

## Getting Started in Lumberjack Competition

So you've been to a lumberjack contest, or you've recently seen one on TV, and you said to yourself, "man that looks like fun, I wonder if I could do that". Well if you live in an area where there are lumberjack contests, and experienced competitors it's really a lot easier getting started than you might think. If you don't live in an area where there are other competitors, it's going to be a bit more difficult, but it still can be done if you're willing to do a bit of traveling.

### Familiarization

The first thing you should do is to start going to the competitions, and meet some of the competitors. Talk to them, ask them about their equipment, find out how they got started. During the course of your conversations find out if any of them live near you (in lumberjack sports a two hour drive is considered nearby). If you're lucky enough to find a competitor who lives in your area, don't pester them to death at the competition, but rather make arrangements to meet with them at a later date where they train, and see if they would be willing to let you attend their training sessions on a regular basis.

Before jumping in your car and heading off to one of the competitions, lets take a moment to consider which competitions you want to attend. Do you want to try and attend the larger, major competitions; or some of the smaller regional ones? Well, if you head out to one of the major ones, like the World Championships in Hayward WI, you are going to see some really great competitors and some awesome competition, but unfortunately the intensity level at the major competitions is so high you may have a hard time establishing a personal dialogue with any of the competitors. Our advice would be to try and attend some of the smaller regional competitions where the atmosphere is a bit more relaxed.

### Equipment

Allright, you're willing to do all of the above, and now you're wondering what equipment you will need, and how much it's going to cost. If you are going to start out with say Axe Throwing, and one of the Chopping events, you will need a throwing axe and a couple of chopping axes (one for training and one for competition). In addition to the axes you will also need some safety gear like toe and shin guards. Most likely you will be able to buy used gear from some of the other competitors, at a cost of between three and five hundred dollars.

If you're more interested in the sawing events you are looking at a substantially larger investment. A practice saw will cost you around five hundred dollars and a decent competition saw will run around twelve hundred dollars. Our advice would be to just buy the practice saw until such time as you were absolutely sure this was something you wanted to pursue at a competitive level.

### Physical Requirements

Finally, you may be wondering if you have the physical ability to become a lumberjack competitor. Don't fret if you're not six feet tall and capable of bench pressing three hundred pounds, as 85% of being a lumberjack competitor is dependent on technique and training, and only about 15% on raw, physical strength. Mind you, we're not saying that strength isn't an asset when it comes to lumberjack competition, what we are saying is that it can be beaten by superior skill and technique.

### Competition Locations

If you feel this is something you still want to pursue go to the North American Lumberjack Guide's web site ( [www.starinfo.com/ljguide/](http://www.starinfo.com/ljguide/) ), about halfway down the page you will find a section called "Lumberjack Contests in the United States" the links there will take you to pages that list most of the competitions currently being held in North America. Before going to any of the contest listed there, you should call ahead to verify the dates as they are only updated when, and if the contest organizers send in the updated information. Some of the dates may be one or two years old.