

The Basics of Negotiating a BDSM Scene

<https://submissiveguide.com/communication/articles/basics-negotiating-scene>

Written by [lunaKM](https://submissiveguide.com/authors/lunakm) <https://submissiveguide.com/authors/lunakm>

It can be terrifying approaching a Dominant and asking them to play with you. The butterflies in your belly can make it very difficult to take that first step. It can be even worse if you two don't negotiate the scene to get what you want out of it, and they do too. Negotiating a scene is different than negotiating a relationship. I will be covering the play negotiation in this essay.

If you're interested in relationship negotiation, check out [Keys to a Successful Relationship](#).

Negotiating play is vital for new players or for those who have never played together. Once you get to know someone, you can likely forego some negotiation for spontaneity unless you have something you'd really like to experience. But situations like play parties and more casual encounters will require you to have some negotiation skills employed.



When you are ready to negotiate with someone, have in mind what you would like to experience. You can be as specific as you'd like to be. Express what turns you on and what things you have tried in the past that really did it for you. Tell them your limits, and if you don't know your limits, it's best to go back to [do your checklist again](#). It will give you a clue as to what you can and can't do as well as things that aren't appealing.

Negotiating pre-scene can include:

Arrangement of Roles

Deciding who will be the top and the bottom may be a given if you don't have fluid role preferences (switch) and identify as completely Top or bottom. But even so, if one of you is a switch, or if you are bottom but enjoy service topping, make sure it's clear who will be giving and who will be receiving during the scene.

Discuss if there will be the participation of any other observers. Rarely, the audience can be involved as barriers if you're going to be rough, secondary tops, or service submissives that provide additional support or play.

Talk about the way you will address one another. Never assume that a Top must be called by a title. Often, using your preferred name is enough.

Expectations and Needs of Both Partners

The likes and dislikes of submissive and dominant partners and the ability to fulfill each other's needs is important to establish for a scene. You don't have to go through your entire list. It is unlikely you're going to do a bunch of things, so keep your likes and dislikes limited in scope to what you might be interested in during the scene. If you're planning a spanking scene, you could say that you like or dislike different toys, need breaks in between hard hits, or that you're looking for a partner that will be playful.

Limits of the Scene

Boundaries are set to define what experience is acceptable within psychological and physical limits. Again, you don't have to go through your whole history, just what is pertinent to the scene you are planning. If a bondage scene is planned, for example, you don't need to go into limits related to impact play, watersports, or other things unrelated to the scene.

Learn More: [Limits: Limits: Drawing That Line In The Sand](#)

Discuss where on your body you're open to sensations. Are you looking for a bottom spanking? A back flogging? Maybe something on your thighs? Be specific about what locations are available and which ones are off-limits. It's also a good idea to discuss if any contact that isn't from tools is allowed. Some Tops like to touch the area they are playing with to feel welts, the heat and to encourage further sensation. I've also played with Tops that use it to just connect with the person in the scene so that you don't just feel like a slab of meat. As a bottom, if you need contact, be open about that too and what it looks like. Do you want them to touch you while they spank you? Can they hold you if you seem to be wobbling?

Types of Play

You should try to be specific about what you're looking for or express that when asked. It's okay if you don't know what you might like to try, but at least have some idea of what you'd like to do to help potential partners negotiate and connect with you. If you have seen this person play before and it's something you'd like to try, suggest that. If you've never seen this person play before, ask them what they enjoy doing the most and see if you have common interests.

****BDSM Gear and Attire ****

Going along with what activities you plan to try, you should negotiate what tools and toys will be used. This included any restraints, gags, and sex toys. Go through all of the available tools and be specific about which you are comfortable with and which you'd like not to use.

This is also the time to discuss just how undressed you plan to be. Some people play completely naked, while others prefer to keep undergarments on. Even more like to wear fetish gear such as corsets or leather harnesses and prefer to wear those during play.

Duration of the Scene

If you're at a play party, you'll likely be playing almost immediately after negotiation, but that's not always the case. Sometimes you or the other person has a dance card, and you'll need to set a time to play. This is often easier in advance of the party, but not always practical.

Decide how long of a scene you're looking for. Some locations have a time limit for equipment so that everyone who wants to use a particular piece of equipment can.

Health Concerns

Your potential play partner must know of any health concerns that could impact your scene. Things like allergies to materials such as latex, if you've had surgeries that make areas more sensitive, injuries that require modifications in position or bondage, and your overall health. Can you stand still for the whole scene, or do you need to take breaks to sit? What is your range of motion in your limbs? If sexual contact is on the table, do you have STDs? Are you taking medications that could cause problems like increased bleeding or dizziness?

Safety Measures

Whether you are playing publicly or privately, you should be aware of any safety tools needed for the play that interests you. Each scene is unique, but some of the more common safety measures for play are:

- Safewords
- Safety shears for cutting restraints and rope
- A first aid kit
- Emergency contacts list
- Fast-dissolving glucose
- Medical grade cleaning supplies such as Cavicide
- A dungeon monitor

Sexual Contact

BDSM play does not automatically mean sexual contact, so discuss things ahead of time for what is permissible. If contact with genitals is allowed for impact or bondage or sexual contact - be clear. If sexual contact is permitted, what safety measures should there be? What kind of contact is okay?

[Why BDSM and Sex are Not Always Connected](#)

Safewords

The best way to communicate that you're reaching your limit or that you're uncomfortable is to use a safeword. Safewords are stop words. They are words or phrases that don't show up in play that tell your partner that you need them to stop or check-in immediately. Public play spaces often have a universal safe word that dungeon monitors will be listening for. If you must use a different word, let the dungeon monitor know ahead of time.

Learn More: [Understanding Vocal and Nonvocal Safe Words for Safe Play](#)

Ultimately, negotiating a scene will be different each time you play with someone new or someone you are getting to know. Take these suggestions into consideration the next time you want to play so that communication is clear. You get the play you and your partner will enjoy. Safely.

Links

<https://www.submissiveguide.com/communication/articles/keys-to-successful-relationships-its-all-about-communication>

<https://www.submissiveguide.com/fundamentals/articles/bdsm-checklist>

<https://www.submissiveguide.com/fundamentals/articles/limits-drawing-that-line-in-the-sand>

<https://www.submissiveguide.com/fundamentals/articles/why-bdsm-and-sex-are-not-always-connected>

<https://www.submissiveguide.com/safety/articles/safe-words-for-safe-play>