

## HOW TO PITCH A TENT



Pitching a tent may look easy, but for many it isn't. If you're not familiar with pitching your tent, this can be disastrous, especially if your first attempt is on some wild, wet and windy moor.

Ideally you should practice pitching your tent before you embark on the hillside, this could save you hours after a long days hike. For many beginners this may not be a viable option. Maybe you have borrowed a tent from a friend or you local DofE group? If time does not permit a test run, at least ensure you have the full kit in the bag before you set off, carrying spare string and tent pegs could be a good idea too to be doubly sure!

We have looked into the various types of tents, to help with the potentially 'unknown' pitch.

Most conventional tents are usually what are called 'double skin'. That is, they usually consist of an inner tent and a flysheet (outer tent). If the tent instructions state that you need to pitch the flysheet first, it has the great advantage of it being the waterproof part of the tent so that the inner can be pitched without the worry of getting it wet. Having erected and secured the flysheet, the inner tent is then attached which can require a little crawling around inside.

The alternative method is to pitch the inner tent first. These types of tent are usually easier and quicker to pitch and, as the flysheet is thrown over the already erected inner sheet, it requires no crawling around inside. However, the major disadvantage is that the inner tent has no protection during pitching and, if it's raining, it may end up getting soaked before the flysheet can be attached.

There are a few tents that can be stored and pitched with the inner attached to the outer. This makes them very easy to pitch and keeps the inner tent dry during wet weather pitching. However, if the outer tent is wet it's always advisable to separate the inner from the outer before packing and to let both parts dry out before storing.

When pitching a tent where the flysheet is put up first, make sure that all the poles are threaded through the correct sleeves before you attempt to secure the poles in the eyelets or rings of the flysheet. This is especially important if the tent is a large one.

Most of the large dome tents require two people to make pitching easy and quick and, for some, it's useful to have an extra person, possibly a child, to go under the flysheet in order to take some of the weight of the fabric and then it becomes easier to make the fabric taut and to connect the pole ends to the eyelets or rings of the flysheet.

Dome tents are self-supporting and so you have the added bonus of re-adjusting it to the best position before pegging it out. Always ensure that you have the adequate amount of pegs and secure the tent with guy lines, especially if the weather conditions aren't good. Pegs should be pushed in by hand (or you can use a mallet if the ground is quite firm) at roughly a 45% degree angle and you should always remember never to remove a peg by pulling it out with the guy rope. This can often rip the tent so if you've pushed the peg in too far, the best method for removing it is by hooking it with another peg.

### **Packing away your camp**

When striking (packing up) camp, you may find that the outer sheet is damp, either due to rain or condensation. If possible, separate the inner and outer and spread them to dry in a suitable place while you continue with the rest of your packing away and other tasks. The inner tent should be dry on all areas except, perhaps, the base of the groundsheet and should be packed away carefully to ensure that it does not come into contact with a damp or dirty flysheet or dirty pegs.

Sometimes, it's not always possible to pack your tent away completely dry if it's been raining yet you have to continue on to your next campsite the following morning. If you are going to be using the tent again the following day, that shouldn't be a problem but the important thing is to ensure that, as soon as you can, you fully dry out your tent to prevent mildew forming which can literally eat away at the fabric, destroy the waterproofing and, in extreme cases, can totally ruin your tent. You can buy recommended tent cleaners which you can apply to your tent once a trip is over but these will not repair a tent that's been heavily affected by mildew. If you take care of your tent then, whether it costs you £50 or £500, it should provide you with many years of use.

[www.campingexpert.co.uk](http://www.campingexpert.co.uk)