

Shortroping 100 – Shortening the Rope

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Shortroping CANNOT be learned from an article. This simple description of shortening the rope is insufficient to describe how shortroping is properly applied in mountaineering terrain. Take a course from a guide and practice diligently under supervision from a knowledgeable mentor.

Step One (new age technique): Begin by taking the rope from the tie-in knot and passing it behind your neck. Then wind the rope repeatedly between your neck and your outstretched hand.

The coils should reach down to about the level of the waist band of your harness.

Step Two: Continue taking in coils until you have taken as much rope as you require.



Step Three: Pass the coils over the shoulder as shown. If wearing a pack the coils should go over top of the pack as well.



Step Four: Reach out a comfortable distance and create a bight in the rope.

Step Five: Pass the bight behind all of the coils and through the loop of your tie-in knot.



Step Six: Pull about 30cm (12 inches) of bight forward of the harness.





Step Seven: Begin to tie an overhand slip knot around the standing part of rope coming from your partner.

Step Eight: Finish tying the overhand slip knot. If tied correctly, the end of the bight should be pointing toward your partner.



Step Nine: Clip the bight into a carabiner attached to the harness (belay rappel loop) or the harness tie-in knot. This secures the slip knot from accidentally coming undone.



Photo Ten: On smooth or relatively even terrain when the distance between the leader and second climber is not likely to change frequently, the use of a fixed overhand or figure of eight loop is occasionally in order. This is typically used on non-glaciated snow terrain and perhaps very easy scrambling or scree (simple terrain without significant steps). The loop allows a slip to be checked without compressing the hand.

When the arm is at full extension the rope should just come tight against the harness.

The loop would only be carried by the leader and is untied any time a step of scrambling or climbing is encountered.

That concludes the basic discussion of how to shorten a rope for Shortroping. Now it is time to receive expert instruction from a certified mountain guide on how Shortroping is carried out.

About the Author



Cyril Shokoples is an internationally certified Mountain Guide and Past-President of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides. He has been a member of the Alpine Club of Canada and Edmonton Section since 1975 and became a "Senior Member" in 1979. He received the Silver Rope award in 1988 and the Distinguished Service Award in 2002. He also received the Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides in 2003. In 2005, the Edmonton Section of the ACC awarded Cyril with the George Stefanick Legacy Award (only the 2nd time this award has been presented). He has been teaching mountain leadership for over two decades and he continues to broaden his background and skills into many related areas of safety and rescue education. He trained Emergency Medical Technicians for over a decade and is a life member of the National Association for Search and Rescue (US). He has been training the Canadian military Search and Rescue Technicians in mountain climbing and mountain rescue for over fifteen years. He created the Parks Emergency Responder program for National Park Wardens and has taught that program across Canada for well over a decade. He is a PADI Rescue Diver and a DAN Dive Emergency Specialist. He is also a professional member of the Canadian Avalanche Association, a CSIA Ski Instructor and a licenced Advanced Amateur Radio Operator. Cyril has taught courses and seminars in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, The Yukon and North West Territories. He currently resides in Edmonton, AB, Canada and is the proprietor of Rescue Dynamics, which is involved in guiding, climbing, rescue and safety instruction.

Further information on courses as well as additional copies of this and other technical notes in this series can be obtained directly from Rescue Dynamics. On the internet, visit the Rescue Dynamics Website at – <http://www.rescuedynamics.ca>

