

West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association

Walling Ways of Working



Scottish Charity SCO 39439

Ways of Working

This guide covers the correct ways of working on a walling project and should be read and understood by all trainees prior to attending a training course.

The course is supervised by trained instructors and you should always follow their advice and instruction.

Safety

You will be working in close proximity to other trainees, and you need to be aware the impact of your actions on both yourself and fellow trainees as follows:-

1. If a stone is too heavy – ask for help
2. Keep your working area as clear as possible next to the wall, to avoid tripping on stones at your feet.
3. When lifting large stones; keep your feet apart, back straight and head back – lift in one fluid movement with your elbows locked and keep the stone close to your body.
4. When placing large stones; place the stone on the wall one end first and then the other to avoid trapping your fingers – the stone can then be adjusted to the final position.
5. When placing small stones; work at a steady pace and take rests as necessary, be aware of repetitive strain from picking, turning and placing stones on the wall over a long period.
6. When dismantling a wall be aware of possible collapse, and make sure you have a clear area of escape and that the other wallers are aware of your actions.
7. Keep tools within easy reach but not where you may trip over them, large items such as shovels, picks and bars should be placed away from the work area when not in use.

Equipment

All the equipment that you need will be provided, and will consist of hammers, chisels / bolsters, picks, shovels, pinch bars and metal marking pins. If you are not sure of the appropriate tool to use and how to use it, you should ask the instructors. As a general guide the following should be observed when using equipment:-

1. Make sure that you have adequate space to use the tool and that your fellow wallers are aware of what you are doing, particularly when swinging picks and hammers. Be aware that when a stone is hit with a tool, fragments of stone can travel long distances and that eye protection should be worn.
2. Stones should not be worked with a hammer on the wall as this can destabilise the wall and increase the risk of fragmentation. Stones should be lifted off the wall and shaped prior to replacing on the wall.

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3. Metal marking pins and string will be used to layout the dimensions of the wall and care should be taken to avoid the ends of the marking pins, which will be protected with tennis balls.

Clothing & Protection

Clothing should be comfortable and provide adequate protection from both the Scottish climate and abrasion from the stones whilst building the wall, as follows:-

1. Boots with adequate protection are essential to protect your feet, the best boots are those with steel toe caps, the boots should also have adequate grip to work on wet and muddy soil.
2. Gloves provide protection for your hands from the stones, and from any hazards such as broken glass when dismantling the wall. Gloves also provide adequate grip on the tools such as hammers and picks to prevent slippage.
3. Clothing should be water and wind proof. The course is held on an exposed site and can be subject to rapid changes in the weather; therefore, it is best to take layers of clothes that can be adjusted to suit the climate. In the summer months it is advisable to take a hat and sun cream as you may be working for a prolonged period in direct exposure to the sun.
4. As well as taking lunch and refreshments for the breaks, you should also take supplies of water to drink. On hot days it is recommended that you have access to 1 litre of water as the exertion of walling can lead to dehydration.
5. Eye protection goggles are provided and should be worn when working the stone with tools. When lifting and placing stones on the wall, prescription or sun spectacles are generally adequate to provide protection from dust and debris.

Building

Walling is a collaborative process and you will need to work in cooperation with your instructors and fellow trainees on the wall as follows:-

1. You will be assigned a place on the wall and you will need to ensure that your build fits with the wallers on either side or opposite you in terms of joins and level.
2. The instructors will provide advice and assistance. In some cases where the instructors consider the build is unstable. it may be necessary to strip and rebuild a section. This is to ensure the overall stability of the wall.

As a final point –

If in doubt ask the Instructor