



Fireplay



THE COMPLETE MANUAL OF FIREPLAY

Edition Li-lie.

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Disclaimer

Warning

The goal of this manual is to provide information about some of the activities referred to as “Fireplay”. I do not take any responsibility in any practice inspired by this manual. Training should always be done with a mentor who has experience in the specific activity and performed with the proper protection and gears. Any of these activities described below can lead to serious injuries or even to death. I truly believe that you will find this book informative nonetheless.

About the author

I always loved playing with fire since childhood; from starting fire in the woods while camping to playing with more advanced chemistry sets and flammable gas. I also have extensive experience in pyrotechnics from my time in the military, and from my time as a weapon-master for movies. There along with others I did special effects that went from smoke to explosion and to controlled fire. Over a decade, I took every class I could on pyrotechnics, from erotic flame manipulation to circus acts involving fire. I got over 20 years of professional experience in pyrotechnics. This book will be an amalgam of some of this knowledge.

Laws

Before playing with fire, and doing performance, inform yourself about local laws on the topic of fire performance from your local firemarshal.



Introduction

Introduction

This book is about a practice called “Fireplay”. The first half of the book will be focus on the BDSM side of it: it will be about giving sensation as in temperature play and the erotic practices. The second half will touch on the use of Fireplay for circus type performances where we will be aiming for Poi, staff, fire breathing and more.

Burn

Fire can easily bring burns on yourself or on partners. You should learn how to help prevent them, but also how to deal with them.

-The first-degree burn is superficial, similar to a sunburn, and can be painful.

Some creams can help ease the symptoms. They normally represent no risk for the health.

-The second-degree is deeper into the skin then the first degree and comes with the blisters. Those can leave marks for a long time. Creams can be used to reduce symptoms and can be a good add to help heal.

-The third and fourth degrees mean the derma is damaged or destroyed. Medical assistance will be needed. Permanent scars are possible and these degrees or burn represent a risk for the health.



Safety

Safety in Fireplay touches many things from clothing to equipment and knowledge.

- Textile: any textile close to an open flame can be a risk. Aim for natural or aramid fiber: they will not melt on your skin. 100% cotton, bamboo or wool are the best choices. Nylon and any plastic-based material will melt which can lead to second-degree burns. Plus, they are hard to remove from the skin. Many performers have died simply because their clothes caught on fire. Keep clothing close to your body, no extravagant pieces, or long kimono sleeves.

- Fire blanket: I got a preference for the military ones, but any made in 100% wool or 100% cotton are suitable. Those blankets are a must for sensual kind Fireplay. They will protect the surface where you play and will also be helpful in case of a spill of flammable liquid. Also, a blanket can help for the aftercare. I will not recommend non-absorbing Kevlar or fiberglass fire blankets. Those will not absorb any fluid but spread it on other surfaces. They are also not comfortable for aftercare.



- Water: having more water than fuel is common sense. A pitcher or bucket is a good size recipient. Water is used for cleaning skin, humidifying a towel, humidifying hair, and in worst cases to extinguish fire.

- Extinguisher: I will recommend powder-based ones. A small kitchen one is perfectly affordable and portable. CO2 based extinguishers represent a risk of frostbites if used on a person. Learning how to use it is also a must. They have an expiration date that needs to be verified from time to time.

-Safe hand: it is used mostly in erotic play. A 100% cotton wet hand-towel will be used for safety among other things. I prefer them to be humid than dripping wet.

Basic knowledge

-Knowing how to light your torch and kill your flame: these are the most basic things to learn. You can extinguish your torch by blowing on it or by wrapping the safe hand around it.



-Using a third hand: most sturdy candles can be used for sensual play. That way, you don't have to play with a lighter and to drop your safe hand to light up.

-Knowing the flammability of your fuel: this includes how they react and how simple or hard they are to light. Experience with them to learn, and maybe find the mix you like. Mix is the percentage of alcohol and water. Please remember that lower than 50% of alcohol in the fuel will not light up.

-Do not panic: this is the most important for both bottom and top.

-Do not mix activities: for example, do not do bondage and Fireplay at the same time

-Clean the skin: remove all perfume and cream. For best practice, use your safe hand to clean the region you will play on before doing anything else.

- No oil on the skin: adding oil would help to transmit the heat deeper into the skin.
- Hair and body hair: those are very flammable and smell bad when they burn.
- Clothing, long sleeves and hair floating around, they represent a risk.
- Taking first aid class: make sure to take one that includes how to tend to fire-related injuries and how to react if they occur.

Risk

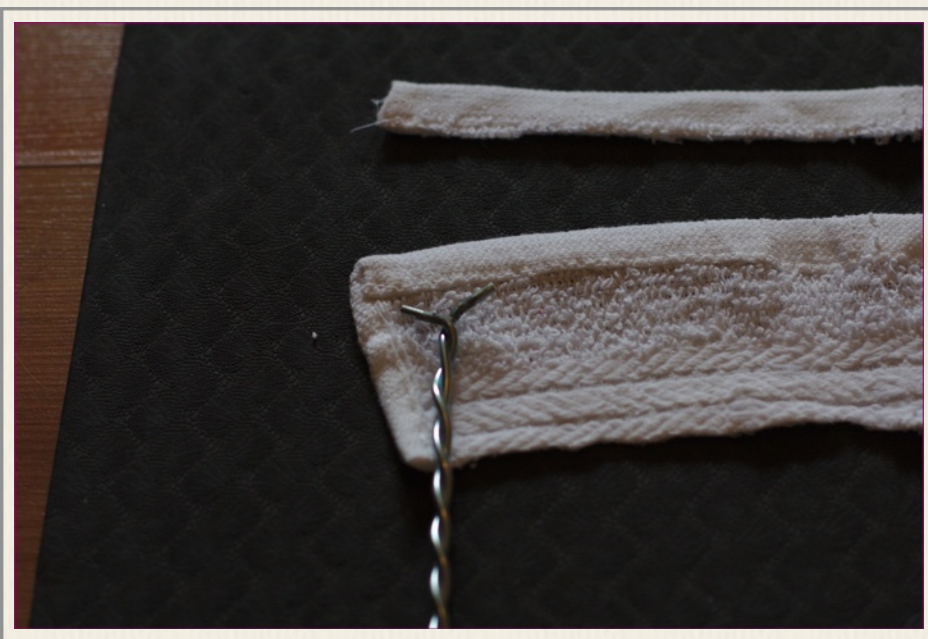
- Wind: this is the primary thing to pay attention to. Indoor wind can come from an AC or a fan. Notice where they are located.
- People: a real danger is also people coming closer and the risk of them stepping over your safety equipment or fuel or catch on fire. Limit the zone where you play. You can have also a spotter: a person to help keep people away while in a dungeon.
- Skin: it can react differently for each person: it can also be more sensitive than expected. Be aware and be prepared to take care of first and second-degree burns. More extensive burns should be treated at the hospital.
- Clothing: it can catch on fire by accident. Be sure to aim for wearing cotton, wool or materials recommended for Fireplay.
- Surrounding: watch for elements that can catch on fire like blinds or table decorations. Never play in a bed with synthetic fibers on it.
- Tattoo: doing Fireplay on those do represent not a risk for the health, but the ink can get damaged by heat. Also, be aware of body modifications: piercings can get stuck in your instruments. Which is not the best when doing Fireplay.



Building your toys

Creating your torch

A torch used for the sensual side of Fireplay is simple to make. I normally build it from a hand-towel from which I cut pieces of about 1-2 inches wide by more than 7 inch long. I also cut the border along the long side of the towel to tie it around the torch. I use a constrictor knot to hold everything. Most of the time, I use the handle of cheap fly swapper or fondue forks as the handle of the torch. You remove the swapper part, bend the twisted pair of wires a little – this helps block the cotton from flying away while you play. Be sure to not leave any of those prongs visible since they will get hot during the scene and can therefore burn the skin. The more you play with your torch, the less it will hold the fuel well; so, invest at least a dollar a year to replace them. I do not believe it's worth it to pay more for those made professionally or from cotton Kevlar.





Fuel

Use of fuel

For Fireplay, we normally use 70% rubbing alcohol. The lower the percentage, the lower the amount of alcohol which means the flame doesn't last and becomes less hot. Rubbing alcohol at 70 % alcohol means there's also 30% mix of water, menthol and camphor. Ask if the bottom person can be allergic or sensitive to those products. You can also use 99% alcohol and dilute it yourself to create a flame you like to play with. We use this fuel for the temperature it reaches and for the price. It is perfect for this kind of activities.





First step

Dipping

I use three containers in my dipping station; one for water which normally remains open in case, one empty for the dipping and one that is closed which will contain the fuel. When dipping, you put your torch in the empty container and drop fuel on it. When the torch is wet enough, you close the fuel container, make sure your torch is not dripping and you are ready to go.



How to

Technics

on/off

Like in the military, the first thing you learn about a new toy is to use it safely: how to put alcohol on it in the dipping container and be sure it is not dripping. Then, you are ready to light up with your third hand which is a candle. Learn how to put the fire out under control by blowing on it. Be careful if your facial hair gets too close. Another technique is to wrap your torch with your safe hand. Worst case scenario: dip it in the water container.

Sensual art of temperature play

The goal of this sensual play is simple: play with the difference of temperature. From cold to warm. First step is to cool down the body part by using your safe hand which is always wet; this will lower the temperature of the shin and leave a film of water over it. Perfect for beginners or sensitive skin. Then, with your torch lightened up, you pass over that same area, close to the skin, for a short period of time. Then return to cold, then warm and so on.

Tapping

Tapping is very similar to the sensual temperature play, except you will touch the skin for a brief moment. Make sure that you are not letting the skin burn. The first step is the cool down and to leave a thin film of water on the skin. Then, you do the tapping with your torch. You can do multiple soft hits before needing to cool down the skin again. Don't forget also to change spot in order to not overheat one location. Be aware that doing this technic after fuelling your wand represents more risks of letting some lighten up fuel drip over the skin: be attentive and use your safe hand quickly.

Fleshing

This is a more a dangerous technique that involves putting the skin on fire for a very short time.

Multiple approaches can be used to do it. One is to cool down the skin and leave a film of water over the skin; then, with the torch which is not lighten up, you make a visible line of alcohol. You light your torch, then light the line of alcohol with your wet safe hand following 1 second behind: so the fire on the skin stays for less than a second.

No cool down

This technique is the same has the sensual temperature play, but without your safe hand. There is also no water over the skin. For safety reasons, you can have your wet towel by your side. The goal is to gradually warm up of the skin. The cool down part or the removal of fire over the skin are done with your own hand. Over time, the skin gets warmer and warmer. Massage done by the hand and warming from the torch provide a very relaxing effect.

Hair removing

Please, do not do this where others will also play: the odor of burned hair is no perfume. Fire can be used to remove hair on the back of someone and other body parts consensually. More abundant the amount of hair is, the more heat is generated: be careful about over heating a body part. Also, when hair is burnt, it will not grow back the same.

Two torches

This technique uses two torches in one hand held like a “X”. This is a more advanced play. It allows you to do fleshing in a simpler way with one torch used for placing the line of alcohol and the other to light it up. It allows you also to play with two lighted torches for more heat. Those types of play should be performed along with a safe hand.

Fire Spanking

It's possible to find fire gloves made in cotton or Kevlar on which you put some alcohol before you light it up. I recommend having a safety person with you to help extinguish the fire and help you remove the glove. I saw many gloves that had silicone on them to help holding objects: those will become very hot and, if the silicone touches the skin, it will do a second-degree burn. I recommend removing the external layer and reversing that part of the glove inside-out and put it over the other part of the glove.

Sparkler

Sparkler is the candle-like thing that we use on birthday cakes. They can be used for sensual play. Be careful to never touch the skin; the sparks can set things on fire. When off, dip them in water before disposing of them.

Flash cotton / Flash paper

These are instruments used in some magic performances: those catch on fire and burn fast – in a flash. The denser they are, the more they burn hot and for a long period of time; the fluffier they are, the more they go in a flash. Flash cotton needs to be dry before being used to be more effective. Practice on your own hand before playing with partners.

Cell-Popping

This is a kind of branding which can create permanent designs on the skin. If it is made on pale skin, with exposure to the sun, it can fade away. The procedure is easy: it is to do a design dot by dot. First, make a design over the skin. You can also use transfer paper to place it over the skin. If you use a printer to generate the image before drawing or transferring it to the skin, don't forget to invert the image. Then, you use a heater – butane torch or propane stove – to heat the tip of a metal rod until it has a red color. The rod is about 1mm in diameter or less. The rod is held in a wood handle. The use of multiple rods or a devil stick can help go faster. You apply the red tip on the skin for 1 second or less. Normally, a rod can do maximum three dots. Repeat this process until the design is complete. You will hear the sound of popping as you do a dot.



Hair mousse

The use of hair mousse to do Fireplay can be seen has unexpected; but, it gives a nice visual effect and it is less dangerous than many other ways of playing with fire. The goal is to do a design with the mousse – like a circle – and light up a part of it. The flame will follow the design. You can put up to an inch high of mousse. The mousse can be light up a few times. To help this process, you can oxygenate the mousse with a finger by retracing the design. Notice that the mousse when heated loses its solid form and can drip on the side of the body. To remove it, you can use a spatula or your safe hand. The composition of the mousse will change from brand to brand. The main ones I recommend are Alberto V or White Rain.

Fire Cupping

This is a fun part of the Fireplay art as it gives a kind of massage or sensation play. I will recommend using real suction cup designed for fire cupping and not a shooter glass. The goal is to make a vacuum inside the glass that will create suction on the skin. The bigger the glass, the stronger the suction can be. The way to create the vacuum effect is simple: put a mist of alcohol inside the cup, light it up and put the flame out by putting the cup over the skin. The main danger can be the glass: never heat the side and watch for cracks. To release the vacuum, use a finger to let the air in. A good sensation comes from moving those cups over the skin. Be aware that suction cups can leave huge marks.

Butane bubbles

This a fun kind of experiment. In a good size bowl, put water and dish soap. Mix a little. Then put a canister of butane upside down in it and press it against the bottom of the bowl: butane bubbles will be created. Those are very flammable. Take some of them and put them over the body. Then light up with a torch. Be careful that no flame gets near the container of butane bubble: do not go near with your torch.



Circus type

Fireplay Circus or Performance-oriented fire

Introduction

Fireplay for performance is different from Fireplay for sensual play. It's about playing with other types of fuel that burns hotter and tools that you need to learn how to manipulate. Most implements need to be learnt through mentoring or learning on your own when they are dry – without the parts on fire first.



Safety

Safety

First, you need to have proper clothing which is flame proof or fire retardant at the very least. Most 100% cotton or wool are good enough. Never wear Nylon. Many performers have died from issues related to their costume burning. Knowledge and how to react are also key points: never panic; never do a performance alone – a safety person should always be there. Controlling fuel is also important: from where to dip, to how to store it and how to light.

DM / Safety person

When performing any kind of circus-type fire activity, you should team up with a safety person. The role of this person is to protect you and the surrounding area. If fire gets on the performer, it's their job to alert them by saying something like: "BOB, LEFT LEG." This is faster than going to them and it doesn't disturb the performance. Bob can put it out or ask for help if needed. If the performer cannot resolve the fire, then the safety person can intervene fast using a safety towel. Also, a safety person is useful for stopping props from burning by wrapping the props in a towel to remove the supply of oxygen which stops the fire. The safety person should be also aware of any safety procedure, safety equipment and have a lighter at hand. I recommend a butane torch type since some fuels are harder to light up.



Fuel

Fuel

The fuel used for performances will depend on the needs and the resources of the show. But also, some fuels have particularities that some performers will like more over other.

Fuels can be mixed to get special properties or to add a quick start. Mixing should be done in a controlled environment.

Liquid

- Kerosene: This fuel is very common for fire performers since its cost is very low. It's a little bit harder to light than naphtha. It generates lots of fume which makes it inadequate for indoor use.
- Naphtha: It's the most common fuel for props. Easy to light up, it is also cheap. It generates a little bit of fume. It makes good flashes with whips. It is used as a kicker in some mixes to help light up other fuels.
- Liquid Paraffin: It's the recommended fuel for fire breathing because of its special property. It's very toxic to use: do not swallow or inhale it. Drinking milk before using and washing your mouth with Coke or Pepsi type of drink, after use are recommended.
- Isopar: The isopropyl paraffin is the most expensive fuel we play with. It's very hard to light up and it burns twice as hot than most fuels. However, it does not generate any smoke or odor. Type M or K have differences that some will like over others.

- Car fuel: It is very rarely used since it is very explosive, the flash point is very low, it generates fumes and it creates an unpleasant smell. Please, do not use.
- Isopropyl: It creates a very light and weak flame. It produces less fume than naphtha. The flame lasts a shorter time.
- Nitromethane: It's a very expensive fuel. It is easy to light even in very cold conditions.
- Methyl Hydrate / Borax: This mix produces a green flame, but the fumes are toxic. Please, use outdoor or in a well-ventilated area. The ratio that I use to create the mix is 2 spoons of Borax for 1L MH.
- Napalm: It is made from soap or foam dissolved in another fuel. It is very sticky and makes lots of fume. Use with caution.

Powder

- Lycopodium Powder: It is like cornstarch that can get on fire when in mist-form, but it is very safe to use when it is not as a mist. It is used to make little flame throwers.
- Titanium powder: It is used with props to make sparks. Those are making white sparkles which are very hot.
- Iron Powder: It is like titanium powder, but it makes more of a yellow-colored spark which is very hot.
- Charcoal: It is used in cages as this makes lots of fine sparks. It is very dangerous for eyes and if breathed.
- Steel wool: produce nice and long spark who are very hot and can ignite some material on fire.



Tools

Tools or Props

- Poi, meteor, snakes, rope darts: It is Kevlar attached to a handle by a string. Most movements are done by rotation. The starting spinoff can be done when the prop is not on fire: it's done close to the ground by performing fast rotations to remove the excess of fuel. When done with the prop lighten up, it gives a "Back to the future" type of trail.
- Sword: It is a stick of Kevlar mounted to look like a sword. Some are made for contact and combat-like performance. The guard helps the performer since it represents a little heat and flame protection. No spinoff has to be performed, but you need to remove excess of fuel by letting the sword drip a little before use. You could also use a towel to absorb a little of the excess.
- Staff, dragon staff: Many variations of this exist. Staffs are used for body contact manipulations or spins. Also, it can be used with movements from martial arts. The starting spinoffs are very impressive: they are done by rotations on the axe to allow excess of fuel to get out like a ball of fire on each side of the staff.
- Whips: The fireballs produced by those are very impressive. Whips need to be kept in movement all the time because heat will damage the fall and poppers. They do not have spinoffs, because the excess of fuel will produce the expected fireball.

- Floggers: They produce big balls of fire on a chain. Those generate lots of heat. The burning time is normally shorter. I recommend a good spin before use. They can hold a lot of fuel.



- Fire Breathing: This is a special act. You need to be able to make a nice mist with your mouth. The proper fuel used is liquid paraffin. This is one of the most dangerous fire activities since inhaling the fumes or the heat can be deadly. Same goes for swallowing the paraffin which can make you sick. It comes with high risks of putting your face on fire. A safety person should always monitor the drooling of paraffin.

- Fleshing: Similar to kinky fleshing, but this one is done on yourself using naphtha most of the time. The heat is more extreme. With experience, some performers go as far as transferring flames with their hands or tongue.

- Fire gloves: These made in Kevlar and cotton. They allow a small time for fire punching. Please be aware that movement will increase the glove's temperature. Also, it can be hard sometimes to remove. Be careful if the glove has silicone. If you don't reverse that part, the silicone, that usually helps to get a grip, will give a second-degree burn if you touch the skin with it. Reverse the outer glove so the silicone is inside the glove touching the inner glove. Use Kevlar tread to suture it in place.

- Steel wool/Charcoal cage props: Those are designed to make nice sparkles. Steel wool will make nice long sparkles, while the charcoal ones will produce very tiny sparkles, like fairy dust. Those sparks can easily put things on fire. Proper clothing, eyewear and mask are recommended.



Protective gear

Protective gear

- Gloves: Leather or Nomex glove are recommended.
- Sleeves: Sleeves that can be used for arms or legs can be added for protection.
- Goggles: This is an extra that can be used for self protection, especially when using whips or any prop that can produce dust or fine sparkles. Safety glass is recommended.
- Hood: Some artists will use hoods, or a removable hood made of leather or other fire-resistant material. It help to protect while performing high spinoffs. It can be added to different costumes.
- Clotting: Cotton, wool and leather are the norm. Nomex, aramid and bamboo are also seen as type of fiber used in costumes.



Zone

- Fuel and dipping zone: It should be as far as possible from your spinoff zone to avoid any risk of putting the fuel zone on fire. It is called the red zone. Designated also by a red light at night.
- Spinoff zone: Do your spinoff as far as possible from the fuel zone.
- Safety zone: it should contain water, an extinguisher, a wool blanket, a cotton towel and fuel absorbent material in case of a fuel spill. It is called also the blue zone and is designated by a blue or green light.
- The cooldown zone: It is to allow the props to cool down before transport. Normally, the cooldown zone uses a white light.
- Jam zone: There should be in a perimeter around the area to allow a safety distance from people who would like to watch. All the other zones should be included in the jam zone to avoid public going where props, fuel or safety equipment are located.

Thanks to everyone I learned from: Pierre Black, Cicatrix, Shay & Stefanos, Chantalie, and many partners. I learned a lot from many local fire performers and groups also.



Referance

<https://www.stefanosandshay.com/classes/pyro-passion-fire-play/>

Great handout available on multiple topics.

<http://www.gardefeu.ca/>

Trainning and education