

WHAT'S A BELAY?

A **Belay** - is the securing of a person with a rope in order to keep them from falling a distance that would cause considerable injury. The person who has the task of belaying is called the...

The **Belayer** - and they perform the belay by "holding the rope" for the climber with their...

Brake Hand - This is the hand that holds the rope on the side of the belay device opposite the climber and that will activate the brake, locking the device to stop a falling climber.

THE NUMBER ONE RULE in roped climbing is that...

The brake hand never leaves the rope!

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS THAT ALLOW FOR AN EFFECTIVE BELAY?

Always aim to attain all three of these. Remember, sometimes your situation may exclude one or more...The rock on its terms.

- 1) **Anchor** - The temporary means of attaching the rope and persons to something secure. This can come in the form of trees, boulders, chocks, cams and bolts to name a few. The anchor must be capable of withstanding the force of several thousand pounds, which means it needs to be... Bombproof - This term is to describe an anchor that is unquestionably solid. This anchor will not fail.
- 2) **Friction** - applied to the rope by using a... Belay Device - A specially designed piece of hardware that when attached to the rope, creates enough friction to stop a falling climber.
- 3) **Stance** - If possible, the belayer must be in a position to resist the force of the falling climber. In doing so, the belayer has a greater probability of maintaining control of the belay.

Remember, you want your partner to belay as if your life is in danger!

AVOIDING THE "PLUMBER'S NIGHTMARE"

Think about belaying & roped climbing like the plumbing in your home. The plumbing as a whole is pretty much a closed system. Water escapes from the system only if you open the faucet or if a pipe springs a leak. The belay system in climbing requires *you* to prevent any "leaks," i.e., where there is a loss of control of the belay or where one or both climbers may become unattached to the system. The most common potential leaks in a belay system are:

- 1) The belayer's Brake Hand is NOT consistently on the rope.
- 2) Climbing with an unsecured end of the rope.
- 3) The climber says, "Off Belay!" before they are completely safe.
- 4) Belaying the leader from the ground with no directional anchor.
- 5) Belaying the second from the summit with no anchor.

On top-rope, sport and gym climbs it is common to have the end of the rope, opposite of the climber, unsecured and the belayer may lose the end of the rope right through the belay device. A stopper knot, tying in or anchoring the rope are all options to utilize.