

## Forged Friend Placements

Forged Friends are the original cams and have been used across the globe on some of the most groundbreaking ascents; from The Phoenix to Separate Reality these cams turned dreams into reality.

And although less common now than they were they are still a valued and valuable piece of kit.

In terms of placements, as a general rule, Forged Friends are equally adept and as safe as Technical Friends in most situations. However, there are times when more care needs to be taken and the diagrams to the right show some instructions.

### Horizontal Cracks & Placements –

This is where more care is needed. As a general principle you should avoid horizontal placements where the stem is loaded over an edge. However, the deeper the Forged Friend is placed the safer the placement will be. [See Figure 1.](#)

**Figure 2** is much more dangerous and is to be avoided unless there is absolutely no alternative.

The difference between these placements is due to the leverage on the head and this is shown by the letters **A** and **B**.

But with experience you will be able to judge how vulnerable a horizontal placement is. So dependent on the downward angle and the protrusion of the stem out of the crack, safe horizontal placements are possible for the experienced climber.

Wild Country never give absolutes on safety when placing Forged Friends in horizontal placements and the safest practice is to always use a “Gunk’s tie off” [see Fig 3.](#) This essentially reduces the leverage down to a manageable level.

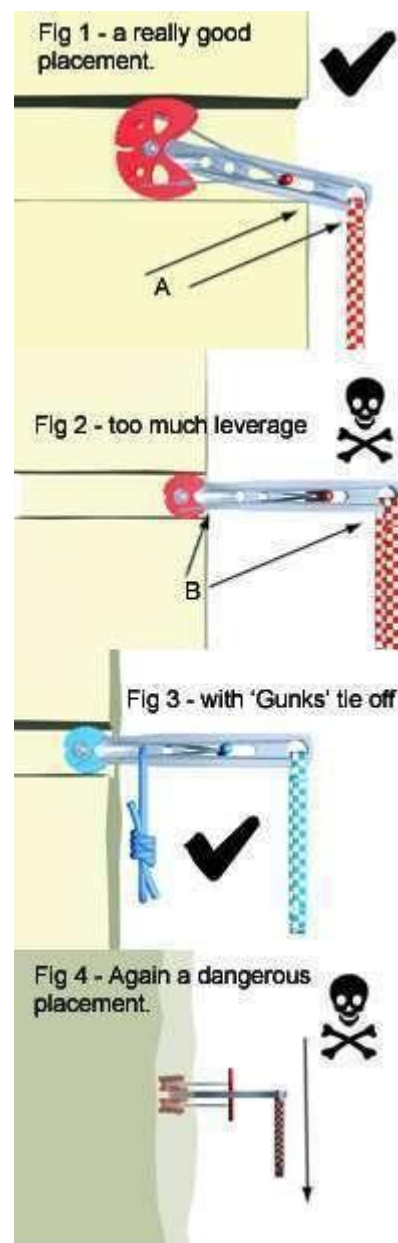
To learn more about the 'Gunks Tie-Off' [click here](#)

### Vertical Cracks & Placements –

The same simple rules apply here as for Technical Friends - basically as long as the cam is placed in the correct 'plane of rotation' to the crack - [see Fig B below](#) - then all is good.

The main concern is if a Friend is 'bottomed out' in a crack - [see Fig 4](#) - and could not rotate to the correct plane. This again should be avoided at all costs as it will put maximum leverage at an unsafe angle.

Essentially the safest option is to have the stem of the cam as closely aligned with the direction of the force in the event of a fall.... shown for vertical cracks very if you [see Fig B below in the Tech Friend section.](#)



## Technical & Helium Friend Placements

As expected when Technical Friends came on the scene they did away with many of the caveats concerning Friend placements that we have discussed above.

The new flexibility that was built into the stem enabled much more radical placements to be made and the horizontal crack no longer held such terrors. So placements like in **Fig C** below, could be made once again opening up more opportunities.

However, must not be taken for granted and there are still important points to be made. The first is that flexibility did not make the cams indestructible and after any fall which bends the axle like in **Fig C** it is imperative to inspect the Friend thoroughly. If there is any damage to the wire rope stem it must be retired.

Friends aren't indestructible and even though they will take a heck of a lot of use abuse and impact inspection is essential.

The other points to make are mainly to re-iterate about trying to ensure that the stem of a Friend is as much as possible orientated in the direction of any possible fall - **See Fig B**. As opposed to **Fig D**, which even for Technical or new Helium Friends is not the healthiest situation.

Finally, one of the simplest points to make is that all Friends will benefit from placing in at the mid-point of their expansion range - **see Fig A** - which makes them the most secure and gives the placer an easy target for size picking.

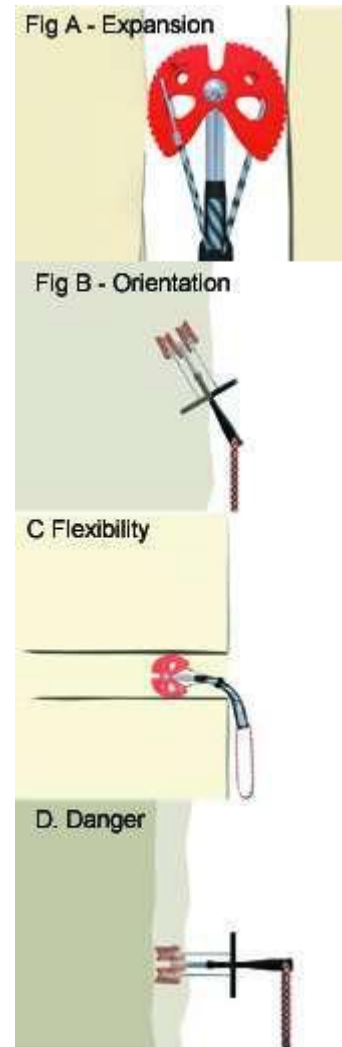
### Getting them out

We've all done it; crammed in a unit in desperation knowing it will be a real nightmare for the second. These are the rules. When leading, try not to place them in cracks that are too tight. When seconding, assess the placement before doing anything - you might save yourself a lot of trouble. If it looks or feels as though it's stuck, squeeze the trigger as hard as you can.

If this does not work and the unit seems well and truly stuck, ask for a tight rope and/or clip into another piece so that you can use both hands, or if on a shorter climb, rappel down later. Concentrate on one pair of cams at a time and try to feel or see if there is any movement.

Try using a nut key to free the cams. Use a pair of wires looped round the trigger to pull on the trigger bar whilst pressing or tapping the end of the stem to release the cams. Try moving or tapping the cams sideways - in the direction the axle is pointing.

Finally don't get angry, don't give up - and don't damage the rock as some people have - as much as a Friend costs it's not as valuable as the flake on your favourite route...



ZEROS - for more information about these radical mini Friends and their placements please go to Zeros - Use Strength and Function. Zeros are different and it is better to read all about them in one place - even if these same general placement rules apply.