

Script for leaders

Follow along with the video session for 'Top of the table'.



Explain what you're doing today and make sure everyone has what they need. You could say something like:

Today we're going to develop our pioneering skills (and practise our knots and lashings) by building a camp table, problem solving along the way. Before we get started, we'll need something to act like ropes and spars. You could use pens, pencils, and string if that's easier. We'll need 14 pieces of rope or string, five long spars, four medium spars, two small spars, and some planks.

Remind everyone to check their ropes and spars and talk them through tying a sheer lashing to start their first A-frame. You could say something like:

First things first, we're going to check that our ropes and spars are in good condition – it seems less important for pens and pencils, but it's a good habit to get into.

We're going to start by making an A-frame. Take two medium spars and tie a sheer lashing on one end – tie a clove hitch around one pole then wrap both with a simple lashing. Wrap the lashing with two or three tight frapping turns and tie off the end with a clove hitch.

Tell everyone how to use a square lashing to lash a third, smaller spar near the base of their A-frame to give it some support. You could say something like:

Once we've got our sheer lashings, we're going to pull the two spars apart and lash a third, smaller spar near the base to make the support. For a square lashing we need to tie a clove hitch around a pole, twist the short end around the long end and wrap the rope around both poles, going over and under each pole for about three or four turns. We'll tighten the lashing by surrounding it with three or four frapping turns, then finish it off with two or three tight half hitches.

Talk everyone through repeating what they've done to make a second A-frame. You could say the same thing, or just name the steps along with the video if people seem confident. Explain that everyone should use square lashings to lash their first long spar to the top of their A-frames, connecting them together. You could say something like:

Now we need our five longer spars. We'll use a square lashing to connect one to the top of both A-frames so our structure stays upright while we attach the others. Does anyone remember the steps to a square lashing? It's clove hitch, twist the short end, over and under, frapping turns, half hitches.

Once we've got the first one sorted, we'll do the other four – two are going to be the sides of the table while the other two are the benches. We need to make sure they're straight and even, otherwise people (or food) will slide down the bench.

Finally, tell everyone how to use a double floor lashing to attach their planks to the tabletop. You could say something like:

Finally, we're going to attach our planks to make the table top. We're going to use a double floor lashing, starting with a clove hitch around one of the supporting spars (the long ones we just attached) and twisting the short tail around the long part of the rope. We'll bring the rope over the top of the first plank, on the inside of the spars, then make a loop and pop it over the end of the plank. We're going to keep going, bringing the rope over the top then making the loop and hooking it over the edge – the rope always stays on the inside of the supporting spar... once we've looped it over the last plank, we'll finish it off with two half-hitches and push them tight against the planks. And you guessed it, we're going to repeat on the other side.

And there you have it – everyone should have a mini camp table.