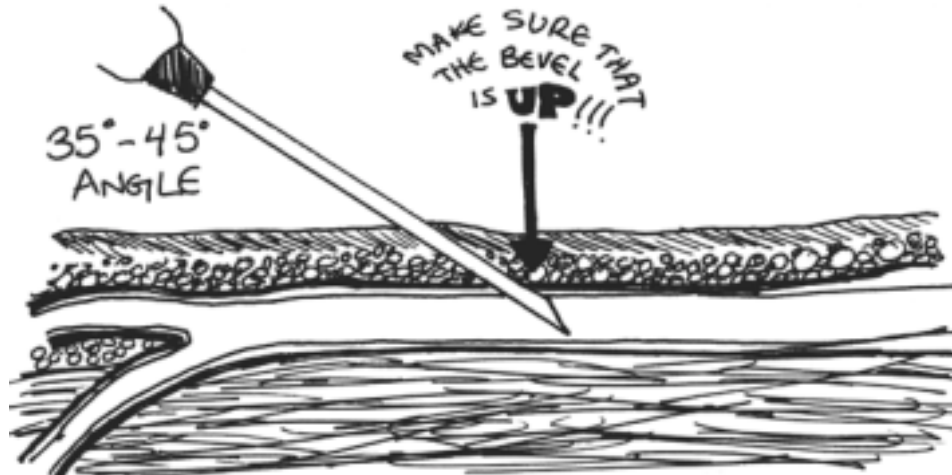


VEIN CARE

Be kind to your veins, they're the only ones you've got! Veins become leaky, infected and will eventually collapse if they don't have time to heal between fixes. You can tell a vein has collapsed when it seems to have disappeared or you can't draw blood from it. To help prevent your veins from becoming damaged:

- learn how to inject in a number of places and with either hand so you'll be able to rotate where you shoot
- save the "easy" spots for when you know you don't have time
- shoot in the direction of your heart with the hole of the needle facing upwards
- taking oral vitamin C may help your veins repair themselves



To make sure your vein is full of blood and easier to hit, try:

- clenching and relaxing your fist
- gently rubbing or slapping the skin over the vein
- soak your arm in warm water
- squeeze your bicep with your hand
- pushups, pull-ups or wrist curls
- use a tourniquet (belt, string, rubberbands, shoelaces, etc.)

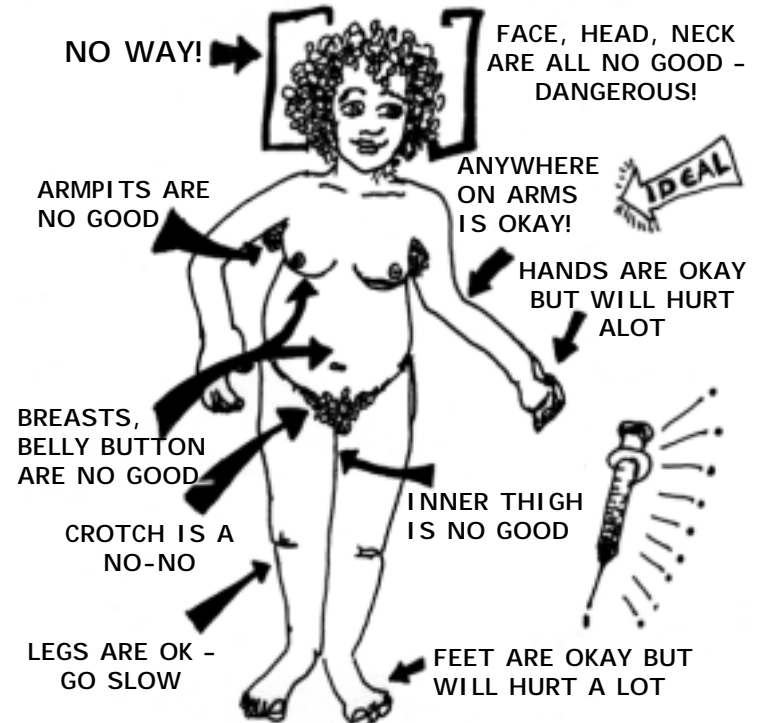
**REMEMBER THAT INFECTIONS ARE HARD TO HEAL,
IT IS BETTER TO PREVENT INFECTIONS**

WHERE TO SHOOT

Veins bring blood to your heart, arteries bring blood away from your heart. **Always** shoot in a vein, never an artery. Shooting in an artery won't get you high, will hurt like hell and might cause an abscess. To be sure you're in the vein, pull back the plunger (flag it), if slow moving dark red blood comes into the syringe, you're in a vein. If the blood is bright red and frothy or if the plunger is forced back by the pressure of blood, you're in an artery - get out! Untie, pull needle out, raise the limb above your head if possible and apply pressure for 10 minutes.

IF YOU HAVE TO USE YOUR JUGULAR (in the neck)

Hits into your jugular are very dangerous. Chunks and clots can go quickly to your brain or heart and cause a stroke or heart attack. Your best bet is not to shoot here at all. If you must, clean the area first with alcohol, then shoot towards the heart and come in at the smallest angle possible - 35 degrees or less. Flag it to make sure you're in. Go as slow as possible and don't stand up too fast.



REMEMBER...

- areas that are furthest away from the heart heal the slowest and have the worst circulation (eg. feet)
- areas that are closest to the heart have veins that are near major arteries and nerves which can cause serious damage if hit
- the veins in your arms are the safest places to shoot
- never inject where you feel a pulse (an artery)
- shoot in the direction of your heart

GERMS and other complications

Spit germs, skin germs and other people's germs cause abscesses. The germs in your mouth are like the ones in your butt. Make sure you don't lick the site or needle before or after fixing. Don't use a dirty mix like spit or toilet water (if you have to use toilet water, use the water in the tank, not the bowl). **Always wash your hands and the site with soap before fixing.**



ABSCESSES

Abscesses start with redness, swelling and tenderness at the injection site and turn into an infection with a hard, pus-filled middle.

They are caused by tiny germs getting pushed under the skin by the rig or by missed hits. If you notice a hard warm lump developing and can't see a doctor, put a warm compress on it at least 3 times a day, this will bring blood to the area and will make it go away or it will soften and fill up with pus. Also keep the abscess clean with soap and water. It may drain by itself but if you choose to drain it yourself, **ONLY USE A CLEAN NEEDLE** to poke it with. The pus should come out easily, never squeeze it because it will spread the infection. If you are able to, put a dry bandage over it and keep it clean. If you get a fever, chills, extreme fatigue or pain that is related to the abscess, you may have a blood infection - you probably need medical attention for this.

Some infections need anti-biotics to be cleared up.

COTTON FEVER

Happens when a piece of the filter gets sucked into the syringe and injected into your blood. Within minutes or hours, you develop a fever and get really sick, your bones ache, you feel hot and cold at the same time and you shake. If you can, rest, eat something and cover up with a blanket. Cotton fever usually gets better after an hour.

CHALK LUNG

Chalk Lung is caused by injecting something that won't mix with water. These pieces can include talc, chalk and cornstarch (many pills have these pieces.) Your lungs may scar making it hard to breathe. Chalk Lung can be prevented by filtering carefully every time.

Much respect to all the prisoners, ex-prisoners, users and agencies that helped put this pamphlet together, you know who you are...

BE KIND TO YOUR VEINS:

a guide to caring for your veins while fixing in prison



Stuff you might know already (but a reminder won't hurt)

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(we accept collect calls from prisoners in Canada)