



## Tree Kickers



Tethering a trunk or branch within a watercourse can be a great way of installing woody material, whenever retention is important, particularly in higher flood risk areas, reducing the risk of downstream blockages. In less sensitive locations hinging (see WTT habitat sheet on Hinging) is more appropriate.

The technique is relatively simple. A trunk or limb is felled, then a hole is created within the trunk and its stump, or another bankside stump, to create fixing points. The hole is ideally created with a drill or petrol auger, or with a chainsaw operated by someone suitably trained in making plunge cuts. An appropriately robust length of steel cable, usually 8-12 mm diameter (c. 4-10 tonne breaking strain), is looped through both holes, and secured with steel cable clamps (as shown above). Note the tighteners of the clamps are fitted on the main cable side, not the tag end.

The length of cable should be kept to a minimum so that the kicker does not move excessively in high flow, or end up deposited on the bank. To achieve this, the trunk/branch should be maneuvered as close to the stump/anchor point as possible, either through dragging it into place with a suitable number of people or with the use of a winch, by appropriately trained personnel.

This technique can also be a good way of securing a trunk resulting from a failed hinge. Similar, alternative techniques include lodged woody material, which is generally favoured now over tree kickers as no artificial materials are required.



