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Posted by moss - 05/09/2007 12:46am

Originally posted by tree boy

Is it better to have an attachment point near your legs or at the top edge of the harness? I have seen it both ways and was wondering what the difference was. I was also wondering if soft attachment points are any better than metal ones.

Need more information on what kind of tree climbing you want to do to answer specific questions. Harnesses are designed to optimize for specific climbing styles and techniques. You are asking about arborist work harnesses. They are not designed for rec climbing. Doesn't mean they can't be used for that but they are not as comfortable as the harnesses designed specifically for rec climbing. While rec climbing and arborist climbing have many things in common they are very different. An arborist wants to get in and out of the tree as quickly as possible. Time is money and tree work is extremely hazardous. Saddle comfort takes a back seat to considerations of climber efficiency. Rec climbers may spend many hours in the tree in one climb session. There is no pressure or need to go fast. There is no pressure to get out fast. There are much longer hang times. When you hang on the harness away from the tree leg pain starts fast with a typical arborist harness. Arborists don't hang around when they're working. They move fast and have a lot tree contact with their legs to take harness pressure off their thighs. This is very tiring for a long climb. Try standing on a branch on one leg for five minutes, your leg will start to shake and your muscles will cramp up. To solve this hang on the harness, you will be able to stay in the tree much longer, but your harness better be comfortable. Rec climbers ideally have less leg/foot contact with the tree during ascent and descent for this reason. they can climb efficiently, become less tired and be more comfortable. All this is important since the goal of the rec climber is to enjoy the climb not suffer. This climbing style also lowers climber impact on the tree and associated mosses, lichens and epiphytes if present. Hope this helps clarify.  
-moss

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## Soft loops vs Metal D's

Posted by Oldtimer - 05/09/2007 12:01pm

Quote:

"I was also wondering if soft attachment points are any better than metal ones"

Soft handles creates less noise while in the tree. I have used both systems (Basic saddle vs Ultralight saddle) now and prefer soft loops over metal D's connectors. Also they do not damage the biner as much as metal to metal connections.

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Posted by moss - 05/09/2007 12:41pm

Sorry for my long semi-rant. Oldtimer covered your second question.

Some arborist harnesses have floating D attachment points (or something similar). These usually consist of a rope or webbing bridge which holds the floating or sliding D. The ends of the bridge attach to the harness at balance points between the leg and waist. The floating D allows the climber to quickly change body position side-to-side from vertical to horizontal or upside down. This type of harness attachment can feel unstable for a beginning climber.

Another type (Petzl Navajo comes to mind) has a center ring attachment on the belt. this harness will tend to hold you upright and you'll have to fight the harness to get into side-to-side horizontal positions.

A third variation is multiple fixed attachments along the belt from hip to hip.

The NT saddles are a variation on the center attachment. There is a sliding D on the leg pad attachment points. This allows more lateral positional mobility than the Navajo for example.

There is no way to know which is best for you without trying one out. Any of them will work. Many climbers will go through a couple harness types over several years before they settle on what's best for their climbing style.

-moss

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Posted by Sitka - 05/10/2007 12:15am

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Originally posted by tree boy

Are soft attachment points any more comfortable than steel?

you raise an interesting point that I hadn't given much thought to, but the steel attachment points on my harness are far less comfortable than the soft webbing loops. When loaded, the steel can push into my sides.

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