



AAC Publications

The Art of the Bail

California

Bailing off a steep route is a nearly inevitable outcome if you climb enough walls, so it's best to know how to get down safely before you find yourself dangling in space, wishing you knew what to do. Yosemite climbing rangers advise the following techniques for rappelling overhanging routes with a haulbag.

- (1) The first person descending should rappel on a fixed single strand with a Grigri or a similar locking belay device, clipping both strands of the rappel ropes to directional pieces to keep them close to the wall. They should also carry equipment to reascend the fixed rope in case of getting too far from the wall or rappelling past the anchor.
- (2) When the first person arrives at the lower anchor, they should feed out five to ten feet of slack rope, tie a knot with both ropes, and clip the knot to the anchor. This will close the system for the second rappeller and allow the second person to pull themselves into the wall to unclip directionals on their way down and to pull into the anchor at the end of the rappel.
- (3) The second rappeller should untie the fixed strand from the upper anchor or undo any knot-blocks, and then rappel both strands as normal, using a tube-style device (such as an ATC) and a third-hand backup. They can unclip and clean the directional pieces as they descend. Note: The second person down should carry the team's heaviest gear (haulbag, etc.), because the tube-style device produces a smoother rappel than a Grigri. Plus, they should not have any reason to reascend the rope because it will be fixed to the lower anchor.

— Yosemite National Park Climbing Rangers

Images

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