



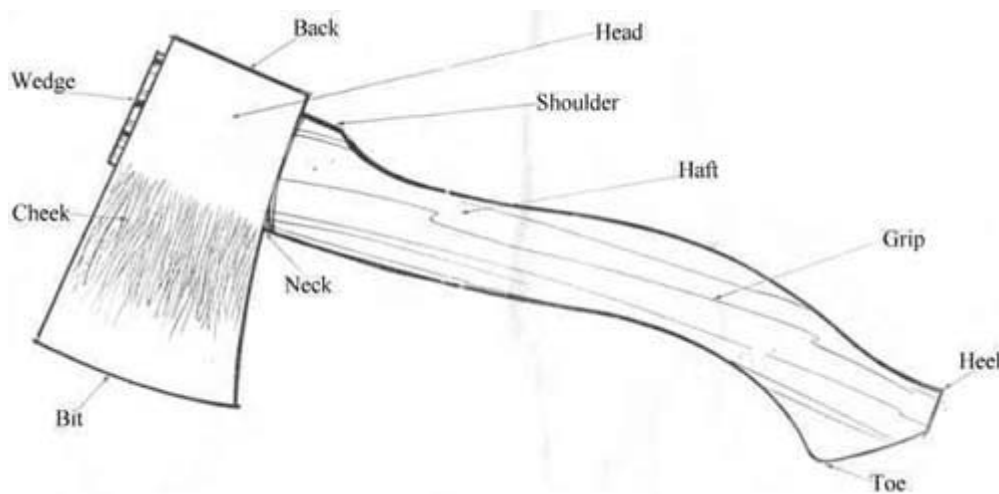
QUARTERMASTER

Lesson Three: Axes, Saws and Knives

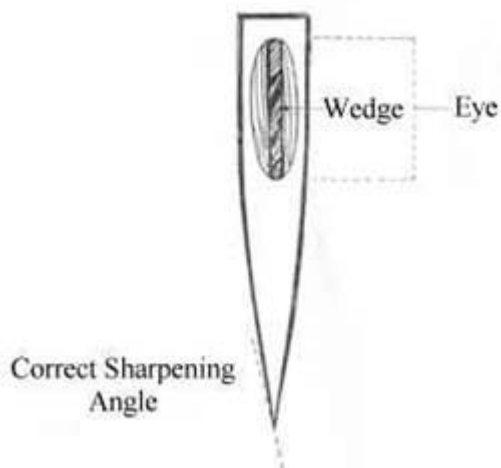
Axes

Axes are a very good way of breaking down very large items of wood. A very traditional piece of equipment with very little to go wrong – if used correctly.

Parts of an Axe



The axe can be thought of as “person shaped” – so you can see how terms such as toe, heel, head now make sense. The head (the metal part) is held onto the haft (typically the wooden section) by driving a wedge into the “eye”.



Carrying

To safely carry an axe, hold the axe head DOWNWARDS, toe UPWARDS, with the bit pointing FORWARDS. The palm of your hand should wrap round the head, not holding the handle. In this way you have control over the axe the whole time – and if you should trip, the axe will fall forwards away from you.

Usage and safety

Even the lightest of hand axes should be carefully used.

You should NEVER use an axe whilst wearing anything less than strong boots (steel toe caps are ideal, but leather walking boots are a good compromise). Standard Wellington boots are NOT suitable.

Before using an axe, you should set up a specific chopping area. With the chopping point in the centre, you should make a circle no less than 2 metres – and make sure that there are no obstructions – either on the ground or overhead. You need to make sure that everyone knows that this is a chopping area – and stop using the axe if someone else comes into that area.

(Be aware that even a small hand axe can travel further than 2 metres without too much of a problem; full size axes can travel much further than that).

When using the axe, you should look at where you want to chop, and make “V” shaped chops – one side, then the other – attacking the wood at an angle of about 45 to 60 degrees.

Saws

A fairly common tool – the most likely tool to use at camp is the Bow Saw.



The handle (shown on the right) is often also used to hold the saw blade – to replace the handle is pulled back and this releases the tension and the blade can be easily replaced (the tension holding the blade is quite stiff though)

Depending upon the wood that the blade is to cut, the teeth will vary in shape and configuration. It is not easy to sharpen a bowsaw, it is far easier to just replace the blade. For that reason, it becomes essential that you use a saw responsibly.

Carrying a saw

Because the teeth can snag on clothing and skin quite easily, the blade should always have a cover on it .

Provided it is properly sheathed, you can carry it by any part of the “Bow” part of the saw (**Question: why do you think you should not carry it by the blade – even if it is covered?**)

Using a saw

If you can, make a chopping area. This doesn't need to be as big as an axe chopping area – but it should be big enough to be clear what the purpose of the area is. As with using an axe, you should wear proper footwear to protect your feet.

Make sure the wood you are cutting is properly secure (so it doesn't move about) and is off the ground (the dirt will blunt the teeth quickly). Holding the wood with one hand (away from the area that you are going to cut), PULL the blade towards you, before sliding it back. Then saw back and forth. For larger pieces of wood, if you can open up the cut area will stop the wood from forcing the blade shut. (this is one area where practical is easier than theory!)

Knives

Note: For this part of the lesson, please refer to the other booklet "Scout Knife and Axe Certification"

Exercise - 1

(This is a requirement for the badge)

Successfully gain the 19th & 8th/12th knife Certificate

(Note: You do not need to own your own pocket knife before gaining this certificate, but you will need this certificate before you are able to make use of a pocket knife at a 19th & 8th/12th Harrow Scout camp)

Exercise – 2

Demonstrate your knowledge in using a saw to cut wood. You do not need to use a bowsaw, but you do need to demonstrate proper set up before cutting the wood and knowledge of proper action in using the saw.