

Nights away

Activity

BUILD YOUR OWN

SHELTER

Follow Victorinox's simple steps to erect your own A-frame structure from the foliage you find on the forest floor

Suitable for all
TIME: 1-2 hours

You will need:

- Sticks ● Pen knife ● Large-leaved foliage ie bracken ● Large pieces of tree bark ● Thin twigs ● Leaf litter ● Groundsheet

1 Only source your materials from the forest floor – never cut leaves and branches from trees. Find a long straight stick to act as your ridge pole, the core support of your structure. Make sure it's taller than you or your shelter won't be long enough.

2 Find two tall and two shorter sturdy sticks; each set of two should be of similar heights. These will be your forked supports and should have a 'Y' shape at one end to

lock the other sticks into place.

3 Use your two tall sticks and your ridge pole to form the A-frame. Interlock the supports at the 'Y' fork at roughly a 60-degree angle; you should be able to lean on the entrance without it falling over. Lock in the two shorter sticks further down the ridge pole.

4 Use a sharpened stick for digging and create holes in the ground to wedge the supports in place.

5 Once you have your frame, clear the ground under it, lie down in the space to check you fit under it and your feet don't touch the ridge pole.

6 Gather lots of straight sticks. These will be positioned along the sides of your shelter to provide a base for the covering.

7 Use as many straight sticks as possible to build up the sides of the frame. Cavities, splits and crumbling wood could all indicate rotting, so be sure to avoid sticks like this. Trim your sticks to size so they don't hang out too far over the top of the ridge pole. If they move around

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A-FRAME
FORKED SUPPORTS
 RIDGE POLE



Photography: Simon Lees

then wedge them into the ground or use thin branches or plants to weave them together for support.

8 Cover your frame with bark, twigs and foliage. After you have added this first layer, add the leaf litter, working from the base towards the top. In good conditions, a minimal covering will be enough, but if it's rainy or windy then add at least 30cm of leaf litter.