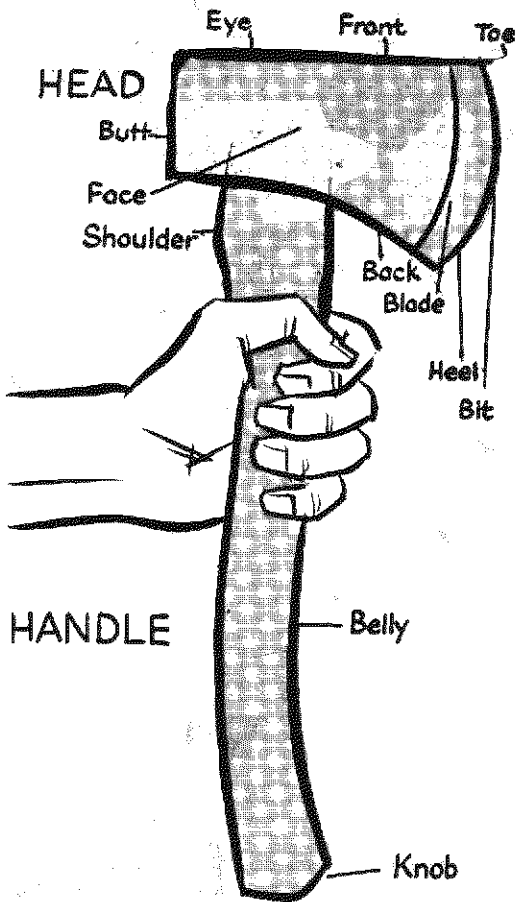


# SWING YOUR AX BUT SAFELY!

By WILLIAM HILLCOURT



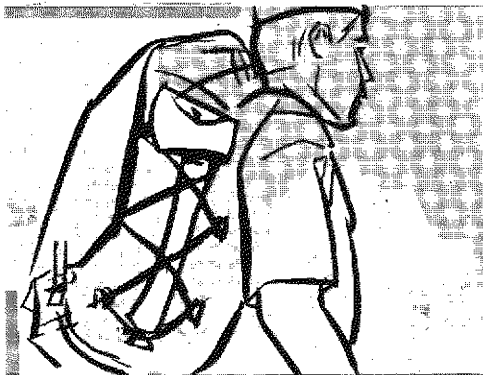
THE AX is a heritage to the Scout of today from the pioneer of the past. The ax and the flintlock rifle—those were the tools that helped to build America! The flintlock is gone forever, but the ax is still the outdoorsman's most popular tool.

For 95 per cent of your Scout camping, you can get along with the small, light hand ax with its 1 1/4 pound head—reserving the larger ax, the felling ax, for occasional chances at log-cutting and big-scale pioneering. Two types of hand axes are popular: The ax with its head set on a springy hickory handle; and the ax with head and handle in one piece, and with inlaid wood grips to give a sure, comfortable grasp (see photo, next page, bottom right). Take your pick—some fellows like one, some the other.

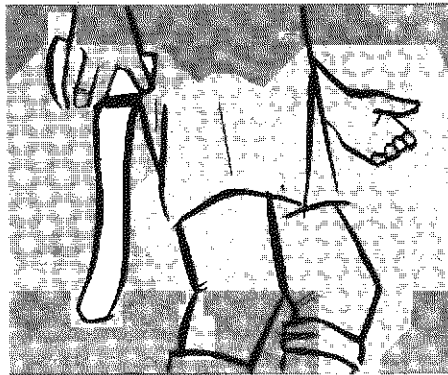
A Second Class Scout knows how to

sharpen his ax, and how to use it for cutting wood for his fires. To become a First Class Scout, you have to know your ax—sharpening and chopping, too, but, in addition, you must be able to use your ax for effective cutting of tent pegs, and for pointing them. There's a test of good axemanship: You either cut a tent peg correctly, winding up with a smartly squared point; or you do it incorrectly, with a point that looks as if a beaver chewed it!

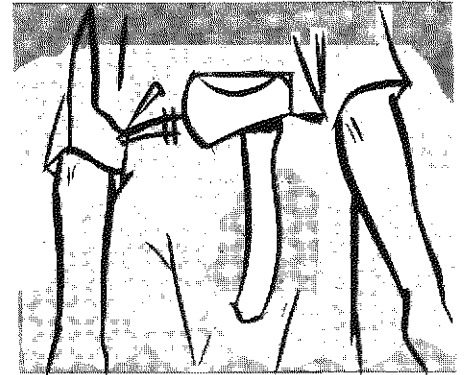
When you use a hand ax, remember that it's not brute force that counts, but the keenness of the cutting edge, and the weight of the ax head behind it. Lift the ax just high enough in a smooth wrist-and-forearm motion, aim it by looking at the point where you want the cutting edge to strike, then let the ax fall in a guided drop. Easy does it!



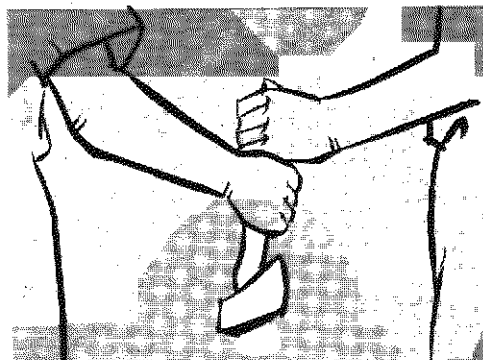
Pack your ax for bringing it to camp—either inside your pack or strapped on the outside.



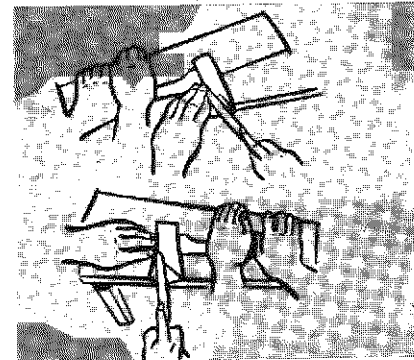
When you carry the ax in camp, hold it firmly by its head, with cutting edge away from you.



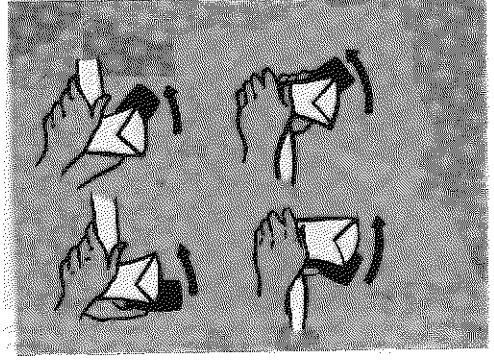
For a short hike, you may prefer to carry the ax in its sheath, on your belt on your right hip.



Pass the ax to another fellow by holding it vertically, head down, and giving him the handle.



For sharpening, use a flat mill file with a handle. Rest the ax on a workbench.



Keep the cutting edge keen with a carbundum sharpening stone. Rub across blade as shown.

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**BOYS' LIFE**

for all boys

## Rules of Good Axemanship

**Keep your ax sharp**—not just sharp enough to chew, but sharp enough to bite! A sharp ax is a safe tool when used properly. A dull ax is always dangerous.

**Keep the handle tight.** It is just as risky to use an ax with a loose head as it is to play with a loaded gun.

**Never touch a living tree**—unless with definite permission and for a definite purpose. Not even the greenest Tenderfoot has any excuse for making a destructive, ax-hacking idiot of himself!!!

**An ax is not a hammer, a maul, or a wedge**—don't use it as one.

**Clear the ground**—an ax length around so that the ax will not accidentally be caught by a branch or other obstacle and be deflected. An "ax length" is the combined length of your arm and your ax.

**Onlookers stay two ax lengths away**—not only out of reach of the ax itself, but also safely away from flying chips.

**Keep the ax off the ground.** Never aim it so that the blow will finish in sand or dirt. Never drop it on the ground.

**Chop and split against a chopping block.** One of the first things a real camper does when he arrives in camp is to find a log to do his chopping against.

**Rest when you are tired.** You have no control over your ax when you are tired—and an ax out of control is dangerous.

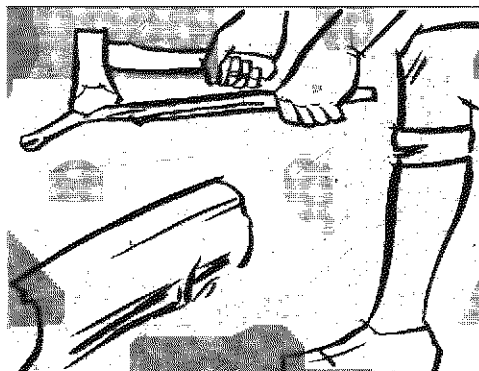
**Keep the ax masked when not in use.** "Masking" means covering the cutting edge. Stick it in a log or sheathe it.

**Carry your ax in a safe manner**—sheathed when possible, otherwise with the edge turned outward, away from you.

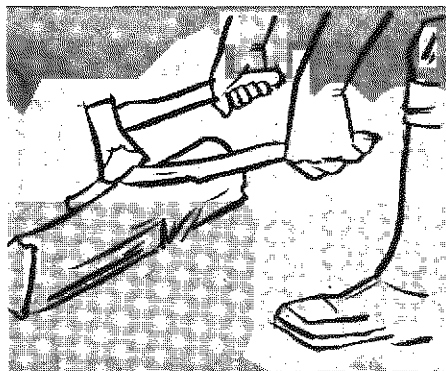
**Pass the ax with its harmless end first**—that is, handle first, head down.



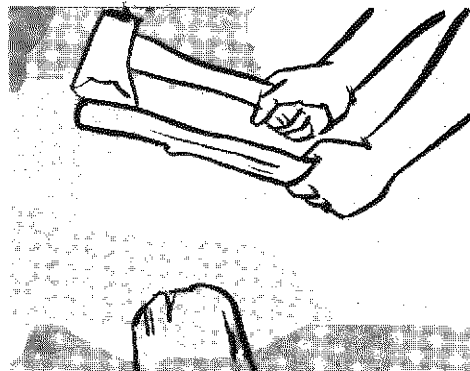
"Strike Four!" Four cuts only—and the result should be a perfectly square-pointed tent peg—provided you are that kind of an axeman! In your training, learn to hit the same spot again and again.



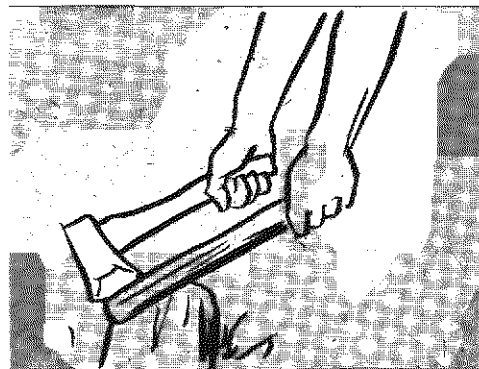
For CUTTING, use the contact method: Place the edge of the ax on the stick. . . .



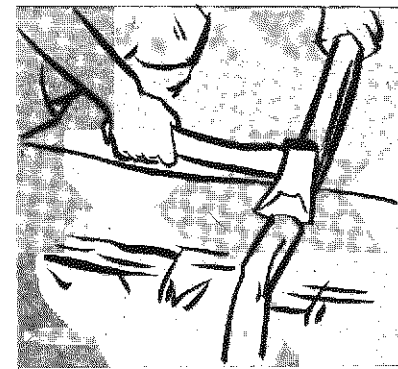
. . . then lift stick and ax together, and bring them down together hard against your chopping block.



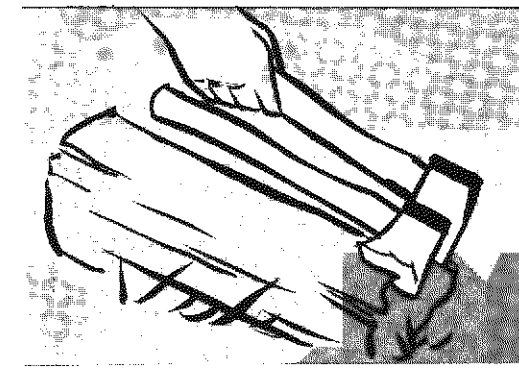
For SPLITTING, place the edge of the ax in a crack. Lift the ax and stick together. . . .



. . . bring down together. As you hit block, twist the ax handle slightly to separate the pieces.



Use a V-shaped cut for chopping a thick stick. Make the top of the V as wide as stick is thick.



When not in use, "mask" your axes: Fasten them in your chopping block, or sheathe them.

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