

Fire Play is clearly not a beginner's adventure. It clearly falls into the realm of Edge Play. While fire play is considered edge play it can also be highly erotic and passionate due to the close personal contact created during a fire scene. What this means is that it is something to learn from one who has demonstrated experience with the materials and techniques required. The nature of this play and a single wrong move or position can create a dangerous if not tragic situation. It is wise to have a second person standing by to do Fire extinguishing so the Dom can stay focused on the submissives care should things get unwieldy.

Reading about this is a beginning. But learning first hand from a Master and gaining many hours of practice with the materials, are prerequisites to **any** play.

"Hot" is a word used (and overused!) to describe everything from objects of sexual desire to taco sauce. "Cold" could denote anything from rejecting an object of sexual desire to politicians. Here I want to use these words in their most exact meaning -- the temperature of an object relative to human body temperature.

Hot and cold objects can provoke some of the same kinds of feelings as painful stimuli. This is because the nervous system processes extremes of temperature in the same way as certain types of pain. Sensations such as touch and vibration are perceived by way of large nerve fibers that have structured nerve endings in the skin. Pain, cold, and heat are perceived via uncovered loose nerve fibers in the skin, and are all transmitted along the same type of small, nerves that go to the brain through the same part of the spinal cord. While these three types of sensation: pain, cold, and heat -- all have separate nerve endings, the nerve impulses end up in the same area of the brain, the thalamus. Extremes of any of the three can elicit similar responses from a bottom.

Playing with Fire

There are many ways of making the skin feel hot, but you need to be cautious! There is not much difference between body temperature and a level of heat that

can cause burns. A brief exposure to 110-115 degrees F can cause a first-degree burn, and hotter surfaces for longer periods cause more serious burns.

The intensity of the fire can be gauged and adjusted – the speed at which the torch is moved and the length of time the wand is in contact with the bottom's skin. Based on the bottom's response, these can be adjusted to intensify the sensation without causing an actual burn. When moving over your bottom with the wand or any other source of intense heat the rule of threes should always be followed, the rule of threes simply states that you should never warm an area more than three times in a row without allowing the skin's surface temperature to cool down. The skin can be allowed to cool on its own or to add an interesting twist to the scene you may wish to rapidly cool the skin through the use of ice.

Putting a Bottom on Ice

Temperature play with cold can be particularly wicked, because it is easy for a bottom to confuse hot and cold sensations.

There is a much wider temperature range between body temperature and dangerous levels for cold than for heat. Tissue damage due to cold is caused by formation of ice crystals in cells and blood vessels. Unlike heat burns, which are very rapid, freeze injuries (frostbite) or non-freeze cold injuries (chilblain) are slow to occur. Depending on the temperature, these injuries develop over minutes to hours. Ice, at 32 degrees F, is cold enough to shock but not cold enough to cause damage over a period of several minutes.

When heat and cold are used together in a scene the feelings are much more intense, because alternating hot and cold sensations can confuse the nerves. Hot and cold nerve endings respond to differences from body temperature, but when rapidly repeated changes in temperature are administered to an area, these calculations can become wildly inaccurate. The bottom may feel as if they are being subjected to incredibly high degrees of heat and cold or both at once -- and pain nerves may be recruited as well, even though the skin is not burning.

Because skin, which has been flogged or spanked, has had the blood flow increased, the surface will be more sensitive to temperature sensations. This is the skin equivalent of turning up the volume. Keep this in mind when you have decided to do a fire and or ice scene because the results can be quite unexpected, often times with less than desirable results.

The mental state of the bottom has a great deal to do with how the sensations are experienced as well. Much of what the heat or cold feels like will be affected by the bottom's expectations. The anesthesiologist's slogan, "Pain is in the Brain" is nowhere more true than in temperature play!

Fire Play Terminology

Baton: A wooden rod, with cotton batting on the end used to light an area or hold a flammable liquid. Also called a torch.

Bouncing: The act of striking a lighted torch against an object depositing a small amount of the flammable substance on the object being struck.

Cupping: An ancient form of massage. Using a vacuum, the skin is drawn up into a vessel and thereby stretched and massaged.

Flash Cotton: A magician's trick using very flammable cotton. Burns very quickly, very intensely, and completely.

Leather Rounds: Round pieces of leather used for various purposes.

Streaking: Using an unlit torch to deposit flammable liquid on an object and then lighting it.

Torch: A rod with cotton batting on the end, may be made of any non-conductive substance. Used to hold the flammable as it is lit.

Vessel: A glass jar, heat resistant and not easily broken or cracked. Should be clear or lightly colored.

Play Style

Cupping: A Leather round is placed on the area of skin to be cupped. A loose area works best with minimal bruising but the sensation is more intense with tighter skin. A cotton ball soaked in isopropyl alcohol, 70% is best, is placed on the round and then lit.

Once the alcohol is burning fully, a glass vessel is placed over it quickly. Delay in placement can cause the edge of the vessel to become hot and then burn the skin. Once the vessel is placed, the flame will use up the oxygen and cause the skin to rise to replace it. The intensity of the sensation is dependent on the type of alcohol used, the shape of the vessel; one that begins small and gets bigger inside is most intense, and the duration it is left on. The vessel is removed by gently releasing the pressure with a finger tip on the edge of the vessel and allowing air inside.

Streaking: Using two torches held in the same hand, one lit, one unlit, a line of alcohol is laid down on the skin. This is then allowed to sit for a moment and begin to evaporate, and then it is lit. It is allowed to burn dependent on the amount that was laid down; more can burn longer, and the response of the submissive. It is extinguished using the hand not holding the torches. Should the hand catch on fire, simply smother it in the fire blanket or if only a small amount, wave it quickly and it will go out. Be certain to keep the lit torch as the upper one while you are holding them or else you may end up with TWO LIT TORCHES.

Bouncing: Using a lit torch, the skin is struck sharply with the torch, causing alcohol to be deposited and lit at the same time. This should not be left on very long as the alcohol is very thin and burns the skin very easily.

Flash Cotton: Cotton used by magicians to make large flashes. It must be pulled out to a thin "haze" in order to be used on the skin. It makes very spectacular displays and can be used to make designs. It can also be used to burn the skin in patterns. Using previously pulled out cotton, lay it gently on the skin, DO NOT press it down as this can cause a burn, and light an end. The fire will travel to the other end. You can make spirals or any design. Most effective in a darkened room, hence the term "flash" cotton.

Safety Preparation

CAUTION

You will be setting a Human Being on fire.

This is an inherently dangerous practice and SHOULD BE PRACTICED MANY MANY TIMES on glass tables tops and other non-flammable objects before being considered for actual practice. Both the Dominant and the submissive you see performing here today have practiced Their/their techniques, yes the Dominant has required that the submissive practice this for a long time before doing it even on themselves and only after this did they do it on each Other/other.

Safety Materials

Alcohol Type: Use only 70% alcohol. 90% is extremely difficult to control and burns entirely too hot.

Drop Cloth: Use a Fire Retardant drop cloth to cover the table or floor that the submissive will be laid on. This helps keep the fire from spreading should an accident occur.

Fire Blanket: Used to smother the fire, any large, cloth item such as a large bath towel will work, the cloth must be 100% cotton otherwise it may melt. The towel or blanket **MUST BE COMPLETELY INTACT**, any hole or weak spot in it could allow air to the flames.

Bucket of ice: The ice serves a twofold purpose, first it can be used to cool an area that was overheated, second it can be used as part of the scene by alternating between hot and cold.

Any or all of these should be available:

Fire Blanket

Fire Extinguisher

Bucket of Water

Bucket of ice

Area Preparation

Drop Cloth: Lay out the drop cloth to cover any flammable surface within reach of the fire.

Fire blanket: The fire blanket should be laid so that it can, in one smooth motion, be pulled to cover the submissive to the greatest extent possible. This allows for easy smothering of the flame.

Minimum Materials: Fire Blanket, Drop Cloth, Torches, Extinguisher, Alcohol, Cupping vessels, Leather rounds, Cotton balls, Flash cotton, Submissive that enjoys extreme sensation, Dom/Domme that enjoys giving extreme sensations.

Space considerations: The technique you plan on using will determine the amount of play space that you will require, but as a general rule you will want a minimum of four to five feet around your bottom. Please keep in mind that drafts and other unexpected sources of air movement can cause your flames to go in places and directions that you had not intended. Keep in mind that any alcohol, which drips off of your torch, may be burning when it hits the floor.

Ambience: Our personal fire play space is darkened, generally only illuminated by candlelight this allows for better visibility of the flames and tends to create a rather eerie feeling because of the shadows. Music for fire play is as much an individual choice as anything else; we prefer "Cross of Changes" by Enigma and

“Dreamland” by Robert Miles. The use of a blindfold can add to the intensity of the scene, as the submissive cannot see whether you are using fire or ice.

Toy Making

Torches: The torches are made using a wooden dowel; this can be slipped or hammered into a copper coupling for strength and fire retardancy. It is then wrapped with cotton batting and secured with cotton string or unwaxed dental floss. YOU MUST USE 100% COTTON STRING or else your torch may fail with disastrous results. The batting should just cover the coupling. The other end may be wrapped in "vet wrap" or some other tape in order to assist in gripping the torch.

(Demonstration)

Flash Cotton

Pullout: Flash cotton must be pulled out very thin in ALL directions before use. This helps prevent extreme temperatures, which can easily burn skin.

(Demonstration)

Clean-up

Reuse of materials: Unused alcohol should be poured back into the bottle. The used torches should be air-dried. If this is not possible, put them in baggies and air dry them at home, but be warned you are making a possible bomb when you do this so DO NOT COMPLETELY CLOSE THE BAGGIE. Take them out immediately after returning home and air-dry them away from flame. The leather rounds should be air-dried and the used cotton balls thrown away or if possible, allowed to burn out then thrown away.

Materials Storage

Store all glass in a way that it will not be impacted. All glassware should be inspected before each use by both the Dom/Domme and the submissive. Toys and all flammables should be stored away from ignition sources.

© COPYRIGHT 2001 By Lord Drachen