

INSTRUCTOR HANDOUT

RAPPEL WEEKEND

Guidelines

- No instructor/assistant soloing.
- There is a first-aid kit and stretcher available in the weekend leader car near the cliff.
- Instructors and students should be anchored on top of the cliff whenever near the edge.
- Students should always be belayed when rappelling. They may be anchored by standing/sitting in a loop in the rope or by clipping into a locking biner. The biner need not be clipped in behind them, but may be in front, next to their belay device.
- Be supportive, this can be frightening for beginners.
- Explain the concept of a long descent using one and two ropes. Mention snarls and hang-ups.
- Explain the choices for getting friction - belay device, figure 8, munter, body,
- Explain the choices for backup: none, prussik above device, auto-block below device, belay. Discuss that the backup above the device occasionally gets stuck and that on a long free rappel the ropes can get stuck after twisting.
- Explain fixed rappel anchors and how rappelling off trees eventually kills them.
- Explain safety knots in the ends of the rope, pros and cons.
- Explain "smooth" rappels, protecting the anchors and the ropes.
- Explain how to build a carabiner brake so that they do not need to fumble with loose biners during a multiple rappel.
- Explain hazards such as: falling over backwards (top heavy body types may need chest harness); catching clothes or hair in a belay device; falling rock; stuck ropes; which end of the rope to pull.

Every Student Should

- Build rappel/belay anchor that is SRENE (Solid, Redundant, Equalized, No Extension).
- Practice joining two ropes together with a knot and throw the ropes.
- Rappel with a belay device.
- Rappel with a carabiner brake.
- Rappel with an auto-block. An auto-block is just 4 or 5 wraps with a sling around the rope below the belay device, connected to the leg loop. It holds the rope like a brake hand.
- Stop midway through the rappel using a leg wrap and an auto-block

Extra Credit

- Double rope rappel (two ropes tied together)
- Munter Hitch Rappel and belay. Use a harness to rappel using a Munter Hitch on a locking pear-shaped carabiner. Instructor may discuss the use of the munter hitch as an alternative belay/rappel method if the belay device is dropped/lost.
- Extending the belay device with a sling and discuss why one may want to do this.
- Body Rappel (separate station).
- Rappel using slings and belay device rather than a harness and belay device.

Free Rappel Station

- Free Rappel. See separate handout for details.

Body Rappel Station

- Tie into the rope for belaying purposes, optionally with a bowline on a coil.
- Rappel using proper Dulfersitz (body rappel technique). Make sure you know the proper technique. See John Long's How to Rock Climb 3rd edition.
- Set up station on LOW ANGLE slab with no overhangs.

Equipment

- One gear bag per instructor
- Harness (1/person)
- Shoes (optional, 1 pair/student)