

My name is Andre Somerville and I am from Waterbury, ct. It is important that cops be trained in the proper application of chokeholds if they are going to be allowed to continue using them. They need to regularly practice the safe application of hand to hand combat techniques. I would like to see training hours increase. There is no reason for a person to die during the application of a chokehold. Martial arts experts have been using them for years without killing each other. I will not feel safe knowing police will be able to continue using chokeholds under the law in this bill, if there are no assurances that they can use those techniques without killing people.

Below is an article I read about police use of chokeholds. This is a link to my source. <https://thefederalist.com/2020/06/29/why-banning-chokeholds-endangers-the-lives-of-aggressors-and-police/> .

If a police officer does not know the difference between an air choke and a blood choke, they have no business using chokeholds. If they do not know to release a person after they have passed out they are not competent enough to use the technique. During police training martial arts experts should be consulted. Medical experts should also be consulted to inform the police of underlying medical conditions that may make using a chokehold on a person too dangerous. I would also recommend the committee review the medical article that explains why people died after police officers used chokeholds and how police can use chokeholds safely this link <https://judoinfo.com/chokes6/> . The following is the abstract from the article

DEATHS ALLEGEDLY CAUSED BY THE USE OF "CHOKE HOLDS" (SHIME-WAZA)

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ABSTRACT: Shime-waza or the "choke hold," when properly applied, should not cause death; therefore, its primary purpose should be to subdue violent suspects. When properly applied, the choke hold causes unconsciousness in 10-20 seconds. No fatalities as a result of shime-waza have been reported in the sport of judo since its inception in 1882. Among the methods of "control holds" taught to law enforcement officers is the choke hold similar or identical to shime-waza used in judo. Using the choke hold, officers may afford themselves maximum safety while subjecting the suspect to a minimum possibility of injury. The author has reviewed 14 fatalities with autopsy findings where death was allegedly caused by the use of choke holds.

<https://thefederalist.com/2020/06/29/why-banning-chokeholds-endangers-the-lives-of-aggressors-and-police/>

Why Banning Chokeholds Endangers The Lives of Aggressors And Police

If police forces are banned from using chokeholds, they'll be left with less effective techniques that only increase the odds of worsening the situation.

By [Jeffrey K. Mann](#)
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Having studied martial arts for several decades, I forgot how scary words like “choke” and “strangle” sound. To many, those words elicit images of vicious attacks designed to kill. In reality, they are simply one of the options available to martial artists, and I have helped many students learn how to use them properly, including my children.

Chokes are simply tools, used both in sports like judo and violent situations. Like any tool, they can be used for good or harm. Like guns, however, they can evoke strong visceral reactions. In reality, chokeholds can be a safe, responsible, even peaceful tool to be used in a violent altercation.

To begin with, there are two fundamental types of chokes: air-choke and blood-choke (sometimes called “strangles”). They are applied differently and induce different physiological effects.

Air-choke occludes the trachea and stops a person from inhaling. The effect of an air choke is usually immediate, not because of the loss of air, but due to the pain and damage caused to the trachea. People instinctively react to pressure to the front of their throats by backing up as quickly as possible.

If they cannot, because the back of their head may be against the ground or restrained, additional pain and even damage can occur to the trachea. If applied with extreme force, this can eventually lead to asphyxiation.

The big problem with air-choke is not the lack of air while the choke is applied, but the damage that may happen to the trachea. If the damage is severe enough, even when the choke is released, the injury may prevent the person from breathing properly, resulting in asphyxiation later. Thus, air-choke hold a real danger, especially if applied carelessly and improperly.

Blood-choke, on the other hand, stop the flow of blood to the brain by restricting the carotid arteries on either side of the neck. When the brain stops receiving blood, the drop in glucose makes a person “pass out,” or what physicians call *syncope*.

This is actually painless, like falling asleep. When the choke is released, blood returns to the brain and the person regains consciousness. Damage to the brain from a loss of blood results only if the choke is held for minutes after syncope. Thus, a blood-choke, despite its scary name, is a fairly safe technique.

Just how dangerous are these chokeholds? Given that hundreds of thousands of people practice them daily at innumerable judo and jujitsu schools, they are clearly not as dangerous as they may sound. Blood-choke are especially safe. Unless one is applied to an unconscious individual for three minutes or more, which does not happen by accident, they are generally harmless.

An overzealous application of an air-choke, however, can certainly injure a person; an extremely vicious use could kill. Yet the firm use of this type of choke is used responsibly every day in martial arts schools throughout the world.

This brings us to the question of the police using chokeholds. Law enforcement officers follow something called the “force continuum” when trying to direct others’ behavior. It begins simply with their presence, moves up to verbal commands, different degrees of unarmed force, non-lethal tools like Tasers, and finally lethal force with firearms.

A blood-choke is a much better way to stop a person from fighting than striking a person repeatedly with a baton. There is no injury or shedding of blood.

Even an air-choke has an appropriate place on the scale. Imagine a criminal has tackled a police officer to the ground and is on top of him trying to grab his pistol. Another officer arrives from behind. What should he do? In this scenario, I believe a strong air-choke to pull him off that first officer is in the best interest of everyone. There may be some pain and even possible injury to the aggressor, but far less than many of the other tactics that could be used.

Proper training of police officers in the use and dangers of chokeholds would be “doing something” useful and I strongly support this. The responsible use of chokeholds serves the best interest of all involved. Counter-intuitive as it may sound, they are sometimes the virtuous choice.

Jeffrey K. Mann is a Professor of Religious Studies at Susquehanna University and author of a book on the ethics of violence entitled "May I Kill?"