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## The third hand

Posted by MarkF - 03/15/2007 04:53pm

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OK, confession time. Anybody out there besides me use the "third hand" while climbing - that is, holding stuff for a moment or two with your teeth? I always seem to find it useful to hold an end of (unloaded) throwline, or some other small lightweight item I need out while a bunch of other stuff is out too. No mishaps yet...

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Posted by NickfromWI - 03/15/2007 08:56pm

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Mark, don't put rope in your mouth! I never do it because I can't get this picture out of my head. Maybe someone can find a link...I don't have it. But this picture will never leave my mind.

The picture is of a rock climber who fell while using the "third hand" to hold the rope while he attempted to clip in.

The picture is of him, smiling, and all his front teeth were missing and his bloody gums could be seen.

It made an impression on me.

love  
nick

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Posted by Electrojake - 03/15/2007 10:27pm

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Yeah. . .

I know you're not supposed to, but once in a while I too use the 3rd hand to hold a glove, clip, or line.

Additionally, I have been told many times by co-workers "NEVER wrap a rope or line around any part of you that your not willing to lose" namely your hands.

I also have a bad habit of stepping on a line (usually a steel cable) to get an idea of just how much load is actually on it when doing a tricky rigging job.

So yes Mark, I do it and yes Nick, it's a real bad thing to do.

Anybody else care to fess-up?

I'll bet there's a lot of poor safety habits going on out there!

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Posted by Leon - 03/16/2007 02:34am

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I will admit that on occasion I do hold unloaded ropes and throwline with my teeth. Most of the time, though, if I need that "third hand" I'll try to grip with my curled over lips, which I figure is much safer. A rope burned lip is better than ripped out teeth!

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Posted by MarkF - 03/16/2007 09:32am

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Rope in the mouth does seem like a particularly bad idea, and I've never tried it even on a rope I believe to be unloaded. As the first post said, this is for small lightweight items like an end of a throwline or a glove. Anything metal is likely to give the oral surgeon some business.

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Posted by moss - 03/16/2007 10:05am

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With a little practice you can tie a slip knot into a rope with one hand and clip it into an accessory biner. To put a rope in your mouth you need a hand anyway so there's no need to do it.

If you're grabbing the rope with your teeth then you're having serious rope management issues :-)

It's difficult to talk to other climbers with stuff in your mouth.  
-moss

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## Third Hand Holding

Posted by Oldtimer - 03/16/2007 03:01pm

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Tried it before and had similar experience to what Nick describes while holding the the throw line with my teeth. I almost got them re-aranged. So now I just clip stuff to the small carabiner on the saddle and let it take the hit.

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