



Spring 2021
Issue 1

The Outdoor Practitioner



 **Outdoor Hub**

Clove hitch & campfire bread

OUTDOOR CLOTHING

A guide to getting outdoors and what clothing to wear

HOW TO USE A FIRE STEEL

One of the most reliable methods of lighting a fire outside

THE BREEZE PROJECT

Exploring the potential of forest school



BROUGHT TO YOU BY
MUDDYFACES

IDEAS, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS FOR THE OUTDOORS



MUDDYFACES

Welcome

to Issue One of the new
Outdoor Practitioner magazine!

Spring 2021

Dear fellow outdoor enthusiast!

Spring is really flourishing now, with all its beautiful colours and sounds - from snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils to trees with their blossoms and buds, from beautiful blue skies, birdsong and insect buzz, to the days starting to last a little longer.

As we all slowly emerge from lockdown after a long winter the busyness of nature in spring is a great way to entice us outdoors and increase our feelings of wellbeing.

To celebrate spring and look forward to positive futures, we are launching our new free **Outdoor Practitioner** magazine. Each issue will feature practical solutions, ideas, activities & useful kit for outdoor play and learning.

Our Outdoor Hub is a massive free online resource, full of activity ideas & inspiration, research, articles and links. In this magazine we've gathered some of our favourite seasonal articles and activities from



the hub and, with all the changeable spring weather, we thought this would be a great time for a guide to Outdoor Clothing.

Special thanks to our guest contributors - National Association of Environmental Education (NAEE), National Trust, Breeze project, Wildlife Trusts and Milford Pre school.

In the next issue of the **Outdoor Practitioner** we'll explore outdoor hand washing, with tips, ideas and kit to help get you up and running, for a healthy summer maximizing your outdoor space to create safer and healthier provision for you, your families and those you work with. Plus lots more activity ideas of course.

We'd love to hear about your outdoor experiences and suggestions for areas for us to address - both in our shop and on the Outdoor Hub - please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Wishing you dirty knees and muddy faces this spring.



Beccy Golding
Editor, The Outdoor Practitioner

ps You can also sign up for our regular e-newsletters which offer even more seasonal activities, news from the field, events and calendar dates - as well as great competitions and discounts. There's a sign up link at the bottom of every page on the website.



Outdoor Clothing

Tips, guides & advice on dressing for spending time outdoors.



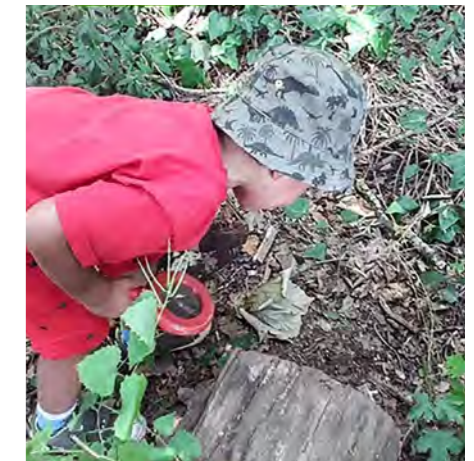
The Breeze Project

Exploring the potential of Forest School as a way of supporting children and young people.



Outdoor case study

Milford Pre School, Hampshire.



How to use a fire steel

All you need to know about fire steels (ferrous rods) and some top tips on how to use them.



Bushcraft knots

How to make and use a clove hitch.



Muddy Faces website

Visit our new look website.

The National Trust

Get your kids closer to nature with '50 things to do before you're 11¾'. There's plenty of outdoor activities to do all year round, from watching the sunset to creating some wild art. Many can be done at home and in your garden.

Campfire bread on a stick

Freshly baked bread smells even better on a campfire! Here's a quick unleavened (non yeast) recipe to try.



MUDDYFACES

Forest School, Outdoor Play and Learning Resources

Please contact us if you would like to contribute an article or share activities in our next issue.

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Disclaimer: Muddy Faces cannot take any responsibility for accidents or damage that occur as a result of following our activities. You are responsible for making sure the activities are conducted safely.

Contributors: Beccy Golding - editor, Neal Jobling - design, Liz Edwards, Clare Whitely - writers, Clare Ruskin - research. With thanks to all the team at Muddy Faces.

There's no such thing as bad weather....

Now you may be expecting this to be followed by "...only inappropriate clothing" (Alfred Wainwright) but I'm favouring a less famous quote "There's no such thing as bad weather, there's just weather and your attitude towards it" (as said by me!) as we delve into the whys and whats of outdoor clothing.

Liz Edwards



Effective outdoor clothing is the most important resource we can invest in

... to enable rich and sustained play and learning outdoors.

Being comfortable outdoors can increase everybody's engagement. There is nothing more effective at distracting you from a deep learning experience than feeling damp or cold, as your body focuses on survival rather than higher cognitive behaviours.

If children and adults are physically comfortable outdoors they can start to explore, observe, play and learn.

Over time both children and practitioners will grow in confidence and barriers will be overcome.

Having the right sort of clothing for your setting will help to embed the outdoors as part of your normal daily practice.

The only thing that can equal clothing in importance is your settings' values and attitudes to the outdoors. Even with a limited outdoor space, with the support of enthusiastic, invested adults and effective clothing, children can access the outdoors for sustained periods, becoming deeply involved in imaginative and creative embodied learning.

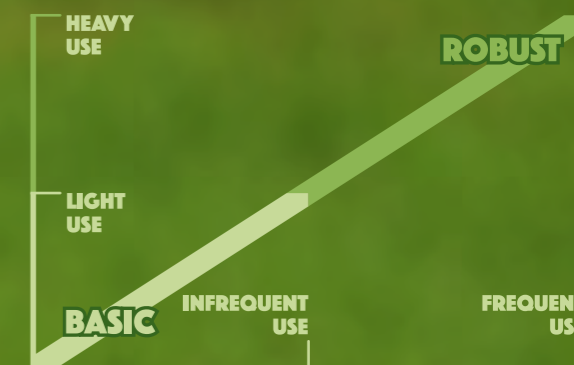
Value for money

Buying outdoor clothing can be a significant investment for any setting. Making the decision to buy the cheapest waterproofs you can find may not be the best decision for your setting.

To achieve best value for money a number of factors need to be considered:

Activity type: What sorts of activity will the clothing need to endure?

Light use - walking and light play such as splashing in puddles and running around - or more **heavy use**, which might include crawling, kneeling, sitting, climbing, sliding, etc.



Frequency: How often is the clothing going to be worn? Occasionally, eg once a month for an hour or so, or all day, every day?

Try before you buy

Most suppliers are happy to send you samples to help you choose the best option and correct sizes for your setting. If you order samples you need to return them if you are not planning to buy.

Case study: realistic expectations

Sheffield Woodland Kindergarten are a fully outdoors nursery offering care for children aged two plus. MJ attended and, when his peers started school in September, his days were increased to 5 days a week to prepare for his move to school after his 5th birthday in the summer term. MJ wore his outdoor dungarees every day. His favourite activity was climbing - he'd climb anything and jump off too! His clothing definitely experienced robust outdoor play. The expectation was that he would get through a couple of pairs of good quality dungarees a year due to the high frequency of use and high level of robust play.

It's a false economy to buy cheaper lightweight brands if clothing will be exposed to a tough environment. The clothing will fail and replacements will be required. But we also need to have realistic expectations of robust clothing, and replacements budgeted for if used frequently.

Muddy Faces Tip

Believe it or not, in the UK, it doesn't rain the majority of the time - it just feels like it does!

Even if it is not raining during your session, the ground is most likely to be damp. Many experienced practitioners encourage the wearing of waterproof bottoms for protection from the wind, mud, damp and vegetation. Dungarees give the added freedom, particularly for younger children, of being able to lie and play on their tummies whilst still protected from the damp.

If you can afford it, we recommend buying **higher quality waterproof trousers or dungarees** to allow for the extra wear and tear trousers get compared to jackets.



Factors to consider

How waterproof clothing looks, feels and works are all very important, and providing clothing that children and staff feel comfortable in will support the success of an outdoor project. Choosing items children can put on and take off without major adult assistance promotes independence and participation.





Tick box	Consideration	Comments
Jackets		
	Removable or adjustable hood	Will the hood stay up? Will it go over a hat?
	Comfortable material around face	Some zips & seams can be rough or spiky on the face
	Zip protected from dirt and rain	Does the zip have a storm flap and is it made of plastic or metal?
	Arm cuffs elastic or velcro	To keep hands free & able to move
	Length of coat	Particularly important for adults who squat or kneel, as a short jacket can expose the lower back
Trousers & dungarees		
	Can straps & braces be adjusted?	This will allow a better fit for different sizes
	Are clips or toggles easy to use?	Elastic or velcro makes it easier
	Detachable elastic stirrup at feet	It is important to have plenty of length in the trouser. If not, when kneeling, force pulls on the bottom of the trouser and they may rip out.
	Width of leg cuff fits over boots	If elastic is too tight to go over boot water will run into the boots
	Waistband and braces not too tight or loose	Too tight they dig in; too loose they fall down
	Height of trouser	A high trouser or dungaree can prevent cold air and moisture from reaching the lower back
All-in-ones (most of the above applies)		
	Length	Make sure there is plenty of length for when children are squatting or kneeling
Other considerations		
	Colour	How a colour shows up the dirt is important. Navy or black are popular for this reason
	Children with particular needs	You might avoid material that rustles, or specific colours

How waterproof is the clothing?

An item of clothing labelled as 'waterproof' can range from keeping out most of the rain for brief showers only, to keeping you dry whilst exposed to rain for longer periods. A clear understanding of how waterproof an item is will help with comparing products effectively.

Look out for our waterproof rating system.

Muddy Faces waterproof clothing rating

-  2000-3000mm 1 drop is light water
-  4000-6000mm resistant down to
-  7000-9000mm 4 drops which
-  10,000-12,000mm is extremely waterproof

Is the material environmentally considerate?

The **OEKO-TEX® Standard 100** is an independent test and certification system which most clothing now follows.

"Human beings are 100% washable & dryable."

Kathryn Solly



Care - cleaning, washing and storage

Outdoor clothing's longevity is important, and a care and storage strategy is vital.

Waterproof clothing, if maintained in the correct way, should last for a long time, giving good value for money. Dirt and residue can build up on your waterproof clothing, affecting the garment's breathability and waterproof efficiency. However, every wash, particularly in a machine, reduces the lifespan of the clothing.

We recommend (for most outdoor clothing) that you rinse under running water or, if water is limited, rinse in a bucket of water then rinse again in a clean bucket of water.

Machine washing

Always check the label of your garment for exact care details. Rinse out any detergents from the machine before washing as detergent and fabric softener destroy the waterproof coating on many fabrics.

Drying

After rinsing the garment, hang it up to air dry completely. Do not use a drying machine.

Storage

Make sure all waterproofs are dry before storing away; this will help prevent them becoming mouldy or musty. Avoid storing in direct sunlight as this can cause damage to the fabric.



Don't forget the grown ups

Clothing is as important for adults as it is for children, possibly more important as children tend to be more active and generate more of their own heat. Adults need to be comfortable in order to facilitate good quality outdoor play and learning. They need to be able to move easily and to regulate their temperature to remain comfortable. If this is not the case,

then a practitioner could become cold, less interactive and less alert, leading to sessions being cut short even though the children are still fully engaged outdoors.

Top tips

From Sheffield Woodland Kindergarten.

- Try setting up a quarterly **clothes swap** for parents

- Holes in socks – don't throw them away - turn them into wrist warmers
- Reuse items in different seasons
- Encourage children to become independent in regulating their own temperature, eg knowing where their drink bottle is, and to get a drink when they feel thirsty, and if they feel cold to add their extra layer.



Shop for outdoor clothing

Muddy Faces are a specialist outdoor clothing supplier with a well-tested range of outdoor clothing and footwear.

Visit the Outdoor Hub

Clothing guides including [dressing for the outdoors](#), [layering](#) and information for parents.



National Association for Environmental Education

NAEE IS A UK CHARITY that has supported the work of schools and teachers since the 1960s. This is when the world first started to become aware of the environmental issues being caused by how we were living on the planet.

Educational responses were clearly needed and NAEE began to support young people's learning. We still do this in a number of ways:

- producing a termly journal for teachers
- providing bursaries to help young people experience the natural world
- writing curriculum reports and guidance
- working with others to support learning about climate and the environment
- supporting a lively website

This work was important before climate change became problematic but is even more so now.

If you would like to support this work by becoming a member or making a donation – or to receive a copy of the latest journal – visit naee.org.uk or contact info@naee.org.uk

“When children spend time playing outdoors in nature, it helps increase their wellbeing – and that of their families. It also means they’re more likely to care for our world and the natural environment. We hope that by providing access to special places, people of all ages will develop a strong connection to these beautiful and historic landscapes.”

NT quote

50
things to do
before you're
11³/₄

What's '50 things to do before you're 11³/₄' all about?

There's a reason birdsong, rainfall and crashing waves are some of our favourite sounds. **Nature makes us happy.** We know that nature is good for our wellbeing and there's plenty of evidence to back this up.



Visit the National Trust's website to find the whole 50 things to do list.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/50-things-to-do

Thank you to the National Trust for kindly providing this article and activity



National Trust

Ways to have a mini-adventure

Prepare yourself for some **wild**



exploration with these top tips.

Things to take with you



1. **Backpack** for storing any found treasures



2. **Water and snacks** to keep you going, like dried fruit and nuts



3. An **envelope** or a **scrapbook** to keep the things you find on the ground such as leaves, feathers and petals.



4. **Coloured pencils and crayons** to take leaf rubbings and notes.



5. A **piece of string** to attach objects to your journey stick.

Ways to explore



What can you hear?

Can you collect fallen feathers from birds who are singing?

Feel as many different textures as you can – soft, rough, smooth, crinkly, squishy



Create a rainbow with found objects



Smell

the flowers

Get down

into the grass and see if there are any hidden bugs or flowers ...



Make a journey stick

- **Find** a twig or stick to collect things that will remind you of your walk.
- **Use the string** to attach feathers, leaves petals or different types of grass.
- *Where* did they come from? **How** did they end up on the ground?
- Please don't pick something off a living plant.



And remember ...

These fun top tips for exploring the wild have been created with your safety in mind.

Remember to wash your hands properly and follow social distancing guidelines.

Wildlife can be *shy*, so it's best to look at animals, birds and bugs **without** touching. Always ask an adult if you're unsure.

Please **take your litter home.**

The Breeze Project

IMPACTING ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING THROUGH FOREST SCHOOL

By Harriet Menter, Scotswood Garden, and Lucy Tiplady, Newcastle University



Even before the current pandemic, we were witnessing a crisis in Child and Adolescent mental health, with increasing numbers of referrals to specialist services. We know that time spent in nature can have a positive impact on people's mental health. This project was designed to really explore the potential of Forest School as a way of supporting **children and young people** (CYP) who struggle in the classroom due to social and emotional difficulties.

Over the last 3 years we have worked with five schools (one first, two primary and two secondary special schools) with CYP whose social and emotional difficulties stop them from achieving their full potential. The CYP attend FS sessions once a week throughout the school year (term time only). The sessions are planned, delivered and evaluated by the Forest School leader and trainer from Scotswood Garden, together with school staff who undertake Forest School training. In our experience **nearly all children and young people love Forest School**; this is particularly significant when working with CYP who almost always express negative emotions in relation to school. CYP who struggle with

the classroom environment tend to find Forest School an easier place to excel, as it provides more of what they require, for example plenty of space, opportunity for lots of movement, lack of pressure, and opportunity to do things in their own way.

"It's a school but different because there's trees to climb. You have a lot more freedom at Forest School, you're allowed to run a lot."
(Year 4 student)

We have used a theory of change approach to assess the impact



of Forest School. We started by discussing with stakeholders (schools and their partners) how they anticipate change will happen, step by step. One of the ultimate aims of this project was "a significant improvement in CYP emotional wellbeing". The steps towards these (of which there were 16) included "CYP are able to persevere at an activity/task and experience success"; "children become more comfortable interacting with peers and a range of adults" and "children develop positive self-narratives".

We collected data to see if there was evidence that each of these steps occurred or not. Evidence included school data such as attendance, behavioural records, social and emotional assessments; interviews with parents, teaching staff and children; researcher observations, session plans and (staff and children's) evaluations.

"You learn how to get along with people, good teamwork. Working on things you could never normally do in school."
(Year 8 student)



The evaluation of year one found clear evidence that many of the "steps" that contribute towards emotional wellbeing had been achieved. Evaluation is ongoing and we are finding more evidence that many of the steps have been achieved. The final evaluation will be published after the end of the project (July 2021).

We have seen each CYP grow and develop in different ways, and witnessed how the freedom of the sessions allowed each CYP to take what they needed from the experience. For example 'Polly' is an adopted child who had a disrupted early life and struggles with relationships. She is a bright, sociable child who has extremely high levels of anxiety which makes it hard for her to engage in learning at school and regulate her behaviour at home. At Forest School, Polly felt more comfortable and proved herself to be an excellent play facilitator for younger children in the group, some of whom struggled with turn taking or listening to other children's ideas during play, resulting in disputes. Polly has a natural ability to gently direct play so that everyone is involved and feels listened to and included. Her enthusiasm for whichever activity is happening also

shined through and other children are keen to be part of what is happening.

"Coming to FS has made a huge difference to Polly. On the FS day, there are no problems getting her up, dressed and out of the house (totally different to other days!) and she is noticeably much calmer, more relaxed and more playful in the evenings. We think FS is raising her self-esteem which was at rock bottom. Now she knows she is able to achieve and successfully manage relationships. She is proud of what she learns and makes which is so lovely to see. Her teacher has also commented that Polly is happier and more confident in school which he attributes to coming to FS. I have no doubt that without FS, it would be a real struggle to get Polly into school at all!"
(Parent)

What worked for Polly at Forest School? The different expectations of the outdoor setting meant that Polly's natural exuberance was not out of place in the way it could be in school. Polly appeared more relaxed and less anxious in the setting and did not display disruptive behaviour seen in the classroom. The child led pedagogy of Forest School allowed Polly to choose to engage in tasks she was interested in and which she

felt she was good at. Polly had time to play and this was encouraged and valued by staff away from the constraints of the curriculum.

"There's more to life than what you think, in a really good way... You can set your mind free."

(Year 9 student)

The full report and the year one evaluation can be downloaded here: <https://scotswoodgarden.org.uk/learn/forest-schools-research>





How to use a Fire Steel

Safety

Carry out an initial risk assessment of the site and planned activities, considering the nature of the group you plan to do the activity with.

Ensure:

- The site being used is appropriate and permission has been gained to light fires
- All safety and emergency procedures and equipment, including first aid provision, are in place
- All participants have correct information, instruction, training and supervision
- Use of fires is supervised at all times by a competent instructor

Preparation

Collect the appropriate tinder, kindling and fuel.

Using a steel striker

1. Ignite tinder

- Hold the steel in front of you at a sloped angle above the tinder
- Scrape the blade down the steel in a long stroke to create a spark - a medium to slow stroke should be sufficient to create a spark. It is not necessary to rapidly and repeatedly scrape down the steel (this will wear it out)
- Aim the sparks at the tinder
- Repeat these strokes until the tinder catches alight

2. Maintain the fire

Slowly and carefully add tinder, kindling and fuel.

3. Extinguish the fire

All fires should be carefully extinguished before leaving the site.

4. Correct storage and checks

- Check all fire equipment is accounted for

- Make sure it is clean, and in good working order
- Store securely



Handy hints:

When creating a spark some people find it useful to rest the base of the block on something hard to make it more stable. Others prefer to hold it to get the spark as close as possible to the tinder. Try both ways.



Using a magnesium fire steel

- Use the serrated edge to draw long strokes along the magnesium block on the opposite side to the flint
- Scrape off curly pieces of magnesium
- Collect magnesium on a piece of dry bark or a cotton wool pad
- Sprinkle the shavings over the tinder or add tinder to the magnesium

Bear in mind that the spark will not be hot enough to burn you until it hits the magnesium so try not to be nervous of it!



Magnesium burns at a **very high** temperature so ensure the magnesium is being used appropriately at all times. Fire lighting can be enjoyable and rewarding but always follow safe fire lighting guidelines.

TIP - Place the base of the block on something hard such as a tree stump. This allows you to press down firmly, making it easier to scrape off slivers without your fingers being under the scraper.

What is a ferrous rod fire steel?

The ferrous rod fire steel is a very engaging tool used to light fires in many different situations.

Ferrous rods are made of ferrocerium, also known in Europe as Auermetall. The name ferrocerium comes from its main components: iron (ferrum) and cerium. Cerium is a highly elastic, rare earth metal, iron-grey in colour. Cerium has a low ignition temperature

of between 150 - 180°C (302 - 356°F). Ferrocerium is a synthetic alloy that is highly pyrophoric (capable of igniting spontaneously in air). During the striking process small shavings are removed at high speed, this oxidizes very quickly in contact with the air,

the heat of the friction ignites the oxidized shavings and the burning metal is the spark. Ferrocerium is commonly used in lighters and as fire lighters for survival, this is due to its ability to spark in adverse weather conditions.

How to choose your Fire Steel



Often the choice of fire steel comes down to personal preference. There are a few things to consider:

How will the tool be held?

Many small fire steels have been designed to be lightweight and compact – ideal for survival situations. There are now fire steels on the market that have been specially designed for easier holding positions, such as our Dragons Sneeze.

Quality of ferrous rods

This is normally represented in the price of the fire steel. If it looks the same size but is much cheaper it is likely that the quality of rod is not as good.

Often the bigger heavier rod steels are better value for money as they are normally twice as expensive as a smaller one of the same brand but could have up to three times as much ferrocerium material in them.

Standard fire steel

Most ferrous rod fire steels are designed in a similar way, where the

rod is encased in a plastic pad at one end. This pad is held in a pincer grip between forefinger and thumb of the less dominant hand. The striker is also held in a pincer grip, by the dominant hand.

Benefits: Small and compact, making them ideal for travel and survival.

Disadvantages: This grip can be tricky to master for young children or anyone with any sort of dexterity issues.

Dragons Sneeze fire steel

Benefits: Designed to overcome the dexterity difficulties that are associated with a standard steel. It has a large comfortable handle, for both the rod and the striker. The long connecting string offers freedom of movement, and a high quality ferrous rod and striker ensure successful results. Its size and brightly coloured string makes it easier to keep track of. A very high success rate for striking. Many leaders have a Dragons Sneeze

available in case an individual is struggling with a standard striker.

Disadvantages: Not as small as other tools for situations where size and weight are critical. It is a bigger investment than many standard steels, but essentially you are purchasing two separate tools. The striker can be used even after the rod has worn out. Due to the stronger grip the large handle offers, excess force can easily be applied, if pressed down onto the ground this is likely to cause the rod to snap.



There are lots of fire lighting, kits, and outdoor cooking resources available from our [online shop](#).

For a fire safety guide, fire pit designs and outdoor cooking inspirations visit our [Outdoor Hub](#).



Ingredients

Makes approximately 10–15 small (thin sticks) or 5–10 large (thicker sticks)

300g (2 cups) self raising flour
240ml (1 cup) milk (or enough to bind into dough)
½ tsp salt
75g (2 tbsp) butter (optional)
1–2 tsp sugar (optional)
Flavourings of your choice – herbs, spices, cheese etc (optional)

Special dietary needs:

Gluten free – try a mix of 3/4 rice and 1/4 gram flour or other gluten free flour (you might need to experiment a bit and use a binder such as egg).

Dairy free – substitute butter for plant based oil and use water instead of milk.



Preparation

Build a fire and let it die down to embers. (see [building a cooking fire](#) in the Outdoor Hub)

You will need

- a greenwood stick to wrap the dough around tubes such as bamboo or a metal tube on the end of a wooden stick allow the bread to bake from the inside out
- hand washing facilities
- tubs for transporting the ingredients – screw top beakers are great for this
- bowls for mixing

Step 1 – make the mix

Mix the flour, salt and sugar in a large bowl. If using butter – rub into the flour mix until it resembles a fine crumble.

Step 2 – add flavourings

Add any additional ingredients – here are a few ideas: oregano, rosemary, thyme, toasted garlic, cajun spice, garlic powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, a handful of cheese.

Step 3 – add wet ingredients

Add the liquid a little at a time and stir the mixture. Eventually it will form a soft, slightly sticky dough. Knead the dough for a short time in the bowl (if it is too sticky add a bit more flour).

The final consistency should be slightly softer than playdough.

Step 4 – wrap your stick

Tear off golf ball-sized pieces and roll into a sausage. Squidge these onto a stick, wrapping the top back around onto itself to make it hold firm. Then twist the dough down the stick and wrap at the bottom to secure again.



Step 5 – cook

It is important that the fire has died down before starting to cook (flames will quickly blacken the outside). A medium-sized fire that has died down with plenty of hot embers is ideal.

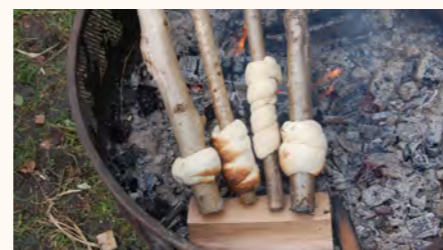
Hold the dough over the embers (not too close) and regularly turn the stick. If you want the bread to be nicely baked then patience is required. If the dough is put too close to the heat the outside browns but the inside remains doughy.

Time taken to bake will be dependent on a number of factors such as the thickness of the dough, but allow around 15–20 mins to bake.

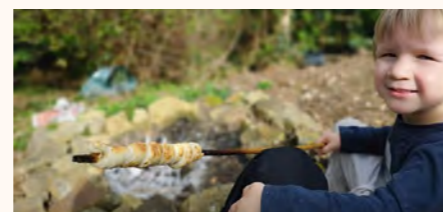
Tip

Cooking can seem like a long time to wait for some children/groups and often they get tempted to move their bread closer to the heat to speed the process up.

If you prepare a stand that can be used to hold the bread at the correct distance above the embers, then the sticks can be left and other jobs/activities can be done while they are cooking slowly.



It is important that at least one person stays to keep an eye on them in case the embers flare up or die down and are not emitting enough heat. Encourage the children/group to return roughly every five minutes to turn the sticks to ensure even cooking.



Eat warm with butter or make your own wild garlic butter and dip in your campfire vegetable soup. Yum Yum!



Sheffield & Rotherham



The Wildlife Trusts say: 'We are passionate about outdoor education! We know that children that are connected to nature are happier, healthier and more creative. We also know that 92% of people think that access to nature and wildlife is important for children. So we're working with schools across the UK to try to make every child wild.'

Some of the services offered to schools include: Wild School Award, visits to nature reserves, on-site lessons at schools, Forest Schools, Teacher training and improvement to school grounds.

For example Muddy Faces local Trust: **Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust** have an outdoor learning team that offers a **FREE** hour long taster session at your school, and full or half day Outdoor Learning sessions that you can buy in. Topics include: The Stone Age, Outdoor Adventure (KS2), Natural Art, Habitat Studies (All ages), and Exploring Seasons (FDN, KS1).

(They also have a [Nature Adventures](#) page on their website with lots of ideas you can do outside, and you can follow them on social media for regular updates, videos and free downloads!)

Make a note for April 2021 and sign up for the [30 Days Wild](#) national campaign.

Visit www.wildsheffield.com to find out more.



You can also explore wildlife with **wildlife watch** club www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Bushcraft knots

Clove hitch

A really useful and incredibly strong self-tightening knot that can be used in many different scenarios.

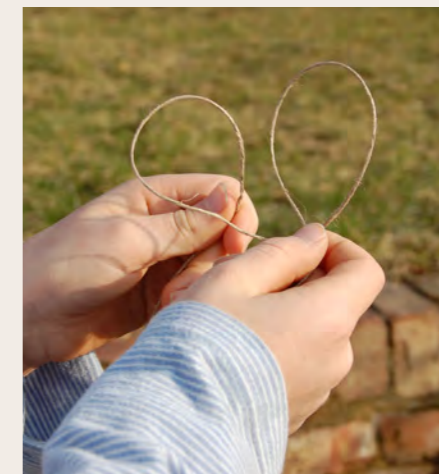
What you'll need: string and knife or scissors

Preparation: You don't need much to prepare for practising your clove hitch, just a piece of string or cord and a stick to slide it on.

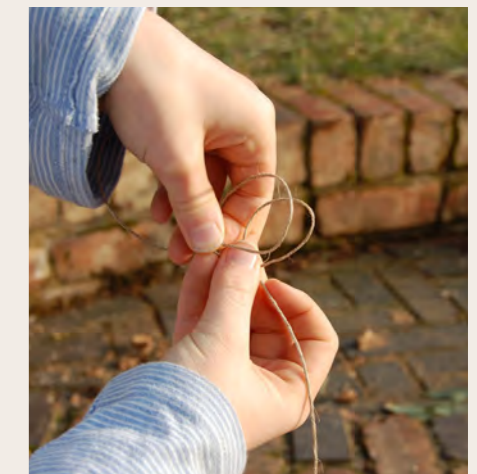
When working with groups it's really handy to have 1 metre lengths of cord ready and available for the group to practise with - they are also great to give out for people to fidget with when listening.



STEP 1 Create a loop - we call this loop the **p**. The descending stem of the **p** should sit over the top of the loop.



STEP 2 Create another loop to the right of the **p**. We call this the **q**. The descending stem of the **q** goes over the top of the loop. If you pull it apart slightly it creates a spiral.



STEP 3 Slide your **q** behind your **p**. If you slide it the wrong way, when you slip it on the stick it will all unravel, so it's easy to see if you have gone wrong.



STEP 4 Slip the loops onto your stick. If done loosely it should look like our photo, with a diagonal bar going across the incoming and exiting strings. If it's not correct it will probably all just spring apart.



STEP 5 Pull the knot tighter. A clove hitch is a self-tightening knot and will stay gripped. Have a little play with it - it is incredibly strong. When pulling in the same direction the strings pull away but if you pull the string back down in the opposite direction the knot can slip.



Take it further:
The clove hitch can be threaded or slipped on. In this example we've shown how to slip it on. Make sure you become familiar with the threaded clove hitch as well. Keep practising the clove hitch - it is so useful to use - we find we use it all the time, from tying string onto sticks for leaf mobiles, to constructing shelters.



Milford Pre School, Hampshire: Outdoor case study

It is a team effort at Milford School where the pre school and school share their 'Little Wood' site. Both are lucky enough to have designated FS leaders who also trained together!

Pre school children use the area every morning so it's a huge part of their day. The children especially enjoy:

- the **pond** where they dip for newts and during the spring they take some frogspawn to their playroom so they can observe the changes and replace the froglets when they have grown 
- **lighting the fire** and **cooking their snack**; pancakes and vegetable chilli are the most popular!
- learning how to build, light and maintain the **kelly kettle** for hand washing water
- using the bow saw to saw wood and then using tools such as **palm drills** and **hammers** to construct any chosen creations, alongside **loose parts** such as buttons or bottle tops 
- and of course the **mud kitchen**, **tree climbing** and construction is totally **child led** and much enjoyed!

Parents get involved when pre school hold **termly "little wood" sessions**. They get to hear about and see

all the amazing things the children are doing and how they learn; they are so impressed! The school are hoping to start those again soon, in the meantime pictures are sent home and the Facebook site is regularly updated. **Parents** are keen to get on board with helping **raise funds** for equipment or maintenance, such as when we took down an old chicken coop to expand the mud kitchen to add a dining room!

Ofsted loved it too! They said:

"Children regularly take part in forest school activities in 'Little Wood'. Children show an excellent understanding of the safety rules when using the area. They help practitioners identify areas where they need to take care, such as where the new daffodils are growing. Children take part in a vast range of exciting and stimulating activities. These include pond dipping, using a hammer and nails as well as cooking on an open fire. Children adore the opportunity to risk take, such as when they climb along balancing ropes between trees. They love to explore and to learn about the world around them. For example, children take part in a bird hunt using binoculars. Children confidently identify the different birds by listening to their birdsong"

Ofsted (2020)



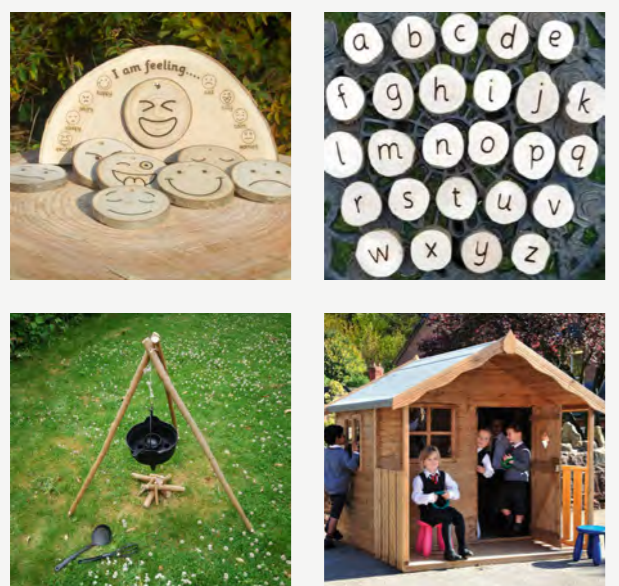
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Since 2007 Muddy Faces has been dedicated to selling high quality inspiring resources for outdoor practitioners, with a particular focus on Forest Schools. In 2018 we launched our Outdoor Hub - a massive resource full of free activities and information to support families, schools and outdoor practitioners to get outside for play, learning and wellbeing. In 2020 we launched our wonderful new website, combining our shop site and Outdoor Hub better than ever before. There's so much here - do come and explore!

Shop

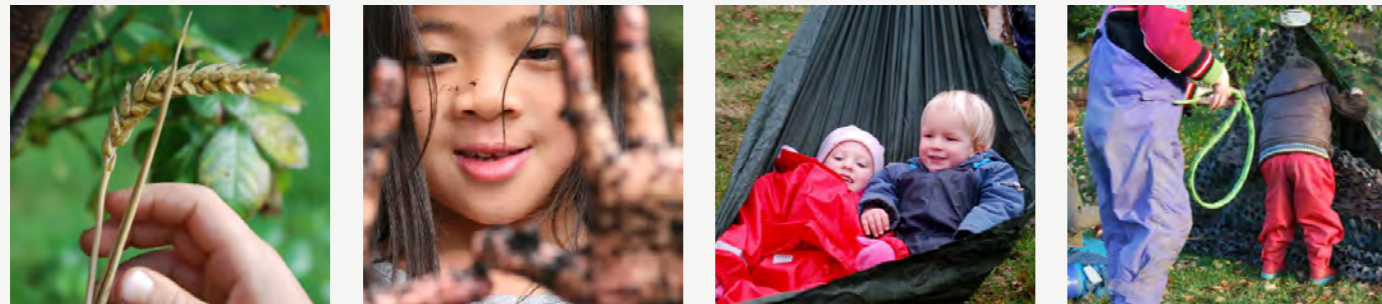
Discover all that Muddy Faces has to offer for children of all ages! Our outdoor play and education materials are designed to help children connect with the outdoors.

There's a diverse selection of practical, educational and inspiring products, including playhouses, shelters, sheds, clothing, footwear, tools, fire & cooking, den building, curriculum learning, books, art & craft materials, and mud kitchens.



Outdoor Hub

The Outdoor Hub is a massive FREE resource filled with activities, information and events to support you to get outdoors. Connecting to the elements, nature and each other has incredible, positive health and wellbeing benefits.



Activities

We have hundreds of outdoor activities to explore, from simple, fun, less-than-an-hour arts and crafts, to more complex projects that'll keep you going for a few hours or even weeks; plus a range of themed inspiration pages, technical guides and video demonstrations.

There is something for everyone in our activities section including sun print bunting, wooden discs, leaf decorations, natural dyes, foraging, pewter casting and campfire cooking.




News

All the latest from Muddy faces

About us

We are passionate about the outdoors and we strive to ensure that you have an inspiring and positive experience.

We are nationally-recognised for our innovative content and products, and our excellent customer service. We aim to maintain these high standards and are always aspiring to do better - whether this is by reducing our environmental impact or ensuring that you receive what you expect, within timescales that we can deliver.



Events

Find a variety of different events all associated with being outdoors, including training & annual days.



JUNE 29