Slacklining in Schools - Outdoor

Recommendations

Choosing a Spot - Respect the Environment

Many conflicts of use can be avoided by choosing a suitable spot.

- Avoid crossing paths and busy lawns.
- Be mindful of the surroundings, especially when someone is walking the line, and intervene preventively if necessary.
- Using less frequented areas is recommended when setting up slacklines in school yards.
- Do not leave any marks or trash behind.

Especially toddlers and small children can be attracted by slacklines. People riding bikes and elderly people may not be able to see the slackline. Make people aware of the slackline and do not leave it unattended.

Ground

The area around the slackline needs to be level and free of any objects that could cause injury when falling off. Be especially mindful of tree roots, rocks, holes, and bumps in the ground.

Suitable Anchors

Trees and tree protection

- The tree needs to be healthy.
- If there are loose or dead branches in a tree’s crown, use another tree.
- The tree should have a diameter of at least 30 cm at the height of attachment -- that is about 1 m of circumference.
- If the tree is moving while someone is on the slackline, it is not a suitable anchor.
- Use professional tree protection.
- Tree protection should go all the way around the tree.
- The slings wrapped around the tree should at least be 5 cm wide.

Fig. 1 (top left): A clean anchor on a tree using an industrial sling (source: Landcruising). Fig. 2 (top right): This tree protection flyer is available as a PDF download and can also be ordered in print. Fig. 3 (below): A selection of professional tree protection products available.

Tree protection serves to reduce friction and wear where the anchor sling is moving against the tree’s bark. The tree protection should still wrap around the entire tree to show to other people that care was taken. The contact surface area of the anchor slings can be increased by fanning them out or wrapping them around the tree twice if possible.
Wall Attachments

Similar to indoor wall attachments, beginner slackline setups can also be rigged off wall mounted attachment points. These attachments should be able to withstand at least 40 kN in the direction of the load (according to the recommendations of DIN 79400).

Poles

Dedicated slacklining poles can also be installed outdoors by pouring concrete foundations for pole sockets. Create a terrain that is suitable for falling (level gras) and has sufficient lateral space. Manufacturers of pole systems can help to design suitable spaces.
Ground Anchors and Screws

Ground anchors and ground screws can be used for beginner slacklines, if a suitable method of redirection (e.g. A-Frames) is available. Such a setup, however, is usually not suited for jumping. Whether or not ground-based anchors can be used at a given location is mainly dependent on soil composition. If the soil is too rocky, getting the anchor into the ground will be difficult. If the soil is too wet, the anchor might be pulled along. Make sure to choose an appropriately sized ground anchor.

Redirection, A-Frames, Poles for Shortening

Redirecting a slackline is useful if no trees or only small trees (diameter between 20 and 30 cm) are available. Besides mobile A-Frames, other objects of appropriate size and strength can be used to create a redirection, for example tree trunks or blocks. Creating a clean anchor using redirection can take some time and experience to master. So called “dead man” anchors are best suited for permanent installations.

Be mindful of sharp edges. Tensioned slings or slackline webbings running across an edge can be easily damaged. Always use appropriate padding.
Fig. 6 & 7: A tree trunk (left) or an A-frame (right) can be used to redirect a slackline rigged off a steel spike. Make sure to use a strong enough spike that is inserted deep enough into the ground (source: Slacktivity).

Fig. 8: Another alternative for outdoor slackline classes without trees is the use of mobile slackline racks (source: Balance Slacklines).

**Unsuitable Slackline Anchors**

Do not use aluminum poles, lamp posts, railing or fences as well as any playground installations to anchor a slackline.