Highline - The most important points

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

1. Highlines should be **planned and rigged with experienced highliners**. Nevertheless everyone ought to check the rigging and question it critically. Knowledge concerning highline rigging, the handling of gear, as well as highline rescue techniques are learned from more knowledgeable highliners.

2. **Solid slackline skills** are recommended. Standard techniques like a solid sit-start, climbing up the leash and swinging back upon the line have to be mastered. In terms of walking ability, we recommend sending a 50m (150 ft) line on the ground as a minimal preparation.

3. The proper use of climbing and personal protective equipment in steep terrain is particularly important as is the ability to respond appropriately in case first aid is required. **Always be clipped in at the edge to two points.**

4. We advise every highliner to invest in gear suitable for highlining, since most **slackline sets are not designed for highlining**.

5. All safety relevant components of the highline have to be **doubly secured (redundant)**. The slackline itself is backed up with a rope or a second webbing, taped under the primary webbing. This secondary system must be anchored in such a way that it would still hold if the primary anchors failed.

6. The highline system needs to be protected against **abrasion and sharp edges,** even in the event of a primary system failure. We recommend extending the anchors over edges. Webbing can wear through quickly when exposed to friction.

7. For **low highlines**, where the height is less than the length of the highline, the secondary system should be checked for sufficient tension to ensure a mainline failure would not result in a ground fall.

8. A beginner highline should be a **minimum of 10m (30ft) long and all highlines under 25m (75ft) should be rigged on polyamide (nylon)** to prevent abrupt forces on material and body when taking a leash fall.

9. **(Aluminium) Carabiners should not be used when anchoring a highline**. They are not designed for permanent loads which occur in slacklines and use in anchors often results in unfavorable loading angles. These two factors increase the possibility for the carabiner to break below the minimum breaking strength.

10. **Do not connect the leash to the line with carabiners**. They could inadvertently open or damage the slackline webbing. **Forged** (not welded) steel or aluminum rings are suitable for this purpose.

11. **Buddy Check** before getting on the line: Is the highliner tied in correctly (through both loops) with a double figure eight knot? Is the harness properly adjusted? Check the knot on the rings as well.

12. **Double check the rigging before going on the line.** When was the far end anchor checked the

last time? Is the anchor still solid? Is the padding against abrasion still working? Are quicklinks and shackles fully closed and screwed tight? Is the anchor appropriately backed up? Are the tails of webbing backed up?

13. **Do not start walking from the anchor or edge**. Mount the line a few metres away from edges and sit down before reaching the far anchor, in order to avoid falling close to the edge.

14. The **leash length** needs to be adjusted individually and should be as short as is comfortable. Learning to handle the leash and perform **safe leash falls and catches** should be trained previous to the first highline attempts, for instance over water or above mats.

15. **Personal highline equipment** includes a harness, a line transportation device, a lanyard/sling, carabiners and a prusik. Besides basic knots, abseiling and ascent techniques should be mastered as these might have to be performed during rigging, derigging, or in a rescue scenario. Furthermore, at least one rescue kit should be onsite.

16. **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 or cause injury to the slackliner.

17. Highlines can be a threat to **airspace safety**, for instance in case of a rescue or transport going on nearby. Be aware of restrictions to the airspace as governed by regional/national aviation agencies and make your line visible to third parties.

18. The **installation and drilling of new anchors** for a highline on rock and infrastructure should only be performed by professionals and should happen in accordance with local highline and climbing ethics. Never use bolts from climbing routes for tensioned highline anchors.

More information concerning the mentioned topics is linked under www.slacklineinternational.org

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