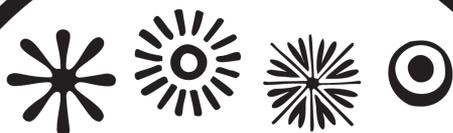


# From Bottom To Top

## BDSM For Beginners



come

*as you are*

**CO-OPERATIVE**

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493 QUEEN STREET WEST | TORONTO, CANADA | M5V 2B4 | 888.504.7934

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## Introduction

Like so many aspects of sexuality, powerplay and BDSM (Bondage/ Discipline, Dominance/Submission, Sadism/ Masochism) are often misunderstood. One of the things that we love about powerplay at Come As You Are is that it embodies one of our core values: Sex the Way You Want It! In a society where much of the mainstream messaging around sexuality encourages people to achieve an imagined and arbitrary normative sex life, BDSM requires people know and communicate what they want openly and honestly.

So what is it really? BDSM can be any number of things, from playing with rope bondage, restraints, and nipple clamps, to spanking, blindfolding, and flogging, to role playing and beyond. In short, it is the consensual decision to explore different sensations and/or power dynamics. This means it is all about building trust, communicating desires and exploring fantasy and eroticism. BDSM is a learned art – whether it is a matter of learning to communicate clearly with a partner or learning how to ensure your flogger hits just where you want it to (in just the way that you want it to) – it takes practice.

## Communication & Consent

Consent is probably the single most important aspect of BDSM, and good communication is essential. Before embarking on any BDSM scene, you need to communicate in detail about what you are and are not looking for. For many of us, talking openly about sex can be difficult. Here are some tips:

**R-E-S-P-E-C-T (sing it!):** Build trust with your partner through empathetic and respectful communication. Try not to laugh or grimace when your lover discloses their sexual fantasies.

**Finding a common vocabulary:** Our sexual vocabularies are filled with different words and different associations and sometimes this makes communicating about sex challenging. Check in with your partner about words you each like and don't like and what they mean to you.

**Be Specific and Ask Questions:** It is everyone's responsibility to communicate needs, desires, limits & boundaries clearly. If you say "I love being slapped", what do you mean? Do you love being slapped everywhere? How often? When? Communicating clearly is partly about really knowing what you like, what you don't, and what you might like to try. Actively listening also means clarifying when you aren't totally sure you understand something that has been said.

**Create a Safe Word:** Before you start, choose a word that either partner can say to end a scene. For example, if someone says "red", it means 'stop' and check in. If you are using a gag or bit, and your partner cannot speak, you need to create a non-verbal cue in place of a verbal safe word.

## **Restraints**

Whether you're using cuffs, rope, or a silk scarf to restrain someone, here are a few important considerations:

**How quickly can you get them off in case of emergency?:** Most cuffs should have a quick and easy way to undo them. If you're using rope or scarves be sure to have safety scissors on hand.

**How tight are your restraints?:** You must ensure that restraints are not so tight as to restrict blood flow. As a general rule you should always be able to slip two fingers between the restraint and the person's body part.

**How comfortable are they?:** You may not be looking for a cushy soft feel, but you want to ensure the restraint is not

going to do any physical damage. Most inexpensive rope will cause rope burn, and metal cuffs will dig into the skin.

## **Implements**

When choosing a BDSM implement, (like a flogger, paddle, slapper or cane) start small and be realistic. Although the large \$300 flogger may be the one that catches your eye, you need to first learn how to wield it before it can be a sexy choice.

**Know where you're aiming for!:** Not all parts of the body are safe for hitting; generally you want to hit more on flesh and less on bone. This means usually bums, thighs and shoulders are good spots, where as knees, elbows, and temples are not. You also want to be sure to avoid potentially damaging internal organs which means avoiding the lower back and stomach. Use common sense and know your partner's body!

**Make sure to hit your target!:** It's not enough to know where to aim if you don't have the control to make sure that is where you end up hitting. This means practice is key! You can practice on a pillow, or a spot on the wall. You want to be able to control not only where you hit but how hard. When you are ready to move from the pillow to a partner remember to go slow – start light and work your way up, making sure to stay within your comfort zone.

## **Further Resources**

AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) [www.actoronto.org](http://www.actoronto.org)

Ntl Coalition for Sexual Freedom [www.ncsfreedom.org](http://www.ncsfreedom.org)

The New Topping Book & New Bottoming Book By Dossie Easton and Janet W. Hardy

Screw the Roses Send Me the Thorns by Philip Miller and Molly Devon