

How to Construct a Zip Line

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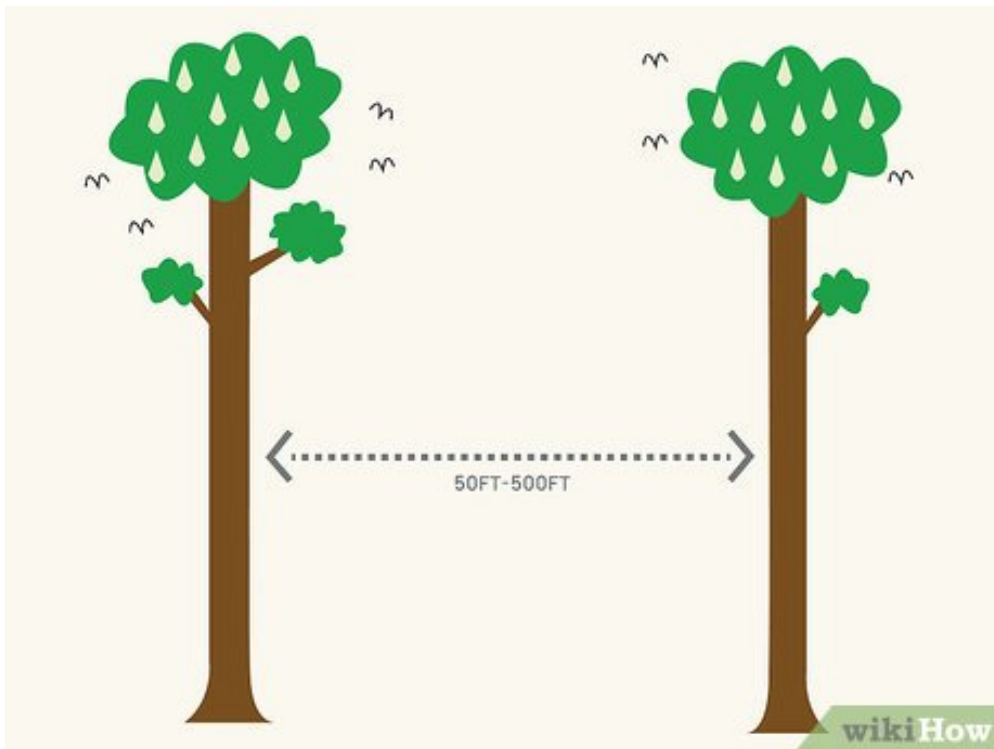
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Making a zip line is easy, but safety requirements take time to think about.

Things You'll Need

- ☐ 1/4 or 3/8-inch steel-cable
- ☐ Come-along manual winch
- ☐ Properly sized cable clamps
- ☐ Ladder
- ☐ zip roller

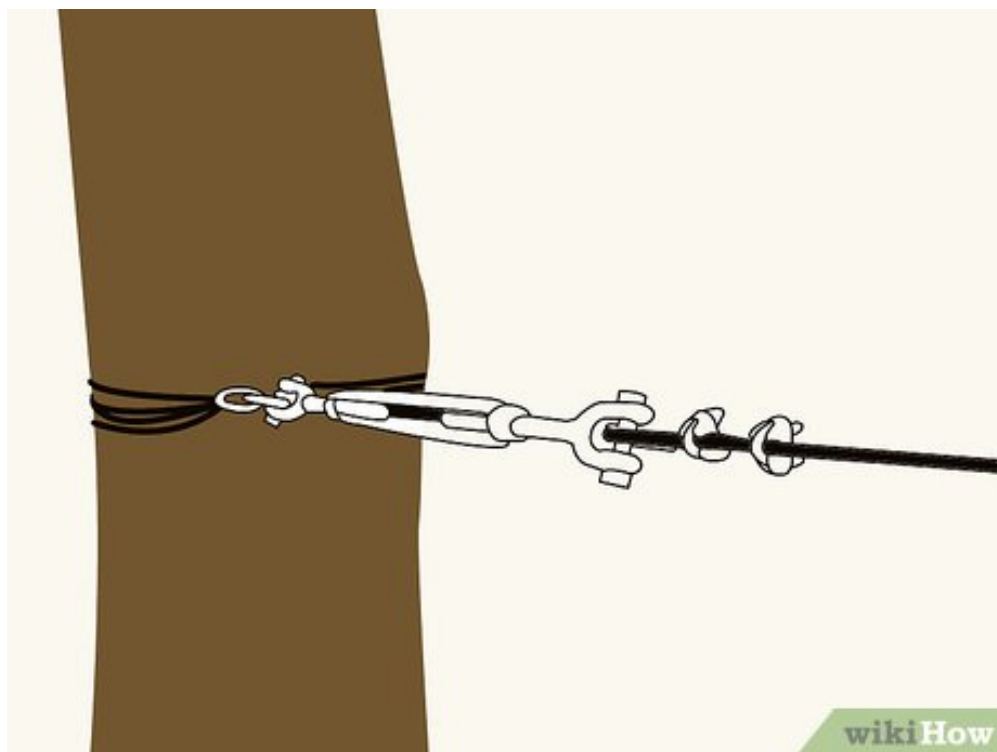
Steps



1 Select a distance between two solid objects, Preferably the objects should be trees or other solid structures. [1] The distance should be anywhere from 50 feet (15.2 m) to 500 feet (152.4 m).



2 Lay the cable out between the two points. You will need enough cable so there is suitable slack when it's stretched out between the two points. This slack should form a belly in the cable between the points. You **never** want to stretch the cable too tight.^[2] This creates a dangerous situation of speed and crashing at the other end, and your last words will be, "Hey, watch this!" before you're taken to the hospital.



3 Attach cable to one point. If you are attaching to a tree, wrap the cable around the tree a few times and then clamp the free end to the leading end. Use high quality clamps that are sized for the cable diameter. These clamps will require you to tighten with a socket set. Two clamps six inches apart are good. Three or four clamps add the necessary safety.^[3] The other end of the cable is where you will tighten it up and raise it off the ground.



- 4 Attach a temporary cable clamp about 20 feet (6.1 m) from the end of the cable.** Attach the winch to this clamp and to a point on the tree. Winch the cable up. Once it's winched up, the free end of the cable can be wrapped around the tree and then clamped on its leading end to hold it in place.^[4] Try to have the clamps about 8-feet from the tree. At this point the winch can be taken off the first clamp and then reinstalled on the furthest out permanent cable clamp. This allows for adjustments to be made on the cable. As the cable stretches, it will need to be tightened with the winch.



- 5 Determine who goes first.** This is a nerve-wracking decision. Testing the zip line is important.^[5]



Community Q&A

Question

How do I make sure a zip line has the right amount of rope?



Community Answer

When you buy the cables for the the zip line, just make sure you have 15-20 ft. of extra cable to account for slack. (You'll need to measure the length of your zip line area as well.)

Helpful 20 Not Helpful 3

Question

How can you set up a zip line if you don't have any trees?



Community Answer

You would have to build a system that would replace the trees, like some steel posts. They must be able to hold the weight though. It will be more difficult and costly.

Helpful 19 Not Helpful 8

Question

How do I get the other end of the cable to the other side?



Raif
Community Answer

You can lasso it to someone on the other side and the one on the other side can tie it on the object. If there is noone on the other side, you will have to engineer something that can help you.

Helpful 14 Not Helpful 9

Question

What happens if someone gets hurt on a zip line?



Jammie Cheung
Community Answer

If the injury is bad, call 911 or other emergency lines and ask for medical help. After accessing any injuries, slack the rope more so either the speed is lost more, making the zip line slower, or tighten the cable clamps if it fell off.

Helpful 8 Not Helpful 4

Question

What if you don't have a tree?



Idabelle
Community Answer

If you don't have any trees, you will have to use something like a steel pole, instead.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 1

Question

What should the height be when constructing a zipline?



Community Answer

Start at about 20 feet. Then go down to 5 feet because your weight will bring the cable down.

Helpful 4 Not Helpful 2

References

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3. ↑ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8JqU5Df_aw
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