



Österreichischer Slackline-Verband



Schweizer Slackline-Verband

Slacklining in School Sports

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Slacklining as part of a physical education class is fun and encourages new forms of movement. To facilitate participation of the entire class or group, it is recommended to provide a set of integrated activities with several slacklines. The learning curve for slacklining can be very steep if a useful and methodical approach is applied. Students will make significant progress within only a few lessons and without losing interest in keeping their balance. The recommendations in this document are intended to inform teachers that are already using slacklines in their classes as well as institutions that are considering to buy a slackline system.



Goals

These recommendations provide advice and suggestions for the safe use of slacklines in physical education (PE) classes. There already is a considerable amount of material on this topic available on the Internet. However, many of these materials are imprecise and of a very general nature. This often limits what can be done in a class and also creates unnecessary safety risks. This document provides the responsible parties in schools with the opportunity to acquire sound information about slacklining in schools. The ultimate goal is a group activity for younger and older kids, that promotes fun and progression, while, at the same time, avoiding injuries as well as damage to equipment and facilities.

General Recommendations

The basic principles of slacklining are summarized in a flyer, available [as PDF](#) or to order [in print](#). These recommendations for use in PE classes assume the use of basic slackline sets, having peak loads no higher than 10 kN when jumping or bouncing. Slackline sets that create larger peak loads (especially trick/jumplines or longlines) are discussed in separate documents. In the remainder of this section, several additional recommendations relevant for slacklining in schools are introduced.

Purchasing Equipment

- When purchasing slackline equipment for the first time, it is recommended to buy slackline systems made of carefully matched components. It can also make sense to extend already available equipment.
- Slackline sets conforming to DIN 79400 should be preferred.
- If existing building structures (e.g. large pillars) are intended to be used as anchors for the slacklines, their suitability should be evaluated by experts and appropriate anchoring materials obtained.
- Consider other potential users (e.g. local associations or training groups) of the equipment and take their requirements or wishes into account.

Cheap slackline sets often come with very static webbing and are thus less suited for indoor use (less stretch, therefore higher peak loads on the anchors). This will increase the likelihood of damage of gymnasium facilities and equipment.

Rigging

- Study setup instructions before rigging a slackline. Video tutorials from manufacturers are often available online.
- Students should practice setting up and taking down the slackline systems under the teacher's supervision.
- Later, students should be encouraged to set up the slackline systems by themselves while applying the four-eyes principle (partner check).



Anchoring

- Refrain from using slings or webbing materials and carabiners for mountaineering or climbing use (regardless of the stated breaking strength) to replace parts missing from the original slackline sets.
- Pre-tensioned slackline systems should only use metal parts made from steel. Aluminum carabiners for mountaineering or climbing will eventually break at much lower loads than stated, as permanent loads are applied repeatedly. Aluminum carabiners that have been used for slacklining should never be used for climbing or mountaineering again.
- Only a few oval-shaped (not pear- or D-shaped) steel carabiners have proven to be safe in slackline applications. When rigging slacklines at higher peak loads (trick/jumplines and longlines), carabiners should be avoided entirely.
- When using shackles and quicklinks, it is paramount to make sure they are completely screwed shut. Always double check before tensioning (four-eyes principle).

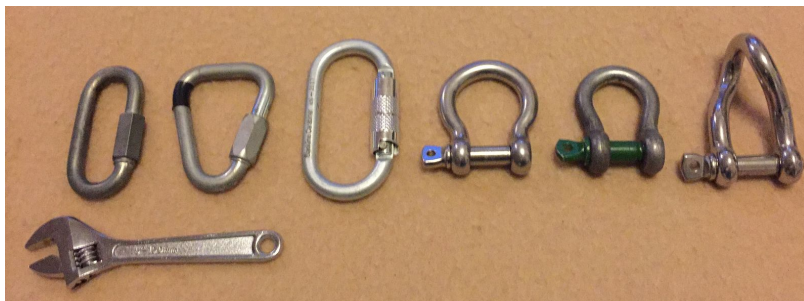


Figure on the left: An overview of suitable connectors for slackline setups. The two quicklinks on the left need to be tightened with a wrench before use. From left to right: 1. 12 mm oval quicklink and 2. 12 mm delta quicklink with wrench; 3. oval-shaped steel carabiner; 4. 12 mm shackle for marine applications; 5. 1.5 t WLL GreenPin shackle for industrial use; and 6. twisted shackle for marine use.

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- Using industrial-grade materials (slings, connectors) with a working load limit (WLL) of 1 to 2 tons is recommended. In a straight-pull configuration, 1 t WLL is equivalent to 5 t to 7 t of breaking strength (depending on norm and country), which is usually sufficient. It is important to only use industrial-grade materials that provide a WLL, and particularly for the quicklinks to have a CE sign (in Europe).
- Using the girth-hitched slackline webbing itself to attach the line to the anchors is not recommended, as wear and shear forces damage the materials. Instead, invest in industrial slings and connectors.
- Do not put knots into the slackline webbing as this will reduce breaking strength dramatically.

Figure to the right: Industrial round slings with 1 t WLL (violet colouring) are sufficiently strong for most anchoring purposes. Connect the slackline webbing to the steel connector. The two innermost slings (0.5 m and 1 m long) are mostly useful to attach to artificial anchors. The outermost sling (2 m long) can also be used to anchor on trees when using tree protection.



Ratchets in Slackline Systems

- Ratchets should only be tightened with as much force as one hand can exert. Do not use a lever extension or other tools for tightening.
- If feasible and useful, the ratchet should be installed having the lever point to the ground.
- Place the ratchet as close to the anchor as possible (for example, by slinging the anchor multiple times).
- Ratchet protectors are recommended. They are especially important if the ratchet is more than 30 cm away from the anchor (beginning of the walking area).
- Ratchet levers need to be closed entirely after tensioning, as the ratchet is only locked when in this position.
- At higher tensions, it is recommended to use the remainder of the webbing to backup the ratchet to the anchor.

Installation and Use

- For beginners, set up the slackline so that the webbing is lower than the crotch.
- Only apply as little tension as necessary. Also experiment with lower tensions. High tension doesn't necessarily mean that the slackline is easier to walk.
- There should never be more than three people (or a maximum of 200kg of weight) on a slackline at the same time. Only one person should be standing or walking on the line. Up to two additional persons can be calmly sitting on the line in a controlled manner. This can serve to effectively shorten the slackline for the walker.
- Otherwise, no other persons should be touching or crossing the line while it is being walked.

Method

Mobilesport.ch provides [methodological basics](#) as well as a [sample lesson plan](#) (in german, french and italian).