

Shelter Building

Shelter building is a fun outdoor activity for all ages and allows development of many skills. It is particularly useful as an activity to promote problem solving and leadership - but can equally tie into many aspects of The Curriculum for Excellence.

This activity is also a life and survival skill - which has the ability to facilitate team building and co-operation – as well as peer to peer learning. The sense of achievement and resilience which comes from learning the knots required also offers the reward of raising self-esteem.

Sloping A Frame

These techniques involve propping up a long branch, which then supports other branches that can make the frame of the shelter.

- With a sloping A frame, the long branch or “backbone” is supported by two Y shaped branches at the far end. It then slopes to the ground, and other branches or “ribs” can be rested upon it.

Tent Shaped

- With a tent shaped shelter, the long branch is lodged and rested between two trees. The other branches are then rested upon it.

Once you have your frame, create a mesh using smaller twigs by weaving them through the frame. Finally, cover the shelter with materials like large leaves, twigs, and grass, to make it waterproof.

Add dried leaves to the floor of the shelter, to make a cosy carpet. Or use a ground sheet.

Tree Tepee

A simple and effective tepee style shelter can be made by finding a suitable tree. You will need one with a fork in its branches, near to the ground.

Make the frame by resting long branches into the fork of the tree.

Continue with the rest of the steps, as outlined for the above methods.



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Knot Tying

The best knots for shelter building are the half hitches, clove hitch and timber hitch. The best way to get better at knot tying is repeated and regular practice. You can see these as well as other handy additional knots (such as the bowline) here: <https://www.animatedknots.com/basic-knots>