

Belay Practice Steps

Setup: Use 20' webbing with Klemheist hitch on Light Pole with a Locker for an anchor at chest height. The student pair will work from a "ground" point 20-30 feet from the anchor. Run the rope from the "ground" point up through the anchor master point and back to the "ground".

Bottom Belay Practice:

- Climber ties in, belayer sets up belay with slot device. Tie stopper knot in belayer's end of rope to "close the system"; always close the system to make sure rope can't run through belay device.
- **Partner checks.** Climber – harness doubled back on three, through both, good knot. Belayer – harness doubled back on three, locked and loaded. Double check each other and keep it short and sweet.
- Belayer takes in slack until tight to climber. No need for climber to say "That's Me" because they are standing next to each other and it's obvious. Climber uses "Ready" and "That's Me" in top belay situations when it makes sense.
- Climber: "**On Belay?**". Belayer: "**Belay On**". Climber: "**Climbing**", but waits for permission to climb. Belayer: "**Climb On**", confirming to climber that he is really ready for climber to start.
- Climb to anchor while belayer practices "**Pull, Brake, Under, Slide**" (PBUS) belay technique.
- When climber reaches top of climb, calls "**Take**" and waits for belayer to say "**Gotcha**" before weighting the rope. Climber calls "**Lower Me**" when ready. Belayer calls "**Lowering**" and lowers climber back to the "ground". Climber calls "**Off Belay**" to indicate he is safe and ready to be taken off belay. Belayer calls "**Belay Off**" as soon as he releases the brake and starts to undo belay set up.
- When climber is back on the "ground", have belayer switch from slot device to **Muenter**. Repeat the climb to get practice using the Muenter. Demonstrate how knot "flips" when transitioning from taking in rope to catching a fall or lowering. **Keep rope strands parallel when moving rope through the Muenter to avoid putting twists in the rope.** Note that brake position is forward rather than back, but back works OK and it's better to reinforce the automatic habit of braking in the same direction.
- Switch climber and belayer and repeat.

Top Belay Practice:

- Leave the climber tied in from the previous scenario and standing on the "ground". Move the belayer up to the anchor, have him clip in with his personal anchor, and get out of the belay set-up. The scenario is that the person at the anchor just lead this pitch, set up the anchor, and is ready to belay the second up. The climber and belayer will assume that they are widely separated and cannot see each other.
- Climber ties in and calls "**Ready**" and then waits for the belayer to pull in the slack. Belayer pulls in the slack until it goes tight and Climber calls "**That's Me**". Belayer then gets into the "redirected belay" set-up using the standard slot device. When ready, calls down to the climber "**On Belay**". Climber: "**Climbing**", Belayer: "**Climb On**". When climber reaches the top, he clips into the anchor with his personal anchor and calls "**Off Belay**" when safe. Belayer verifies the climber is safe, then calls "**Belay Off**" and gets out of belay.
- For the sake of time, **do NOT switch** partners and repeat. They both experienced the process adequately.
- Make the point that being widely separated can be a big communication problem when Belayer and Climber cannot see or hear each other. You **MUST** have a **backup communication method**; **radios** and/or "**rope tugs**" are common – work it out ahead of time.

Rappel Practice

Setup: Same as the Belay practice set-up. Use 20' webbing with Klemheist hitch on Light Pole with a Locker for an anchor at chest height. Pretend the Locker is a Rappel Ring, since that is often the case.

Each student should work through this entire process of rappel set-up and rappelling.

Rappel Set-up Steps:

- Clip personal anchor into main anchor master point for safety.
- Find one end of the rappel rope, run it through the master-point locking biner, and tie a stopper knot. Pull some rope through the master point biner, then find the other end of the rope and tie another stopper knot.
- Grab both ends of the rope and run it through your hands until you have the middle of the rope at the rappel ring. This guarantees both ends are equal length, rather than depending on a middle marker.
- Butterfly coil one side of the rope, set it down carefully, then butterfly the other side. When done, pick up the other coil so you have one in each hand.
- Yell "**ROPE**" once, wait 3 or 4 seconds to give people a chance to clear the area, then yell "**ROPE**" again and toss both coils at once. We should now be ready to get set up on rappel.

Rappel Steps:

- Set up the extended rappel device on the harness using the 48" sewn runner. Thread the runner through the tie-in points on the harness and even-up the ends; this is a Basket hitch. Tie an overhand in the middle for redundancy and to shorten the extension. Set up the slot device on the extension with the double rope.
- Add the autoblock on the double rope brake. Use one of the smaller lockers on the belay loop with the 4mm autoblock cord. Start with 3 wraps on the brake strands of the rope. Students will dial this in on Saturday when they actually body-weight their rappel.
- Double check the system - SLOW DOWN, FOCUS, and CHECK the system! Be systematic and check the entire system from one end to the other – Anchor, Rope, Rappel Device, Extension, Harness, Autoblock. Convince yourself that it's all good and you are **willing to bet your life** on it, **or don't proceed!** Bad mistakes happen here!
- Test the system by weighting it, including the effectiveness of the autoblock, while still clipped in with the personal anchor. Make sure the personal anchor isn't taking any load.
- When you are convinced everything is a GO and you are ready to actually start rappelling, unclip the personal anchor, **keeping the brake hand on the brake!**
- Yell "**ON RAPPEL**" to warn people below and proceed to rappel to the bottom.
- When on the "ground", COMPLETELY disconnect from the rope (rappel device and autoblock removed), then yell "**OFF RAPPEL**" to let people waiting above know that you are free of the rope and the next person can start getting into the rappel. If you are still working on getting the rope out of your rappel device when you yell "Off Rappel" the next person above will start pulling up some rope and you may lose your rappel device as the two of you play tug-of-war.