

SURVIVOR

A man in military camouflage gear is shown in a jungle environment. He has green and black face paint on his face and is holding a black radio to his ear with his right hand. He is looking down at the radio. The background is a dense jungle with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

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THIS ISSUE:



Survivor's Quote	Page 2
Hole-Up Sweet, Hole-Up	Page 3
Any Questions?	Page 6
Survivor's Quote	Page 7
Recommended Reading	Page 8
Personal Survival Kit	Page 13
Survivor's Quote	Page 13
Urban Bliss	Page 14
Urban Travel Factors	Page 15
...In A Single Bound	Page 16

Survivor's Quote:

"Everything can be taken from a man or a woman but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances..."

Viktor Frankl

Neurologist, Psychiatrist, Author, and Holocaust Survivor

Comments to the Editor/Publication

If there is a SERE or instructional topic (in the publication or not) you would like to discuss or to create cross-flow/forum on, please email it to me and I will post it in the next issue.

If you would like to have your SERE article published, please write it and email it in.

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Hole-Up, Sweet Hole-Up

By SURVIVOR Staff

There is no way to turn a hole-up or hide site into a cozy little bungalow, but you can do several things to improve the usefulness and effectiveness of these locations.

While there may not be time to do some of the things mentioned in this article due to evasion movement, recovery capabilities, the environment, and the enemy situation, even an Isolated Personnel (IP) stopping for short periods will find many of the hole-up/hide site tips below helpful.

LOCATION

To quote a comedian, or at least his terrorist ventriloquist-doll, "Location! Location! Location!" Choosing the right spot is critical. Before you choose the location of your hide site you have to determine what your needs are. Are you just looking for a quick spot to catch your breath? Or are you looking for place to stay and rest? When teaching hole-ups and hide sites, I simply break it down into two types of spots to stop at: "*concealed*" and "*concealed with protection*". I like to avoid the vague and indefinable terms like immediate, short, and long.



Concealed hole-up is one where I just need to get out of sight (360° to include above), whatever the reason I am just not going to be

there long. Reasons to stop are endless, such as getting a drink of water, reapplying my camouflage, or making a radio call. To me, the deciding factor in this location selection is that I don't want it to take longer to conceal myself than I am going to stay.

Concealed with Protection hole-up is just a longer planned stay. I want to disguise and blend where I am (360° concealment again), but I also want help maintaining my 98.6° while I am there. Reasons could vary from waiting for recovery forces, sleep, treating medical injuries, or doing my communication plan.

While comfort might mean nothing, I still want to take advantage of anything which helps maintain my body core temperature. The estimated length of time in the site will determine how much work goes into the initial "construction" (if any) and how much improvement will occur once "inside".

BASICS

There are still some basics principles which apply to both these types of hole-up or hide sites:



An IP must be able to take cover when and where they can find it, sometimes moving on as quickly as they can. In the IP's race against getting caught and time; comfort counts for nothing.

People catch people in evasion, so use good concealment and camouflage techniques and adhere to the basic disciplines (light, movement, sound, smell) for your hole-up. Just like with personal camouflage, always consider the terrain and climatic conditions for maximum concealment of your hiding area.

Constantly be on the watch for hide sites which need little or no improvement for camouflage, protection from the elements, or security.

Stay away from landmarks when you're selecting the site for your little nondescript home in the dry or wet.

Roads, crossroads, bridges, outbuildings, power lines, junctions of waterways, large caves, lakes, and any distinctive features of the countryside are danger zones. During a Ridge Runner Exercise, I crawled through vegetation covering a small space between two large boulders into a cave which initially seemed remote and perfect. Unfortunately, once inside I realized something was off (odd sound to the rocks I was walking on) I realized it was a local drinking spot when I produced a flashlight. Shining it, I found the cave had graffiti on the walls (some more than 30 years old), a fire pit, and broken bottles on the ground. I moved out of there quickly through the walk-in access on the other side of the cave (there wasn't a road or easy trail to this place). I found smaller caves some distance away which showed no signs of human habitation or even a single smashed beer bottle. These "landmark" spots might be "zeroed in" by the enemy for searching, which will make it uncomfortable for anyone who moves in. The spot you choose should look typical of the whole environment at a distance.

Before entering the site, you may want to move a distance forward of the site selected and then go back to it, especially important with a *Concealed with Protection* since you will be staying there a while. In this way your trail does not dead-end at your hole-up. This is one of those simple tricks (I learned it during Instructor Training, but last time I heard it was 24 years later by a member of the Border Patrol in Arizona), but is difficult to get an IP to understand that they must do this, especially when they are tired and ready to drop.

Ensure the site meets the need of the specific task(s) you hope to accomplish i.e. don't be in cave or deep hole if you are trying to make radio contact.

Try to use natural concealment afforded by shadows, vegetation, and terrain features. The more concealment nature provides you the better off you are no matter what type of hole-up you select. This helps to give you that all important 360° concealment (to include from the air or higher ground) that is an IP's dream. Also try and use natural protection which may run concurrent with natural concealment.

Try to ensure there are multiple routes to evade in case the enemy stumbles on your location. And since we always expect there to be enemy, having the ability to observe routes towards your hide site are also a good-on-you. Ensure your hide site does not become a "trap" if the enemy discovers your place of concealment. Always try to situate your site has multiple concealed escape routes. The smart mouse has more than one hole.



If you have any choice in the matter, realize there are disadvantages to using low ground sites. High terrain tends to be drier, so

when you're on the side of a hill/military crest instead of at its base, your "living-room" won't act as a drainage basin for the surrounding country. Also by selecting sites near the military crest of a hill helps dissipate noises and smells.

Use your knowledge of enemy tactics and current observations to determine what kind of man-made threats you might come into contact with. This will help you to determine the location of your hole-up. Is the

enemy using ground troops or helicopters (or both) to locate you? Are search efforts quickly deployed? Does the area look like it has been struck by artillery or bombs? Are night vision devices being employed by the enemy? Do they have special teams that are searching for IPs? Is the enemy using dogs? Did you leave evidence of your starting location such as a destroyed vehicle or parachute left in the trees? These can be critical factors in where, as well as when, you stop.

When you're creating a *Concealed with Protection* hole-up remember the increased time at that location can create problems unless you have good situational awareness. These may also apply to your *Concealed* hole-up depending on why you stopped. They are: 1. Hide your path. 2. Concealment. 3. Security.

HIDE YOUR PATH

Scout around your hole-up site for signs of the enemy. By assessing the area for signs of enemy civilians and forces you can determine how much of a risk this location is. A simple thing like the type and amount of trash can be the determining factor on moving to a more secure area.

Beware of creating a "worn" path to your hide site/hole-up. Just like in urban travel always try and use a variety of entrance and exit routes. When selecting a *Concealed with Protection* hole-up take advantage of terrain features and the type of ground to keep "paths" from forming.



Since you are staying in a *Concealed with Protection* hole-up is for a "while", you might need other spots such as latrines, signal sites, water sources, etc. The routes to these sites must be concealed and camouflaged in the same manner as your hole-up. Avoid creating straight-lines leading point to point to any of these locations or your hole-up.

Trails must be hidden! When there is snow or loose dusty-dirt on the ground, it's necessary to pay particular attention to tracks. Brush snow or smack "dust" (so it floats up and drifts down), so that any trail leading to your hide site is less likely to be visible from the air and how "fresh" it is will be indeterminable from the ground. Beware of making your trail look "swept" vs.

“worn”, the enemy may assume you are evading with your mother losing considerable cool points.

CONCEALMENT

Always remember to HIDE FIRST... IMPROVE LATER, by selecting a place where this is possible you are automatically selecting a place with natural concealment.



The biggest wear point in your hole-up site is the entrance, so ensure it is durable, easy to maintain, and not a weak area in concealing your presence. Always try and enter feet first so you can see what signs you have left behind as you enter and can work the concealment of these. If you are not a lone IP, one should observe how you enter and “close up” your hide site, so that procedures can be developed to get maximum concealment out of your actions.

Life in a hide site usually runs to extremes. Everything happens or nothing happens. During the long stretches of boredom, you'll be tempted to stir up a little excitement. When you're in your hole-up, stay in it! You'll have the urge to get out and stretch your legs. The coast may look clear, but always figure it isn't. A little exploring may seem to be in order, but going a bit “stir crazy” in a hole-up is nothing compared to the “stir craziness” of captivity or worse.

After dark, the flicker of a match, the light from a candle, or the flash of a lighter can expose your location with fatal precision. Even in daylight a haze of smoke can be seen a long way off. Historically, Americans have frequently betrayed their whereabouts with bad cigarette discipline. While the extra heat out of a candle could be the difference between maintaining your core temperature or not, still you must develop and use good light discipline and precautions. Light of a little candle or cigarette can carry for miles or the smell/smoke of an extinguished one can carry. Ensure your hole-up site is black-out capable. Have the means to extinguish the candle or cigarette without creating lots of smoke. If

you're using those “trick” birthday candles (the ones you packed in your personal survival kit), be prepared with an alternative method of extinguishing them. Black-out capabilities of your hole-up applies, if you are using any self-lighted device or flashlight.

Avoid letting your hole-up area look “lived in”.

SECURITY

Maintaining silence is a very important aspect of security

During evasion an IP most always be aware of the rhythm of nature and the natural sounds around them. IPs should hole-up during the transition of dawn to dusk (and visa-versa) to help avoid disturbing this “rhythm” of

the transition between day and night dwellers (to include humans). Disturbances in animal life around a hide site may indicate enemy activity in the area.

With multiple IPs lookouts can be established to see any signs the enemy being in the area. Forewarned being forearmed in this situation.

Readiness is another aspect of security. Develop the mindset that at any time, the hole-up area may be overrun, ambushed, or security compromised, making it necessary to vacate the area. Equipment should be ready and organized to go at all times. The IP should have critical evasion data memorized for immediate use like an emergency action plan; things such as initial directions of travel, routes of travel, headings, destination descriptions, identifiable terrain features under all lighting conditions, and rally points (for regroup after separation with multiple IPs). Alternatives to all these things must be available just in case compromised by the enemy (knowingly or unknowingly).

By helping an IP to naturally think of their hide sites or hole-ups as home, we set up a “house” that benefits them. Keeping your hole-up house in order is worth the time and cost such as your life or freedom, you have invested in it, just like any other home you may own or live in. By good location selection, meeting your basic lodging needs, avoiding the pitfalls which led to “nosey neighbors”, and maintaining low impact by staying camouflaged and concealed can make the difference between returning with honor as an evader or thinking about setting up house in a POW cell.

Any Questions?

By SURVIVOR Staff

The use of questions in training should be viewed as a valuable asset for the instructor and the evaluation of any training program. Questions aid the student by clarifying information, create critical thinking to help ingrain the ideas, and help motivate especially with adult learners. Questions help the instructor by getting feedback on the student's progress and learning. The use of questions as an effective instructional tool only takes a little proper preparation on the instructor's part to avoid poor performances of the question.

Remember that questions are also an instructional tool for the student. Instructors need to be willing to answer all questions asked by their students, just not immediately. Sometimes students will ask a perfect question, but for tomorrow's lecture, so an instructor must be ready to save it or "park" it until a more appropriate time. My classroom really determines how I do this, whether I write it down on a post it or paper placing it (or taping it) on a wall next to where I teach from or write it on an unused dry eraser board.



Overall, questions will come in two categories: convergent and divergent. Convergent questions are highly objective and typically arrive at one correct answer. Generally speaking, convergent questions are best asked early in the training to help the student gain confidence and when their at the knowledge level of learning. Divergent questions are more subjective and may have more than one correct answer (usually involving a higher level of learning). This category of question should be asked after the student has gained

more confidence within the subject of the training. Again as the instructor you can determine which to use by evaluating the students core knowledge.

The question should be phrased to indicate the purpose and response desired. Leading words, using words such as *classify*, *compare*, *criticize*, *define*, and *discuss*, tend to indicate the type of answer that you want. Questions that ask "how" or "why" emphasize relationships of concepts and display a higher level of learning in the student then questions that ask "who," "what," "where," or "when" that only measure memorization of facts (knowledge level).

Make sure that the student can understand what you are asking, so avoid being unclear or asking foggy questions. If you have to re-explain your question, its lack of clarity will affect the answer and the student's confidence in your ability to teach. Make the question as challenging and thought provoking as you possible can, while still supporting the objectives and subject. So avoid close-ended (yes or no), multiple part (unless you ask the parts individually), and loaded/catch questions which create more confusion then clarification.

Questions can be divided into two main forms. They are whole group questions and individual questions:

- 1) Whole group questions tend to be the safest and usually will involve the most response from the widest group, but some students will hide under it, while others will always answer. Try to phrase your questions so that answers have to be evaluated. Ask students randomly, not in any fixed order (makes everyone pay more attention). Use follow-up questions that expand or pinpoint ideas as much as possible.
- 2) Individual questions can be intimidating. It's a good idea to ask a whole group questions after you have asked an individual question. Academic rules on questioning recommend asking the question, pause, and then identify the person who should answer. It is felt that this allows the student that is asked time to think of a response. I find using this rule usually means that I have to repeat the question I asked. I find identifying the student first and then asking the question usually gets you a better answer (the student is listening and thinking about what your asking from the start), and you save a little time. Also I feel it creates a better learning

environment since you avoid the chance of embarrassing the student for not paying attention. Both methods promote the entire group paying attention, so it's more of a matter of preference and evaluation of the students which you use.

If you are asking a fact based question, always know the answer to any question you ask or don't ask it. Nothing shakes a student confidence like an instructor who asks a knowledge level question without knowing what the answer is.



Types of effective questions are:

- 1) **Leadoff questions:** Stimulate thinking, can produce student responses (guided discussion), and are usually directed to entire group. Example: What purpose does a fire fulfill for isolated personnel?
- 2) **Follow-up questions:** Promote reasoning within a discussion, used to expand or pinpoint ideas, and must maintain the main topic yet guide students into new areas of discussion. Example: How are ways that cold has effected the isolated personnel?
- 3) **Direct questions:** Randomly used to seek opinion, support, or elicit involvement. Example: SSgt Smith, give me three examples of when an evader might use fire?
- 4) **Redirected questions:** Promote student discussion while reducing instructor domination of discussion. Example: Lt Jones, what would be your answer be to SSgt Smith's question?
- 5) **Spontaneous questions:** Help control lesson content by keeping responses pertinent and can be used to clarify unclear points. Example: What is meant by the fire triangle?

Some general rules that I try and keep in mind with questions:

You must create an environment that allows them the time to formulate their answers. Wait time is a big factor in using questions as an effective instructional tool. While most research states you should allow a student nine seconds to answer a question, most students are conditioned to answer in two seconds, somewhere in-between is the best since time is always a factor in SERE training.

You may want to have a few questions prepared and ready for use in lessons areas that are difficult or likely to be problematic to the students learning.

Rhetorical questions are just used to provoke thought, to stimulate student thinking. They can be easily over used and put the student in a mindless trance, "the instructor never asks a real question, I don't need to pay attention."

Using questions effectively is a force multiplier to your briefing/lesson. They can promote paying attention, highlight points, help students to learn from each other, create the opportunity for insight, fuel curiosity, and allow you the feedback to evaluate student learning outcome. Questions can help that operator to ingrain and retain their SERE training and skills when their lives depend on it. So ask yourself, how effective are your questions?

Survivor's Quote:

"The key to wisdom is this - constant and frequent questioning, for by doubting we are led to question and by questioning we arrive at the truth."

Peter Abelard

French scholastic philosopher, theologian, preeminent logician, and composer.

Recommended Reading

ESCAPE

Author Dwight Worker was arrested at customs in Mexico City, in December 1973, while attempting to smuggle cocaine into the United States under a fake body-cast. With assistance from his wife, he later became the first person since Pancho Villa to escape from the maximum-security prison called Lecumberri in Mexico City. This fast paced narrative is richly detailed, providing a great mental picture of exactly what it must have been like in all phases of his captivity and his preparations for escape. His harsh arrest, so-called “trial”, and daily prison life spent in countless confrontations, beatings, rape, extortion, and nearly fatal stabbing episodes are retold with an eye for practical “how to cope with it/survive” details, whereas other stories of this sort offer vague generalizations or simply skip over the embarrassing moments while avoiding self-criticism. Dwight took responsibility for his error (lots of soul-searching) and while prepared to serve a prison sentence, he was not going to submit to the harsh realities of the corrupt Mexican judicial system, American embassy officials on “the take” or prison officials bent on lining their pockets at his family’s expense. He decided to attempt an escape and proceeds to prepare with outside assistance from his wife. Together they accomplished what it would have taken an entire “committee” to do in WWII. Lots of great information inside this book. How to electrocute rats on page 113 is pretty interesting. Well worth reading.

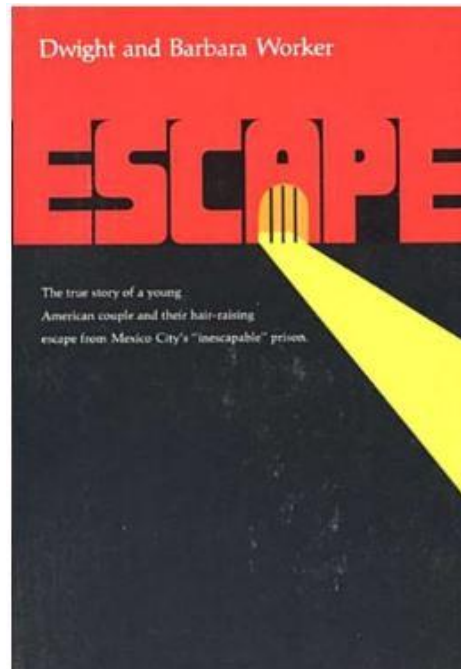
AUTHOR/S: Dwight and Barbara Worker

CONFLICT/COUNTRY/DATE/TYPE OF CAPTIVITY:

Mexico/ 1973 / Criminal (Drug Smuggler)

NOTABLE QUOTES:

FEELINGS UPON BEING ARRESTED: p. 11-
“With a pair of surgical scissors he cut off my cast within a minute. There was the cocaine. They had me



flagrante delicto. I sat there bare-chested, too shocked to say anything, with my worst horror fantasy- *getting caught in Mexico*- coming true. Other passengers came in and out of the body-search area and passed by, looking at me as I sat there half-naked with the bags of cocaine lying on my lap, my face sweating and flushed, blood on my mouth. ...I felt the heaviest shame and embarrassment... A photographer came in and lined me up against a wall covered with photographs. While he

was putting film in his camera, I turned around and looked at the photos. All of them were pictures of people who had just been arrested at the airport for drugs. But most striking about all the photographs were the expressions on their just-arrested faces. All of them looked as if they were in a state of shock- as if they had just been at the scene of a disaster. They had. *Their own.*”

CONFESSING AFTER ELECTRIC SHOCKS: p. 14- Note: pages 11-14 detail his arrest sequence. “All I wanted them to do was to leave me alone and not give me any more electric shocks. I was telling myself that it was so obvious I was guilty

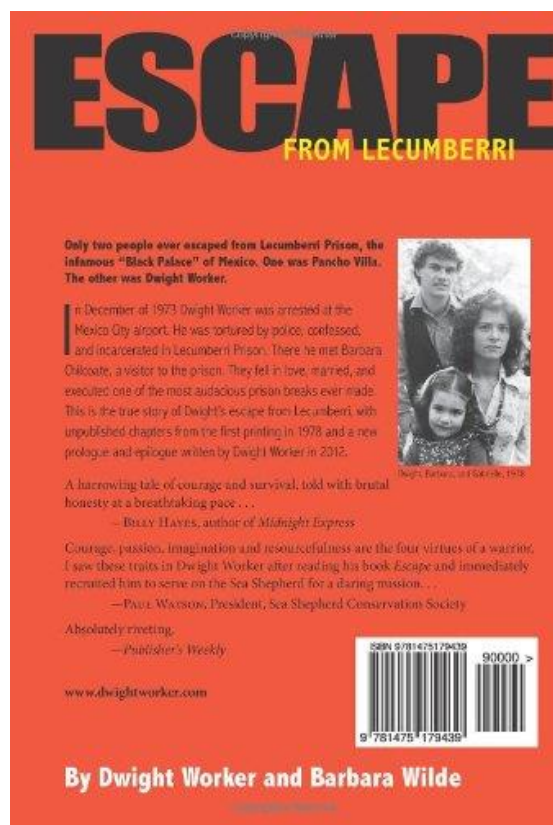
anyway that it did not make any difference what I said, because *they had me*. They had already refused to believe the truth: that I was a small-time smuggler working for myself on my first cocaine run from South America. I signed a lie of a confession that night at the airport. But what mattered about the signed confession was not that it was a lie or how it had been obtained, but rather that it was self-incriminating. The agents all smiled when I signed. They explained that... tomorrow I would have to sign a typed version. One of them waved the cattle prod again, smiling.”

FEELINGS OF SELF-DEFEAT: p. 14- Author recounts what it felt like to have been ‘broken’. It wasn’t the fact that he committed a crime, or that he had been arrested that bothered him- he felt horrible as a result of what he felt was unmanly behavior during his beating and torture. “I had lasted less than one hour. The way I conducted myself that of December 8, 1973 at Benito Juarez Airport ranks among the lowest moments in my life- totally devoid of any traces of honor, or dignity, or courage. I have never completely forgiven myself for it.”

“TRIAL”: p. 16- “Four guards handcuffed me and drove me to the equivalent of the attorney general’s office. They typed the statement that I had signed the night before and read it back to me. I signed it. All of the guards smiled at me victoriously. One of them said, “And now, gringo, *your trial is over*. You are now going to spend six to fifteen years in Hotel Lecumberri, the most expensive hotel in Mexico.” They all laughed. He was almost right. During the next two years, I would never see or enter a courtroom, or see a judge or a prosecutor, or even make a plea of guilt or innocence.”

FIGHTING ODDS: p. 20- This page details how the Mexican prisoners wouldn’t hesitate to fight an American in ratios of five- to ten- against one. They call this a *hacer un montañ* – to make a mountain (on him). Author goes on to recount the first night being locked in a three-bunk cell with 10 Mexicans and getting into a fight almost immediately over where everyone was going to sleep. There were no mattresses or blankets,

nor any water and electricity in the cell.



GUARD HARASSMENT: p. 21- “Suddenly I heard the guards outside begin yelling ‘FAJINAS! FAJINAS! FAJINAS!’ Everyone in the cell raced outside to the small patio. It was about

2:00 a.m. Bewildered, I followed them. The guards shouted and pushed us into a line. Then they flung rags in our hands and proceeded to run us back and forth over the stone patio in a fast backward duck-walk, scrubbing the floor. They drove us again and again, randomly kicking anyone any place while stomping the hands of those who weren’t scrubbing fast enough. Cold sweat

ran down my back as I maneuvered myself as far as possible from the guards. The floor was clean but they continued driving us nonstop to the cadence of furious jackboots and violent staccato Spanish, kicking, stomping, and hitting. Whenever I got out of line with the prisoners around me, the guards whacked me with a club. This went on for two grueling hours. It was a vision of galley slaves from some dungeon hundreds of years ago. I could not believe what I was doing. We were duck-walking backward as fast as possible, chased by guards with clubs. And yet I had to believe it, for with every whack of the club I found myself moving faster, even though my legs were screaming with pain. This I would later learn, was *fajinas*: compulsory work detail. If I did not pay a large sum of money quickly, I would have to do this work indefinitely.”

EXTORTION: pp. 26-27- These pages detail the pressure that the prison staff put him under to pay various people “rent” as well as the questioning they put him through regarding his finances. “I have never been a good, spontaneous, stand-up liar who could keep his story straight and credible. I would soon be learning the price of naïve honesty.”

SECURITY OF GUARD UNIFORMS: p. 47- “It was illegal for the guards to wear their uniforms on the street. They could only put them on after they entered the prison and they had to remove them before leaving. Prison officials had already guessed that prisoners might try to escape dressed as prison guards. This way such escapees could be quickly detected- and shot.”

THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM: p. 47- The author hits the nail on the head... “It was either go *over, through, or under* the wall- or stay within it.”

ROPE MAKING: p. 52- “For two weeks I had been braiding string together into a rope, late at night when everyone else was asleep. I already had thirty feet. A few more weeks and I should have a good rope ladder.”

HIDING MONEY: pp. 58-59- The author did not want to have to use the “traditional jailhouse stash” so he decided to try and swallow the three \$50 bills that he needed to hide. “Furtively, I took the three \$50 bills out and folded them as tightly as I could. Then I took a dangling thread from a ripped seam in my pants and bound the bills together. I tried to swallow the tiny packet. I couldn’t. The dry paper scratched my throat, forcing me to gag. I saw a puddle of dirty water left over from the morning’s floor washing. I stuck the bills

in the water, put my foot over them, and waited for them to soak. Then I examined them.” A guard saw this and tried to grab the money from the author, who quickly stuffed them in his mouth and swallowed them with “one tremendous gulp.”

CLOTHING SEARCH: p. 60- Author was taken into a bathroom, stripped and searched for his money. “Good thing I had swallowed the money. They checked ... the seams of my pants and vest, my sandals, belt-everything. They knew all the prison stashes.”

NEAR RAPE, BEATINGS AND RETRIEVAL OF THE MONEY: pp. 60-67- These pages describe in graphic detail how the author was nearly raped after his body search. The point of which was simply to inflict the greatest amount of humiliation upon him that they could. Even though he was in bad shape from previous beatings, he still put up a tremendous struggle. After his attackers tired of trying to rape him (basically they were impotent due to drug use) they proceeded to beat his rear end and thighs bloody with a heavy wire filled rubber hose. After this they forced him to work at high speed, non-stop for four hours at *chocos*, a punishment during which the prisoner had to repeatedly rub the cement floor of a stinking urinal with a heavy (50lb) stone, while being screamed at and beaten and whipped further. He goes on to detail how several Mexicans watched him peel the bloody underwear off his skin so that he could defecate. (He ended up having to soak them off partially, but still some of the scabs were ripped off.) They obviously thought that they could catch him with the money that he hid. On page 65 he lists some of the insults heaped upon him by the Mexicans. They dumped all their national hostility on him- blamed him personally for stealing California and Texas from them, being a capitalist robber who exploits the Mexican people etc. They took every ounce of jealousy and hatred out on the author- the same things that they thought-but couldn't say- while they played lackey to American tourists in hopes of getting a tip. Later, he defecates again (into his hand) and squeezes through it to find the cash. He peels off the top bill, rinses off the rest of the bundle and reswallows it. With this money he is able to buy himself out of the harsh treatment.

DETAILS OF THE WORST CELL CONDITIONS: pp. 68-69- Nearly unimaginable filth, the abysmal physical conditions of ‘forgotten’ prisoners and sexual perversity mark what he refers to as the tenth circle of hell.

PAYING TO GET STABBED: p. 71- Author is so desperate that he pays another inmate to try and stab him deep enough to get into the hospital. His plan was to try and get to a more lenient cellblock afterward. The plan failed due to the dullness of the improvised knife and the fact that the guy who was supposed to stab him was transferred.

FLAG SALUTE BEATING: p. 72- He didn't salute their flag and they beat him badly. The next time he put his left hand on his heart and extended his middle finger. This little victory was hollow for him however.

MEETING THE EMBASSY MAN: pp. 72-73- When the official proved to be bored and totally unconcerned over his condition, the author tells him that he will write his Senator and report on the man's negligence. This angers the embassy man, who leaves, and rats him out to the Mexicans. The author was then beaten with the wire filled rubber hose until he could no longer stand.

DEALING WITH CONSTANT INSULTS: pp. 74-75- Because he was an American, the author was subjected to constant and, as he termed them, “intolerable” insults regarding his country, race, American lifestyle, etc. It finally dawned on him that whatever he did, the inmates and staff would beat and insult him anyway- so- he decided to speak his mind. These pages detail some hysterical comebacks to their insults, a few of which follow:

- ◆ *Accusation:* Why did the *gringo* armies attack the Mexican armies?
- *Answer:* For practice. You were so easy to beat. Watch your mouth or we'll do it again.
- ◆ *Accusation:* *Gringa* women don't like Mexican men.
- *Answer:* They have good taste. They don't like Mexican men because they act so macho and don't treat any women, including their own, like humans. Mexican men have the manners, charm, and technique of Billy goats. They are also dwarves and have little boys' penises.

Of course, answers like this didn't make matters better- he still got into fights- but these comments didn't make things worse either. Eventually, they came to see that they couldn't walk all over him- they stopped asking their leading questions because they didn't like hearing the answers. He also felt freer in his own mind

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIGHTING BACK:

p. 105- “What could I do when I caught someone stealing something out of my cell, or when someone insulted me, or hit me? Could I go to the guards? No, never never never. Prisoner law does not allow it. I could either yield- or fight. So I fought. *I had to be my own law and my own enforcer*- and if I couldn’t enforce my law, then it wasn’t worth a damn. In the end fighting was the *only* way to protect my mental and physical territory and rights within prison. I learned that it was essential to fuck over badly whomever you were fighting. Mark him, cut his face or mouth, blacken his eye, or chip a tooth- ideally, send him to the hospital for stitches. But do *something* to him so that when he walks around the dormitory afterwards, everyone who sees him will know that *you got him and got him good*. Imprint that message on his face so that he would now be a walking advertisement saying, ‘Don’t fuck around with ____.’ One or two of these and you would be established in the dormitory and, consequently, left alone.”

Lecumberri Prison near Completion by Djarter



THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT BRAGGING

ABOUT WINNING A FIGHT: p. 107- “I also learned not to boast after a fight. It was enough to beat a man, too much to rub it in. So I treated my former opponent with silence and respect. I already had enough problems without having to look over my shoulder all of the time.”

HAVING A SCHEDULE: p. 118- “Night was the only time when the dorm was quiet. I appreciated the 10:00 lockups because the ensuing silence and privacy allowed me to read and write. I became nocturnal, sleeping in

the mornings and early evenings. With such a schedule, and by putting on mental blinders, it was possible to obliterate much of the prison. I did not see many prisoners and I talked to even fewer. I had my program- a schedule of things to do for the day- and I stuck to it. I was much less conscious of being in prison. I began to transcend my surroundings.”

THE POWER OF READING: p. 118- “I discovered that when I was in the midst of an informative, or moving, or enlightening book, I was doing something I would have done regardless of where I was. Therefore, *I was not in prison*. A good book could take me beyond the walls.”

KEEPING IT ALL IN PERSPECTIVE: pp. 119-120 “One day I received a book I had not been expecting: *Gulag II*. ...by Alexander Solzhenitsyn...I had not read anything like *Gulag II*. For the next month I read and reread it, revising my perspective of what other people had endured. My opinion of my imprisonment changed forever. With just one long, cool, objective assessment

of millions who shared Solzhenitsyn’s fate, my experience seemed almost trivial.”

AN ESCAPE PLAN: pp. 121-122- These pages detail his first escape plan upon finally being allowed to use an exercise yard. He wanted to make a guard uniform, smuggle it to the yard, dress in it, somehow get up onto the guard cat walk and then drop over the side to a car which he would try to arrange to have waiting for him in the street below. He decided to run laps around the area to watch the guards surreptitiously and as

result, got it into his head that he wanted to train for a marathon. After he ‘got into it’ the guard watching became secondary to the act of running.

BOREDOM AND PREDICTABILITY: pp. 125-126- Musings on having no power to change anything in the day to day events of his life- and- how much he missed women. A pretty good psych aspects section. “I may have been making do and surviving ninety per cent of the time, but this other ten per cent was unbearable. Totally unbearable. Life was passing me by. I was

losing my sanity.”

REASONING AS TO WHY TO ESCAPE:

p. 153- “I could not bear to see her crying when she came to visit; I could not bear all of the insults and vulgarities she put up with daily just to see me. I could no longer bear our forced partings and our fears of what would happen to us. I couldn’t take it any longer. It all came down to one thing, *Escape*. After I had been through their forced confessions and their phony legal system, after I had met their lying, rip-off lawyers, after I had lived in and suffered through their dirty

extortionist feudal prison system, and after I had experienced firsthand their ruthless culture, I did not want to beg the Mexicans for my liberty. I did not want to negotiate with those arrogant bastards in any way. And I did not plan on waiting for them either. ... all I wanted to do was get myself out of prison on my own terms. *I had to escape or at least to try*. How could I live with myself twenty years from now knowing I had done all those years in a Mexican prison without even trying to get out? Maybe they would kill me if they caught me, but then, I just might make it. Maybe I could assert my free will against them and win, proving that I could be a free man by my own decision and my own acts, regardless of what they thought or did. Far beyond being an act of defiance, escape would be an affirmation of life and freedom and dignity. Escape was the only honorable way out.”

THE PLAN AND ILLUSION, DIVERSION,

DECEPTION (IDD): pp. 156-165- These pages detail the entire plan. A great idea- that of leaving disguised as a woman. Lucky for him that after all the running in the exercise yard, he had slimmed down! Additionally, he was able to have a list of items (see page 161) brought in to him by his accomplice (who he married in prison- their conjugal night was to play a big role in IDD). How they cased the route, figured out the timing for the escape-critical! They had to be certain that the ‘right’ guards were on duty when they made the try. This whole section is detail packed and well worth reading

for all of the many considerations that they took into account- disguise, numerous types and shapes of metal visit tags that had to be copied, which guards were on what shifts, etc. In order to fool the staff, he bribed



Lecumberri Prison Cell by Djarter

someone to let him grow a beard, saying that it was a custom to have a beard on your wedding night. In reality, he was just getting ready to shave it off months hence- and by doing so to drastically change his appearance.

FORGING PAPER

PASSES: p. 171-172- Visitor passes changed color daily. The author had to have the correct paper, typeface, wording, numbers, etc. This section describes how this was

accomplished. On page 180, it goes into more detail as to how bad security at the prison led to his being able to find and steal other pass examples. Additionally, it describes how makeup was smuggled into the prison.

SMUGGLING IN A WIG: p. 185-186- The idea was to bring it in as part of the filling of a pillow. This would be a very dangerous maneuver with no way to explain it away if the person bringing it in were to be caught with it. Good thinking and planning on page 186 as to how this was accomplished. Additional notes regarding how the pillow seams were sewn on page 187.

SMUGGLING METAL ID/VISITING TAGS INTO

THE PRISON: p. 196- Describes how the smuggler reworked a leather and woven sandal that had soles made of car tire. Also on this page, the author describes where all the disguise items and escape aids were hidden in his cell. A line or two about how they realized that the tags that they had made needed to be aged and discolored appropriately.

THE ESCAPE: pp. 208- 237- Great stuff. Lots of tidbits here- sleight of hand etc., suspenseful. Broken down in a timeline with a very well done narrative.

National Geographic - Locked Up Abroad: Where are They Now?
Dwight Worker May 23, 2012

<http://tvblogs.nationalgeographic.com/2012/05/23/locked-up-abroad-where-are-they-now-dwight-worker/>

Personal Survival Kit

By Reader Contribution

So- as you know, you can start a knife fight in a phone booth over the topic of what should go into a personal survival kit (great topic to discuss around the fire!).

I think that if you look at the issue from a requirements perspective (what tasks must the IP do) then much of the arguing is over. The items either support a task or not- there's no more, "Hey this is neat and fits in my Sucrets box" ...

SERE training prepares graduates to face isolation challenges by giving them the tools necessary to perform SERE tasks with efficiency, tenacity and confidence in the face of adversity. A properly trained person is far more apt to achieve success by avoiding, surviving, and assisting in their own recovery- and to do so with Honor. It doesn't matter how sporty your SERE kit is without proper training...

Personal survival kit items (categorized by IP task)

1. TRAVEL

- a. Evasion charts, or other maps of the operations area
- b. Compass, magnetic luminous

2. MEANS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE LOCAL POPULACE

- a. Blood chit
- b. Pointee-talkie (or phonetic phrase booklet/word list)
Consider knowing the local words for:
 - i. Please/Thank you
 - ii. Help/Mercy
 - iii. Food/Water
 - iv. Sir/Ma'am
 - v. Reward
 - vi. Hide
 - vii. Doctor

3. ITEMS ENHANCING PROTECTION FROM THE ELEMENTS AND CAMOUFLAGE

- a. Gloves
- b. Socks
- c. Shelter material (quiet/proper color)
- d. Hat/insect netting

- e. Extra clothing depending on low temperatures (vest/insulated underwear)

4. ITEMS TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTING HIDE SITES, GROUND TO AIR SIGNALS, AND PROCURING WATER

- a. Compact, orange/silver "survival blanket"
- b. Knife, locking
- c. Light weight, foldable hand trowel
- d. Small multi-tool

5. FIRST AID AND PERSONAL MEDICATION

- a. Consider: cuts, burns, blisters, insects, sunburn, sprains
- b. Personal medications/spare glasses

6. ITEMS OF DAY/NIGHT VERBAL/VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS W/RECOVERY FORCE

- a. Radio
- b. Signal mirror
- c. Chemical light sticks (some infrared)
- d. Flashlight with red filter
- e. GLINT tape
- f. Three feet of line/cord (construct "buzz saw")

7. MEANS OF WATER PURIFICATION AND TRANSPORT

- a. Water purification straw/steri-pen
- b. Water purification tablets
- c. Heavy duty gallon Ziploc bags
- d. Small plastic flask/"platypus" style water holder

8. ADDITIONAL ITEMS (AOR DEPENDENT)

- a. High energy food bars
- b. Metal match
- c. Snare wire (food/repairs)
- d. "Pocket" duct tape
- e. Fire starting aid (fuel tabs/"shoe goo"/cotton balls and Vaseline, etc.)
- f. Parachute type cord

Survivor's Quote:

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."

Benjamin Franklin

Urban BLISS

By SURVIVOR Staff

The isolated personnel (IP) who finds themselves in an isolating event in an urban environment will need to modify a great deal of their SERE tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Urban BLISS



In my experience urban is the hardest environment to evade in. The five phases of evasion are the same, but what is different is how they will adapt to meet the specific social-political, cultural, population, climatic, their condition, and duration of what they will encounter in an urban environment.

What that means to SERE personnel is that the basic principles that we teach need to include at the very least discussions on the modification for our potential IPs to meet an urban challenge for example; modifying the BLISS principle to meet evading through man-made structures or to calmly walk in plain-sight. Let's take a look at the urban aspects to **BLISS**.

- “B”. The “B”



Blending

stands for **BLEND**. The IP needs to blend into the background. Blending can take on many aspects from the more traditional evasion to the IP looking like they belong, so they may not be challenged. This deception works when locals or the enemy look at the IP, but do not see them for what they really are. In most societies sharing public space is an accepted and tolerated fact, so it may be easier for the IP to walk through a street in



Low Profile and Avoid Kids

disguise, rather than sneak around it in the shadows. Avoid drawing attention to yourself; remain in the background. IPs have done this even during the Korean and Vietnam wars passing right by police officers and locals.

- “L”. The “L” is for maintaining a **LOW PROFILE**. An IP needs to be patient, polite, and not draw attention. They need to not look or act nervous. A person that moves quickly, frantically, and looks over their shoulder stands out, as opposed to someone who calmly walks like everyone else. When in Rome do what the Romans do, follow the lead of the way the locals act and dress. Evaders in Holland had to learn to tuck their shoelaces into their shoes and wear belts over-sized belts (to wear over their coats while riding bikes or in bad weather).

- Avoid children. They are attentive and curious and will point out the peculiar to adults.

- Avoid cultural taboos; this will avoid situations that demand complicated explanations or actions.

- “T”. The “T” is for **IRREGULAR**. If you are performing a repetitive act, you must vary your activity and not become predictable by changing travel routes and patterns. If an IP is maintaining a signal, they should always try to approach and check it at irregular times. In all actions an IP should try and avoid repeat scrutinized by the same people.

- “S”. The “S” is for **SURVIVAL**. The IP must apply their survival training towards this urban environment to meet their basic needs. Modification to things like personal protection may include using debris and man-made materials to look like the environment. The IP should be aware of preventive measure for localized diseases and hygiene issues. The IP has additional sustenance problems they will have to overcome in an urban environment, such as competing with the locals for limited resources (dumpster diving), ensuring their procurement techniques match local techniques so it doesn’t attract attention, possible stealing of food, and purification and preparation practices which do not draw attention.



Opportunity to Procure Food

- “S”. The second “S” is for **SECLUDED**. The IP should try to keep their selves and all that they do out of the way and isolated from others, without being obvious and dramatic about it.

Urban Travel Factors

By Survivor Staff

Newer cities tend to be built systematically, while older cities are built to follow some type of pattern related to the cities original function, so historical knowledge of a city can be useful. What was the city built for? Such as, if a city was part of a major trade route, main infrastructure lines will run this route. If there has been a decline in any specific historic industry? This may present locations for blending in or avoiding contact with citizens; hiding in deserted structures or industrial sites. Cities will also generally follow terrain features, such as hills and mountains, which can make travel confusing, but pre-knowledge of this may help you to avoid this confusion. Is the city known for any specific landmarks or identifiable features? This may



always give you a line of direction no matter where you are.

Notice your lines of communication and commerce; try to identify a pattern. I have used information related to where pay telephones are located to determine cardinal direction on a cloudy night. Is infrastructure running specific directions? Is there a pattern to the street names or routes? Look for these things to determine any aids to your urban navigation. A simple example is in cities and countries that have not completely switched to modern analog VHF and UHF TV frequencies you may find television aerials directed towards the television

station (or in the poorer parts of some cities), which historically have been located near the city’s center. Another simple tool is using

telephone poles and antennas like a stick and shadow to get cardinal directions. In many ways you may be able to modifying your knowledge of field navigation techniques for urban navigation/operations.

...In a Single Bound

By SURVIVOR Staff

I was always taught that if you could evade in an urban environment that evading in a remote environment was easy. Many urban barriers will take that combination of “buildering” (urban climbing) techniques with general principles evasion travel. When an IP can successfully combine these two, they should be able to avoid capture and return to friendly forces.

Along with remembering the urban evader needs to remember the modified **BLISS** principle **AUTO** acronym can be used by an urban evader to help remember barrier penetration TTPs. **AUTO** stands for **A**void, **U**nder, **T**hrough, **O**ver.

Avoid. Avoid by going around; an IP should not attempt to penetrate barriers if they can be bypassed or avoided because people catch people. An IP may be discovered by inhabitants or their animals.

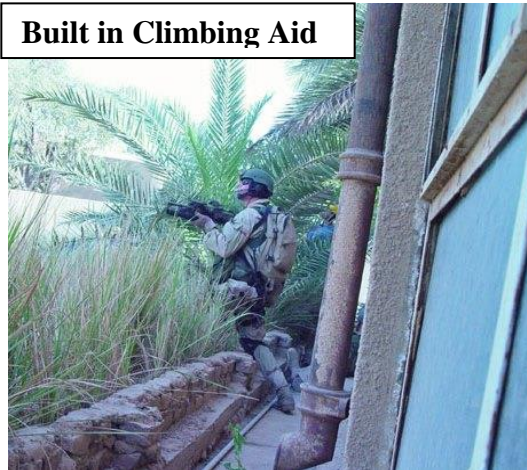
Under. Go under a barrier using tunnels, culverts, trestles, or areas where animals may have already tunneled.

Through. Go through by identifying potential weak entry points, using battle damaged areas, and or using areas where animals may already penetrated through the barrier.

Over. Go over the barrier. Climbing is used by an IP to access high windows, rooftops, to climb walls, negotiate barriers, etc. Some general rules the IP should use are to select route that is safe, quickly climbed and concealed. An IP should mentally climb the route before beginning since once climb is started, it may be impossible to climb back down; assessing the climb based on an estimate of abilities, resources available, and whether solo or in a group. Not everyone can solo climb. An IP should also check the integrity of whatever they are going to climb. The IP should have a plan for crossing the top and climbing down the other side, the back side of the barrier may be steep, drop-off, or present other hazards. Also the IP should try to get a visual of the top of any barrier, before attempting to cross it, since it may contain broken glass, razor wire, or expose themselves to enemy.

Built in Climbing Aids. The IP can use drainpipes, adjacent trees, available scaffolds, and utility fixtures (pipes, conduit, wires, etc.) as ready-made ladders. In some cases the way the structure is built provides another built-in “ladder” allowing IP to use the structural supports such as cables, girders, beams, etc

Built in Climbing Aid

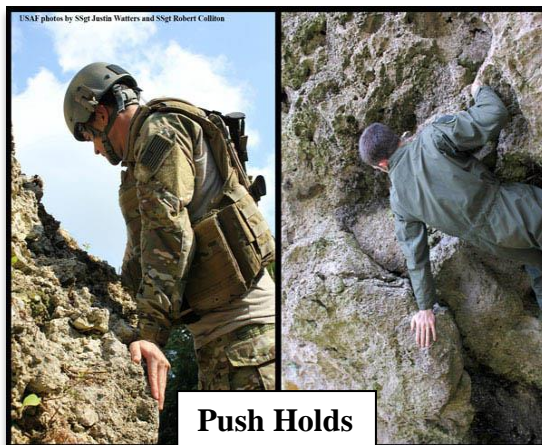


Climbing Order. An IP may want to use any available climbing aids such as wooden pallets, two by fours, pipes, barrels,

dumpsters, boxes, improvised rope, grappling hooks (improvised from rucksack, metal pole, rock, wooden plank, etc.), weapons sling, belts, electrical cords, linens, clothing, etc. In a group situation, one IP can help the other IP to get up onto the barrier. In this case the climbing order should be a consideration. The best climber up should go first, so they can assist subsequent climbers. Also consider having the largest person cross second to last and the smallest/most athletic cross last.

Climbing Using Hand and Foot Holds. An IP climbing in an urban environment should choose a route offering hand- and foot-holds similar to free climbing a rock face. When they climb they should maintain three points of contact while carrying their weight over their feet using their hands mostly for balance. The types of holds will vary with the location and type of barrier, the IP will likely find themselves using a mix of push-, pull-, jam-, counter force/opposing pressure, friction (chimney climb), and jumping techniques.

Assisted Climbing. In group situations, the type of barrier and the number in the group will determine the type of climbing TTPs used. Climbing can involve one or two people lifting the climber by making a catch for the climber’s heel or a supported lift. A supported lift is where the first person to the wall makes a solid frame by putting their

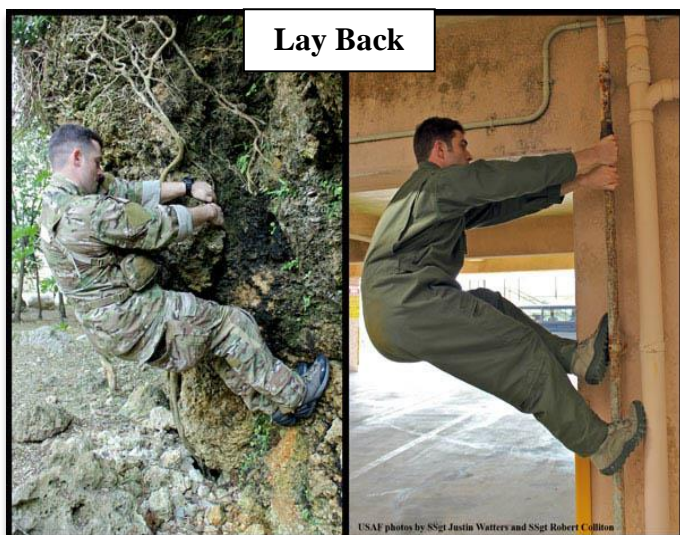


Push Holds

feet shoulder width apart (for stability) with their back against the wall and legs bent to create a step for the second person (first climber), the second person steps on the thigh of the first person then stands on their shoulders, and then the first person fully extends upward to give second person a boost. In any type of assisted climbing, the first climber on the wall must also make a solid frame on top before assisting others, they can do this by laying on the wall with their legs straddling both sides, on backside of wall they should extend their leg and arm to wedge and brace for the lift, on the climber side of wall they should bend their leg at knee to hook their foot on top of wall, then they extend their free arm towards climber, and pull while the second climber uses the leg and out-stretched hand of the individual straddling the wall to assist.

Climbing. Balance climbing is a type of movement used to climb multiple surfaces. During the process of route selection, the climber should mentally climb the route to know what is expected. Climbers should not wear gloves when balance climbing.

Body Position. The climber must keep good balance when climbing (the weight placed over the feet during movement). The feet, not the hands, should carry the weight (except on the steepest cliffs). The hands are for balance. The feet do not provide proper traction when the climber leans in toward the rock.



Lay Back

USAF photos by SSgt Justin Watters and SSgt Robert Colliton

With the body in balance, the climber moves with a slow, rhythmic motion. Three points of support, such as two feet and one hand are used when possible. The preferred handholds are waist to shoulder high. Resting is necessary when climbing because tense muscles tire quickly. When resting, the arms should be kept low where circulation is not impaired. Use of small intermediate holds is preferable to stretching and clinging to widely-separated big holds. A spread-eagle position, where a climber stretches too far (and cannot let go), should be avoided.



Pull Hold

There are various types of climbing holds.

Push Holds.

Push holds are desirable because they help the climber keep the arms low; however, they are more difficult to hold onto in case

of a slip. A push hold is often used to advantage in combination with a pull hold.



Pull Holds.

Pull holds are those that are pulled down upon and are the easiest holds to use. They are also the most likely to break out.

Jam Holds

Jam Holds.

Jam holds

involve jamming any part of the body or extremity into a crack. This is done by putting the hand into the crack and clenching it into a fist or by placing the arm into the crack and twisting the elbow against one side and the hand against the other side. When using the foot in a jam hold, care should be taken to ensure the boot is placed so it can be removed easily when climbing is continued.

Combination Holds. The holds previously mentioned are considered basic and from these any number of combinations and variations can be used. The number

of these variations depends only on the limit of the individual's imagination. The following are a few of the more common ones:



Undercling

Counterforce.

The counterforce is attained by pinching a protruding part between the thumb and fingers and pulling outward or pressing inward with the arms.

Lay-Back.

The lay-back is done by leaning to one side of an offset crack with the hands pulling and the feet pushing against the offset side. Lay-backing is a

classic form of force or counterforce where the hands and feet pull and push in opposite directions enabling the climber to move up in a series of shifting moves. It is very strenuous.

Chimney Climbing



Chimney Climb.

The chimney climb is a body-jam hold used in very wide. The arms and legs are used to apply pressure against the opposite faces of the rock in a counterforce move. The outstretched hands hold the body while the legs are drawn as high as possible. The legs are flexed forcing the body up. This procedure is

continued as necessary. Another method is to place the back against one wall and the legs and arms against the other and "worm" upward.

Friction Climbing.

A slab is a relatively smooth portion of rock lying at an angle. When traversing a slab, the lower foot is pointed slightly downhill to increase balance and

friction of the foot. All irregularities in the slope should be used for additional friction. On steep slabs, it may be necessary to squat with the body weight well over the feet with hands used alongside for added friction. This position may be used for ascending, traversing, or descending. A slip may result if the climber leans back or lets the buttocks down. Wet, icy, mossy, or scree-covered slabs are the most dangerous.

Friction holds.

Friction holds depend solely on the friction of hands or feet against a relatively smooth surface with a shallow hold. They are difficult to use because they give a feeling of insecurity which the inexperienced climber tries to correct by leaning close to the rock, thereby increasing the insecurity. They often serve well as intermediate holds, giving needed support while the climber moves over them; however, they would not hold if the climber decided to stop.

Mantle-shelving.

Mantle-shelving, or mantling, takes advantage of down pressure exerted by one or both hands on a slab or shelf. By straightening and locking the arm, the body is raised, allowing a leg to be placed on a higher hold.

Friction Climbing



Mantle-shelving