

# Training others

This sheet provides practical ideas to help teach other volunteers and young people how to choose, pitch, strike and maintain common tents. Training might take place informally on camp, or more formally as part of a skills workshop or training course.

## Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify different types of tents and when they might be used
2. List the main parts of a tent
3. Pitch a patrol tent
4. Pitch a hiking tent
5. Maintain and store tents correctly.

## Equipment

- As many different types of tent as possible (minimally a patrol tent, a expedition tent and if different, the tents used at Scout camp; ideally other tents such as bell, geodesic, pop-up, frame etc.)
- Good pictures of lots of different tents
- Somewhere to practise pitching
- Equipment as required for activities.

01

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## Lesson 1: Identification (20 minutes)

### Introduce...

**What?** What is a tent?

**How?** Ask the group to define a tent, ask what it looks like, what it is for, where it would be used and whether they have used one before.

### Demonstrate...

**What?** That different types of tents have different uses.

**How?** Show pictures of two different tents and ask the group to think about how and why they are different.

### Explain...

**What?** Why tents might differ from each other.

**How?** Get pictures of a selection of different tents (such as a bell tent, a dome tent and so on). Explain some of the ways in which the tents differ from each other – e.g. material, weight, pole type etc.

### Apply...

**What?** This section reinforces the learning from earlier in the lesson.

**How?** Give the group a selection of different tents and ask them to compile a fact file on each tent type, detailing what it is made of, where would it be used, how much it weighs and so on.

### Summarise...

**What?** This section checks understanding of the learning from earlier in the lesson.

**How?** As a group, check through the fact files. Ask them which tents they would use in specific situations – e.g. hiking, on summer camp etc.

## Lesson 2: Parts of a tent (15 minutes)

### Introduce...

**What?** The structural requirements of a tent.

**How?** Ask the group what they think the key features of a tent need to be if it is to provide adequate shelter. For example, a tent should have a structure that offers room to shelter in, and it should be both stable and waterproof.

### Demonstrate...

**What?** The properties of different parts of a tent.

**How?** Have a tent set up and ask participants to sit inside. Ask them to describe something that may happen, e.g. it starts to rain, the wind picks up or the temperature falls. Pour water on the tent; shake it and so on, to demonstrate the properties. You could also demonstrate what would go wrong if part of the tent was missing!

### Explain...

**What?** Why the parts of a tent are important.

**How?** Explain in simple terms what makes a tent waterproof and stable, and what could go wrong if part of the tent was missing or if it is pitched incorrectly or damaged.

### Apply...

**What?** This section reinforces the learning from earlier in the lesson.

**How?** Take two different types of tents and pile them on the floor. Ask the group to sort the pile into different parts and describe their function.

### Summarise...

**What?** This section checks understanding of the learning from earlier in the lesson.

**How?** Ask the group to come up with a list of things to check before they would use a tent, or when packing the tent ready to take away.

## Lesson 3: Pitching a patrol tent (30 minutes)

### Introduce...

**What?** The tent and equipment used to pitch it.

**How?** If you haven't already, lay out a patrol tent and show them the different parts.

### Demonstrate...

**What?** How to pitch a patrol tent.

**How?** Pitch a patrol tent correctly, enlisting the help of some experienced volunteers. Good demonstrations allow people to learn visually, without vocal distractions, by clearly showing the different steps involved. Ensure that all participants can clearly see what you are doing, and use slow, deliberate movements – e.g. over-emphasize how to position pegs at the correct angle.

### Explain...

**What?** How the tent was pitched, with a verbal explanation of how the various stages are performed.

**How?** Repeat the demonstration or go back through the process, explaining what you did and why. Ask the group why they think you did things a certain way.

### Apply...

**What?** This section reinforces the learning from earlier in the lesson.

**How?** Ask participants to pitch a patrol tent themselves. Offer advice and help as needed but don't take over! You could also perform the demonstration in stages, asking participants to follow each stage rather than doing it all in one operation.

### Summarise...

**What?** This section checks understanding of the learning from earlier in the lesson.

**How?** Pitch a patrol tent incorrectly and ask participants to spot the mistakes. The group could do this by guiding you as you pitch the tent, or they could inspect a pitched tent and report on their observations.

03

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## Lesson 4: Pitching a hiking tent (30 minutes)

Following a similar structure to the previous lesson, pitch a hiking tent. Emphasise the relative fragility of these tents in comparison to a patrol tent and the importance of threading poles into and out of sleeves or eyelets correctly.

## Lesson 5: Maintenance and Storage (15 minutes)

Following a similar structure to the previous lesson, strike the tents, explaining and demonstrating how to pack away correctly. Explain the importance of storing a clean and dry tent and of checking the tent for damage. List common problems and how to deal with them, and how to improvise if part of your tent is missing or damaged.

## Taking it further...

You could run the following activities to practise the skills that have been learned:

- Use different types of previously pitched tents. Ask participants to get into small groups. The trainer shouts out a particular type of tent and one person from each group has to run to the correct tent. The first person to correctly identify the tent gets a point.
- Play a peg bashing relay game. Teams of participants are given a wooden peg and a wooden mallet. Each team member can hit the peg once. The team with the peg that is driven deepest into the ground at the correct angle wins.
- Play a tent challenge relay game. Teams have to unpack and pitch a tent. If it passes inspection, they then strike and repack it. The fastest team to finish wins, but time penalties can be given for errors.
- Once participants have mastered how to pitch a tent, challenge teams to pitch a tent blindfolded. One team member can take part without a blindfold to give instructions to the others.
- Draw a circle on the ground that is about two metres wider in diameter than the length of the tent. Challenge teams to pitch a tent in the middle, without entering the circle.

You could also create lessons on the following:

- Arrange a night away, weekend or standing camp to allow participants to sleep in tents.
- Try running tent pitching activities in wet or windy weather – it will make the experience all the more valuable and is good practise for camps.
- Practise pitching tents in the dark using only torches for light. Head-torches will prove very useful.
- Learn how to make simple tent repairs and fix and take responsibility for your own tents.
- Ask participants to investigate the history of tents and how they are used worldwide.
- If you attend a large camp, moot or jamboree, take a look at the tents that other Scout Groups are using.
- Investigate alternatives to camping in tents. This might involve rigging a shelter from a tarpaulin or creating a shelter from natural materials.