink toys don't necessarily need to be expensive or specialized products; everyday items such as wooden spoons, brushes, Nerf bats, flip-flops, leather belts, ping-pong paddles, and rulers can all be used in kink play. When using household items, it is important to make sure they are clean, without any rough or sharp edges, splinters, or poky bits, and sturdy enough not to break. Additionally, it is important to make sure you understand how to use whatever item you are using safely and effectively.

## Some other terms you might hear

There are some names and terms for impact toys and techniques that you might hear and wonder about; here's a few of them and what they are.

- **Slapper:** These toys can be more like a paddle, or more like a crop. They have two layers of wide, flat material (usually leather) fastened together only at the base, which allows them to create a very satisfying slap or crack sound during impact. If you were disappointed by my warning against whip cracks, this is a toy that can give you that intimidating noise.
- **Tawse:** A form of strap, it's a strip of leather split into two or more sections. It originated in Scotland as a schoolmaster's implement of discipline, but has been adopted as a kink toy.

- **Quirt:** Something a bit between a whip and a crop, it's another equestrian tool that has a long slender shaft (usually braided leather) that ends in a strap or tail. Some that are made for BDSM just have a handle with a couple of short straps or tails.
- **Hand Bat:** Another term for a crop, some of them have tresses in the shape of a hand.
- **Cat O'Nine Tails:** Historically, this was a multi-tailed whip made with nine tails of braided and knotted rope or cord that could deliver intense pain. These types of modern BDSM whips are more commonly called floggers and can have any number of tails (and are much more commonly made with other materials like leather), but I've seen some arguments that a flogger has flat, unbraided tails and a cat o' nine has braided tails.
- **Scourge:** Another historical term for a multi-tailed whip, this tended to have a religious connotation, as they were symbols of god-kings' power in Egypt and were a tool for self-flagellation in ancient and medieval religious practices.
- **Cracker:** The short piece at the end of a single-tail whip that creates the cracking noise.
- **Bullwhip:** Generally refers to the very long, very intimidating-looking single tail whip, as opposed to the ones that are about 4' long or shorter.
- **Dragon's Tail:** A long, usually rigid, usually leather-wrapped shaft with a long "tongue" of flat leather at one end that's partially rolled around the end of the shaft. Similar to a quirt, but so named because the tongue at the end makes it look like the wide pointed end of a dragon's tail.
- **Evil Stick:** A form of cane, usually made from a very thin carbon fiber rod with a small rigid handle. It requires only small, focused flicks to inflict painful welts.
- **Florentine:** A flogging technique where the top has a flogger in each hand and wields them simultaneously. It's a great play party trick—it looks dazzling!
- **Signal Whip/Snake Whip:** Refers to shorter, 3-4' single tail whips, as opposed to bullwhips.
- **OTK:** Stands for "over the knee" and refers to spanking or paddling sessions where the bottom lies face down across the top's lap. For many people, the psychological aspects of OTK are a big part of the turn-on, and their interest in edge play starts and ends there.

- **Throwing:** The verb used to describe striking with a whip or the practice of using a whip, as in, “I’ve been throwing singletail for 5 years now” or “He came with that final throw of the flogger”.
- **Sweet Spot:** The area at the very base of the buttocks, right where they join the upper thigh. It’s a muscular, well-padded area that, when a bottom is bent over, is also close enough to the genitals to send some vibrations through all the nerve endings in that region. For many bottoms, this spot can both tolerate the most impact play and delivers the most pleasure from it.

## Final notes

*This guide is not designed to be considered comprehensive advice on how to play safely – it is a guide on things to think about prior to engaging in dangerous forms of play. No matter the precautions you take in these kinds of activities, you cannot guarantee the safety of those involved. Approach all play with extreme caution.*

*You can find other great information from [kynk101.com](http://kynk101.com) - [submissiveguide.com](http://submissiveguide.com) – [xcbdsm.com](http://xcbdsm.com)*