

Laptop sized Lashings Gadget for Quick Skills Exercises

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As Patrol Advisor for my son's Patrol, I recently watched the collective group of Scouts struggle with a Patrol lashings exercise because of length and size of the poles and rope length. While struggle is part of the journey, it is important that younger Scouts not get overly discouraged early in the process of learning a new skill.

When we run our larger Troop program (for 40-50 Scouts) on lashings, tables are set up with poles laid on top, waist high for Scouts to have easy access from one side of the table and senior Scouts across the table to Guide and Enable rope tying. But set up takes time and that isn't always convenient for 15-20 minute Troop Meeting 'filler' exercises for smaller groups.

Having a lot of Scouting energy reengaging when my son crossed over from Cub Scouts last March, my Eagle Scout blood kicked in and I came up with a small gadget, laptop sized, that will keep Scouts focused on the Skill and less worried about poles moving around, ropes tangling, etc. Total cost was \$30 to make 6 gadgets and took <2 hours to put together.

Supplies per gadget

36" of 3/4" dowel rod
One (1) #6 1" screw
Two (2) #6 1 1/2" screws
Two (2) 1/2" pine hole plugs
Wood glue
Sandpaper (optional)
Twelve (12) feet 3/16 rope

Tools

Small hand saw
Tape measure
Phillips screwdriver
Small chisel
1/8" Drill Bit
Drill



Cut three pieces of dowel rod, one 18", one 10" and one 6". On the 18" piece, carve a concave notch in the dowel rod 5" from one end to receive a 'cross' piece. On the 10" piece, drill and tap a hole in the middle or 5" from the end. In the 6" piece, drill and tap two holes 1 1/2" from each end. Also drill a hole in the middle of two pine hole plugs.

For assembly, place a small amount of glue in the receiving indent of the 18" piece and attach the 10" piece using a #6 1" screw. That will form a cross. Then on the other end of the 18" piece, screw the 6" piece slightly offset from the end onto the cross with two (2) #6 1 1/2" screws with a pine plug spacer sandwiched between the two pieces of dowel rod. The spacer creates a gap between the dowels to make the 'frap' easier for the Sheer Lashing. The slight offset makes it easier to tie off the clove-hitch to finish the lashing. Let the glue dry and take your time to tie cut and whip two pieces of rope to length, one for a square lashing on the cross and one for the sheer lashing on the stacked dowel rod end.

When you are done, you have a self-contained quick to access lashing skills station that you can take just about anywhere. The size of the 3/4" dowel rod relative to the 3/16" rope creates good scale relative to what Scouts will experience in the field with larger scale poles and thicker diameter ropes.

I also serve as the Unit Training Coordinator for the Troop training incoming Adults on Outdoor Leadership Skills. This is pretty handy to have accessible to work in a classroom environment.

Scout skills are about gaining knowledge and confidence in performing, which is accomplished through repetition. Working through this has certainly reinforced lashing skills for me to better Educate and Demonstrate to the Scouts the First-Class requirements. My son helped me assemble and he was quick to learn the lashings to now teach other Scouts in his Patrol!

Yours in Scouting!