

Chicago Rope Bottom Roundtable September: Nerves!

1. What are nerves?
 - a. Nerves are what enable your brain to communicate with the outside world.
 - b. Communication goes two ways: Your brain needs information in (senses) and it needs to send directions out (movement). Your nerves carry this information both ways!
 - This is why we can get sensory and motor symptoms when our nerves are irritated or injured. This is also why we care so much about nerve injury!

2. Where are they?
 - a. Everywhere! They originate from the spinal cord in your spine, and then they wind their way all over your body (see a diagram of the nerves to understand this better)
 - b. There are a few “hot spots” on your body that are particularly easy to hit with rope bondage, especially on your limbs. Some of these are:
 - Armpits (radial, median, musculocutaneous, ulnar, axillary)
 - Middle/back of upper arm (radial nerve)
 - Elbow joint (ulnar, radial, median)
 - Wrist (radial, ulnar, median)
 - Groin/hip joint (femoral, obturator, lateral femoral cutaneous)
 - Knee (sciatic, tibial, common peroneal)
 - Just below knee on outside (common peroneal)
 - Ankle (superficial peroneal+branches)

3. What are symptoms of nerve irritation?
 - a. Tingling or numbness (usually sudden, but not always) on a region of a limb
 - b. Shooting pain (think of when you hit your ‘funny bone’)
 - c. Some people report itching or burning. Some people get no sensory warning whatsoever!
 - d. Inability to move things such as fingers, toes, feet, hands, or entire limb; weakness in movement

Important note: The spot where you’re noticing the tingling or numbness or weakness is almost never where the irritation itself is occurring. Frequently in the arm, for instance, numbness on the back of the hand on the thumb side is due to tight rope on the upper arm. When you start noticing these symptoms, just get the rope off!

4. What can bottoms do to protect themselves?
 - a. Know roughly where these problem areas are on your own body! This takes practice and experience, because the exact locations are different on every body and change with different positions
 - b. Don’t be afraid to speak up. Any top will tell you it’s not worth it to them to give you an injury just to have you in a tie. Better communication is better bottoming.
 - c. Learn what the numbness in certain areas will usually mean (Glove activity!) This will help you and your top learn what to avoid in the future.
 - d. **Know what to do when nerve irritation happens** (because it will, if you do rope more than very occasionally): Take the rope off, rest the limb, do **NOT** massage the area of injury. Some people recommend ibuprofen or ice immediately after an incident. If significant symptoms last more than a day, consider speaking to your doctor. If they last more than a few days, do talk to your doctor.