

RELEASABLE RAPPEL GOALS & PROCEDURES

Using a two-rope system (ie., one rope for belay, one rope for rappel), a rappeller somehow cannot continue and is stuck out of anyone's reach with full weight on the rappel rope. You must rescue the rappeller from their situation in a timely and safe manner with no risk to yourself or others.

Of course, in order for the following procedures to work you need to set-up your rappel staging area in this manner:

- The rappel rope must be attached to the anchor using a munter / mule knot & back-up.*
- The belay rope must be set-up with the belay directly off the anchor and the belayer positioned at the anchor.*

1. Alert your rappeller that you will assist them. Try to calm them.

- a. Make sure that only one person is giving directions. You may delegate!

2. Get belayer's hands free.

- a. Place a mule knot w/back-up on belay device on the belay rope.

3. Back-up the system.

- a. Place an autoblock friction knot from your harness and onto the belay rope near where your break hand would be on the rope.
- b. Give it a test tug from the anchor side of the autoblock to see if it will hold. If the rope slides through the knot, put in more raps into the knot. Test again. You will need this for the final step.

4. Transfer load from rappel rope to the belay rope.

- a. The rappel for this person is over! Alert the rappeller that there may be a slight bump on the rope as you transfer their weight to the belay rope. Carefully untie the munter / mule knot & back-up on the rappel rope at its attachment point at the anchor. This unloads the rappel rope and will probably relieve the rappeller from their original situation. Just tell them to sit back, relax and that you're going to lower them down on the belay rope.
- b. Make sure that the rappel rope is released in a controlled manner and doesn't suddenly drop without warning others first.

4. Lower to the ground.

- a. Since there is now only a one-rope system, the belayer first must back-up the lower of the person by using an autoblock knot off their harness. Yes, this IS step #3, but this is so important that it is repeated here just in case you missed it! The autoblock should be near the same position as the belayer's brake hand. Once the back-up is in place, the belayer may now lower the person directly off the anchor.
- b. Again, alert the person to be lowered that they may experience a slight bump as you unlock the belay device and that you are going to lower them down. Then carefully untie the back-up and mule knots from the belay device, and lower the person to the ground with the belay rope.
- c. While lowering, hold the autoblock in your brake hand. In the event that your brake hand comes off the rope if you lose control of the lower, the autoblock will act as a brake hand.