

Knife, Saws and Axes

The nature of Scout camping necessitates the use of a number of tools: namely the knife, saw and axe. The improper use of these tools results in accidents, by far the largest number of camp accidents. Training of Scoutss in their proper use will reduce the likely hood of accidents.

The basic rule of thumb should be to leave the axe at home.

Saws

Although it does not have the same appeal as an axe, a saw cuts wood with greater economy.

The bush saw is ideal for working on small timber in camp because it leaves no wood chips. Obviously the blade must be sharp and, as new blades are relatively cheap, it is better to put a new blade than have an old one re-sharpened.

Bush saws come in various sizes so there is no point in using a saw larger than the job demands.

As with all saws, start work slowly until the cutting edge has a firm grip in the log and then you can go as quickly as you like. Keep the blade as straight as possible and work rhythmically.

The simplest way to mask a saw is to wrap sacking over the blade and to hang it out of harms way. If you have a quick release mechanism on the saw it is better to remove the blade and wrap it in newspaper when transporting the saw. Saws should never be left on the ground.

A safety measure which can be easily applied is to provide a pair of industrial gloves for the user of the saw. This can prevent cutting of fingers if a saw blade should slip. Another safety measure is for the Patrol to construct a saw horse for holding the logs steady when cutting.

Knives

Scouts should be encouraged to have a good penknife, ideally a Swiss Army type which offers a number of other tools on each model.

Sheath knives are not allowed.

The knife can be invaluable camp tool when used correctly under the right circumstances. However, in the hand of the wrong person and used incorrectly it can be a lethal weapon.

All knives must be kept clean and sharp - there is nothing as dangerous as a blunt knife. If a knife becomes blunt it will not cut properly and therefore cannot be controlled very easily.

To sharpen use a dry carborundum stone. It can be wet (with oil), but this tends to block the pores of the stone quickly and requires cleaning with paraffin. A wet stone is, however, used to sharpen axes.

Hold the knife and, keeping your fingers away from the blade, make a rotary motion with the rough side of the stone over the blade. The stone and blade should be set at an angle of 15 to 20 degrees. Remember to sharpen both sides of the blade. Having sharpened - be careful when you feel it - finish off by making a rotary motion over the blade with the smoother side of the stone.

Rules to remember

Never throw knives into trees; it will damage the tree and blunt the knife apart from the obvious danger of throwing a knife;

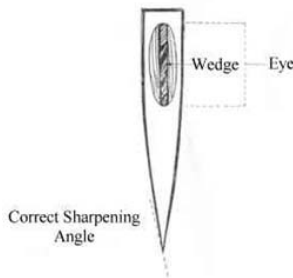
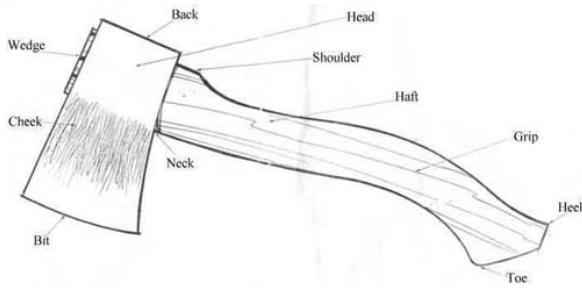
Never throw knives for 'Spilts' or similar games; this may injure someone and damage the knife blade;

Never stick the knife in the ground;

Always cut away from the body and keep the blade clean and sharp;

When not in use a knife should be closed and put in its belt holder or in your pocket.

Axes



As has been said above, the basic rule of thumb is to leave the axes at home. However, if axes are to be used on camp then strict rules should be enforced.

Stand square and firm on the ground. Always wear strong boots or shoes and never sports shoes or trainers

Clear the area around you. The ground should be care of any branches etc. There should be no spectators less than 3 metres radius around you.

Ensure there are no overhanging branches in which the axe could snare itself.

Check that the axe head is firm before starting.

All loose clothing, such as lanyards, neckerchiefs, etc,

should be removed.

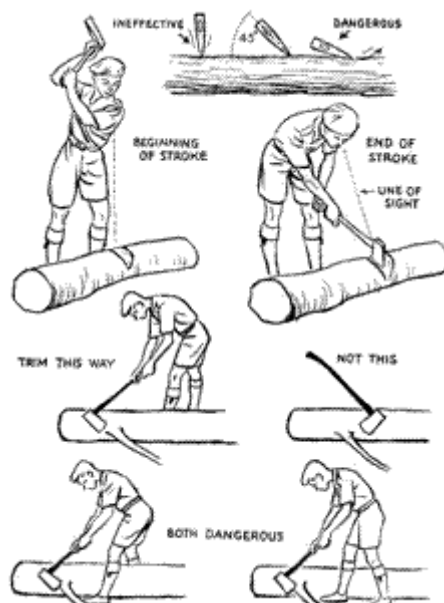
Always use a chopping block and chop the wood over the block. Always keep your eye on the job.

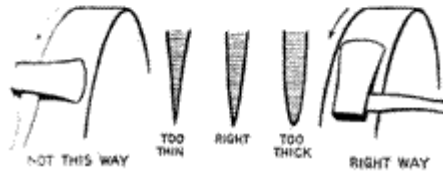
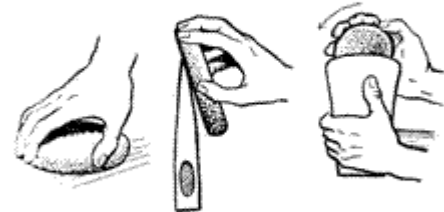
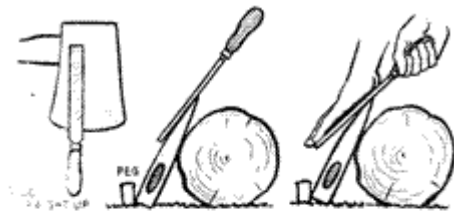
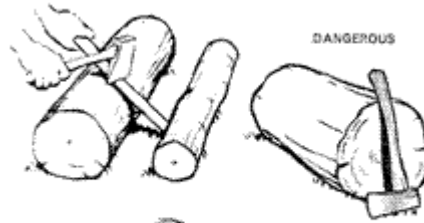
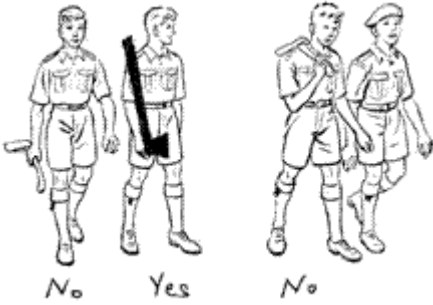
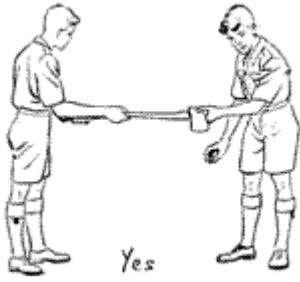
Never use an axe when tired; this is when accidents occur.

Never use the axe as a mallet or hammer.

Never touch a living tree and never fell a tree without the permission of the landowner.

Keep the axe masked when not in use. An axe is masked by placing it in the chopping block. Its head buried in it rather than half sunk into the side of the block.





Sharpening An Axe