

The School For
Mountain Leadership

HIGH ANGLE RESCUE TRAINING HANDOUT No 5 : CHANGE FROM ASCENT TO DESCENT

*This training handout may be freely reproduced
and distributed in an unaltered form.*

NEED MORE INFO?

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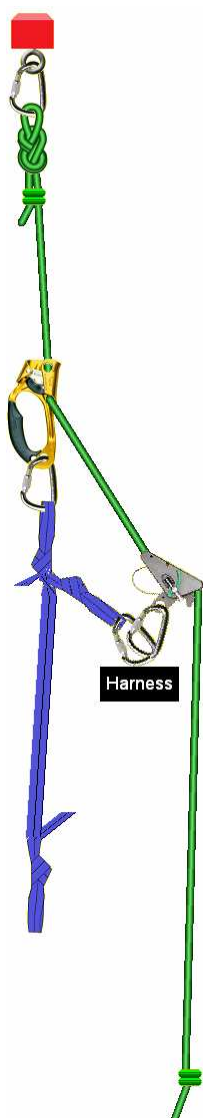
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This training handout is an aide-memoire for students who have completed the appropriate training. Do NOT attempt these techniques without proper training – getting it wrong can be lethal!

A useful skill for anyone working on rope is the ability to change from ascending to descending whilst free-hanging on a rope. This illustration shows one way of doing this – there will be others. Note – the use of a rope-grab instead of a chest ascender is deliberate – it's easier with a chest ascender.



Step 1

Move the handled ascender down.

Get your handled ascender a little lower than normal. You'll be moving it even lower just before you commit your weight to your descending device (Figure-8, Rescue-8, etc).



Step 2

Connect your descender

Pull up some rope and connect your descending device (in this case a Rescue-8).

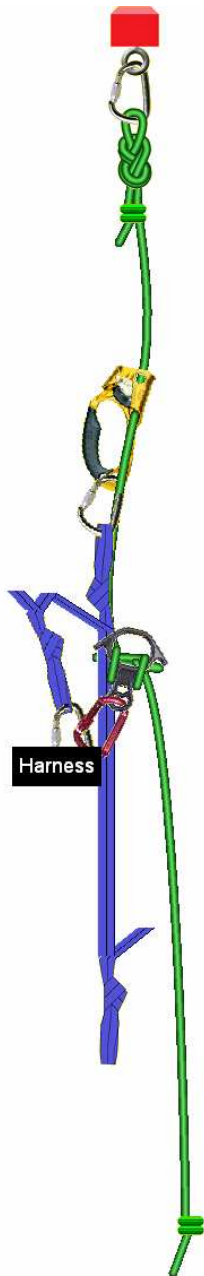
If you're using a figure-8 then see our ***Abseiling Tutorial No 1: Threading a Figure-8*** for a technique that reduces the chances of dropping the device whilst threading it.

Remove as much of the slack between your descender and the chest ascender as you can. Failure to remove enough slack *will* cause problems later.

Once you have removed as much slack as you can then lock off the device. Even a self-locking device such as a *Petzl*

Stop needs to be 'hard-locked' to prevent a slow slip from starting once you've put your weight onto it.

Check carabiners!



Step 3

Remove your chest ascender

Bring your handled ascender down until it is about 15cm above your chest ascender. This reduces the chances of it ending up out of reach once you have disconnected the chest ascender.

Stand up in the foot loop and disconnect the chest ascender from the rope. Slowly sit down, checking that your weight comes onto the descender without cross-loading a carabiner. Make sure that your lock-off doesn't partially unlock while unweighted.

If you're using a rope grab (as pictured here) then you can disconnect it by unscrewing the carabiner attaching it to your harness before standing up. Instead of trying to disassemble it while you're standing, disconnect it from your harness and sit down. You can remove it from the rope while hanging in a sitting position with hands free.



Step 4

Remove your handled ascender.

You do not need to remove the attachment from your harness. Simply remove the handled ascender from the rope and clip it to a gear loop on your harness.

Unlock and abseil away!

Problem solving:

If you cannot unweight your handled ascender you can stand up in it and disconnect the carabiner connecting it to your harness. This will remove your weight from it and allow you to remove it from the rope.

If the handled ascender is a little too high to remove then tie a knot below your descender to create a foot-loop in the rope in order to stand up a small distance (10-20cm). Don't forget to untie the knot afterwards.

Please contact us at the above addresses for further information.
