

# SPLITTING WOOD

They say that firewood warms you twice: once when you cut it and the second time when you burn it. For sure you can buy pre-cut wood, but a Cragman like you needs to be prepared for any situation. Ready to cut a log into quarters to make that roaring fire?

## FLIP OVER FOR YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE



### EARN THIS NUGGET

- With your parents' permission and observation, split ten good logs into quarters.
- Come home without any injuries and enough wood to build a monumental fire.

LEVEL K

B-5

While you can use an axe to split a log, it's not really the right tool for the job. Typically a splitting wedge is used. If you think you've never seen a splitting wedge, you may be wrong. To the untrained eye they look just like axes, only the cutting head has a bit more of a wedge shape so it will split the wood rather than cut into the wood. The last thing you really want is a blade buried into the top of a log and you can't get it out again.

Now, splitting wood is done after the trunk has been sawn into cylinders that are typically 12" to 18" long. Usually these are too big to be thrown on a fire as is, so they need to be split, probably into quarters.

Wood has a grain. So bringing the wedge hard onto the top face will split that log. As long as you have enough force and the log isn't too "green."

Place the log on a firm surface, not concrete, as this will really blunt the blade if the head strikes it. Ideally an old tree stump works well.

Swing the wedge down hard (start softly to begin with until you get used to it). Remember safety first and wear gloves. You'll get blisters otherwise. It may take you quite a few strikes before the log splits, especially if it has a knot in it. But every time you strike, you are weakening it, even if you don't think you are.

One trick I like to use is to stand the log inside an old tire or two. This stops it from falling over and stops the quarters from flying off when you strike through.

As always, safety first. While a splitting wedge is not super sharp, it will go through your foot without blinking. So you need to be very careful and make sure no one is near you, in your "Kill Zone," as you are doing this.

