



### **Vein Care - Why Bother?**

If you whack up often, it can be harder to find veins to use. This pamphlet has some advice on how to look after your veins. There are some good reasons to look after your veins, including:

- Less thrashed or dropped veins
- Less infections and sores
- Whacking is easier
- Less trackmarks
- Veins last longer

### **Vein info**

*The easiest veins to get are the large veins that run along the inside elbow (these veins are close to the skin's surface)*

***Kornie's** (men's) veins are often larger and stick out more than*

***Mimini's** (women's) veins*

*If you can't see any veins - try to feel them under your skin (they will feel soft and rubbery)*

### **Finding a Vein**

If you've been using for a long time, you might have a problem finding a vein

If you are having a hard time, try:

- Hanging your arm lower than your waist and clenching your fist
- Lightly slapping or tapping the vein you want to use
- Holding your arm under very warm water for a while

**Remember.....**

**Relax, Chill – it's harder to whack up when you're stressed!**

### **Needle Insertion**

Before you even mix your gear– **wash your murras** (hands) to get rid of germs and viruses.

The sharper the **puntapi** (fit), and the tinier it is, the less damage to your veins (new puntapis are **always** the way to go!)

When you've got your gear mixed and ready to whack:

1. Find a vein that is not thrashed or sore
2. Put the puntapi in at an angle
3. Jack (pull back) a little to check that it is 'in' (if it is, you will see blood in the syringe)
4. Whack it in slowly by gently pushing on the plunger



### Using a Tourniquet (belt/tournie)

**You don't have to use a tournie but it can help to 'bring up' (pump up) your veins, making them bigger and easier to get**

- Tie the tournie so that it's easy to loosen quickly
- If you're using a vein in your arm, make sure the tournie is tied on the upper part of the arm, between your biceps (arm muscle) and your shoulder
- Loosen the tournie as soon as you know you are 'in' and before you whack up

If you use tournies often, its good to use a quick-release one, available from most clean needle program outlets.

### Looking After Your Veins

Using the same spot all the time can lead to soreness, swelling, infections and even scarring and collapsed veins.

#### How veins collapse



The needle damages the lining of the vein



forming clots & scar tissue



that pull the sides of vein in



causing it to block and eventually collapse

**It's better to whack into a new spot, so try to change around the spots you whack into (in other words rotate sites).  
'Rotating your site' gives veins a chance to heal between shots.**

### To keep your veins in good shape:

- Let a spot heal before using it again
- Use lots of different spots and both arms
- Learn to whack up with both murras (hands) (this can be an advantage)
- Save 'old faithfuls' (easy or favourite veins) for when you are in a hurry
- Swab the spot you're going to whack into to kill any bacteria that can cause infection (wipe in one direction only)
- Filter your mix (your shot) to remove any crap other than the drug (which should dissolve in water).
- Don't whack into sores or abscesses 'cos this can make them even more sore or spread the infection to other places
- When using new spots, move away from where you have whacked into before, and away from previous spots and damage

### In Short

- Relax/chill out
- Go slow
- Filter the shot
- Rotate sites (change around the spots you whack into)
- Swab the spot
- Use a new puntapi (fit)
- Don't whack into thrashed veins



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For more info on vein care and safer injecting contact SAVIVE, NU-HIT or your local clean needle program outlet.