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Personal anchor system vs daisy chain

Use this guide as a general assessment of personal anchoring systems. Remember, learning about rock climbing online serves as a tool, but in no way are written articles a substitute for hands-on instruction. Failure to follow appropriate safety measures could result in serious injury or death. If just getting started, seek professional climbing courses offered by AMGA-certified guiding services. Be smart, and climb safe. At the surface, a daisy chain—a piece of webbing that features variable length loops—might seem like a great option for securing yourself to an anchor; however, this tool should not (and is not intended) to be used as part of your personal anchoring system. While many climbers elect to use them for this purpose despite warnings, improper use or an unexpected impact load on the daisy chain can result in catastrophic failure, and ultimately, danger to your life. Dangers of daisy chains First and foremost, daisy chains are intended to be used for aid climbing only, as manufacturers, like Black Diamond explicitly outline. They're designed to temporarily withstand body weight—not dynamic falls. For aid climbing, daisy chains are safe tools, given that the rope should always remain in the system (i.e. if your daisy chain were to fail, you're backed up by a dynamic rope, which can absorb the energy shock of a fall). This safety back up, however, is lost immediately when you unte from the rope at an anchor and rely solely on a daisy chain. Secondly, daisy chains (and Dyneema slings, for that matter), have no stretching capacity, meaning that not only do you substantially increase the load on your anchor system in the event of a fall, but a severe impact on the daisy could also cause it to snap immediately and compromise the other gear in your system. At this point, you not only put your own life at risk, but also that of your partner. In the event of a fall, the Daisy will not stretch, resulting in a severe shock load to you, to the anchor and to all gear in the system. – Black Diamond That being said, many climbers are drawn to daisy chains specifically due to the fact that they feature multiple loops that can allow you to easily adjust your proximity to a point by clipping into multiple points; often referred to as “clipping in short.” Unfortunately, it's easy to screw this part up when using a daisy chain. To perform this technique safely (when aid climbing), you should always use an additional locking carabiner to avoid faltering your security to the webbing. We'll let Black Diamond show you the importance of doing so: As you can see, it's quite simple to incorrectly shorten a daisy chain, and its impact rating alone should make you question whether or not you'd want to put the weight of your life on it. Benefits of a Personal Anchor System (P.A.S) While you can certainly secure yourself to an anchor using the rope and/or extra nylon slings, many climbers enjoy the ability to quickly clip into an anchor and adjust their distance from the master point—especially when cleaning an anchor at the top of a sport climb or before rappelling. Luckily, there's a solution for these scenarios: a personal anchor system (PAS). The difference between a daisy chain and PAS: Unlike a daisy chain, specifically designed anchor chains, like the Sterling Rope Chain Reactor or the Metolius' Personal Anchor System (PAS) can serve as a safe, reliable means of securing yourself (and even your partner) to an anchor. The loops on a PAS are each rated to full strength, meaning you can safely clip multiple loops, anchor points, and even your partner to its various loops. A few solid PAS options: Black Diamond Link Personal Anchor While a PAS is great for safely adjusting your positioning at an anchor, many PAS options, aren't very dynamic (especially those made with Dyneema). Another personal anchoring alternative A diagram of the Connect Adjust. Image: Petzl In 2015, Petzl released two new personal anchoring alternatives, the Petzl Connect Adjust and the Dual Connect Adjust lanyards, which are made with dynamic rope (Petzl's 9.5mm Atrial), offering the benefit of being able to absorb more force than a daisy chain or personal anchor system in the event of a short fall. These devices also have an assisted locking mechanism that allow you to easily adjust your position with significant precision while building an anchor, belaying your partner, or preparing to rappel. Both are one hand adjustable and strength rated for one person, but the Dual Connect Adjust offers two arms usable for clipping into fixed lines and extending rappels. For simple personal anchoring purposes, the Connect Adjust provides ample features. Petzl Connect Adjust For those who like being able to the use various anchor points for gear, their partner, or to equalize your personal anchor system, you might prefer going with a simple PAS. Conclusions While there are surely numerous ways to create a personal anchor system while climbing, we do not recommend using a daisy chain for the reasons outlined above. As a rule of thumb, redundancy in your climbing is always desired, so perhaps it's worth making a habit of throwing in a PAS and a clove-hitched rope at a belay, or cleaning the anchors with both a PAS and another sling to back you up. Further reading January 09, 2019 January 09, 2019/ John Godino Leash, lanyard, tether, daisy . . . Lots of different names for pretty much the same thing, a short sewn bit of webbing that connects you to the anchor, especially handy when you're rappelling. (When you are going UP a route, it's generally best practice to use the rope you're tied in with to directly connect to the anchor, not a leash.)And no, I have absolutely no idea why this is called a daisy chain . . . Modern “personal leashes”, such as the Metolius Personal Anchor System (PAS), are made of connected full strength loops. Use them for just about any kind of connection to the anchor, clip two adjacent loops, make a rappel extension, whatever, it's going to be bomber no matter where you clip it.Metolius PAS. Each sewn loop is full strength (22 Kn) Image: metoliusclimbing.com/pas_personal_anchor_system.html But, before the PAS came along, many climbers used a sewn pocket daisy chain as a personal leash. Even though this is designed for aid climbing and bodyweight only, the convenient pockets were too tempting to pass up. And hey, the sling as a whole is rated to 20+ Kn, right? Well, these pockets disguised a potentially lethal problem. Each pocket is sewn with bar tacking that's only rated to about 2 Kn (about 440 lbs.) Clipping one pocket is okay. But clip two pockets and put any sort of a serious load on it, you could potentially break the sewn bar tacks and be completely off your anchor! Large problem!Clip ONE loop on a sewn pocket daisy? No worries. Clip TWO adjacent loops on a sewn pocket daisy? Break those bar tacks and you're gone, YIKES! Fortunately, most modern climbers are aware of this potential problem with pocket daisy chains, so many folks have a semi-retired pocketed daisy that's now collecting dust in the bottom of the gear bin. Well, here's a possible use for that. January 09, 2019/ John Godino/ A personal tether, also called a personal anchor system (PAS is made by Metolius) or anchor chain, is an important component of the climbing system. A personal tether is used to attach a climber to a belay or rappel anchor by clipping an auto-locking carabiner from a loop of the tether to an equalized anchor or a piece of equipment like a spring-loaded cam, wired nut, or bolt. The tether is a series of sewn loops of webbing, Spectra, or Dyneema that is girth hitched to the climber's harness. The free end of the tether is clipped to a gear loop on the back of the harness, with the tether either around the outside of the climber's waist or between his legs. Personal tethers are usually 40 inches long. The personal tether is a fast, convenient, and easy way to clip into an anchor after leading a pitch, reaching a rappel anchor, or clipping into an anchor atop a sport pitch before threading it. The tether is easy to adjust at an anchor by simply clipping one of the chain loops so that the climber is tight against the anchor. Never have slack in the chain after clipping in because a fall on a loose chain greatly increases the shock load and can cause the tether to break and fail. In the past, climbers always tied into anchors with the climbing rope, usually tying a couple clove hitches, an equalizing figure-8 knot, or a figure-8-on-a-bight knot. This ensured that the climber was attached to the anchors and the cliff with his climbing rope—his lifeline. Using the dynamic climbing rope is still the preferred way to tie into anchors since knots are adjustable, won't come untied, and most importantly, absorb the energy of a fall or shock load on the anchor and the climber. It is best to tie directly into anchors with the rope as your primary tie-in point, as well as clip your personal tether into them. The personal tether originated from the daisy chain, a length of webbing with bar-tacked loops that is used for aid climbing. Daisy chains, usually two, are girth hitched to a climber's harness, with each chain then clipped to an aider or etrier for aid climbing or ascending a fixed rope with Jumars or ascenders. Climbers began clipping their daisy chains directly into belay anchors as a primary point of attachment rather than the rope since it was fast and easy. Daisy chains, however, are not designed for clipping into anchors since each of the loops are sewn only for body weight and can rip apart under the load of a fall. Daisy chains are full-strength only when clipped in each opposing end. Climbers have been killed and injured after daisy chains failed after being attached to anchors. In response to the dangers of daisy chains, climbing equipment manufacturers, including BlueWater Ropes, Sterling Ropes, and Metolius, began making personal anchor tethers. Metolius' unit, called the PAS, was one of the first to appear. The tethers were designed as a chain of ultra-strong webbing sewn into links, each as strong as a carabiner. The climber could then clip one of the links tightly into a belay anchor to secure himself to a cliff. Anchor chains are rated at full strength when any of the loops are clipped to an anchor. While the climbing rope should be your primary tie-in point to anchors, it is a good idea to also carry and use a personal tether. Here are some of the reasons why a tether is good to carry: It's convenient to use a tether to quickly clip into an anchor, rather than hang around and tie a knot. If you are working a sport route or want to hang on gear to catch a rest, a personal tether is a quick, adjustable tie-in point. If you are making multiple rappels down a cliff, it is easy to clip into the next set of anchors by using a personal tether since the rope is not free to use for tying in. While you can use a couple two-foot slings girth-hitched together to clip into an anchor, it's easier and stronger to use a personal tether. If you are threading the rope at the top of a sport pitch, clip yourself in with your personal tether rather than making a temporary tie-in point with a bunch of extra quickdraws. When you are climbing with three or more people, personal tethers make it easy and fast to attach each person to the anchor, plus you avoid having a mess of knots and rope at the belay stance. Personal tethers are made of several different materials—nylon, Dyneema, and Spectra. Tests show that all are strong, but nylon absorbs more force generated by climbing falls than Dyneema and Spectra. Both Dyneema and Spectra are extremely strong materials that are often used for climbing equipment, but they absorb little force, which transfers the force of a fall to the anchors and to the climber's harness. If you do use a personal tether, no what material it is made from, do not allow it to be shock loaded by having slack in your anchor system. A fall onto an anchor system and personal tether causes high forces and shock loading on your equipment and could lead to failure of the tether. Again, it is best to use a knot tied into the climbing rope as your primary anchor attachment. While some climbers will girth hitch the personal tether to the belay loop on their harness, it is preferable to hitch it to the tie-in loop on the harness itself. This will cause less rubbing and possible damage to harness. The tether should not be attached to the belay loop, which is an important part of the harness and integral to the belay system. If the tether or any other sling is hitched to the belay loop, it will rub the loop and cause significant wear and damage over time. Here are tips and thoughts for clipping into a belay anchor with a personal tether when you are lead climbing: Upon reaching the belay ledge, either build an equalized anchor with gear and clip into it with your personal tether or clip directly into a bolt anchor with your tether. Either way it is best to first create an equalized anchor with slings or your climbing rope and clip the tether into the master point. This distributes the weight and possible shock load onto both anchors. It is not recommended to clip the tether direct into only one bolt or other anchor, since forces would be generated only on that single anchor point, and could lead to failure. After reaching a belay stance, build a bombproof anchor and clip your rope into it with an equalizing figure-8 knot or a couple clove hitches. This traditional way of clipping into an anchor is safe, easy, and quick. Use your personal tether as a back-up by clipping it into a master point on the anchors. It's best to put the tether in a place where you can easily escape the belay and still stay tied in if there is an accident, or if you are going to rig the rope for a rappel at the stance. Keep the tether and attachment system tight and weighted all the time. A short fall onto a slack anchor tether generates high forces which can lead to tether failure, particularly of Dyneema and Spectra loops. A fall of only a couple feet direct on the tether can cause catastrophic failure. Some personal tethers, like those made by Mammut and Edelrid, have an arrangement of loops which allow them to be clipped into multiple anchors and remain equalized. what is a personal anchor system

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