

# FIND THAT VEIN!

- Tying off really helps! But take the tie off after the needle is in and before you shoot, or the pressure in your vein could ruin it.
- Gravity helps! Just standing up and letting your arms hang can bring veins out!
- Swinging your arms and making fists helps, too.

BODY HEAT brings veins to the surface:

- Getting off someplace warm will make finding a vein easier.
- Wearing a sweater or a coat while you prepare the shot can help. Don't take it off until you've got the shot cooked up!
- Wrapping your arm in cellophane or Saran Wrap can heat you up and bring veins to the surface.

If you can, TAKE YOUR TIME!

Sometimes your in a place where you can't stay. Sometimes you're in a hurry because you don't want to be seen. But SOMETIMES you can relax. Don't waste veins by rushing unless you have no choice.



This flyer is brought to you by your friends at  
HARM REDUCTION COALITION  
NY: 212/213-6376  
CA: 510-444-6969  
[www.harmreduction.org](http://www.harmreduction.org)

**EVERYONE is entitled to take care of themselves, whether they use drugs or not. Learning to take care of yourself takes time and thought. Talk to your friends, find out what they know**

**IF THE SHOT HURTS:  
PULL OUT!!**

**Avoiding  
Arteries and  
Nerves  
When You  
Want a Vein**

People who mainline (inject into veins) have to be really careful about where they hit!  
AVOID HITTING ARTERIES AND NERVES!  
**NEVER INJECT INTO THEM!!!** Inject only into veins!

## REALLY GOOD ADVICE

Anytime you hit something that feels like a vein, but it hurts, PULL OUT!

No matter how sick you are, no matter how bad you want to get off, you will only hurt yourself and waste your shot!.

Reasons the needle may hurt:

1. You hit an artery. Injecting here could kill you. PULL OUT!
2. You hit a nerve. Injecting here could hurt you bad. PULL OUT!
3. You aren't in a vein. This will totally waste your shot, and you could wind up with infections or an abscess. PULL OUT!

If you want that shot, don't waste it. If the hit is hurting, pull the needle out and start again. You are saving your shot, and *you are saving your life.*

## HOW YOU KNOW YOU HIT A VEIN:

When you think you've hit a vein, ALWAYS pull back the plunger a little. **If dark red blood comes into the syringe, then you hit a vein.** *Vein blood never comes into the syringe on its own, you have to pull the plunger back.*

If you hit a spot on the surface of your skin that you can see, that is a vein. You are only going to hit an artery if you are searching for a spot deeper down.

## HOW YOU KNOW YOU HIT AN ARTERY:

#1: **The color of the blood is bright red.**

- The blood may even be a little foamy or frothy.
- It *might* hurt a lot.
- It has a lot of force behind it. *Sometimes* you don't even have to pull the plunger back, it just comes right into the syringe.
- Sometimes it comes into the syringe in spurts like a heartbeat.
- **If any of these things happen, PULL OUT!!** Apply pressure to the place where you pulled out. If possible, hold your arm or leg over your head! If the bleeding doesn't stop, you gotta call 911 or *get some help.*

## HOW YOU KNOW YOU HIT A NERVE:

- It hurts like hell!
- No blood comes into your syringe when you pull back the plunger.
- **If this happens, PULL OUT!!**

## REALITY CHECK

If you are digging around for veins where you can't see them, it means you have probably lost a few. (No one is looking for veins deep down when they can find them right on top.)

If this is you, you need to be careful. You risk hitting arteries and nerves when you have to dig.

Sometimes you don't have a choice, but make an effort to get off where there is good light, and where you can take your time. **An injector in a hurry is an injector at risk. You are entitled to take care of yourself.**

Look on the other side of this flyer for tips on *getting veins.*