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Highlining – The 10 most important points

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February 2014, Version 3.0



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Picture: Bernhard Witz
Mönchsbüffel Highline - 70m
Photographer: Thomas Buckingham

Highlining – The 10 most important points

The following 10 points have been formulated to help prevent accidents caused by the most common mistakes when rigging and walking a highline.

1. The first highlines should always be **rigged with experienced highliners**, in order to learn the basics. Nevertheless everyone ought to check the rigging and question it critically.
2. **Solid slackline skills** are recommended. Standard techniques like the “Chongo-mount”, climbing up the leash and swinging back upon the line have to be mastered. We recommend sending a 50 metre line on the ground as a minimal preparation.
3. All safety relevant components of the highline have to be **secured twice (redundantly)**. The slackline itself is backed up with a rope. The rope must be anchored in such a way that it would still hold when the anchors of the slackline itself failed.
4. The highline system needs to be protected against **abrasion and sharp edges**. Especially the tensioned webbing can wear through quickly.
5. The highline should be rigged **at least 1/3 of the line length + 3m above the ground**. Otherwise a fall held only by the backup rope might lead to a fall to the ground. A beginner highline should be a **minimum of 10 metres** to prevent abrupt forces on material and body when taking a leash fall.
6. **Aluminium carabiners are a taboo when anchoring a highline**. They are not designed for permanent loads which occur in slacklines and therefore tend to break. Careful: Previously weakened carabiners can break during a climbing fall.
7. **Do not connect the leash to the line with screw gate carabiners**. These could open or damage the slackline webbing. Forged steel or aluminum rings are suitable for this purpose.
8. **Partner Check** before getting on the line: Is the highliner tied in with a double figure eight knot? Is the harness properly adjusted? Is the rigging safe?
9. **Do not start walking from the anchor or edge**. Always mount the line a few metres away from edges and sit down before reaching the far anchor. Doing so a fall onto the terrain, close to the anchor, cannot occur.
10. **Shoes**, long trousers, gloves and sleeves protect against injuries when highlining. **Sharp edged objects** (fly buttons, watches, jewellery, etc) should not be worn on the highline as they can damage the webbing.

We advise every highliner to invest in some gear suitable for highlining, since **common slackline sets are not designed to be highlined with** in almost every case. Knowledge concerning highline rigging, the handling of highline- and climbing gear, the self securing in steep terrain, as well as highline rescue techniques and first aid are important requirements to safely practice the sport.

The drilling of anchors for a highline into rock is reserved for professionals and should happen in accord with highline ethics.

More information concerning the mentioned topics is linked under www.swiss-slackline.ch.