

Single Tail Fact Sheet – by Mz Suzanne SxySadist

The unmistakable “swish” sound of a single tail slicing through the air, culminating in its spine tingling “crack”, has become an increasingly present sound in today’s BDSM scene, but the whip has been used for centuries to drive animals, particularly cattle and horses. Interestingly enough however most cowboys do not ever strike their charges with the whip, even though the average animal hide is far tougher than human flesh, but rather simply use the crack of the whip to achieve the desired effect.



Still, for many of us there is nothing like the feel of a whip dancing in your hand as you send your energy out across the distance between you and a treasured partner, and the ability to strike a target as small as a nipple with varying degrees of intensity from a whisper soft caress to a napalm like strike that could literally slice through flesh.

It should come as no surprise then that gaining mastery over the whip requires a fair bit of dedication and skill, and that it should be wielded with great care and compassion. It should also be noted that single tails of any variety are one of the few implements that can be as dangerous to the handler as it is to recipient, and I personally have found that there is no way to get good at throwing a whip without inadvertently tasting its sting yourself, quite a bit. So, if you are one of those tops that HATES pain, you might want to reconsider learning to “throw a tail”.

Types of Single Tails:

A “single tail” whip is a long, slender, flexible tool and the term describes any whip that has (drum roll please) a single tail or lash. Among the types of single tail whips in common use today are the; signal, snake, bull, and stock whip. The construction, length, and use of these whip styles vary. Kangaroo hide is the most popular leather used for whip making but nylon whips can be a great choice for first time whip buyers. Let’s discuss the individual styles of whips in greater detail for a moment.

Bull whips (1st photo) have short, rigid handles. Older models the handles were made from, wood or cane, but modern builds are using a metal spike or spring steel. They are usually between four and twenty feet in length. This style evolved in America for both cattle herding and noisemaking.

The stock whip (2nd photo) was developed in Australia for the same purposes. Its handle—called the stock—is much longer than that of a bullwhip. A flexible joint or “knuckle” connects the stock to the leather thong, and this construction allows the whip to be used while riding a horse. These whips are generally between six and ten feet long.

Snake (3rd photo) & signal whips are flexible throughout rather than having a rigid handle. Like bull and stock whips, snake whips also employ a fall between the thong and the cracker while signal whips often have the popper braided into the thong making it more difficult to change. That has been changing in recent years as many kink friendly whip makers understand the importance of changing poppers for safety and hygiene.



Another interesting fact about bull, stock & snake, whips is that only the braided thong portion is measured when determining the length of the whip which means that a four-foot whip may actually exceed 6 foot in length when you take into account the handle, fall and the cracker.



Signal whips are the most common type of whip used in dungeons today and are what most scene players are referring to when they say “single tail”. These types of whips can be as short as three or four feet in length, so it can be used in a much smaller space than longer styles of whip.

Whip Anatomy & Glossary:

- The loop, which is often attached to the end of a whip. Although it resembles a wrist strap, the loop was traditionally used to hang the whip for storage and is not required to slip your hand through to throw it.
- The knot or knob (also called the heel, heel knot, Turk’s head or pommel) is a ball on the end of the handle of the whip. (On snakes & signal whips it is generally braided into the end).
- The handle, (on bulls and stocks) is generally made of wood, sometimes covered in braided leather, and is what you use to hold the whip by (duh).
- The thong is the braided portion of the whip that gradually diminishes over its length. This is accomplished by “dropping” the number of strands that are used along the way thereby diminishing the girth very gradually. On whips without handles, i.e. snakes & signals, the thong is actually held when throwing.
- The belly, which surrounds the core of the thong, is perhaps the most important part of a whip. In high quality whips, the equivalent of a smaller whip may be used as the core.
- The fall is a single strand of leather attached to the far end of the thong. This replaceable part is fairly long and wears away with use. It is my understanding that it was meant serve as a buffer zone between the popper & the thong to protect the much more expensive thong portion of your whip from damage.
- The popper or cracker consists of a few fiber strands attached to the end of the fall or braided into the thong. This is the part of the whip that actually makes the cracking sound and the portion that would come in contact with your target. The popper tends to wear out with use, (especially if you practice on inanimate objects), so it must be replaced fairly regularly. Generally, crackers are made of nylon string or cord, but I have also used a kinder, gentler cotton string that is fluffier and bites a bit less for delicate areas. By the same token I have also heard of people using fishing line or equivalents that can cut flesh more easily. As always, whatever you decide to use, proceed with caution.
- Plaits refer to the number of strands used in braiding the whip or thong. Can range anywhere from eight to twenty-eight and up.

What to look for when buying a whip:

Choosing the whip that is right for you, all comes down to personal preference and your individual throwing needs which you will probably discover through trial and error as you go along. I feel that the major things to consider once you decide on the type of whip you wish to buy are: craftsmanship, length, weight, girth (of the handle or portion you hold), where you will be throwing and of course your budget. I used to think that the more plaits (number of strands used to braid the whip) that a whip had the better it was until it was explained to me that after about twenty-four it has a tendency to become too delicate and the thinner strands break more easily. Sixteen to twenty-four seems to be ideal for most people in leather whips.

For first time buyers, I almost always suggest buying one of the more inexpensive nylon whips that are available today for a few reasons. First, they are inexpensive and until you determine whether this is something you want to devote a lot of time and money to, you might as well not make a huge investment upfront. Second, brand new leather whips are generally stiff as a board and not easy to work with until they have been thrown a hell of a long time. Nylon whips tend to be fairly responsive right out of the wrapper so you will not have to spend energy breaking them in and can focus on developing your style and expertise. If and when you decide you are ready to buy a well-made leather whip see if you can buddy up with a few other whip enthusiasts and ask their opinions, see if they will let you handle or even perhaps throw some of theirs. Get a feel for what is out there and be an informed consumer. I have listed some great whip crafters at the end of this document.

Whip throwing basics – Things to know before you throw:

Wear protection – As I have said earlier, you will definitely get to taste the whip as you begin to throw it. It is simply a fact of life that until you learn to control it, it will hit you and everything else in range. If you are afraid of the whip, it will take you a lot longer to learn to throw it because it will affect how you throw and how relaxed you feel with it in your hand. It is strongly suggested that you wear eye protection! Clear colored goggles are cheap compared to the cost of losing an eye. Wide brimmed hats will help protect your ears. Long sleeved shirts and pants are also a good idea.

Learn to listen to the whip – It definitely will speak to you if you listen and every whip is different. In whip throwing it is not about how hard or softly you throw but more about the timing of it. Every whip has its own speed and with practice you will learn to hear the sounds that will tell you if you need to throw faster or slower. A swish or hiss noise without a pop generally means to me I need to slow down because I am throwing too fast and not giving the whip a chance to pop before moving my arm past the target. Similarly, a “thuddy pop” often signals to me that the crack happened too far up the whip because it did not get a chance to unfurl all the way to the cracker. In almost all cases I find that I need to take a breath or two, relax and slow down.

Know your range – a four-foot whip at arm’s length will give you at least a range of six to seven feet in all directions, including overhead! Be aware of your surroundings as best as possible at all times. With time you will almost develop a real sense of having eyes in back of your head because your peripheral vision will get better but when you are first learning you must really pay attention to “what is where” to avoid unintentional involvements (or else your friends & pets will learn to stay the hell away from you when you pick up that thing) and also to avoid striking, or breaking inanimate objects.

What to practice on – Speaking of inanimate objects, I strongly advise against using your whip to practice against walls or other hard surfaces and this can destroy your popper faster at the very least and or damage the braided portion of your whip, however, some of my favorite targets are leaves on bushes (avoid the branches though) and sheets or other soft objects like ropes dangling from overhead. Some whip throwers I have met suggest getting to work on people as soon as possible because pillows don’t give feedback but I much prefer that you get a really good sense of your range before moving onto things that can bleed, sue you for damages or throw your ass out of the house. As always, your mileage may vary, so please proceed at your own (and their) risk and let’s be careful out there.

Whip strokes:

When first learning anything I prescribe to the KISS school of thought that tells us to “Keep It Simple Stupid” and while throwing a whip is not something you can learn by reading about it, I am going to do my best to describe at least two of the strokes I use most often.

Stance – Everybody develops their own throwing style and along with that each individual’s stance may vary but I feel it is important when learning to pay attention to a few things that I hope will make it easier for you as you learn. First, take a nice deep breath and relax into comfortable stance, ground into your legs and breathe again. Do not lean in or

come up onto your toes as your throw as this will make the dept hand height harder to control & far less predictable. Try to relax & stay loose as you throw and this will help prevent fatigue.

Horizontal stroke – To begin with, the whip travels horizontally from right to left and then you return to the starting point. Later on, you can add using the return as a striking stroke also but to begin with just focus on the out stroke. As the whip travels across your line of sight, try to watch the tip and work on keeping it as level as possible so that you will develop the ability to know how high or low you are hitting.

Overhand stroke – This stroke is more akin to casting a fishing line, throwing a baseball or as “Boomer” explained it to me, “knocking on a door”. The whip is travelling in a circle arc and when you bring your hand forward to “knock” you are cutting that circle in half and sending the whip straight out in front of you. The pop comes from following through towards your target NOT by pulling the whip back at the end. If you pull the whip back towards you, it will hit you, guaranteed.

Whip Care:

Rather than reinvent a wheel I am going to offer you a link to an excellent article on whip care and maintenance created by Evan of EF Leathercraft <https://www.kangaroowhips.com/whip-care>

A few great whip resources:

Master Dex – I had the pleasure of attending several classes with “Master Dex” and am always thoroughly impressed not only with his skill but with his humble attitude and quiet demeanor. He truly is a master of his craft and he hosts a wonderfully informative YouTube channel called Whips in the Dungeon that you can find here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCItAz0IDII97IU-HXTLztBA>

He also wrote several very informative books about whips and canes: <https://tinyurl.com/5fhvncu>

“Boomer” from Atlanta Georgia is another great whip instructor that helped me tremendously. I had been throwing for several and still having difficulty with long whips but in one afternoon he taught me what I was doing wrong and how to fix it. I would highly recommend attending any class he is giving if you get the chance, or even booking a private lesson with him. You can contact him via email at: rge66@att.net Tell him Suze says “Hiya”!

Evan Fava – of EF Leathercraft is also a remarkable whip maker from whom I purchased my beautiful matched set of galley whips. He also makes beautiful nylon whips but his website says his lead time for custom orders is currently 6 to 12 months. Still, good things come to those who wait. <https://www.kangaroowhips.com> and <https://www.efleathercraft.com>

Most of the other people I have purchased whips from are now retired but I asked my most trusted sources specifically about nylon whips and was told that “Terrance Fischer makes a nice nylon bullwhip” <https://www.swordguybuilds.com>

And he also pointed me toward X1 Whips from Canada <https://www.facebook.com/x1whips>

I have also heard very good things about a female whip maker named Desert Minx from Mohave Outliers <http://www.mojaveoutliers.com>

If you have any questions on this presentation or would like to book a private consultation, please feel free to contact me directly by email at: Mistress@SxySadist.com

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