How to get the best of your throwing axes

Choosing the Right Wood

- **Use soft woods:** Choose softer wood species like pine, spruce, poplar, or cottonwood, which naturally absorb impact and let the blade sink in easily. Avoid hard woods like oak or dry eucalyptus, which cause dangerous bounce-backs.
- **Check the thickness:** Ensure your log round is at least 6 inches (15 cm) thick so it absorbs the kinetic energy and doesn't split apart too quickly.
- **Mist with water:** Spray the target face with water using a spray bottle or hose before and after throwing. Moisture softens the wood fibers, allows the axe blade to bite deeper, and helps the wood "heal" and close up holes as it absorbs the water.
- **Soak it occasionally:** If the log is completely dried out, lay it flat and let it soak in water or leave it out in a light rain for a short time to rehydrate the core.
- **Avoid permanent dampness:** Do not leave the log permanently soaked or sitting in mud, as a completely waterlogged or rotting log will splinter too easily and fall apart. Store it in a cool, dry place when not in use.

How Often to Sharpen

Axe can be oiled to maintain appearance and deter rust

- **Regular Maintenance:** Touch up the edge every few hundred throws or when you notice bounces.
- **Damage Repair:** File out major nicks, chips, or burrs immediately using a sharpening stone or file.

Basic Sharpening Steps

- **Use a Stone:** Rub a medium-to-coarse sharpening stone along the bevel in circular motions.
- **Keep it Cool:** Avoid high-speed grinders that heat up and ruin the steel's hardness.
- **Remove Burrs:** Finish with a fine-grit stone or sandpaper to smooth the edge.

Standard Distances

The standard throwing distance for a hatchet is 12 feet (3.6 meters) from the target face

- **Hatchet (Standard):** 12 feet from the fault line to the target, which allows a normal hatchet to complete one full rotation.
- **General Range:** Most recreational venues and leagues set their lines between 12 and 15 feet to accommodate different thrower heights and axe lengths

How to Adjust Your Distance

- **Under-rotation:** If the axe head hits the handle or bounces off because it did not rotate enough, take a small step back (about half a foot).
- **Over-rotation:** If the axe spins too many times and fails to stick blade-first, step slightly forward.
- **Consistency:** Keep your throwing style and power steady while adjusting your foot position rather than changing your swing