

## RIVER CROSSING

Including the use of ropes and other safety devices during a river crossing in trekking or mountaineering significantly enhances safety, especially in challenging conditions. Here's how to incorporate these tools into your river crossing strategy:

- **Monkey Crawling Technique:**

- **Setup:** Secure a rope across the river, ideally at waist to chest height. This can be done by anchoring it to sturdy objects like trees or large rocks on both banks. Ensure the rope is taut and can bear the weight of multiple people if necessary.
- **Technique:**
  - **Harness and Carabiner:** Each person should wear a climbing harness attached to the rope with a locking carabiner. This prevents you from being swept downstream if you lose your footing.
  - **Body Position:** Face upstream, with the rope in front of you. Hold the rope with both hands and use a "monkey crawl" technique: moving hand over hand on the rope while shuffling your feet along the riverbed.
  - **Maintain Contact:** Always keep at least one hand and both feet in contact with the ground or rope to maintain stability.

**Advantages:**

- Provides an additional point of support and security.
- Reduces the risk of being swept away by the current.

- **Use of Safety Devices:**

- **Rope Systems:**
  - **Fixed Rope:** As mentioned above, a fixed rope across the river provides a secure guide. Ensure it's anchored securely and tensioned properly.
  - **ZDrag System:** In more complex scenarios, a Zdrag system (a type of mechanical advantage system) can be set up to assist in pulling someone across or for rescuing a person who has fallen.
- **Belay Devices:**
  - **Belaying:** If the river crossing is particularly hazardous, belaying each person across using a belay device can offer extra safety. A partner on the bank can manage the rope, controlling the crossing person's descent or movement across the river.
- **Dynamic Rope:** Use a dynamic climbing rope to absorb any sudden forces if someone slips, reducing the risk of injury.
- **Throw Bag:**
  - **Emergency Use:** A throw bag, containing a rescue rope, should be ready for immediate use. In case someone falls and gets swept away, the rope can be thrown to them for rescue.

- **Carabiners and Slings:**
  - **Quick Anchoring:** Use carabiners and slings to quickly and securely anchor ropes to natural features like trees or rocks.
  - **Personal Attachment:** Each person should carry a couple of locking carabiners and a sling or two for personal attachment to the rope or for setting up temporary anchors.
- **Group Strategy with Rope Support:**
  - **Group Crossing with Ropes:**
    - **Linked Crossing:** The group can link together using a rope tied to each person's harness. The strongest person should be in the lead, with others following in line. This method ensures that if one person stumbles, the others can support them.
    - **Guided Crossing:** A fixed rope can be used as a guide, with each person attached via a carabiner and harness, allowing for a controlled, safe crossing.
    - **Buddy System:** Pair up or form small groups where each member is responsible for watching and assisting their partner(s) during the crossing.
  - **After the Crossing (with Rope and Devices):**
    - **Dismantle Rope Systems:** Once everyone has safely crossed, dismantle the rope system and retrieve all equipment.
    - **Check Gear:** Inspect all ropes, carabiners, and other devices for any damage or wear after the crossing.
    - **Warm Up:** As always, dry off, change into dry clothing if necessary, and warm up after crossing.

#### Final Safety Tips:

- **Practice:** Familiarize yourself with these techniques and devices before attempting a crossing in the wild. Practice in a controlled environment under the guidance of experienced individuals.
- **Constant Communication:** Keep clear communication within the group throughout the crossing, ensuring everyone knows the plan and their role.
- **Know When to Turn Back:** If the river crossing appears too dangerous despite safety measures, it's better to turn back or find another route.

By using ropes, harnesses, and other safety devices, you can significantly reduce the risk associated with river crossings during trekking or mountaineering. Proper preparation and the right equipment can make the difference between a safe adventure and a hazardous situation.