

Hammock Setup

Blackbird, Blackbird XLC, Traveler hammock Setup:

The following describes a detailed setup method that should result in maximum comfort (vs. simply hanging between 2 trees and getting inside, which works also.)

Find 2 trees that are ideally 13-17' apart. Hang the hammock so that "once occupied" the foot end is about 16" higher than the head end, and by "end" I mean the end of the fabric, not the attachment point on the tree itself. Since the foot end needs to be significantly higher, the easiest way to achieve this is often to just position the hammock much closer to the foot tree AND attach the webbing to the foot tree at head height or above. Having the head end farther away from it's tree means it will sink more when you get in and that is usually what you want.

The BB/XLC/Traveler is designed to be laid in "off-center" so that your head is very close to the head end of the hammock while your feet are a lot farther away from the foot end. This allows the fabric under your legs to spread out properly when laying on the diagonal. To do this you'll want to lay so that your eyes are approx. even with the farthest side tieout (BB or XLC) so that one tieout is even with your eyes and the other is chest level. Once you are laying in this correct spot you will then determine if you want the head/foot end higher or lower. Most people will want it setup so that when your eyes are even with the tieout that you are basically level/horizontal from hips to shoulders, so if your upper body seems too inclined or declined simply move the webbing up or down the tree trunk to adjust.



***Here is a picture that shows much of what I have just described, the person is much closer to the head end than they are to the foot end, but since the foot end is set much higher, the person is very level from hips to shoulders rather than the torso being "inclined". The hammock is much closer to the foot tree, and also note the upward angle of the suspension straps, you want to shoot for the suspension running upward at roughly 30 deg angle for any hammock.**

You will want to avoid ever pulling the suspension "tight" so there is little to no slack left, doing this will result in the suspension stretching more and the hammock height dropping by a foot or more once weighted, It can also over-stress your suspension. You generally will raise a hammock not by tightening the suspension but by raising it on the tree. A simple test can be done once you are in the hammock... if the ridgeline seems like it is guitar-string tight (see Blackbird setup video to see me doing this test) then the hammock is probably set too tight. If the ridgeline droops (while you're laying down) then the hammock is too loose. Tightening the suspension tightens up the ridgeline and loosening the suspension loosens the ridgeline.

When using any webbing/buckle suspension, make sure that the buckles and webbing are aligned correctly. Webbing/buckles can sometimes get twisted up in the stuffsac and if you hang the hammock without ever looking at or adjusting one end you may not notice, so be sure that even if no length adjustment is needed that you give a glance to make sure they are aligned properly before using the hammock. If the hammock is weighted with the buckles turned sideways it can damage the webbing and/or potentially lead to failure of the webbing.

Never leave the hammock in direct sunlight for prolonged periods. UV rays degrade and weaken any synthetic fabric. Regularly inspect the hammock (and suspension) for wear, and always hang close to the ground. The suspension will wear out over time and need to be replaced eventually, do this BEFORE failure occurs.

If you use a hammock as a ground-shelter, always use a ground-cloth and pad underneath to protect the hammock body from abrasion. Always make sure the area you are camping in is free of overhead hazards (such as dead trees and branches) before hanging the hammock, especially if you expect windy conditions.

If you use the Blackbird or XLC as a chair (sitting sideways with your legs hanging over the zipper), avoid leaning back against the shelf seam.

Ridgerunner Setup

Ridgerunner setup is similar to the above setup in that you want the foot end of the hammock set higher, but maybe only 12" higher instead of 16" on the Blackbirds. You might set the suspension slightly tighter as well, closer to a 25 deg angle. There is a built-in neck support, Most like to lay with their neck on that high spot and their head in the slight divot behind it.