

# Checking your equipment

## Ropes

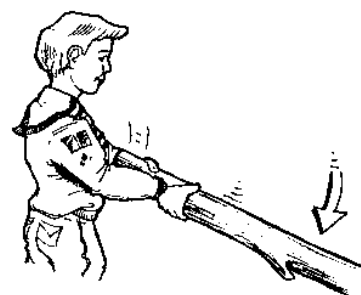
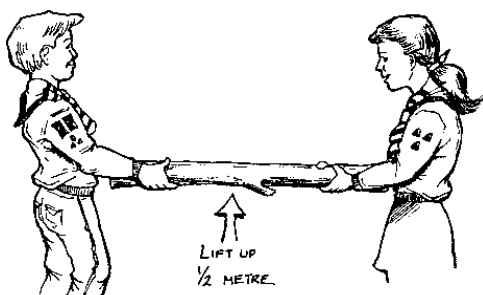
Always check your ropes and lashing lengths before you start. Never consider using frayed ropes or ropes that have been stored badly and appear to be rotting.

Never let anyone stand on your ropes - bits of grit will get ground into the fibres and will damage them.

Wet ropes should always be hung to dry and very muddy ropes should be washed carefully and dried before going into store.

## Spars

Spars must be tested for soundness. Saw cuts and cracks on the outside will be obvious but the inside may also be weakened by rot and splits. To test for internal damage, get two people to hold the spar horizontally, half a metre above firm ground. At a given signal, the heavier end is allowed to drop to the ground.



The spar will give a hollow ring if it is sound. A dull thump will indicate rot and a twang, like a ruler plucked against a table top, indicates dangerous splits.

**If in doubt, discard the spar and make sure no one else will try and use it. It is better to postpone the project than to injure someone when the structure fails.**