

Let's get climbing

DC VICKERS, ARBORICULTURE PROGRAMME MANAGER AT BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, CONTINUES THEIR SERIES ON CLIMBING, CURRENTLY LOOKING AT SRT RESCUE SETUPS.



The I'D opens up to allow installation of the climbing line.

IN the last article we put together a rescue system using the basal tie-off that provided us with a controlled method of lowering the casualty and maximising the rope length.

In this article, we'll see how we can use the Petzl I'D to simplify the system by reducing the amount of equipment required.

The Petzl I'D is ideal for this scenario... it's designed for rescue purposes and is rated appropriately, but if you're thinking about purchasing one, do make sure that you get the correct size for your rope (I'm using the Petzl I'D L here which is suitable for 11.5-13 mm lines, the I'D S works with lines from 10-11.5 mm).

The Petzl I'D also has a few integrated safety functions that can protect against user error and I'd recommend that everyone on the team receives training on its use and that you practise setting up and using the system.

SETTING UP THE I'D

The I'D could be considered as a grown-up, professional version of the GriGri and many years ago we would teach pole rescues using the GriGri (until the decision was made not to use them as they were regarded as recreational devices).

The I'D opens up to allow the installation of the climbing line; this needs to be installed correctly but in the event that it is put in the wrong way, the device automatically clamps the rope and the line will not move through the device.

(See image, left.)

The Petzl I'D is connected to a separate basal tie-off which has been adjusted so that it is tightly wrapped around the tree stem; in the photos I've used a karabiner as the link between this tie-off and the I'D, but you may prefer to use an appropriately-sized Maillon



instead (try the Maillon Rapide Delta or Maillon Rapide Long Opening - both are rated as PPE so are suitable in this application).

Once the I'D is installed, the lever should be moved to the 'LOCK' position and the tail end of the climbing line should be backed up by a marlinspike hitch with a karabiner through it, for additional reassurance.

I would also strongly recommend putting a stopper knot at the end of the climbing line too - just in case you end up using the full length of the line to recover the casualty; it'll prevent the line going through the device whilst you stand there watching the climber fall to the ground...

(See image, top.)

The I'D installed, locked off and the climbing line backed up by a slip knot with karabiner.

OPERATING THE I'D

Should you need to lower the climber for any reason, remove the karabiner from the marlinspike hitch and pull on the tail end of the climbing line to allow the line to move cleanly through the I'D. Keeping one hand on the tail end of the line, operate the I'D lever to lower the casualty - you should find it fairly easy to control the rate of descent but it's worth practising this to get a feel for using the device first!

(See image, left.)

Keep hold of the tail end of the line when operating the I'D to lower the casualty.

CHECK YOUR SETUP

If you decide to use this system, do make sure that you double-check everything before using it... it's easy to put the line in the wrong way (although it's still safe) and the karabiner can sit the 'wrong' way (with the gate against the tree's stem - which is why a Maillon is a better choice) - see photo.



(See image, above.)

Check your system setup before use - this system is incorrectly installed as the line is in the wrong way and the karabiner gate is against the tree.

The Petzl I'D provides a clean, easily installed, safe and efficient system to allow for the effective lowering of a casualty, using the basal tie-off. This system can be improved a little by using a bungee cord tied to the tree stem and climbing line (above the I'D); the purpose of this is to keep the I'D steady and to stop it slapping against the stem during climbing operations - the bungee cord will snap if you need to lower the climber and adds nothing to the strength of the system.

We've been on a bit of a journey with the basal tie-off and I'd be interested to know if you use this type of tie-off and your thoughts and comments on it (contact me at dvickers@bca.ac.uk), but it's time to leave this now and in the next article we'll remain with SRT systems but look at using the canopy tie-off instead.

For more information on the Petzl I'D, please visit the Petzl website at www.petzl.com/US/EN/Professional/Descenders/I-D-L

DISCLAIMER

The usual disclaimer applies... you would be well advised to seek out training and advice from an experienced person before trying out any of the methods discussed in these articles. Try out any new method by starting low to the ground initially and then moving higher. The magazine, Land Based Training or the author cannot accept any liability for any injuries howsoever caused by trying out methods shown in these articles.