Tool Talk

A Guide to

our

Trail Team Tools

and

Notes for Tool Talks

Advice for All Tools

Check before use

- Check that parts like handles, shafts, heads and blades are firmly fixed – are not coming loose.
- Check handles and shafts for splits and splinters. This can happen to metal ones too so check them as well as wooden ones.
- In general, check that the tool is not bent or distorted.

Don't abuse tools
Use the right tool for the job. If you are struggling to make your loppers cut through some wood, you need a saw. Forcing your loppers will distort them and make them useless. if your spade won't go in the ground because it's too hard don't jump on it which will bend it – use a mattock.
Clean your tools at the end of work. It's easy then. If there's no water available try to scrape off as much dirt as you can - it will still make it easier to finish the job later.

When carrying tools always be aware of the safety of yourself and those around you. We often have to carry our tools a long distance to the work site, over difficult ground where space is restricted. So be aware at all times of people nearby and don't let your tools get too close to them. Don't carry tools over your shoulder as this puts them at head height for other people. Make sure points and blades are not positioned so as to injure you or another if you stumble.

Don't hit metal tools together* – for instance don't hit a crowbar with a hammer to make it move. Eye injuries can be caused by sharp fragments of metal detaching and flying through the air.

***Certain specialist metal tools - wedges and some chisels for instance - are intended for hitting with a metal hammer. But these are made of a malleable alloy which does not chip.

It's usually OK to leave tools on site overnight in remoter locations, where there is no risk of theft, so long as precautions are taken:

- Store them together in a place where they are easy to find next day.
- Prevent light objects like buckets from blowing away by weighing them down.
- Bladed tools like saws and Stanley knives rust and are spoiled if they get wet so either bring them away or protect them very well from rain – and don't let nails get wet for the same reason.

A full list of tools can also be found in the Team Folder

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Trail Team Standard Issue

These tools make up a toolkit compact enough to be taken on the road by a Trail Team.

Descriptions and instructions for their use are given, which can be used by leaders as a basis for a Tool Talk.

Trail Team Standard Issue

Fata / Bucket

Uses

- Carrying materials such as gravel, soil and water,
- temporary storage of these,
- moving larger amounts of material along a bucket chain.

Issue: 4 per Trail Team; extras can be provided for special jobs such as chaining.

Check: does it have a handle? Is it split?

Safe and effective using
Its strength is not great so don't overload it. Do not throw it (dangerous to others and you risk losing it on a windy day). Do not use it upside down as a seat (causes splits and therefore leaking).

When you are not using it keep it off the path. If it is empty put something heavy in it such as a stone to prevent it rolling or blowing away.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Skófla / Spade

Uses

- Digging,
- cutting turf etc.

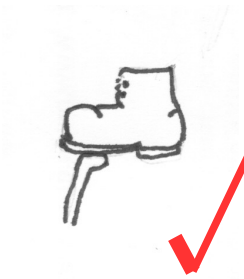
Not for shovelling. (See *Shovel* for that.)

Issue 3 per Trail Team

Check

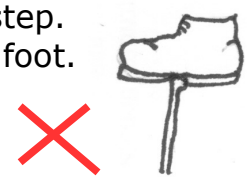
- Are the blade and handle firmly fixed to the shaft,
- is the blade bent,
- are there any splits or splinters in the shaft?

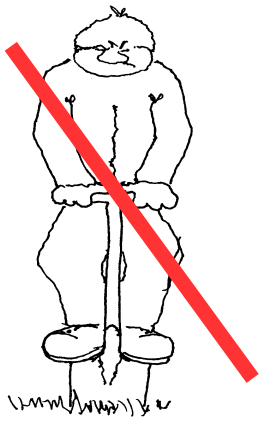
Safe and effective using



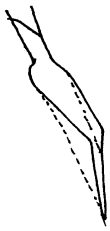
Push the spade with the ball of the foot.

Do not push with the instep. This can injure the foot.

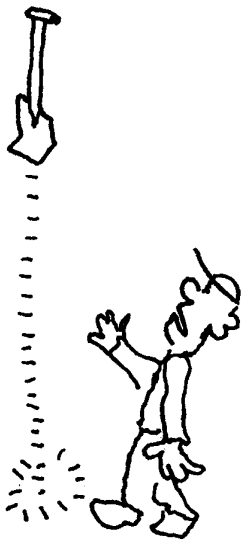


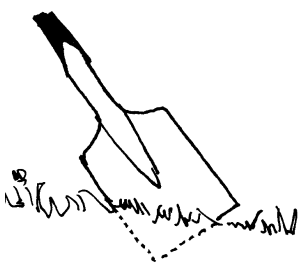


Never jump, stand with both feet or pogo on a spade to get it through hard ground.



This kinks the blade which makes it springy and very difficult to use.





If the ground is hard, try angling the spade to drive a corner in.

If this doesn't work, get a more appropriate tool such as a mattock.

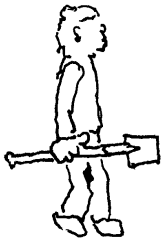
When you are not using it lay it down off the path and out of the way of other workers.

(continued)

Skófla (Continued)

If you are working alone it may be OK to stick it in the ground close to you, but don't do this if there are other people moving around you.

Carrying
Not over your shoulder.
Hold it at the centre of gravity, preferably in line with the body, or low down if not.



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Járnkarl / Rock Bar

(Also sometimes called a pinch bar.)

Uses A heavy steel levering tool usually about 1.5m long. Very versatile. Good for many jobs including

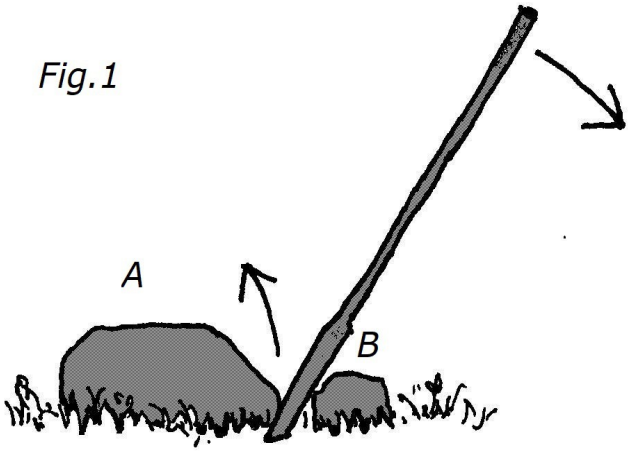
- moving heavy rocks,
- making fine adjustments to heavy stonework,
- making pilot holes for stobs and stakes,
- breaking hard ground.
- 2 or more can be used together.

Issue 2 per Trail Team.

Check Is it bent? Are there any splits or splinters which could cause cuts?

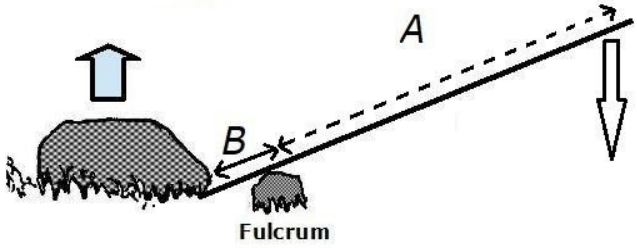
Safe and effective using (Fig.1)
When using the bar to move a load (A), put a smaller rock behind it (B) to support the bar as you pull it down, so that it works like a see-saw.

Fig.1



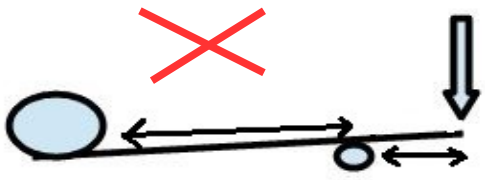
The smaller rock is the *fulcrum* – the turning point (Fig.2).

Fig.2



Distance (A) from the fulcrum to the downward effort should be longer than the distance (B) from the fulcrum to the load.

This increases the lifting power and reduces the effort needed. The longer you can make (A) compared to (B), the easier your work will be.



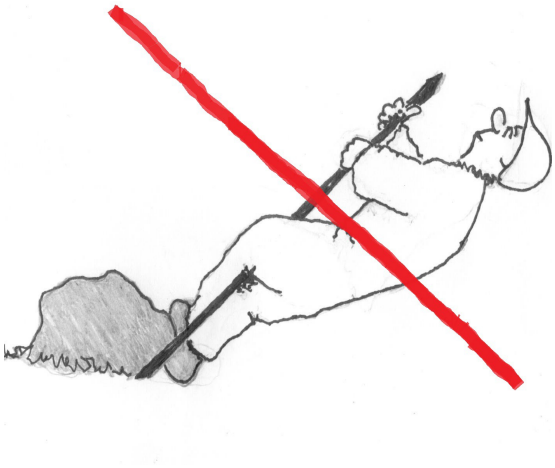
Don't put the fulcrum closer to the effort because that will make it more difficult or even impossible to move the load (Fig.3).

(*Fig.3*)

(Continued)

Járnkarl (Continued)

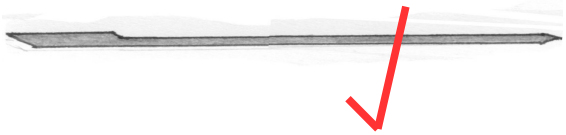
A load can move suddenly. A bar can slip. So -



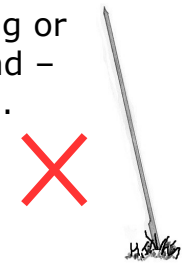
- don't hang from the rock bar to move a difficult load. If it moves suddenly you will hit the ground and the bar will hit you.

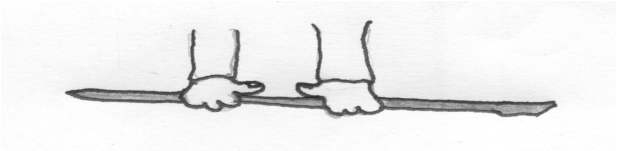
Don't pull it towards your head. A sudden movement could cause head injury.

When you are not using it, store the bar by laying it down where it will not be a trip hazard -

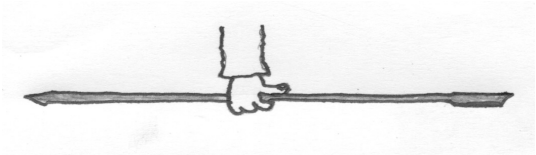


- not by leaning it on something or standing it on end in the ground – it will fall over and be a hazard.





Carrying
it is a heavy tool and can tire the hand when being carried a long distance. So take turns with other team members. It should not be carried over the shoulder because it puts the bar at head height making it dangerous to others.



A low, horizontal, carrying position is the best option – just be very aware of its potential for doing serious injury.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Hamar / Hammer

Uses

Driving in nails and, if it's a claw hammer, pulling out small nails.

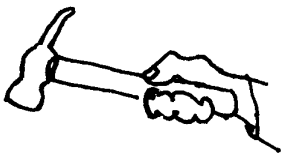
Issue 2 per Trail Team

Check

- Is the head firmly fixed to the shaft?
- If the shaft is wooden, check for splits and splinters.

Safe and effective using

If you wear gloves, they must be close fitting gripper gloves. Never wear loose gardening type gloves with a swinging tool – they risk slipping off, letting the tool fly away.



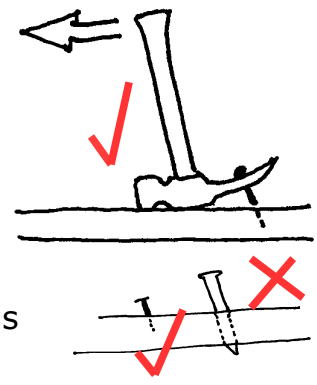
Start the nail by holding it in your free hand and tapping it gently with the hammer until it stands on its own. Remove the free hand before hammering.

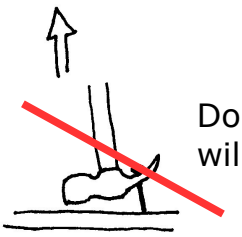
Hold the hammer near the end of the shaft. Then, as you swing it, you will gain maximum power and control. Let the tool do the work.

If you are inexperienced it may take time and practice to get your aim and control right. Don't worry – relax – it will come quite quickly.

Don't hold the hammer close to the head. This makes the action stiff and awkward, and it reduces the power. It also risks injury to your fingers if you miss the nail.

When using the claw to **remove a nail,** rest the head firmly on the wood and lever the nail out. The claw is **only for getting out small nails.** Don't heave on it trying to get out a big one – instead use a crowbar.





Don't use the hammer to pull upwards. This will pull off the head.

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Kúbein / Crowbar

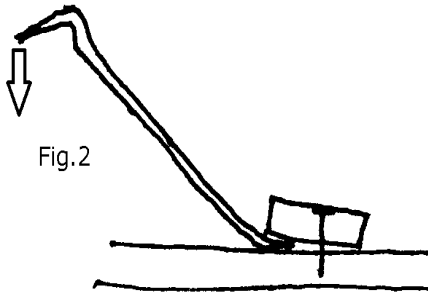
Issue 1 per Trail Team

Uses

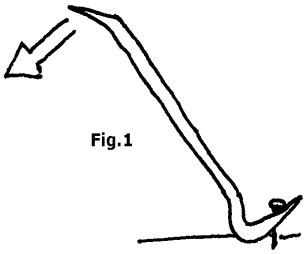
- A versatile two-ended levering tool mainly used for getting out nails (Fig.1) and
- for prising apart wood (Fig.2).
- Also for fine adjustments to stonework.

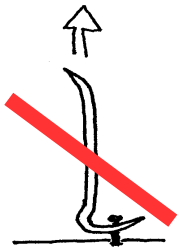
Check Is it bent? Are there splits or splinters which could cause cuts?

Safe and effective using



When getting out nails, rest the curve of the bar on the wood (Fig.1). As you press down it will hold the wood steady and act as a fulcrum, exerting a powerful upward force on the nail and a downward force on the wood.

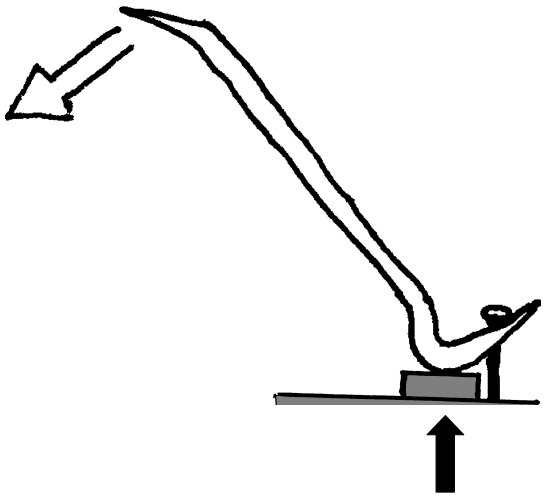




Do not try to remove nails by lifting upwards. Very little force can be exerted in this way, and the wood will be unsteady.

Tip

If the nail stands high out of the wood put a block under the crowbar to raise the fulcrum level.



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Trail Team Standard Issue

Sleggja Stór / Sledge Hammer

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Check

- is the head firmly fixed to the shaft?
- If the shaft is wooden, check for splits and splinters.

Uses

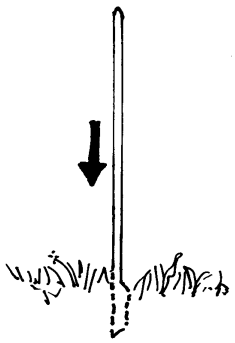
Hammering in stobs, stakes and posts.

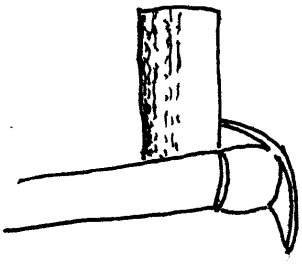
It should not be used to break rock, as chips will fly around and be a danger, especially to the eyes.

Safe and effective using

Before you start, check that there is no-one near enough to be injured as you swing – 2x the length of the tool at least

If you are hammering in a stake or a stob it's a good idea to to make a pilot hole first. A rock bar is good for doing this.





If it is necessary to hold the target steady for the first few hits with the hammer, this should not be done with the hand. Instead, use a tool, such as a mattock.

If you wear gloves they must be close fitting gripper gloves. Never wear gardening style gloves with swinging tools – they slip, and risk losing their hold.

When you are not using it store it on the ground, out of the way of people walking.

Carrying Keep it low, not over the shoulder.

How to swing the hammer See next page.

Sleggja Stór (Continued)

Using the Sledgehammer

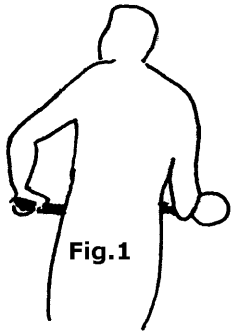


Fig.1

Use one hand to hold the shaft near to the head of the hammer.

Hold with the other hand at the other end (Fig.1).

Stand with your feet apart, one foot slightly in front of the other – be stable, comfortable and facing the target.

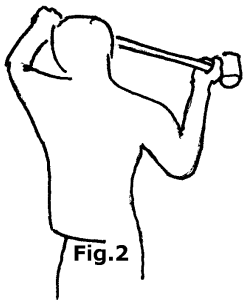


Fig.2

Look at the target and raise the hammer. (Fig.2)

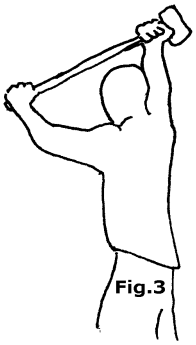


Fig.3

Continue looking at the target and begin the swing. The hand near the head controls the direction and the other hand gives power (Fig.3)

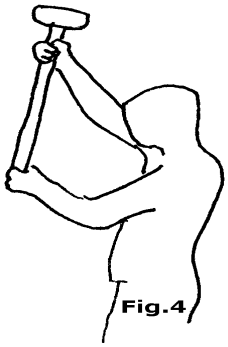


Fig.4

As the hammer comes over, the hand begins to slide away from the head (Fig.4)

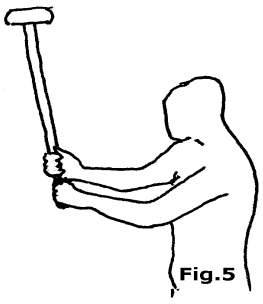


Fig.5

As the hammer comes down on the target, the hands come together (Fig.5)

If you are inexperienced it may take a while to get the control right. Don't worry, relax, let the tool do the work and it will come quite soon.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Haki / Mattock

Issue 1 per Trail Team

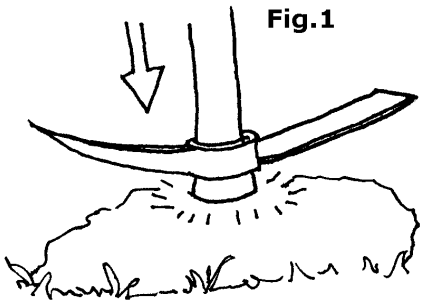
Check Is the shaft free of splits and splinters?

Uses A grubbing tool - the pointed blade breaks ground, the flat end drags and scoops.

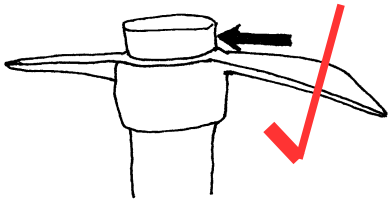
Safe and effective using

The head is not permanently fixed to the shaft.

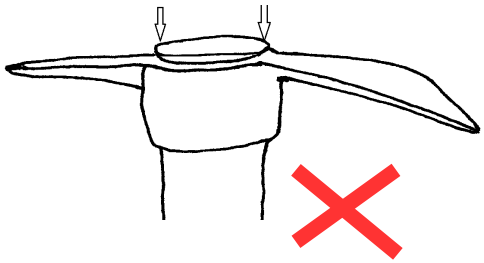
Fig.1



To fit the head on the shaft, slide it along to the end, then strike the end sharply on a hard surface such as a stone.



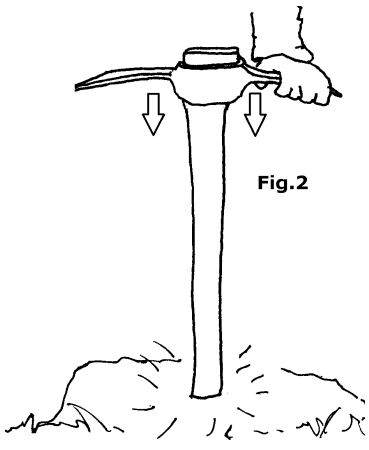
Before you use the mattock, check that the head is not too close to the end of the shaft.



If it is, the shaft is worn and narrow, and the head will slip off.

To remove the head, tap the shaft on a hard surface. **Keep your head to one side** so that the shaft will not hit you in the face if it bounces.

Fig.2



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Haki (Continued)

Before starting work, check the area around you to make sure other people are a safe distance away.

Lift the mattock only to shoulder height. Do not swing it above your head.

When you are not using it: store it off the path, make sure it is not a trip hazard.

Carrying: it is not essential to take the mattock apart before you carry it. But if you don't, make sure to carry it low and not over the shoulder.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Grjótskófla / Shovel

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Check

- Is the blade fixed firmly to the shaft,
- is the blade bent,
- are there any splits or splinters in the shaft?

Uses A spooning tool for moving loose material - not for digging.

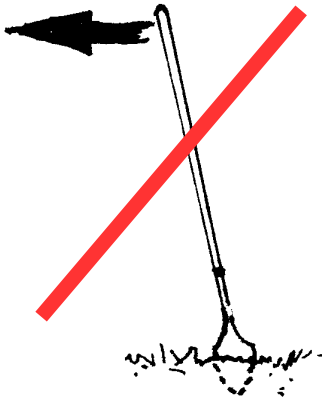
Safe and effective using

Slide the shovel under the loose material you wish to move.

The hand nearest to the load does the lifting.

The other hand helps to control the movement.

Remember: it is not a digging tool. Do not drive it into the ground to dig out turf or soil. This is likely to bend the blade or break the shaft. Get a spade for this.



When you are not using it

Lay it down where it cannot be a trip hazard.

Carrying It is a long tool so you need to be especially aware of those around you. Do not carry it over your shoulder as this puts it at head height and risks injury to others.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Málband / Tape Measure

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Check Does it slide in and out of the case easily?

Safe and effective using

The most common problem occurs when sand and grit get pulled in as the measure is returned to the case. It will jam and be useless very soon if this is allowed to happen. So if it is being used in sandy, gritty or wet circumstances it should be wiped clean before it is retracted.

When you are not using it store where it can easily be found again. Don't leave it out to get wet overnight as it will rust.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

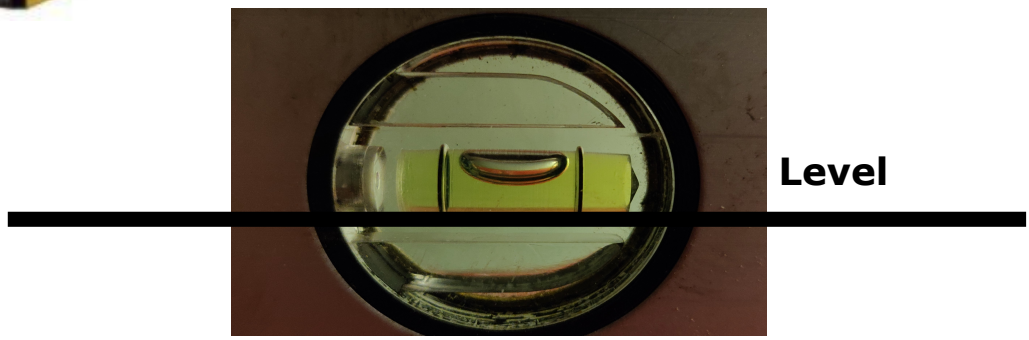
Hallamæll / Spirit Level

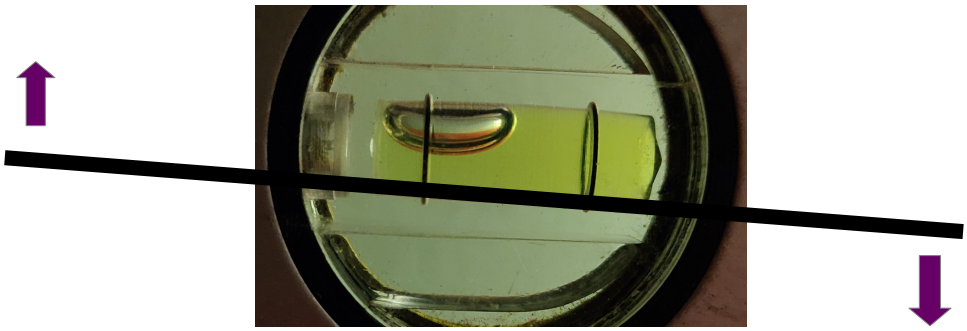
Issue 1 per Trail Team

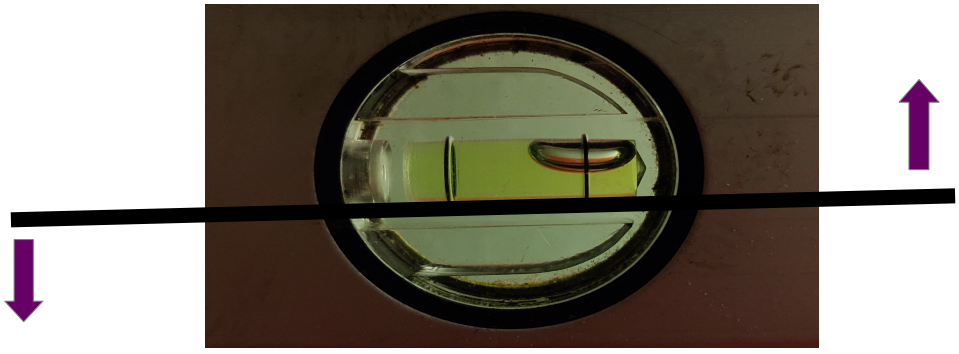
Check Is it bent?

Uses To assess that a surface is truly horizontal or truly vertical.

Safe and effective using: Handle carefully – a bent spirit level will give false readings.







When you are not using it store it where it will not be a trip hazard; don't place heavy objects on top of it which might damage it.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Moli Hamar / Lump Hammer

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Check Is the head firmly attached to the shaft?
If the shaft is wooden, are there any splits or splinters?

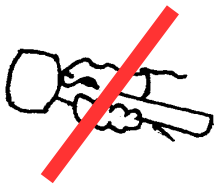
Uses

- Tent pegs and stakes,
- tapping wooden components into place,
- getting stobs started in the ground before using the sledge hammer
- etc.

Safe and effective using

If you wear gloves, they must be close fitting gripper gloves. Never wear loose gardening style gloves with a swinging tool – they risk slipping, letting the tool fly away.

Hold the hammer near the end of the shaft. Then, as you swing it, you will gain maximum power and control. Let the tool do the work.



Don't hold the hammer close to the head. This makes the action stiff and awkward, and it reduces the power. It also risks injury to your fingers if you miss the target.

Stand so that your body will not be hit if you miss the target.

***

Trail Team Standard Issue

Brýni Stein / Sharpening Stone

Issue 1 per Trail Team (Note: the shape may vary from the ones shown here.)

Uses For sharpening bladed tools – usually axes or sickles.

Safe and efficient using – sharpening an axe Make sure the axe head is free of dirt and sap, move the stone in small circles, applying light pressure and keeping fingers clear. Change sides and angles often until the edge has a smooth and even surface.

More information about axes and sharpening stones is available from:

https://members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/FS315070.pdf

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Net / Net

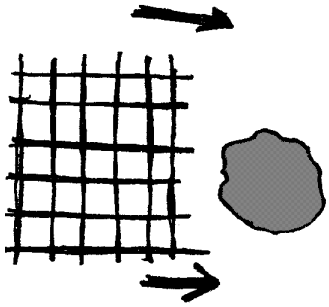
Issue 1 per Trail Team

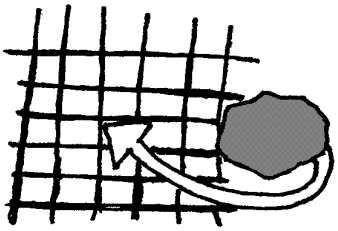
Uses Carrying heavy objects – usually building stones.

Check Is any part of it snapped or broken?

Safe and effective using

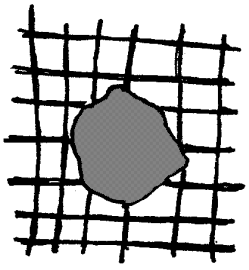
Move the net as close to the load as you can get it.





Roll the load on to the net.

Position the load in the middle of the net.

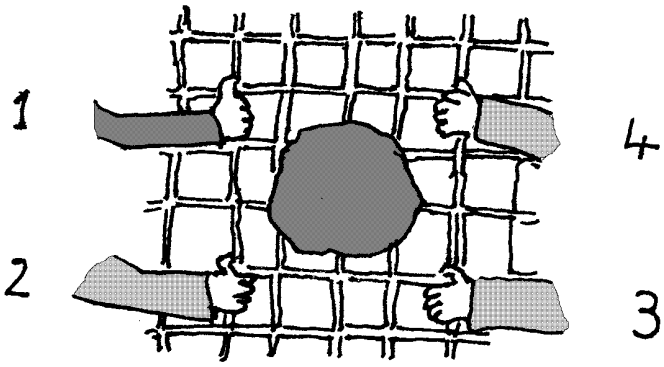


(Continued)

Net (Continued)

- Position 4 people around the load.

- Hold the net as close as possible to the load (so that you don't have to lift up a lot of slack net before you even move the stone).



- **Essential safety measures**

- Use safe lifting technique.

- *Work together, communicate*: appoint one person to count down - for example "Three, two, one, lift". If people don't lift at the same time the load can get skewed unpredictably with risk of back strain.

- Before you start the carry be sure you all know which way you intend to go. Check that everyone is ready to start walking and make sure all start at the same time.

- People in front warn the others about obstacles such as potholes because the ones at the back cannot easily see them.

- If it's a long carry take frequent rests and change places from time to time.

- On arrival use the countdown to put the net down.

- The load can then be rolled off the net and into position.

- **If, during the carry, you need to let go for any reason,** tell the others first so the load can be put down, using the countdown, before you let go. **Never, ever,** just let go without telling anyone. This will suddenly skew the load, risking back strain for the others. Or the load might roll off onto someone's foot.

See also: *Rock carrier*

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Scutch, Tile Hammer, Brick Hammer

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Check

- Is the head firmly fixed to the shaft.
- Is the rubber grip firmly fixed?

Uses

For chopping and shaping *scoria* to make steps etc.

Safe and effective using

- Eye protectors *must* be used.
- There should be no-one closer than 3 tool lengths, i.e. An outstretched arm holding the hammer plus two more hammer lengths.
- If a colleague has to work closer than that s/he must also wear eye protectors.
- If gloves are worn they should be close fitting gripper gloves. Conventional gardening style gloves are loose and slippy and you could lose your grip.

Scoria is a softish aerated rock ejected from volcanoes. It is found in many of the areas in which we work.

***

Trail Team Standard Issue

Hrifa / Rake

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Check

- Is the head firmly fixed to the shaft?
- Are there any splits or splinters in the shaft?

Safe and Effective Using

For use as a finishing tool on path surfaces and for removing off-road tyre tracks in gravel.

It can be used in the conventional way with the tines (points) facing downwards or it can be flipped over and the back used for a final finish.

Raking to remove off-road tyre tracks in the Highlands.

When you are not using it

- Lay it down where it will not be a trip hazard.
- Remember to lay it with the tines facing downwards to avoid comedy accidents.

***

Trail Team Standard Issue

Tréklippur / Loppers

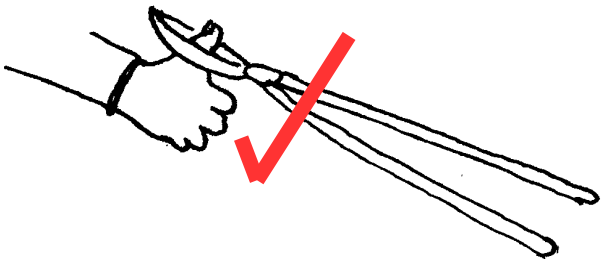
Issue 1 per Trail Team

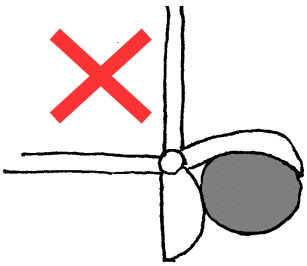
Uses For cutting small branches and twigs.

Check

- Are the blades distorted, causing a gap between them when they close?
- If the handles are telescopic, do they work?

Safe and effective using They are for cutting *small* branches. Only use them with branches up to the size of a thumb.





Do not heave and struggle with the loppers in an attempt to get through thicker branches. They distort and break easily. If it's so difficult you need a saw.

When you are not using them
Store them where they are not a trip hazard. Lay them down, do not hang them in a tree.

***

Trail Team Standard Issue

Sög–Bogin / Bowsaw

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Uses For sawing logs and trees – not for carpentry work which needs a panel saw.

Safe and effective using

- Use one hand to operate the saw and the other to hold the wood steady.
- Alternatively a foot can be used to steady the wood if circumstances allow.
- The steadying hand should always be protected by a glove in case the saw slips out of the cut.
- Start by pulling the saw back towards you a few times until you have started a groove – this will keep the saw on track as you begin to cut.

When you are not using it store it where it will not be a trip hazard; don't place heavy objects on top of it which might damage the blade. Do not hang it in a tree. It should not be left out in the rain overnight as the blade will rust.

***

Trail Team Standard Issue

Sög / Saw (Panel Saw)

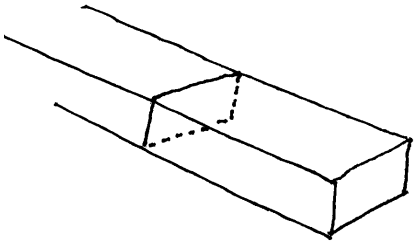
Issue 1 per Trail Team

Uses Carpentry, e.g. box steps.

Check:

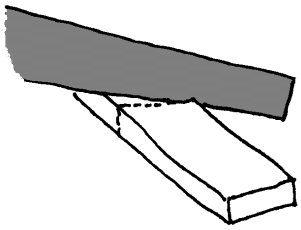
- Is it bent?
- Is the blade firmly fixed to the handle?

Safe and effective using



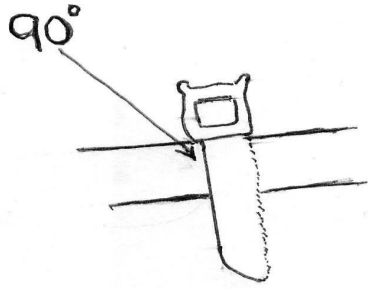
- Mark the wood where you want to cut it. Unless you are very confident mark it all the way round so that you can check from time to time that the cut stays straight all the way through *.
- Check that there are no old nails or screws in the path of the saw as it will be blunted if it scrapes against them.

- Hold the saw with one hand only, and use the other hand to hold the wood steady. This hand *must* be wearing a glove.



- Stand so that your arm and the saw are comfortably aligned with your guide line.
- Pull the saw backwards a few times to make a slot to guide it when you start to cut.
- As you near the end of the cut, get someone to hold the end of the wood to prevent it dropping and tearing a piece out with it.

When you are not using it store it where it will not be a trip hazard; don't let it get wet overnight as it will rust and lose efficiency.



*Most saws are made so that you can use them as a set square to draw a 90 degree line across a straight timber.

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Öxi / Axe

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Uses Usually to put points on stobs and stakes.

Check

- Is it sharp enough? A blunt axe is likely to glance off the wood instead of biting into it, with a risk of injury.
- Is the head firmly fixed to the shaft?
- Does the handle have any splits or splinters?

Safe and effective using

- Do the chopping on a wooden chopping block. Do not do it on a stone or on the ground as this risks eye injury from stone chips and also damages the blade.
- There should be no-one else closer than 3 axe lengths, i.e. An outstretched arm holding the axe plus 2 more axe lengths.
- Clear away any wood chips you create. Doing this from time to time as you work is easier than trying to clear up a big mess at the end of the job.
- For safety, kneel on one knee or crouch to do the chopping, so that any miss-hits will go into the block and not your leg.
- Keep the axe sharp as you work (see *Brýni Stein / Sharpening Stone*).

When you are not using it
It is a small item – store it where you can easily find it, preferably with other small things.

When carrying it, cradle it upside down in your hand with your arm by your side. Make sure the axe bit is facing forward, keeping fingers out of the way. Axes should be passed to another person head first.

More information can be found here:
https://members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/FS315070.pdf

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Trail Team Standard Issue

Fiflabani / Lupin Tool, Thistle Tool or Digger

Issue 1 per Trail Team.

Uses To uproot invasive plants and weeds – usually Alaskan lupins.

When you are not using it It is small and easily lost - store it where it can be seen and preferably with your other small items.

***

Trail Team Standard Issue

Garðskófla / Trowel

Issue 1 per Trail Team

Uses Many, but especially for making adjustments around stones when building drains and water bars.

Check:

- Is the handle firmly fixed to the blade?
- Are there any splits or splinters in the handle?

When you are not using it It's small and easy to lose so put it where it can easily be seen and preferably with other small items.

***

End of Standard Trail Team Issue

Next: Additional Tools for Special Projects

Additional Tools for Special Projects

These tools are not carried routinely by Trail Teams. Instead they are issued as needed for specific jobs. Here, except for the rock carrier, they are listed with a few brief details but there are no instructions for use. Instructions are given as the need arises in preparation for the job.

Rock Carrier

Uses For 4 people to move heavy loads, usually building stones or gravel.

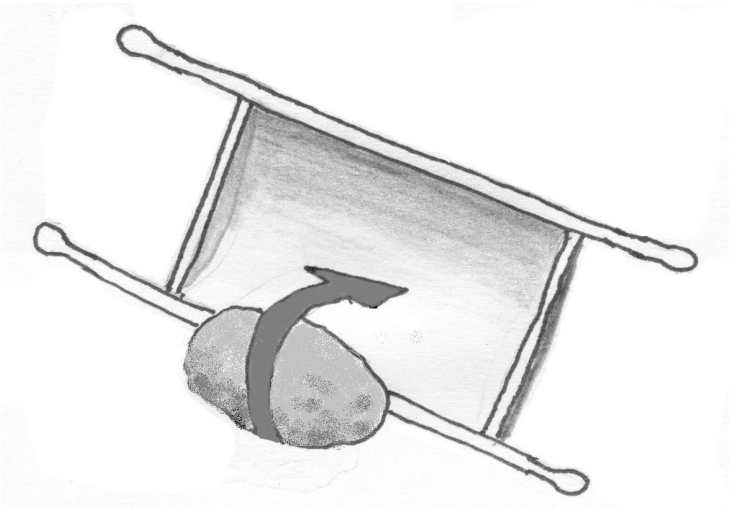
Check

- Are the handles firmly fixed to the body;
- are the handles split and do they have any splinters?

Safe and effective using

Bring the carrier as close as possible to the load.

Lay it on its side and roll the load into it (unless it is gravel or soil).



Be sure that the carrier is firmly set on the ground – if it is not the weight of the load on one side could jolt the other side upwards and cause injury.

Position the load centrally in the carrier so that the weight is evenly distributed.

Bring the carrier to a horizontal position, ready to lift.

(Continued)

- **Rock Carrier (continued)**

- **Essential safety measures**

- Use safe lifting technique.

- *Work together, communicate*: appoint one person to count down - for example “Three, two, one, lift”. If people don't lift at the same time the load can get skewed unpredictably with risk of back strain.

- Before you start the carry be sure you all know which way you intend to go. Check that everyone is ready to start walking and make sure all start at the same time.

- People in front warn the others about obstacles such as potholes because the ones at the back cannot easily see them.

- If it's a long carry take frequent rests and change places from time to time.

- On arrival use the countdown to put the carrier down.

- The load can then be rolled out and into position.
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- **If, during the carry, you need to let go for any reason,** tell the others first so the load can be put down, using the countdown, before you let go. **Never, ever,** just let go without telling anyone. This will suddenly skew the load, risking back strain and injury for the others.
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-
- **See also:** *Net*

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Additional Tools for Special Projects

Járn Sög / Hacksaw or Metal Saw

Vírklippur / Wire Cutter, Fencing Tool

Töng / Pincers

Additional Tools for Special Projects

Whale Tail

A finishing tool for smoothing gravel surfaces.

Garðgaffli / Fork

Additional Tools for Special Projects

Turf Cutter

Sópa Bursta / Sweeping Brush

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