

TECHNIQUES, TRAINING & GEAR REVIEWS.

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BELAY DEVICES.

There are many variations in belay device design. It can be a simple stitch plate or a moulded construction with smooth teeth that provides additional friction. They are usually made from aluminium.

They are primarily designed for belaying in rock climbing but are ideal for belaying people on ladders in caves. They can also be used for rappelling and as a chest ascender.

Advantages:

1. Can be used on single or double ropes.
2. Rope can be fed in both directions through the device.
3. Light weight.
4. No moving parts, simple design.
5. Very cheap, from about \$15.

Disadvantages:

1. Poor wear resistance. This can be a big problem on muddy ropes in caves.
2. Poor heat dissipation. Not ideal for long or fast rappelling.
3. No auto braking function.
4. Not a lot of friction. They can be very fast to rappel on with thin ropes or on single rope.
5. Little or no ability to adjust friction.
6. Easy to drop when removing the rope as the device usually needs to be removed from the carabiner. A keeper cord is a good way to prevent this problem.

My next article will be on the Petzl Gri Gri, which is a very popular belay device.

JSSS



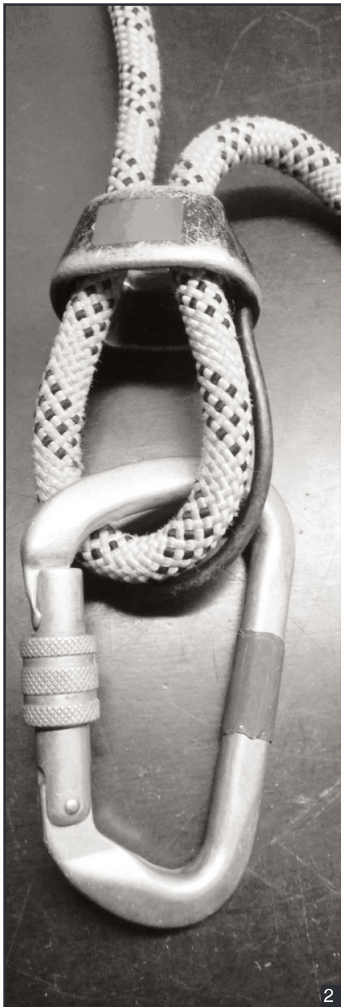
All photos by Chris Curtis.

Photo 1: The basic ATC.(Air Traffic Controller) device.

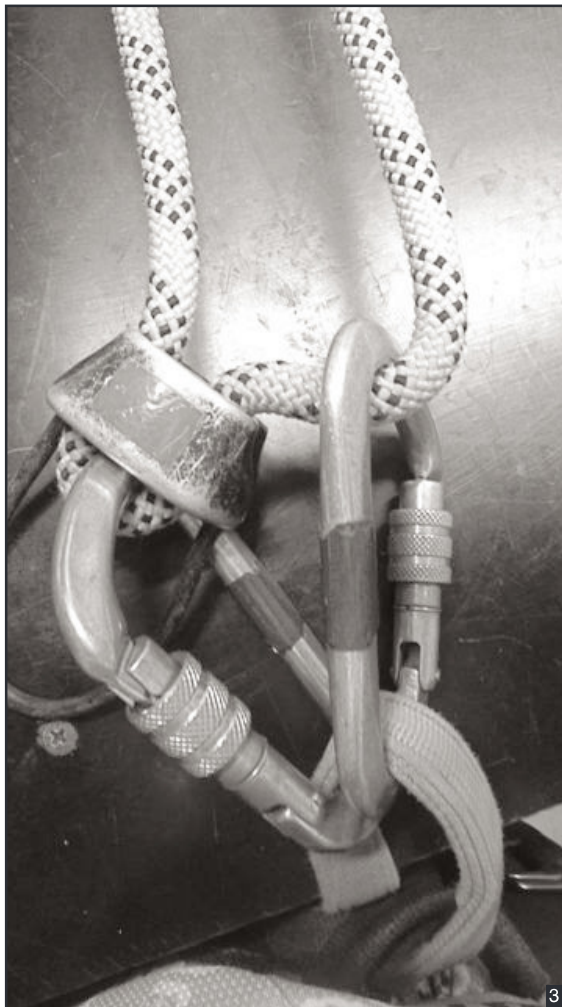
Photo 2: Single rope threaded with carabiner for rappel or belaying.

Photo 3: Single rope with extra carabiner for increased braking friction for rappel only.

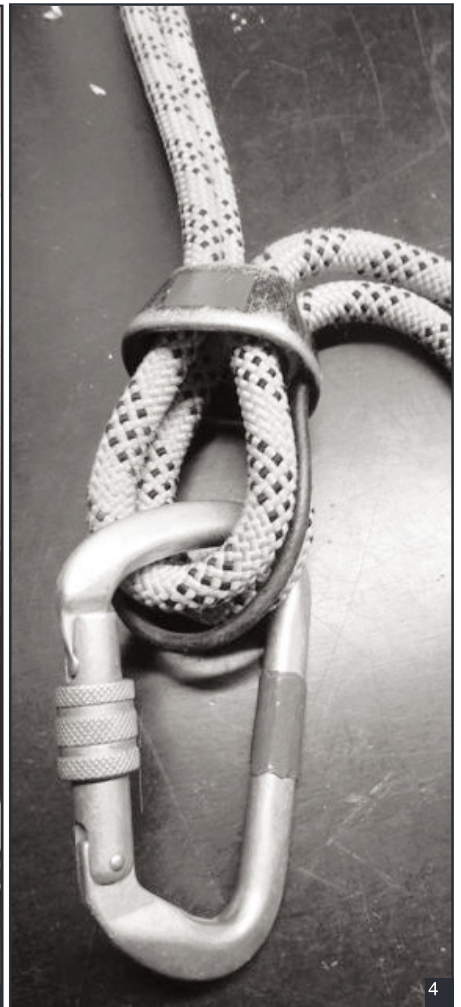
Photo 4: Twin rope threaded with carabiner for rappel or belaying.



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