

## Outdoor Education 110/120 - Shelter Construction Video Challenge

**Rational:** Depending on your location in the province, you may have different options to pursue a shelter build because of availability of materials such as snow or fir bows, etc. Certainly students should not be removing bows from neighbor's tree with permission!

**Warning:** At this particular time, individuals want to avoid trips to the Hospital for an emergency cut/wound more than ever, so only use tools with supervision or instruction! Fortunately, there are several options for shelter (fort) builds without the use of potentially dangerous tools. However, working with sharp tools, one of the 6 tenants of Risky Play, can be empowering developmentally for kids.

**Link to sharp tools use tutorial:**

<http://scoutteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Hand-Axe-Safety.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MheB3eTEuvE>

<https://www.gsmw.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsmw/documents/Knife%20%26%20Axe%20Safety.pdf>

**Research:** There are several styles of shelters to choose from; several of which do not require the use of sharp tools either. Some of these include: the debris shelter, the wick up shelter, trench shelter (snow), a quinzhee (snow), some lean-to shelters and possibly the tarp shelter. Conduct some research on some of the various styles to see which shelter type appeals to you and is suitable for your region. You might want to consider scouting a location a location first; taking stock of what kind of shelter might be best suited for your region and what materials you have available from home, i.e. a tarp, twine/cordage, shovels or other tools that might be required. Learning a few of the following knots could enhance your shelter construction a great deal: the bowline, clove hitch (or the timber or two half hitches) and some simple lashing techniques. See the following site for knots instruction: <https://www.animatedknots.com/>

**Other Things to Consider:**

**A) Location** - One vital thing to consider in shelter construction is its location. Build at least 50 meters away from water (flooding), on mid to higher ground that

**away from both ‘widow maker limbs’ (Branches/tree that could potentially fall on you!), and potential encounters with snow plowing equipment.**

**B) Safety:** Create a safe structure that will not collapse on the occupant during or after construction. **For instance, if using a fallen tree still clinging to the stump, which can serve as an excellent basis for a shelter, ensure the connection is still secure enough to tamper with the tree without risk of it falling.**

**C) Comfort:** Be sure to have a barrier between the occupant and the ground. This could include: bows, tarps, flattened card board boxes or pallets (or even some kind of combination?); especially if you are planning to stay the night in your shelter?

**D) Document your Construction:** Build your shelter and take photos during the different phases of construction. Record a video tour of your shelter upon completion. **If you consider staying the night in your shelter, be sure to record a clip of that part of your adventure! When staying out ensure you have that barrier in place between yourself and the ground, and double up you sleep bag(s) if you do not possess something rated for the current temperatures at night!**

**E) Safety #2:** Be sure to have a parent or guardian inspect your shelter in daylight, prior to your camp out to ensure no hazards were overlooked. Put on fresh dry clothes just prior to getting into your sleeping bag for the night. Avoid being damp with either sweat or precipitation! To be on the “safe side” have a family member check in with you throughout the night; perhaps a text would do?

**DO NOT HAVE A FIRE INSIDE YOUR SHELTER OR LEAVE ONE UNATTENDED OUTSIDE OF IT!**

**Some helpful tips from “Uncle Pauley”:**

**a) When using something sharp always cut away from your body and account for the follow through of the blade if it were to miss the intended target!**

**b) Using the dead branches and logs on the ground takes a lot less energy and is more environmentally responsible than cutting down something “green” in a non-emergency.**

**c) Two live trees growing close together can be used to break dead material down to size. Wedge your branch/log between them and push until it breaks. You may need some help from an adult with this “applied physics trick”.**

**d) Have fun reconnecting with Nature in this unusual time where things have slowed down enough to allow us to do so! Get outside but stay away from others.**