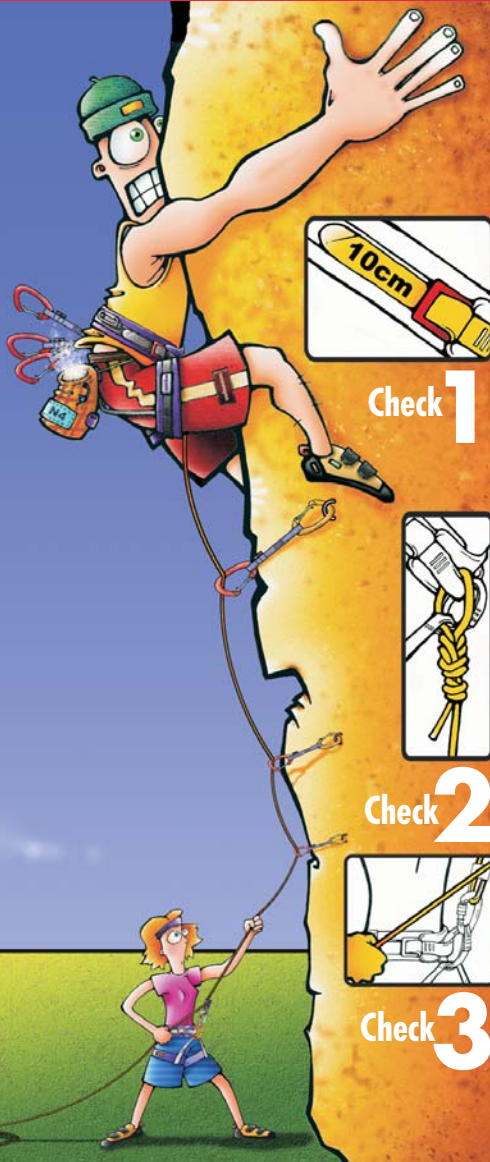


Belaying: get it right!



Check **1**



Check **2**



Check **3**

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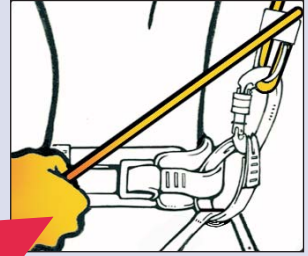
**British
Mountaineering
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Working for Climbers,
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Mountaineers

Belaying: get it right!

Pay Attention!

Belaying is a complex skill, requiring practice and experience to become competent. Inattentive belaying is the cause of many climbing accidents. Mistakes can result in serious injuries for climber, belayer or both. Pay attention and keep a **controlling hand** on the rope.



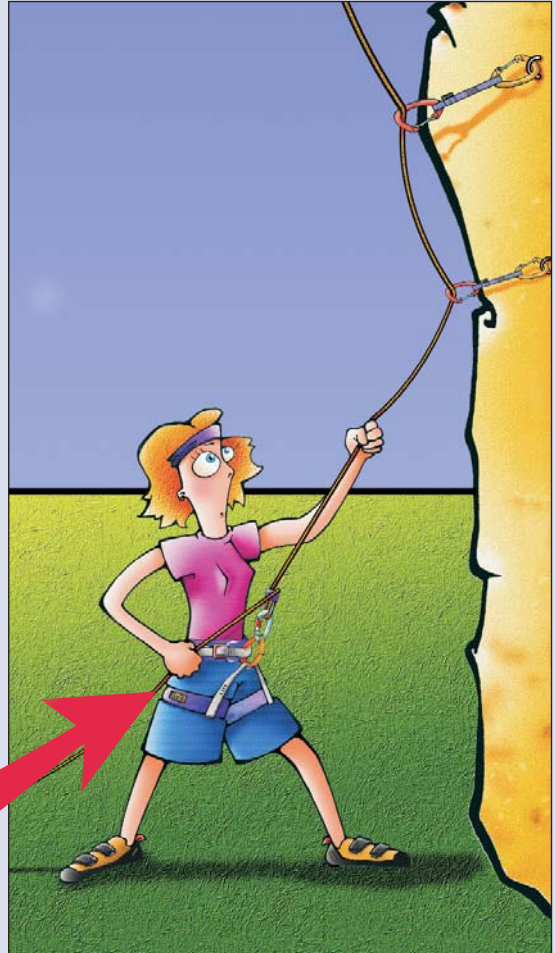
Know how to use your gear

There are many different ropes and belaying devices available. Read and understand the manufacturer's instructions. If still unsure, get advice from someone more experienced. **NEVER** belay with equipment you do not know how to use.

Get in the best position

Anticipate the direction of pull and position yourself appropriately. If you stand near the foot of a climb you are less likely to be pulled off balance when holding a fall or lowering a climber. If there is a lot of rope paid out the climber could hit the ground. Standing near the climb results in less rope between belayer and climber.

When the climber is not moving, hold the rope in the **locked position**.



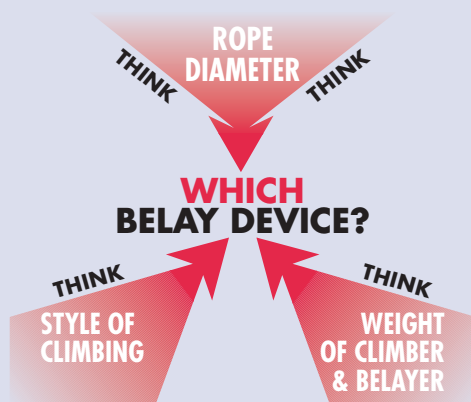
Choosing a belay device

There are many different belay devices available – **all with different properties**. You may need different devices for different ropes, and different styles of climbing.

1. Rope diameter: Belay devices are designed for use with a range of rope diameters. If the rope is too thin for the device, it may not be possible to hold a fall, or lower a climber in a controlled manner. If the rope is too thick for the device, there may be too much friction to manage the rope effectively.

2. Style of climbing: Different climbing styles introduce different levels of friction into the rope system. At climbing walls there is very little friction in the rope system since the rope runs straight and hardly touches the wall. When climbing outside there are many more variables that can create a lot of rope drag. The less friction created by the rope system, the greater the force the belayer will have to apply with their controlling hand to hold a fall or lower a climber.

3. Weight of climber and belayer: The belayer may have trouble controlling the rope if the climber is heavier than them. Use a belay device providing sufficient friction. A ground anchor attached to the central loop of the belayer's harness can prevent them being pulled off the ground.



Belay device design

All belay devices employ friction. Some also pinch the rope in a grabbing or locking action.

A device employing friction alone allows some rope slippage when a fall is held, providing a more dynamic belay. A pinching device allows less rope slippage, creating a less dynamic belay.

Slick devices provide a more dynamic belay. This can be important when ice climbing or traditional climbing.

Grabbing devices provide a less dynamic belay, but can give assistance when holding a fall.

May be useful if the climber is heavier than the belayer.

Locking devices provide a very un-dynamic belay, giving the most assistance when holding a fall.

Suitable for climbing on bolts, unsuitable for traditional climbing.

The performance of any belay device will depend upon many factors. Special attention must be paid to rope diameter and choice of belay karabiner.

Slick devices make paying out rope and transferring from holding to lowering a smooth process. Such devices require *careful consideration* of rope diameter, and some are specifically designed for thinner ropes. Work well with most ropes, especially when stiff.

Grabbing devices tend to pinch the rope if the climber falls, providing some assistance to the belayer. Work well with most ropes.

Variable devices are designed to be slick on one side and more grabbing on the other. This is achieved by graduating the thickness of the device, or by incorporating grooved channels on one side. Work well with most ropes.

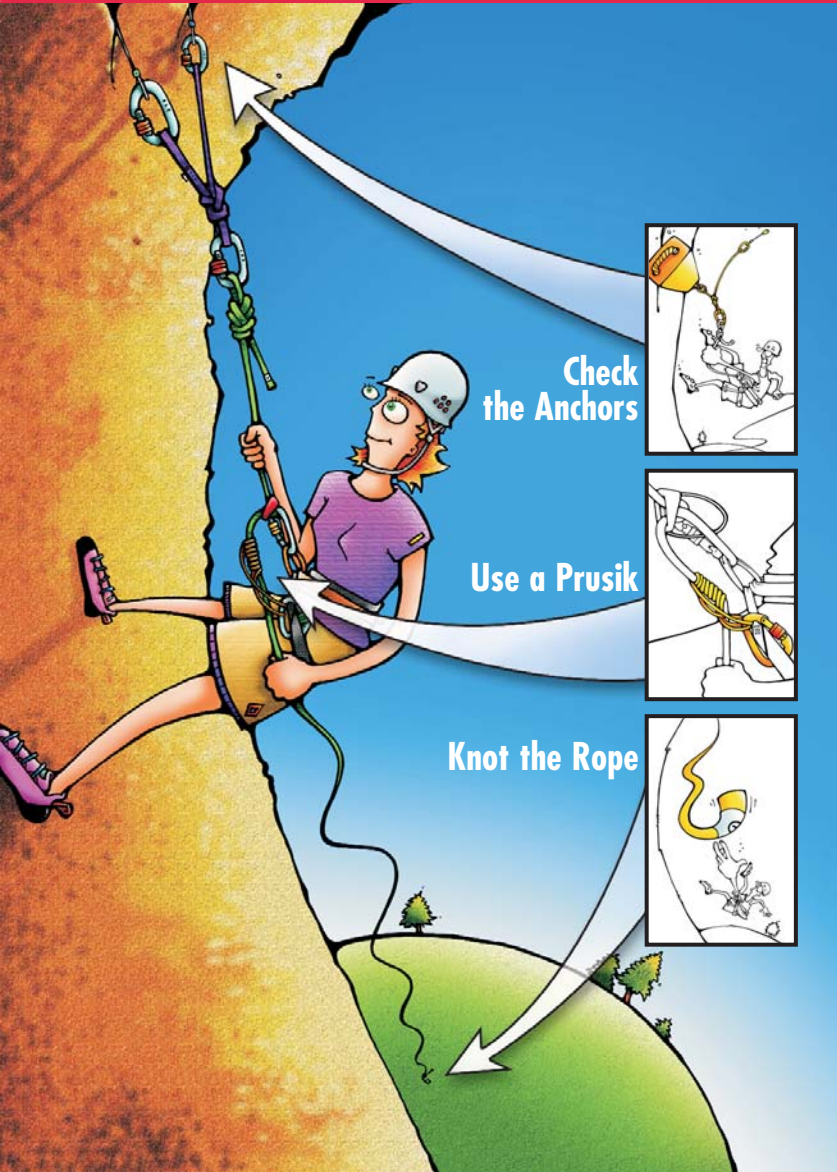
Multi-purpose devices work as a variable device in normal use. They can also be used as a locking device when belaying from above. Used in locking mode requires considerable judgement of anchors and climbing situation. Work well with most ropes.

Semi-locking and locking devices pinch the rope if it comes under sudden tension, thus helping the belayer hold the climber's fall. These devices require careful attention when transferring from holding to lowering a climber. Designed for single ropes of specific diameters.

ALWAYS READ AND UNDERSTAND
THE MANUFACTURER'S
INSTRUCTIONS



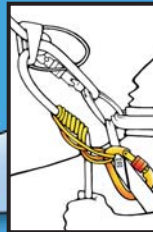
Abseiling: get it right!



Check the Anchors

Use a Prusik

Knot the Rope



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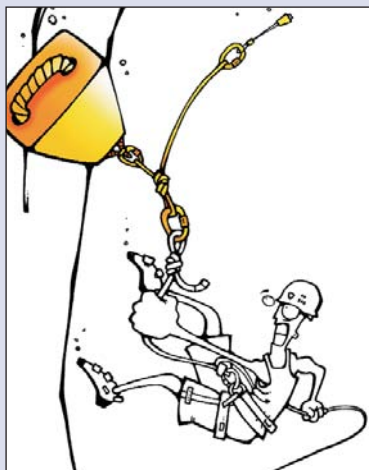
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Abseiling: get it right!

1. Check the Anchors

Anchor failure is not an option – if in any doubt **always** leave extra gear behind. **Check** the rope is properly threaded through the anchor. **Check** the abseil device is correctly attached to both you and the rope.

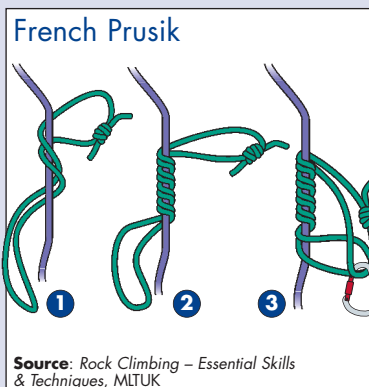
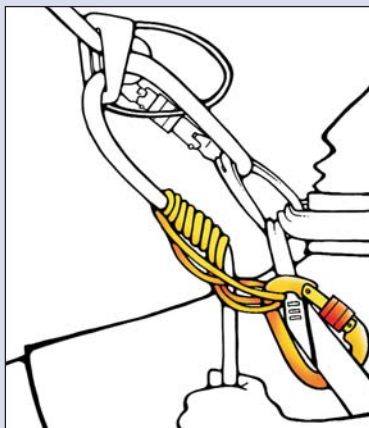


2. Use a Prusik

A *French Prusik* can be used as a back up when abseiling.

The prusik should grab the rope if control is lost, but this is not foolproof.

The prusik can be used in a variety of ways, and when abseiling on two ropes it must be wrapped around both. When used correctly, the prusik should not become trapped in the belay device.



3. Knot the Rope

The consequences of abseiling off the end of a rope are usually fatal. Tying a big enough knot in the ends of all ropes should prevent this from happening.



Abseiling accidents kill!



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