

Strangulation Reference Guide

Loss of Consciousness and Lethality

- Only 11lbs of pressure placed on both carotid arteries for 10 seconds is necessary to cause unconsciousness.
- 4.4lbs of pressure placed on the jugular for 10 seconds is necessary to cause unconsciousness.
- 33lbs of pressure on the trachea is required to completely close it off.
- If pressure is released immediately consciousness will be regained within 10 seconds.
- Brain death will occur in 4-5 minutes

DV and Strangulation Statistics

- Visible injuries are only seen in 50% of strangulation cases.
- 15% of visible injuries are able to be captured by regular photography.
- Victims of just one strangulation are **700 percent more likely** to become a victim of **attempted homicide** by the same partner in the future.
- Victims of one strangulation are **800 percent more likely** to become a victim of **homicide** by the same partner in the future.
- Early studies indicate a correlation between DV abusers and police related shootings (i.e. officers shot by perps/suicide by cop).

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Describe how you were strangled (where was offender/victim, what was used to strangle the victim)?
2. What did the offender say before, during and after the strangulation?
3. How long did the offender strangle you?
4. Did you lose consciousness?
5. Did your hearing or vision change?
6. Did you lose control of bodily functions?
7. Did you have any difficulty breathing when the offender strangled you?
8. What made the offender stop strangling you?
9. How many times did offender strangle you? Describe each incident.
10. Do you have any difficulty breathing now?
11. Are you in any pain now? Where?
12. Describe any changes to your voice.
13. Are you having any trouble swallowing?
14. Have the victim look in a mirror and point out any visible injuries.

Try to speak with the victim in a private setting and in a separate area from the perpetrator.

Try to take photos of any visible injuries, but also note the visible injuries you observe in your memo book.

STRANGULATION

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS⁸

CONSEQUENCES⁷

NEUROLOGICAL

- Loss of memory
- Behavioral changes
- Loss of sensation
- Extremity weakness
- Headaches
- Fainting
- Urination
- Defecation
- Vomited
- Dizziness

SCALP

- Petechiae
- Bald spots (from hair being pulled)
- Bump to the head (from blunt force trauma or falling to the ground)

PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY

PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, memory problems, nightmares, anxiety, severe stress reaction, amnesia, and psychosis.

EYES & EYELIDS

- Petechiae to eyeball
- Petechiae to eyelid
- Bloody red eyeball(s)
- Vision changes
- Droopy eyelid

EARS

- Ringing in ears
- Petechiae on earlobe(s)
- Bruising behind the ear
- Bleeding in the ear

DELAYED FATALITY

Death can occur days or weeks after the attack due to carotid artery dissection and respiratory complications such as pneumonia, ARDS and the risk of blood clots traveling to the brain (embolization).

FACE

- Petechiae (tiny red spots- slightly red or florid)
- Scratch marks
- Facial drooping
- Swelling

MOUTH

- Bruising
- Swollen tongue
- Swollen lips
- Cuts/abrasions
- Internal Petechiae

CHEST

- Chest pain
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruising
- Abrasions

NECK

- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruising (thumb or fingers)
- Swelling
- Ligation Marks

VOICE & THROAT CHANGES

- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing
- Painful to swallow
- Clearing the throat
- Coughing
- Nausea
- Drooling
- Sore throat

BREATHING CHANGES

- Difficulty breathing
- Respiratory distress
- Unable to breathe

Today,
38 States
have legislation
AGAINST
STRANGULATION⁶

VAWA 2013
added strangulation
and suffocation to
FEDERAL LAW



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¹ Strack, G.B., McClane, G.E., & Hawley, D. (2001). A review of 300 attempted strangulation cases: Part I: Criminal Legal Issues. *Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 21(3), 303-309.

² Shields et al. (2010). Living victims of strangulation: A 10-year review of cases in a metropolitan community. *American Journal of Forensic Medical Pathology*, 31, 320-325.

³ Plattner, T. et al. (2005). Forensic assessment of survived strangulation. *153 Forensic Science International* 202

⁴ Wilbur, L. et al. (2001). Survey results of women who have been strangulated while in an abusive relationship. *21J. Emergency Medicine* 297.

⁵ Glass et al. (2008). Non-fatal strangulation is an important risk factor for homicide of women. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 35(3), 329-335.

⁶ Mack, M. States with strangulation legislation. A product of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention. www.strangulationpreventioninstitute.com

⁷ Funk, M. & Schuppel, J. (2003) Strangulation injuries. *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 102(3), 41-45.

⁸ Taliaferro, E., Hawley, D., McClane, G.E. & Strack, G. (2009). Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence. *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*. Oxford University Press, Inc.