Documentation by photographs sequentially for a period of days after the assault is very helpful in establishing a journal of physical evidence.

Victims should also seek medical attention if they experience difficulty breathing, speaking, swallowing or experience nausea, vomiting, lightheadedness, headache, involuntary urination and/or defecation, especially pregnant victims. A medical evaluation may be crucial in detecting internal injuries and saving a life.

Victims may lose consciousness by any one or all of the following methods: blocking of the carotid arteries in the neck (depriving the brain of oxygen), blocking of the jugular veins (preventing deoxygenated blood from exiting the brain), and closing off the airway, making breathing impossible.

Strangulation has only recently been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence: *unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes.* When domestic violence perpetrators choke (strangle) their victims, not only is this a felonious assault, but it may be an attempted homicide. Strangulation is an ultimate form of power and control, where the batterer can demonstrate control over the victim’s next breath; having devastating psychological effects or a potentially fatal outcome.

Sober and conscious victims of strangulation will first feel terror and severe pain. If strangulation persists, unconsciousness will follow. Before lapsing into unconsciousness, a strangulation victim will usually resist violently, often producing injuries of their own neck in an effort to claw off the assailant, and frequently also producing injury on the face or hands to their assailant. These defensive injuries may not be present if the victim is physically or chemically restrained before the assault.

Additional Signs and Symptoms
A larger version of the graphic above which contains detailed signs and symptoms is available for download at https://www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com/Esperanza
Journal Your Symptoms

Head - pinpoint red spots (petechiae) on scalp, hair pulled, bump(s), skull fracture, concussion.

Face - red or flushed, petechiae, scratch marks.

Eyes and Eyelids - petechiae to the left or right eyeball, bloodshot eyes.

Ear - petechiae (external and/or ear canal), bleeding from ear canal.

Nose - bloody nose, broken nose, petechiae.

Mouth - bruising, swollen tongue, swollen lips, cuts/abrasions.

Under the chin - redness, scratch marks, bruise(s), abrasions.

Neck - redness, scratch marks, fingernail impressions, bruise(s), abrasions, swelling, ligature marks.

Chest and Shoulders - redness, scratch marks, bruise(s), abrasions.

Voice changes - raspy and/or hoarse voice, coughing, unable to speak, complete loss of voice.

Swallowing changes - trouble swallowing, painful swallowing, neck pain, nausea/vomiting, drooling.

Breathing changes - difficulty breathing, hyperventilation, unable to breathe.

Behavioral changes - restlessness or combativeness, problems concentrating, amnesia, agitation, Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome, hallucinations.

Vision changes - complete loss or black & white vision, seeing 'stars', blurriness, darkness, fuzzy around the eyes.

Hearing changes - complete loss of hearing, gurgling, ringing, buzzing, popping, pressure, tunnel-like hearing.

Other changes - Memory loss, unconsciousness, dizziness, headaches, involuntary urination or defecation, loss of strength, going limp.

Use a pen or a marker to indicate any visible signs and/or symptoms.

Signs of Strangulation

Diagrams to Mark Visible Injuries
Strangulation Questions

Describe how you were strangled. Was it one or two hands; forearm; object; etc.? How do you feel now?

What did they say to you before, during and after the strangling? (one at a time) Did you experience any visual changes during the strangling? (describe)

Were they shaking or moving you about during the strangulation? (describe) Did you vomit, urinate or defecate as a result of being strangled?

Were you thrown or held against the wall, floor, or ground? Describe how and the results? Describe the surface area. Were the suspect wearing any rings or other jewelry? Look for marks from these objects.

How long did the strangling last? Were you able to do anything to stop the assault? Will the suspect have injuries?

How many time were you strangled? Describe each incident and method. Look for injuries behind the ears, all around the neck, under the chin and jaw, eyelids, shoulders and chest area.

How much pressure was used on scale of 1-10 and was it continuous? Ask them to look in a mirror and point out injury sites including Petechiae.

What were you thinking about when you were being strangled? Are there prior incidents of strangulation? (get details)

What caused the strangling to stop? Any visible injury? Photograph injuries and the entire area. Photograph the lack of injury and any areas the victim feels pain

Any difficulty breathing during the assault or breathing changes now? Any object used? Document where it came from. Photograph and book the item as evidence.

Describe any voice changes. Encourage medical treatment

Any complaint of pain to the throat? Information provided courtesy of Dr. George McClane, Dr. Dean Hawley and Gael Strack JD

Any coughing or trouble swallowing? m.a.

How did the victim feel during the assault? (dizzy, nauseous, loss of consciousness) Absence of a visible injury is common while symptoms of internal injuries may be present.

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.

Strangulation is a high lethality crime. A study in the Journal of Emergency Medicine in 2008 showed that when a man strangles his partner, it increases the odds that he will kill about seven-fold.
Supplemental Report for Strangulation Assaults

WHICH OF THE BELOW HOLD(S) BEST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WERE STRANGLING
(Have the victim circle and initial the type of strangulation hold used)

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photos by Det. Alex Smith, Los Angeles County Sheriff Department

Symptoms and/or Internal Injury:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breathing Changes</th>
<th>Voice Changes</th>
<th>Swallowing Changes</th>
<th>Behavioral Changes</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Difficulty Breathing</td>
<td>□ Raspy voice</td>
<td>□ Trouble swallowing</td>
<td>□ Agitation</td>
<td>□ Dizzy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Hyperventilation</td>
<td>□ Hoarse voice</td>
<td>□ Painful to swallow</td>
<td>□ Amnesia</td>
<td>□ Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Unable to breathe Other:</td>
<td>□ Coughing</td>
<td>□ Neck Pain</td>
<td>□ PTSD</td>
<td>□ Fainted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Unable to speak</td>
<td>□ Unable to speak</td>
<td>□ Nausea/Vomiting</td>
<td>□ Hallucinations</td>
<td>□ Urination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other:</td>
<td>□ Other:</td>
<td>□ Drooling</td>
<td>□ Combativefulness</td>
<td>□ Defecation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face</th>
<th>Eyes &amp; Eyelids</th>
<th>Nose</th>
<th>Ear</th>
<th>Mouth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Red or flushed</td>
<td>□ Petechiae to R and/or L eyeball (circle one)</td>
<td>□ Bloody nose</td>
<td>□ Brusing</td>
<td>□ Mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Pinpoint red spots (petechiae)</td>
<td>□ Petechiae to R and/or L eyelid (circle one)</td>
<td>□ Broken nose (ancillary finding)</td>
<td>□ Swollen tongue</td>
<td>□ Red or flushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Scratch marks</td>
<td>□ Bloody red eyeball(s)</td>
<td>□ Petechiae</td>
<td>□ Swollen tongue</td>
<td>□ Petechiae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other:</td>
<td>□ Other:</td>
<td>□ Bleeding from ear canal</td>
<td>□ Swollen lips</td>
<td>□ Broken nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other:</td>
<td>□ Other:</td>
<td>□ Petechiae (external and/or ear canal)</td>
<td>□ Cuts/abrasions (ancillary finding)</td>
<td>□ Petechiae (external and/or ear canal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

273.5(d) of the California Penal Code defines strangulation (felony) - "strangulation" and "suffocation" include impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of a person by applying pressure on the throat or neck.
## Documentation Chart for Strangulation Cases

### Symptoms and/or Internal Injury:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breathing Changes</th>
<th>Voice Changes</th>
<th>Swallowing Changes</th>
<th>Behavioral Changes</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Agitation</td>
<td>Dizzy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyperventilation</td>
<td>Hoarse voice</td>
<td>Painful to swallow</td>
<td>Amnesia</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to breathe</td>
<td>Coughing</td>
<td>Neck Pain</td>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Faint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Unable to speak</td>
<td>Nausea /Vomiting</td>
<td>Hallucinations</td>
<td>Urination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drooling</td>
<td>Combativeness</td>
<td>Defecation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Difficulty Breathing
- Hyperventilation
- Unable to breathe

**Other:**

- Raspy voice
- Hoarse voice
- Coughing
- Unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing
- Painful to swallow
- Neck Pain
- Nausea /Vomiting
- Drooling
- Agitation
- Amnesia
- PTSD
- Hallucinations
- Combativeness
- Dizzy
- Headaches
- Faint
- Urination
- Defecation

### Use face & neck diagrams to mark visible injuries:

#### Face
- Red or flushed
- Pinpoint red spots (petechiae)
- Scratch marks

#### Eyes & Eyelids
- Petechiae to R and/or L eyeball (circle one)
- Petechiae to R and/or L eyelid (circle one)
- Bloody red eyeball(s)

#### Nose
- Bloody nose
- Broken nose (ancillary finding)
- Petechiae

#### Ear
- Petechiae (external and/or ear canal)
- Bleeding from ear canal

#### Mouth
- Bruising
- Swollen tongue
- Swollen lips
- Cuts/abrasions (ancillary finding)

#### Under Chin
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruise(s)
- Abrasions

#### Chest
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruise(s)
- Abrasions

#### Shoulders
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruise(s)
- Abrasions

#### Neck
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruise(s)
- Swelling
- Ligature mark

#### Head
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruise(s)
- Swelling
- Ligature mark
- Petechiae (on scalp)

**Ancillary findings:**
- Hair pulled
- Bump
- Skull fracture
- Concussion

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Questions to ASK: Method and/or Manner:

How and where was the victim strangled?

☐ One Hand (R or L) ☐ Two hands ☐ Forearm (R or L) ☐ Knee/Foot

☐ Ligature (Describe): __________________________________________

☐ How long? ______ seconds ________ minutes ☐ Also smothered?

☐ From 1 to 10, how hard was the suspect’s grip? (Low): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (high)

☐ From 1 to 10, how painful was it? (Low): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (high)

☐ Multiple attempts: _____________ ☐ Multiple methods: ______________

Is the suspect RIGHT or LEFT handed? (Circle one)

What did the suspect say while he was strangling the victim, before and/or after?

Was she shaken simultaneously while being strangled? Straddled? Held against wall?

Was her head being pounded against wall, floor or ground?

What did the victim think was going to happen?

How or why did the suspect stop strangling her?

What was the suspect’s demeanor?

Describe what suspect’s face looked like during strangulation?

Describe Prior incidents of strangulation? Prior domestic violence? Prior threats?

MEDICAL RELEASE

To All Health Care Providers: Having been advised of my right to refuse, I hereby consent to the release of my medical/dental records related to this incident to law enforcement, the District Attorney’s Office and/or the City Attorney’s Office.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

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### Symptoms of Strangulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>Pain Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Changes</td>
<td>Loss of Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were you thinking about?</td>
<td>Voice Changes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallowing Changes?</td>
<td>Coughing / Vomiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Control of Bodily Functions</td>
<td>Describe pain and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Pain--</td>
<td>Breathing Changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Signs of Strangulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Petechiae</th>
<th>Visible Injuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redness, abrasions, bruises, scratches, swelling etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>