

Wood Tools

Resources

- Boy Scout Handbook
- Totin' Chip pocket certificate

Woods Tools Know-How

Whether you are splitting firewood, repairing equipment, or clearing a trail, woods tools can make your work easier. Proper use and care of your pocketknife, camp saw, and ax will help ensure that these tools will be in tip-top shape whenever you need them.

You should also know how not to use them. Carving or chopping on live trees can kill them. Hacking at dead trees and logs can leave unsightly scars. Don't cut any trees without the permission of a landowner or land manager.

Pocketknife Tips

Use a pocketknife to cut rope or cord, open a can of food, whittle a tent stake, tighten a screw, make wood shavings for fire starter, trim a bandage. A good general knife has a can opener, screwdriver, and a blade or two for cutting.

Note: The Boy Scouts of America does not encourage the use of large sheath knives, which are heavy, awkward to carry, and unnecessary for most camp chores.

Cleaning. Keep your pocketknife clean. Open all the blades, then twirl a small bit of cloth onto the end of a toothpick, moisten the cloth with light oil, and wipe the inside of the knife. Wash any blade that has been exposed to food using hot, soapy water.

Sharpening. Sharpen your knife with a whetstone (follow the manufacturer's instructions). Most knives can be sharpened as follows:

- Hold the blade against the stone at about a 30-degree angle. Tilt the blade off the stone about one-third of the way to vertical. (Some specialty knives may require a sharper angle to produce a keener edge.)
- Push the blade along the stone as though you were slicing layers off the top, or use a circular motion. Sharpen the other side of the blade in the same manner.
- Wipe the knife clean and examine the edge of the blade under a bright light. A dull edge reflects light and looks shiny; a sharp edge is so thin it has no shine at all.

Using a Pocketknife Safely

Do

- Keep the blades closed except during use.
- Cut away from yourself.
- Close the blades before passing a knife to someone else.
- Keep fingers clear of the sharp edge as you open and close the blades.
- Keep your knife sharp and clean.

But

- Don't carry a knife with the blade open.
- Don't throw a knife.
- Don't cut toward yourself. If the blade slips, you could be injured.
- Don't strike a knife with another tool or pry with the point of a cutting blade.

Camp Saw Tips

The camp saw works well for most outdoor woodcutting.

Two Types commonly used

Folding - The blades of a folding saw close into their handles (like those of a pocketknife).

Bow - The bow saw has a curved metal frame that holds its blades in place.

- When sawing a branch from a tree, first make an undercut, then saw from the top down.
- Keep folding saws closed when they aren't in use and store in a secure place.
- Protect the blade of a bow saw with a sheath when not in use.
- Replace dull blades, which make sawing hazardous. Take along a spare if you have to do a lot of cutting.

When cutting firewood:

- Brace the piece of wood against a solid support.
- Use long, smooth strokes.
- Let the weight of the saw pull the blade into the wood.

Safe Saw USE

Do

- Sheathe a saw whenever it's not in use.
- Carry a saw with the blade turned away from your body.
- Replace dull blades. Sharp saws are easier to use and to control.
- Use care when passing a saw to another person.
- Wear gloves and protective eyewear when using a saw.

But

- Don't cut any trees—alive or dead—without permission.
- Don't allow the saw's blade to cut into the ground because soil and rocks will quickly dull the blade.
- Don't leave a saw lying around camp. Store it properly, out of harm's way.

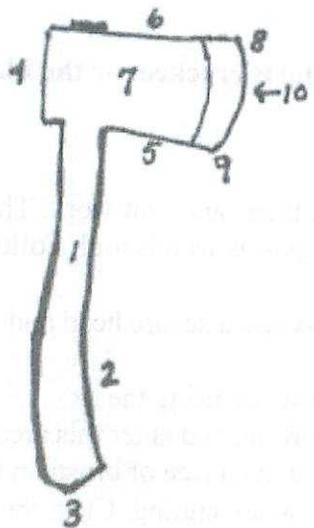
The Axe

An axe must be in top condition. If the head is loose, handle is cracked, or the blade is dull, DON'T USE IT.

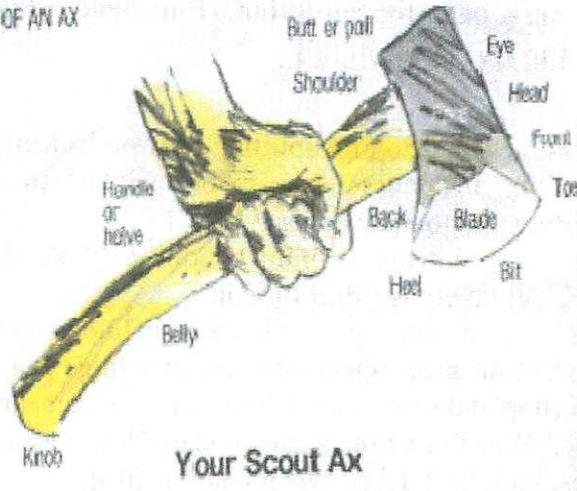
The ax comes in handy for splitting firewood, clearing fallen trees, and trail work. The size and implementation of the ax makes it an especially dangerous woods tool. Follow these safety tips for safe ax use.

- **Safe tool.** Keep your ax in top condition. Make sure your ax has a secure head and sharp blade; otherwise, don't use it.
- **Safe shoes.** Wear proper footwear to help protect your feet while using the ax.
- **Safe working area.** Rope off an ax yard large enough to work in, and enter this area only to chop and saw wood. Check for clearance, and select an area free of brush and branches. Be certain others stay at least 10 feet away while you are cutting. Clear the area of chips, bark, and debris when you are done.
- **Safe technique.** Follow the proper techniques for limbing (chopping branches off a log) and bucking (cutting through a log). Learn how to swing the bit (cutting edge) into the log, split wood on a chopping block (piece of a log that provides a solid, flat surface), and how to use the contact method (placing the ax bit against the stick).
- **Safe carrying.** Cover the blade with a sheath whenever it is not in use. Carry the ax at your side in one hand, with the blade turned away from your body. Never carry an ax on your shoulder—that will put the ax bit too close to your neck and head! If you stumble, toss the ax away from you as you fall.
- **Safe handling.** Hand an ax to someone by holding it vertically, with the handle facing up and ax head facing down. Pass it with the bit turned away from both of you. The passer should always wait until the receiver says “Thank you” and has a firm grip on the handle.
- **Safe storage.** Keep your ax sheathed when not in use. Store it safely out of the way, and keep it dry.

Parts of the axe.



PARTS OF AN AX



1. Handle
2. Belly
3. Knob or Deer's foot
4. Butt or poll
5. Back
6. Front
7. Face
8. Toe
9. Heel
10. Bit

Swing of the axe.

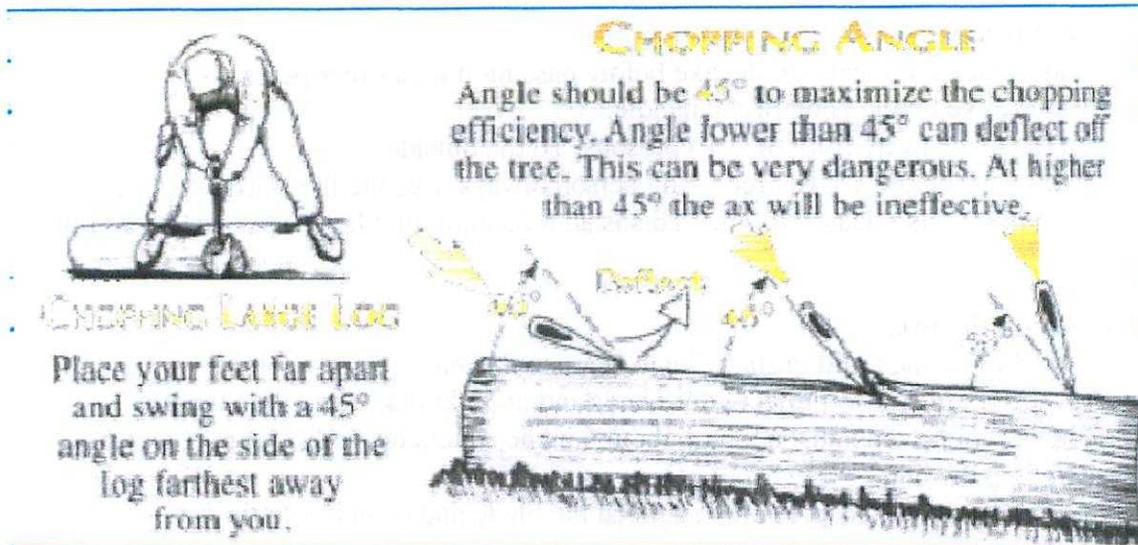
1. Wear gloves and protective eyewear whenever using an axe.
2. Securely hold the belly of the handle in one hand, (right handed people hold with the left hand).
3. With the other hand grasp the handle just under the head of the axe.
4. Position the axe about eye level.
5. Bring the axe down with a smooth motion allowing the upper hand to slide down the axe handle to meet the stationary hand which on the belly of the handle.
6. Allow the weight of the axe to do the cutting.

Limbing.

1. Cutting branches off a log.
2. Stand on the opposite side of the log as the limb to be removed is.
3. Cut close to the log.
4. Keep the log between you and your cuts.

Bucking.

1. Cutting through a log.
2. Cut a "V" notch twice the width at the top as the log is thick.
3. Use proper swinging technique.
4. Keep you eye on the spot you wish to cut.



Splitting wood.

1. Splitting a log lengthways.
2. Use a chopping block. Flat wooden surface.
3. Stand the log to be split on the chopping block.
4. Select an age crack.

An age crack is a natural split through the diameter of a log caused by the drying of the wood.

5. Using proper swinging technique bring the axe down striking the log at the age crack.
6. Remove the log from the axe, reposition on the chopping block, and use the swinging technique again.

Select an age crack.

7. Never swing the axe while the log is still attached to the blade.

Contact method for stick splitting.

1. Used to split a small stick of wood.
2. Best to use a hand axe.
 - a. Place the bit of the axe against the end of the stick.
 - b. Bring the axe and stick down together against the chopping block.
 - c. Twist the axe to break the pieces of the stick apart.

Carrying of the axe.

1. Always place the sheath on the axe before carrying.
2. Grasp the axe by the handle just under the head of the axe.
3. Carry the axe with the blade turned away from yourself.
4. Never carry an axe over your shoulder.

Passing the axe.

1. Always place the sheath on the axe before passing it to another person.
2. Grasp the axe by the knob of the handle.
3. Turn the blade away from the two persons. To the outside.
4. "Thank you, I have it". The receiving person always uses the line, "Thank you, I have it" before the axe is released to him. This is an indication that he has total control of the camp tool.

Sharpening the axe.

1. Use an 8 or 10 inch mill bastard file to sharpen the axe.
2. Wear leather gloves to protect your hands and use a knuckle guard on the file.
3. Place the axe head against a log of about 6 inches diameter. Use 2 pegs or tent stakes to secure it at the butt.
4. Place the file at a 30 degree angle against the blade and push it into the bit.
5. Sharpen with firm, even strokes.
6. Lift the file from the bit when recovering from a stroke.
7. Turn the axe around and sharpen the other side of the bit.
 - a. When looking straight onto the bit in sunlight or a bright light a dull blade will look shiny. A sharp blade will have no shine at all.

Do's for axes.

1. Do keep the axe sheathed whenever it is not in use.
2. Do Carry an axe by the handle just under the axe head, and with the blade turned away from your body.
3. Do keep your axe sharp. Sharp axes are easier to use and control.
4. Do use care when passing an axe to another person. Always turn the blade away from both persons.
5. Do Wear gloves and protective eyewear whenever using an axe.

Don't for axes.

1. Don't cut any trees, alive or dead with permission.
2. Don't allow the axe blade to cut into the ground. Soil and rocks will quickly dull the axe.
3. Don't leave an axe lying around camp.

More Ax Safety Tips

- Use leather gloves for protection from splinters and to help prevent blisters.
- Wear safety goggles to keep flying debris from injuring your eyes.
- Keep your ax sharp using a sharp 8- or 10-inch-long mill bastard file. While using the file, protect your hands by wearing leather gloves and a knuckle guard.
- Remove the protective sheath only when you are ready to use the ax correctly.

Safe work area

Emphasize the fact that the pocket knife, saw, and axe are TOOLS not play things.

A safe work area is a necessity for use of an axe and saw.

A safe work area consists of:

An area which is free of brush and branches.

An area which is at least 10 feet in diameter.

An area which provides all the safety equipment necessary, gloves, eye protection, tool storage.

Only the person operating the camp tools is allowed in the safety area or Axe Yard.

When finished the safety area is cleaned of all wood chips, bark, and other debris.

Make sure that all tools are properly stored when finished.

Axe Yard

On long term camps or when lots of firewood is required, construct an axe yard.

Rope off an area large enough to provide a safe working area. Only enter the axe yard to saw or chop wood. Again apply all rules to the axe yard as you do to the safe working area.

Outdoor Code

As an American I will do my best to

Be clean in my outdoor manners

I will treat the outdoors as a heritage.

I will take care of it for myself and others.

I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.

Be careful with fire

I will prevent wildfire.

I will build my fires only where they are appropriate.

When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out.

I will leave a clean fire ring, or remove all evidence of my fire.

Be considerate in the outdoors

I will treat public and private property with respect.

I will use low-impact methods of hiking and camping.

Be conservation minded

I will learn how to practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy.

I will urge others to do the same.

Totin' Chip requirements

The Scout must show his Scout leader, or someone designated by his leader, that he understands his responsibility to do the following:

1. Read and understand woods tools use and safety rules from the Boy Scout Handbook

2. Demonstrate proper handling, care, and use of the pocket knife, ax, and saw.
3. Use knife, ax, and saw as tools, not playthings.
4. Respect all safety rules to protect others.
5. Respect property. Cut living and dead trees only with permission and with good reason.
6. Subscribe to the "Outdoor Code"

The Scout's "Totin' Rights" can be taken from him if he fails in his responsibility.

