

Strangulation Questions

Ask the victim to describe how they were strangled. Was it one or two hands, forearm, object, etc.

What did the suspect say before, during and after they strangled the victim?

Was the victim shaken simultaneously while being strangled?

Was the victim thrown or held against the wall, floor, or ground? Describe how and the results? Describe the surface area.

How long did the suspect strangle the victim?

How many times was the victim strangled? Describe each incident and method.

How much pressure was used? Describe it on scale of 1-10 and was it continuous?

What was the victim thinking when they were being strangled?

What caused the suspect to stop?

Any difficulty breathing during the assault or now?

Describe any voice changes.

Any complaint of pain to the throat?

Any coughing or trouble swallowing?

How did the victim feel during the assault? (dizzy, nauseous, loss of consciousness)

How does the victim feel now?

Did the victim experience any visual changes during the strangling?

Did the victim vomit, urinate or defecate as a result of being strangled?

Was the suspect wearing any rings or other jewelry? Look for marks from these objects.

Did the victim do anything to try and stop the assault? Will the suspect have injuries?

Look for injuries behind the ears, all around the neck, under the chin and jaw, eyelids, shoulders and chest area.

Ask the victim to look in a mirror and point out injury sites including petechiae

Are there prior incidents of strangulation?

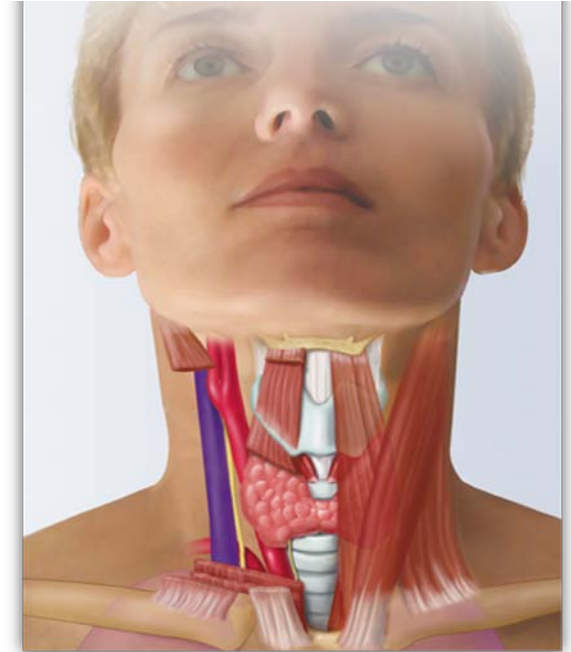
Any visible injury? Photograph injuries and the entire area. Photograph the lack of injury and any areas the victim feels pain

Any object used? Document where it came from. Photograph and book the item as evidence.

Encourage medical treatment
*Information provided courtesy of
Dr. George McClane and
Gael Strack JD*

Strangulation

A Quick Reference Guide



Strangulation is a form of asphyxia (lack of oxygen) characterized by closure of the blood vessels and or air passages of the neck as a result of external pressure on the neck. Based on the mechanism of attack and the victim's signs and symptoms, charge more than a PC 243(e) (1). Absence of a visible injury is common. Consider:

- PC 273.5(a)
- PC 245(a)(1)
- PC 664 / 187

Symptoms

- **Voice changes**
- **Complete loss of voice**
- **Difficulty swallowing**
- **Difficulty breathing**
- **Raspy breathing**
- **Pain or tenderness on touch or movement**
- **Mental status changes**
 - Restlessness or combativeness
 - Psychosis, amnesia
- **Involuntary urination or defecation**
- **Coughing / vomiting**
- **Vision changes**
- **Loss of consciousness**

Signs

- **Redness of the neck**- may be fleeting
- **Scratch marks**-victim or suspects
- **Bruises** - may not appear for some time
- **Finger tip bruises** are circular and oval and often faint.
- **Tiny red spots** (petechiae) -ruptured capillaries. Found anywhere above the area of constriction. (Jugular restriction)
- **Blood red eyes** are due to capillary rupture in the white portion of the eyes. May suggest a vigorous struggle or intermittent pressure.
- **Swelling of the neck** may be caused by any one or combination of the following: internal bleeding, or an injury of any of the underlying neck structures.

| Stages of Strangulation | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Disbelief | Victim cannot believe they are being strangled. Very short in duration. |
| Primal | Victim fights with whatever means to stop the strangling. <i>Ask the victim what they did to get away or stop the attack. This may explain injuries.</i> |
| Resignation | Victim gives up, feeling they can do nothing and go limp. <i>Ask the victim what they were thinking about. What did they think was going to happen?</i> |

Indicators of Loss of Consciousness (LOC):

- Loss of memory
- Standing, then waking up on the floor
- Unexplained bump on the head
- Bowel or bladder incontinence
- A witness to the LOC.

Victims who decline Medical Care

- Discuss the warning signs
- Advise victim to log symptoms
- Encourage victim to seek medical attention if symptoms persist
- Next 24-48 hours could be critical

2012 Change

PC 273.5(c) includes an injury as a result of strangulation or suffocation as a traumatic condition whether of a minor or serious nature, caused by a physical force. For purposes of this section “strangulation” and “suffocation” include impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood

The arrest section is still PC 273.5(a)

Follow-up Questions

- Tell me how you feel now
- Have any new injuries appeared?
- Do you feel pain anywhere-Describe
- Does your voice sound the same?
- When you eat does it feel any different? Describe
- When you swallow does it feel different? Describe
- What is different now than before the assault? Describe
- Have you heard from the suspect?
- Please tell me what you remember about the assault. (Going for more details)
- How can I get in touch with you if you change your phone or address?
- Is there anything you want to talk about that we have not discussed?