

Challenge Course Design Checklist

Editor's note: The purpose of this list is to create careful planning and to help you realize that some things are fixed and some are variable. Going through the checklist will help you identify which things are which and what you still have to do. Feel free to add other items to the checklist.

1	Do you have funding necessary for the project?	
2	Do you have appropriate general liability insurance coverage?	
3	Do you own or have written agreement allowing you to use the property/building where you will locate the course?	
4	Are any permits necessary?	
5	Do you have woods, meadow/open natural space, water, hills/mountains within view or as part of your course's environment?	
6	Does your course environment have relatively little grade with good drainage, few rocks, and is it devoid of bees, poison ivy, or other "live" dangers?	
7	Do you have trees that are healthy, of an enduring species, sufficient diameter and height, proper spacing, trunk straightness, and soil/root quality?	
8	Is there room for expansion of your course?	
9	Do you know who your potential clients are; their range of physical abilities?	
10	Is this course versatile for several types of groups and time frames?	
11	Have you planned a budget for future years to include inspections, training, more harnesses and other gear, additional elements, repairs to existing elements (damaged by weather, tree loss or vandalism), and staff?	
12	Have you invested in belonging to a professional association? We recommend Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA) (but there is also the Association for Challenge Course technology (ACCT))	
13	Have you planned an inclusive/universal/accessible design for your course?	
14	Is there a variety of physical/emotional/mental challenge levels available in your design of the elements?	
15	Do you know what the PRCA operations and installation standards are?	
16	Do you have the involvement of people critical	

	to the success of your operation (i.e., community, public school officials, camp staff, etc.)?	
17	For how many clients and to what end(s) / purpose(s) do you wish to provide an experience? (Recreational, educational, developmental, therapeutic)	
18	Will you utilize volunteers or participants in the belaying?	
19	How will they be trained/supervised?	
20	Do staff people have proper training/certification, experience, and opportunities to maintain their training?	
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22	Have you made arrangements for the continued documentation of staff skill competencies in a portfolio?	
23	How many staff people will you have available?	
24	Do you have staff job descriptions and staff people in mind to fill the jobs?	
25	Do you know what those staff people should be like and ways to measure their abilities?	
26	Do you know where and how many of your staff need to be located on the course?	
27	Do you have a curriculum and challenge course Local Operating set of Procedures (LOPs) that indicates how the course will be utilized?	
28	Do you have an EMS, EAP, risk management and a rescue plan?	
29	Have you considered using Paired or Team high elements to offer a different dynamic and increased participation on the course?	
30	Do you have a blend of element textures (rope, cable, wood) and a variety of element heights, lengths, and movement difficulty (i.e., to provide a range of challenge, creativity, and attractiveness)?	
31	Will the high course elements be mostly connected (centralized) or "stand alone" (decentralized)?	
32	If it is a connected course, do you have traffic routes that allow for a logical progression and quick solutions to potential traffic jams?	
33	Do you also have appropriate ascending approaches that appeal to a range of physical abilities (i.e., self belayed system/staples/removable steps, ascending elements, rope and aluminum ladders, etc.)?	

34	What type of belay system(s) will you use (i.e., slingshot dynamic/static, aerial statics, lobster/bear claws, ascending statics, fixed tree/platform statics, etc.)?	
35	If you are not using trees as anchors for your high course, will you use poles instead?	
36	Are they new, CCA (or Penta) at least class II, installed to the proper depth and guy anchored, and of appropriate height?	
37	Have you designed put up/take down capability for as many elements as possible to reduce liability and vandalism and prolong their life?	
38	Have you planned for convenient, centralized storage facilities for portable elements, Personal Safety Gear, records, etc. in a safe, strong, secure, rodent proof structure; ideally with natural lighting (skylights) as well as power and electric lighting?	
39	Is there at least a path that some 4-Wheel-Drive vehicle can have emergency access to and from the course elements?	
40	Have you planned for ongoing mulching under and around elements to protect tree root systems, reduce the effects of heavy foot traffic, and increase the safety of impact absorption it affords?	
41	Do you have 2-way radios, mobile or onsite telephones, & other communication plans?	
42	Have you considered power and night lighting, and, if so, do you have lighting in appropriate places?	
43	Do you have a logical place to provide briefings, high ropes orientations, and debriefings?	
44	Do you have places for folks to put their personal belongings as well as any trash?	
45	Is this course plan going to be challenging and FUN?	
46	How much time are you allowing for activities on the Teams, Low course, and High course?	