

CAMPING SKILLS**CAMPING SKILLS – DAY 1**

Planning Information													
Subject (Presenter):	Camping Skills – Day 1												
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Selecting a campsite • Whipping & Fusing a rope • Knots: Square, Sheet-bend, Two-half hitches, tautline hitch 												
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of synthetic material rope for each participant for fusing and knot tying • Length of natural material rope for each participant for whipping and knot tying • Whipping twine and matches / lighter for fusing • Handouts for each participant 												
Presentation													
Learning Objectives: At the end, each participant should be able to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know considerations that go into planning a camping trip • Know how to choose a good campsite • Know how to fuse and whip rope • Know how to tie the square knot, sheet bend knot, two half hitches, and the tautline hitch 												
Discovery:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before telling the group how to choose a campsite; ask questions to determine how many factors they can relate • Before showing how to whip, fuse or tie knots; have anyone who knows demonstrate it to the others 												
Teaching-Learning:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Requirement #¹</th> <th>Reference Page(s)²</th> <th>Title of Section</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>T1</td> <td>220 – 223</td> <td>Planning A Camping Trip Where Do You Want To Go? When Are You Leaving And How Long Will You Be Gone? Who Is Going With You? Why Are You Going?</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S 2b</td> <td>232 – 233</td> <td>Selecting A Campsite Environmental Impact Safety Size Water & Terrain Stoves and Campfires Privacy Permission</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N 6, T 4ab</td> <td>34 8, 35 – 37, 150</td> <td>Whipping Rope Fusing Rope Knots & Hitches – Know use & demo how to tie Square Knot , Sheet Bend Knot Two Half-Hitches, Tautline Hitch</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Requirement # ¹	Reference Page(s) ²	Title of Section	T1	220 – 223	Planning A Camping Trip Where Do You Want To Go? When Are You Leaving And How Long Will You Be Gone? Who Is Going With You? Why Are You Going?	S 2b	232 – 233	Selecting A Campsite Environmental Impact Safety Size Water & Terrain Stoves and Campfires Privacy Permission	N 6, T 4ab	34 8, 35 – 37, 150	Whipping Rope Fusing Rope Knots & Hitches – Know use & demo how to tie Square Knot , Sheet Bend Knot Two Half-Hitches, Tautline Hitch
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Application:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice whipping and fusing rope • Practice tying the knots – they can also be tied as a contest for speed and “behind-the-back” for speed to practice with fun – but check that the knots are tied correctly 												
Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that the fusing and whipping is tight and that the knots are properly tied and everyone knows <u>when</u> and <u>why</u> to use them 												
Summary:	Just as the right tool makes a job easier – the right knot for the job is just as important!												
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts: • The Right Campsite (Backpacker magazine) • Camping Know-How (BSA Fieldbook) • Knots and How To Tie Them (BSA publication) 												

¹ Requirements: N-New Scout, T-Tenderfoot, S-Second Class, F-First Class

² Page references are in the *Scout Handbook* if not otherwise noted. Pages with an “F-“ prefix are in the *BSA Fieldbook*.

THE RIGHT CAMPSITE

BY CINDY ROSS (BACKPACKER MAGAZINE, JUNE 1991)

- Scout the campsite first. When you get to what looks like a good spot, put your pack down and take a walk around to scope it out. If you keep your gear on, you're likely to settle for the first spot because you're tired.
- In insect season, camp on higher ground where a good breeze will keep the pests at bay.
- Camp at least 200 feet from water sources to prevent contamination & reduce your impact on the stream or lake.
- After you pick a spot, spread your ground cloth and lie down. This will help you determine which end is higher and where to put the head of your tent (uphill). You'll be able to find the bumps that make for uncomfortable sleeping.
- When clearing the ground for your sleeping area, never use your foot to sweep the earth. Get down on all fours and pick up sticks, stones & pine cones. Gently toss them to the side. Leave all leaves & pine needles in place. In the morning, the only telltale sign that a human slept there should be compacted leaves, which will fluff up by the end of the day. Don't dig rain trenches around your tent. Don't change or take anything away from the land. Leave no garbage, no orange peels, egg shells, nothing. They may be biodegradable but it will take years, and other people will have to look at your garbage in the meantime. Pick up even the smallest pieces of trash. This is no-trace camping.
- Take off your boots as soon as you get into camp or after you fetch water. Changing into camp shoes, or going barefoot, will keep the area from being trampled by big boots and looking over used and scarred.
- If you're in an area that permits camp fires, keep them to a minimum. Never make a fire unless there's plenty of downed wood. If there's little firewood lying around and you have to walk a good distance to find any, it's an indication the area is overused, so don't build a fire.
- Observe fire warnings. There should be no wind whatsoever. Low-fire conditions and regulations vary by region, so contact the management agency with jurisdiction over the land where you'll be camping.
- Damp stones placed around a fire ring can explode when they become hot. Build the fire in the open, never against a large rock – the scar will remain for centuries.
- Use what's available to start a camp fire. Never strip birch bark off a tree for fire starting. Use dry evergreen needles & twigs found under the evergreens, or dry leaves. Make a fuzz stick by shaving slivers on a twig, leaving the shavings attached. Candle stubs are an excellent way to start a fire. They can sit in the fire tinder drying out the wood.
- Know your woods. Softwoods start a fire quickly, but they also burn up quickly, plus they spark and can cause unwanted fires. Stick to hardwoods.
- Smoke follows you around the fire. It's attracted to the vacuum formed by your body. Make a short wall of rocks behind one part of the fire ring. Smoke will rise in that direction, leaving you on the other side free to enjoy.
- If you're drying clothing by the fire, never place any item closer than where you can hold your hand.
- To stay warmer at night, eat something before you go to sleep. Food high in calories gives your body something to burn, and it warms you as you sleep.
- Fluff your sleeping bag before crawling inside. Air trapped within the fibers will warm you.
- Wash off in the evening if the weather is hot and sticky. Soap isn't necessary. You'll sleep more comfortably if you feel clean and also keeps your sleeping bag clean.
- Keep a flash light by your sleeping bag in case you hear animals in camp.
- If it looks like rain, bring your raingear into the tent. You want it handy in the morning. Cover your pack, as well.
- In frigid temperatures, bring your water bottle & boots into the tent to keep them from freezing. You may have to sleep with them, either in your bag or underneath it. To keep your sleeping bag clean and dry, turn a stuff sack inside out and put your boots and water inside.
- If you wake up cold in your sleeping bag, do muscular tension exercises (isometrics) to warm yourself. For instance, push your palms together tightly and hold. The exertion will warm you and your bag.
- When heeding Mother Nature's call, walk as far away from camp or the trail as possible, dig a small hole four to six inches deep. Afterwards, fill in the hole with soil and tamp it down with your foot. Cover it with a large rock or branch to prevent animals from digging it up.
- Put your cooking utensils out of animals' reach. Hang wooden spoons, dish scrubbers and dishrags up high, along with your food sacks. Even if you wash your cooking tools, animals can still smell the scents on them and will either chew them up or carry them away.
- Before sleeping, take all food out of your pack and leave the side pockets open. Mice will be able to run in, sniff around & leave with no harm done. If you leave the pockets zipped, they'll detect the scent and chew through the pack.
- Bears, raccoons, mice and porcupines are attracted to scents. Protect your food by using counter-balancing. Divide your food and anything with an odor into two stuff sacks. Find a limb about 10-20 feet from the ground. Throw a rope over the limb, keeping it away from the trunk. Tie one bag to one end of the rope. Pull the sack up to the limb. Reach up as far as you can and tie the second sack to the rope, also tying up any access rope. Tie a loop near the sack so you can reach up with a long stick and pull it down. Toss the lower bag towards the limb so the top bag drops down to balance it. Push or pull the bags until they are even. This way there's no tie-off rope for an animal to chew.
- Always carry a litter bag to pack out all refuse—yours and that of others.

CAMPING KNOW-HOW

By Joyce Schroeder; Chief Ranger, Philmont Scout Ranch, 1981-83

Perhaps you've seen a group of experienced backcountry travelers making camp. They chose an ideal site, and with smooth efficiency pitched their tents, prepared a cooking area, stowed their equipment and food, and took care of sanitation needs. Before long, they probably had their supper cooked and their ground beds made. If a storm blew in, they were prepared for it, but they were just as ready to enjoy the blaze of stars in a clear night sky. The next morning they broke camp. After they had left, it was so clean a clue that they'd ever been there couldn't be found. They made the whole process look easy, but only because they'd taken the time to learn the know-how of camping.

Camping with skill, grace, and ease is one of the most satisfying of outdoor adventures. Lord Baden-Powell realized that, and when he founded the Scouting movement in the early 1900s he made camping its primary activity. He encouraged everyone to master the art of living outdoors, for he believed that a person able to spend days and nights in the forest would naturally have the confidence to meet the other challenges of life. He was right.

Camping without leaving a trace will draw upon your outdoor skills & your knowledge of ecology, weather, & animal behavior. You'll need to use common sense as you make decisions. The first of these will be selecting a place to camp.

CHOOSING A CAMPSITE

The right camp location is important not only for your safety and comfort, but also for the protection of the land. In fact, choosing a campsite may have as much to do with the success of a night in the backcountry as anything else you do. While it isn't difficult, site selection does take a keen eye and an understanding of low-impact camping techniques. In most cases, it's better to use established sites. There's no reason to scar the land with a new campsite if one already exists.

GENERAL LOCATION

A campsite facing south will get more sunlight and generally will be drier than one on the north side of a hill or in the shade of mountains or cliffs. Cold, damp air tends to settle, causing the bottoms of valleys to be cooler and moister than locations a little higher. On the other hand, hilltops and sharp ridges can be very windy, and may become the targets of lightning strikes.

SIZE AND SHAPE

A good campsite has plenty of space for your tents and your activities. It should be usable as it is, so you won't need to do any digging or major rock removal. The less rearranging you do, the easier it will be to leave the site exactly as you found it.

PROTECTION

Consider the direction of the wind and the direction from which storms may come. Is your campsite in the open or is it protected by a hill or a stand of trees? Is there a solitary tree nearby that may attract lightning? Don't camp under dead trees or trees with dead branches that could be blown down in a storm. In the mountains, avoid avalanche chutes.

ACCESS TO WATER

You can't camp long without water. In some cases, that means hauling all you'll need from home. In the winter, you may be able to melt snow, but in other seasons you'll want to make your camp within walking distance of a water. Pitch your tents at least 200 feet from the edge of the water and out of the path of runoff. That way there is little chance you'll pollute the fresh water. You'll be less likely to trample fragile shorelines and stream banks, and you're not apt to be caught by a rising flood.

INSECTS AND ANIMALS

Insects and other animals all have their favorite habitats. The best way to avoid mosquitoes and biting flies is to camp away from marshes, bogs, and pools of stagnant water. Breezes also discourage insects, so you might look for an elevated, open campsite. Don't forget to check around for beehives, hornet nests, and ant mounds. Their inhabitants usually won't bother you as long as you leave them alone. Make your camps away from lairs, dens, and feeding grounds. In grizzly bear country, give a wide berth to areas with signs that bears are frequent visitors, and pitch your tent near plenty of climbable trees.

GROUND COVER

Any vegetation covering a campsite will receive a lot of wear and tear. Some ground cover is tough enough to absorb the abuse, but much of it is not. Whenever you can, make your camp on naturally bare earth, gravelly soil, sand, or on ground

covered with pine needles or leaves. Grassy meadows may seem inviting locations for camps; set up your tents in the trees at the edges of clearings rather than in the open. You'll have shade, protection from wind, and meadow won't be harmed.

Alpine ground cover demands even more consideration. Because of harsh climatic conditions, plants at high altitude often require years to grow even a few inches, and the pressure of boots and tents may cause irreparable damage. Use established sites if you can, or search for a bit of bare soil on which to make your camp.

DRAINAGE

While you'll want a campsite that is relatively flat, it should slope enough to allow rainwater to run off. On the other hand, you don't want to be in the path of natural drainage. Check above the site and be sure you're not in a dry stream bed that could fill during a storm. With a proper location, you'll never have to ditch a tent.

PRIVACY & BEAUTY

Select campsites that are out of sight and sound of trails and other tents. That way you'll have your privacy while you respect the peace and quiet of other campers. The beauty of a spot often is what first attracts visitors to it. Being able to look out from a tent and see towering mountains, glistening lakes, or miles of canyon land or rolling prairie is part of what camping is all about. Find a campsite that gives you spectacular scenery, but use it only if it is appropriate for every other reason, too.

MAKING CAMP

Once you've picked a good site, you're ready to make camp. That usually means establishing places for cooking, sleeping, storing food and gear, and disposing of waste. A good way to start is by erecting your shelter.

DINING FLY

If your group is carrying a dining fly, put it up first. The fly will serve as your kitchen, help determine the layout of the camp, and give you a place to stow your gear while you pitch your tents. A dining fly is a tarp that can be erected in a number of ways. One of the easiest is to string it between two trees with rope tied through two grommets. Stake down the back of the fly, then raise the front and tie the corners to other trees. Face the fly away from the wind. If weather conditions change, you can lower a corner or shift a stake to deflect wind, rain, and snow. When you use a firelay, place it 10 feet in front of the fly—far enough away that sparks won't harm the fabric, yet close enough that cooks can step underneath during a downpour.

In bear country it's better to do your cooking and eating 30 or 40 yards down wind from the tents. Bears attracted by the odors of food may limit their curiosity to the dining area and leave the tents alone.

TENTS

Select a tent site upwind from any firelays. Clear it of stones & sticks that could poke through the floor. Don't disturb layers of leaves or pine needles; they'll improve drainage, soften your bed & cushion the ground from the impact of your camp.

Tents are usually most stable when its back is aimed into the wind. There may be reasons to situate it differently. There's no better way to wake up than with the warmth of early morning light on your face. The sun will quickly dry your tent & gear.

You can pitch most tents by spreading them over a waterproof ground cloth, staking out the corners, assembling and inserting the poles, then pulling the guy lines taut and pegging them down. Adjust the ropes and, if necessary, move the stakes until the tent floor and walls are free of wrinkles. Since rain can cause some shrinkage of fabric and cord, don't draw a tent drum-tight.

GROUND BED

For the best rest, make a comfortable ground bed. Experienced campers know that what is underneath them at night is as important in keeping them warm & dry as what's on top. Start with a plastic groundsheet or a tent floor to protect your bed from moisture. Put down a layer of insulation. A foam pad is best for year-round use. You can also use layers of newspaper, clean straw, dry grass, or extra clothing. Air mattresses won't do much to keep you warm but are all right in the summer.

BEDROLL LAYER SYSTEM

Just as you wear layers of clothing that can be adjusted to meet changing weather conditions, you can set up your bedroll to match night temperatures any time of the year. Start with a good general-use sleeping bag designed to be effective at temperatures of 20°F to 30°F. On warm evenings you can leave the zipper open. If the night is cold, zip the bag to your chin, and if you need more warmth pull on your long underwear and a stocking hat, wool socks, and mittens. Further increase the insulation by lining the inside of your bag with a blanket or two, and on extremely cold nights you can wear insulated booties and put on a parka, or wrap your coat around your hips and thighs.

CARE

On dry days, unroll your sleeping bag early so it can fluff up as much as possible. In rainy weather, leave the bag in its stuff sack so it won't absorb moisture from the air and become damp. Air your bedding every day the weather is fair. Shake out your bag and blankets and hang them awhile in the sun. Rainstorms have a way of sneaking up so if you'll be away from your tent during the day put away your bedroll before you leave. You can make a pillow by putting some extra clothing in a stuff bag or inside a sweater with the sleeves tied together. To keep your bag clean and yourself comfortable, don't sleep in the clothes you wore all day. Pajamas in the summer and long underwear or a sweatsuit in the winter make good night wear. A fresh pair of socks will keep your feet warm. If the night is cold, pull a stocking hat down over your ears.

FOOD STORAGE

Wherever you camp, it's a wise practice to gather your food into bags & hang it from a tree. Although there may not be a bear within a thousand miles, ground squirrels, mice & raccoons can create havoc with provisions! If there are bears around, it's extremely important that you get all the "smellables" out of your tent and pack before you bed down for the night.

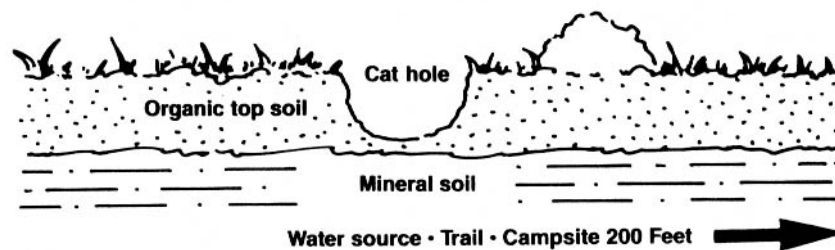
While there is still daylight, find a tree with a sturdy horizontal branch about 20 feet above the ground. Tie one end of a 50-foot cord around a rock and toss it over the branch. Stash your provisions in a sturdy bag, twist it closed and tie it to one end of the cord with a clove hitch. Pull the other end to raise the bag until it is beyond the reach of bears that might stand beneath it—at least 12 feet—or that may crawl up the tree trunk and out onto the branch, and secure the cord to a tree.

A second bear-bag technique requires two cords. Toss the end of one over a high branch and tie it to a tree trunk, then toss the other end over a branch of equal height on a tree some distance away. Pull the cord tight and throw the free end over the center of the cord between the trees. Pull the bag into the air and secure the cord, suspending your bear bag far from the reach of prowling animals.

Bears accustomed to raiding campsites may be smart enough to drop food bags by clawing cords tied to trees. To prevent that from happening divide your provisions equally into two bags. Using a bear rope tossed over a branch, raise one bag in the usual way, then tie the free end of the cord to the second bag. Lift it overhead and use a stick or hiking staff to shove it out of reach. The bags will counterbalance one another, and your food will be safe. To retrieve the bags, use the stick to push one bag even higher, causing the other to come down within your grasp.

PERSONAL SANITATION

Complete your campsite preparations by making arrangements for waste disposal. If your group is small and staying only a night or two, you can each use a cathole to get rid of human waste. Make each cathole at least 200 feet from any campsite, trail, or water source, and choose a location that isn't likely to be visited by others. With the heel of your boot or a small trowel, dig a hole about 6 inches deep, but no deeper than the topsoil. After use, cover the hole completely & in a few days the microorganisms will break down the waste.



When a larger group goes camping, dig a trench latrine. Find a secluded site at least 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites, and dig the pit several feet long, 6 inches wide, and about 6 inches deep. Leave the shovel nearby, for each person using the latrine to sprinkle a little soil into the trench to prevent flies from infesting the waste. Should you need a larger trench, dig your pit longer, not deeper. The bacteria essential for decay are only in the top layer of earth. Bury nothing in a latrine or cathole except human waste. Animals will dig up buried garbage and scatter it around the forest, and materials such as plastic, glass, metal, and cardboard take years to decompose. Take your entire trash home. If you packed it in, pack it out.

PERSONAL CLEANLINESS

Backcountry cleanliness is important for your health and happiness. While you probably won't wash as frequently as you do at home, you can take a good bath with just a couple of pots of water. Carry them at least 200 feet from springs, lakes, or streams, and give yourself a thorough scrubbing with a washcloth, biodegradable soap, and the water in one pot. Use water from the second pot for rinsing by dipping it out with a cup. In the summer, you can let the water warm in the sun before you use it, while chilly weather may call for heating it over a stove or campfire.

DRINKING WATER

Purify all water you get in the wild, no matter how clean it appears to be. Some bacteria thrive in remote mountain lakes, and there is no way of knowing what might have fallen into the water upstream.

BREAKING CAMP

There’s only one rule governing your departure from a site: Leave no sign you were ever there. Break camp by reversing the order of the tasks you made it. If you built an open fire, be sure it is cold. Dismantle the firelay, properly dispose of ashes, and scatter any extra firewood. If you dug a latrine, fill it completely, & replace any sod you removed. Pack your personal and group gear. If the weather is bad, stow your pack under the dining fly or in the shelter of a large tree. Brush debris out of your tent, take it down, roll it tight & strap it to your pack. Be sure you’ve got all the stakes and poles. Finally, strike the dining fly. Spend a few minutes inspecting the area. Don’t leave until the site is as clean and natural as when you arrived.

WHEN YOU GET HOME

After a trek is over, there are still a few things to do. Before you get on with other activities, take time to unpack and put away your gear. Air out your sleeping bag, pad, and blankets. Wash your eating kit and store any unspoiled, leftover food. Clean your share of the group equipment, and return it to storage. If your tent and dining fly are wet, hang them in a basement, a garage, or on a clothesline in the sun until they are dry before you roll and store them. Never put away gear that is wet; mildew can rot and ruin even the finest fabrics.

KEEP A LOGBOOK

As Lewis and Clark explored the vast wilderness that would one day become the western United States, they wrote in their journals the locations of all their encampments, the number of miles they had traveled, and the things they had seen and done. Their logbooks became an invaluable record of their explorations.

You’ll want to keep a record of your adventures, too. A wirebound notebook makes a fine log, and so do hardbound blank journals. Within a day or two of every trip, while the memory of the outing is still fresh in your mind, write down the dates of the trek, the names of the participants, where you went, and a summary of the highlights. Soon you’ll have a logbook as important to you as Lewis and Clark’s was to them.

<i>Sample Logbook Page</i>	
Date: _____	Time: _____
Companions: _____ _____	
Weather conditions: _____ _____	
What we did today: _____ _____ _____	
Personal thoughts: _____ _____ _____	
What I will do next time: _____ _____	
Equipment and supplies to replace or add: _____ _____	

FOLLOW UP

Even the best campers can improve their skills. After each adventure, get together with your buddies and discuss what was good about the trip and what could have been better. Were the meals as easy to prepare and as tasty as you had hoped? Did everyone stay dry? Did you take the right equipment and supplies? Was the campsite a good one, and were you able to leave it unmarred? Learn from the successes of each trek as well as the mistakes, and before long you will have mastered the know-how of camping.