

Outdoor Education 110 - Shelter Construction Video Challenge

Who does not love building forts?

Rational: Depending on your location, you may have different options to pursue a shelter build because of availability of materials. Make sure you have permission to build a shelter and use available materials on whatever property you decide to use!

Warning: At this particular time, individuals want to avoid trips to the Hospital for an emergency cut/wound more than ever, so only use tools with supervision or instruction! Fortunately, there are several options for shelter (fort) builds without the use of potentially dangerous tools.

Link to sharp tools use tutorial:

<http://scoutteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Hand-Axe-Safety.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MheB3eTEuvE>

<https://www.gsmw.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsmw/documents/Knife%20%26%20Axe%20Safety.pdf>

Research: There are several styles of shelters to choose from; several of which do not require the use of sharp tools either. Some of these include: the debris shelter, the wick up shelter, some lean-to shelters and possibly the tarp shelter. Check out the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzUpH0Zft5c>. Conduct some research on some of the various styles to see which shelter type appeals to you and is suitable for your location. You might want to consider scouting a location; taking stock of what kind of shelter might be best suited and what materials you have available from home, i.e. a tarp, twine/cordage, shovels or other tools that might be required. Learning a few of the following knots from last week could enhance your shelter construction a great deal: the bowline, clove hitch (or the timber or two half hitches) and some simple lashing techniques. See the following site for knots instruction: <https://www.animatedknots.com/>

Other Things to Consider:

A) Location - One vital thing to consider in shelter construction is its location. Build at least 50 meters away from water (flooding), on mid to higher ground that **away from both ‘widow maker limbs’** - Branches/tree that could potentially fall on you!

B) Safety: Create a safe structure that will not collapse on the occupant during or after construction. **For instance, if using a fallen tree still clinging to the stump, which can serve as an excellent basis for a shelter, ensure the connection is still secure enough to tamper with the tree without risk of it falling.**

C) Comfort: Be sure to have a barrier between the occupant and the ground. This could include: bows, tarps, flattened card board boxes or pallets (or even some kind of combination?); especially if you are planning to stay the night in your shelter?

D) Document your Construction: Build your shelter and take photos during the different phases of construction. **Record a video tour of your shelter upon completion.** It would be great to have some progress pictures along the way such as: selecting a location, gathering materials, initial construction and final product.

Some helpful tips from “Uncle Pauley”:

a) When using something sharp always cut away from your body and account for the follow through of the blade if it were to miss the intended target!

b) Using the dead branches and logs on the ground takes a lot less energy and is more environmentally responsible than cutting down something “green” in a non-emergency.

c) Two live trees growing close together can be used to break dead material down to size. Wedge your branch/log between them and push until it breaks. You may need some help from an adult with this “applied physics trick”.

d) Have fun reconnecting with Nature in this unusual time where things have slowed down enough to allow us to do so! Get outside but stay away from others.