

Backpack Without the Backache

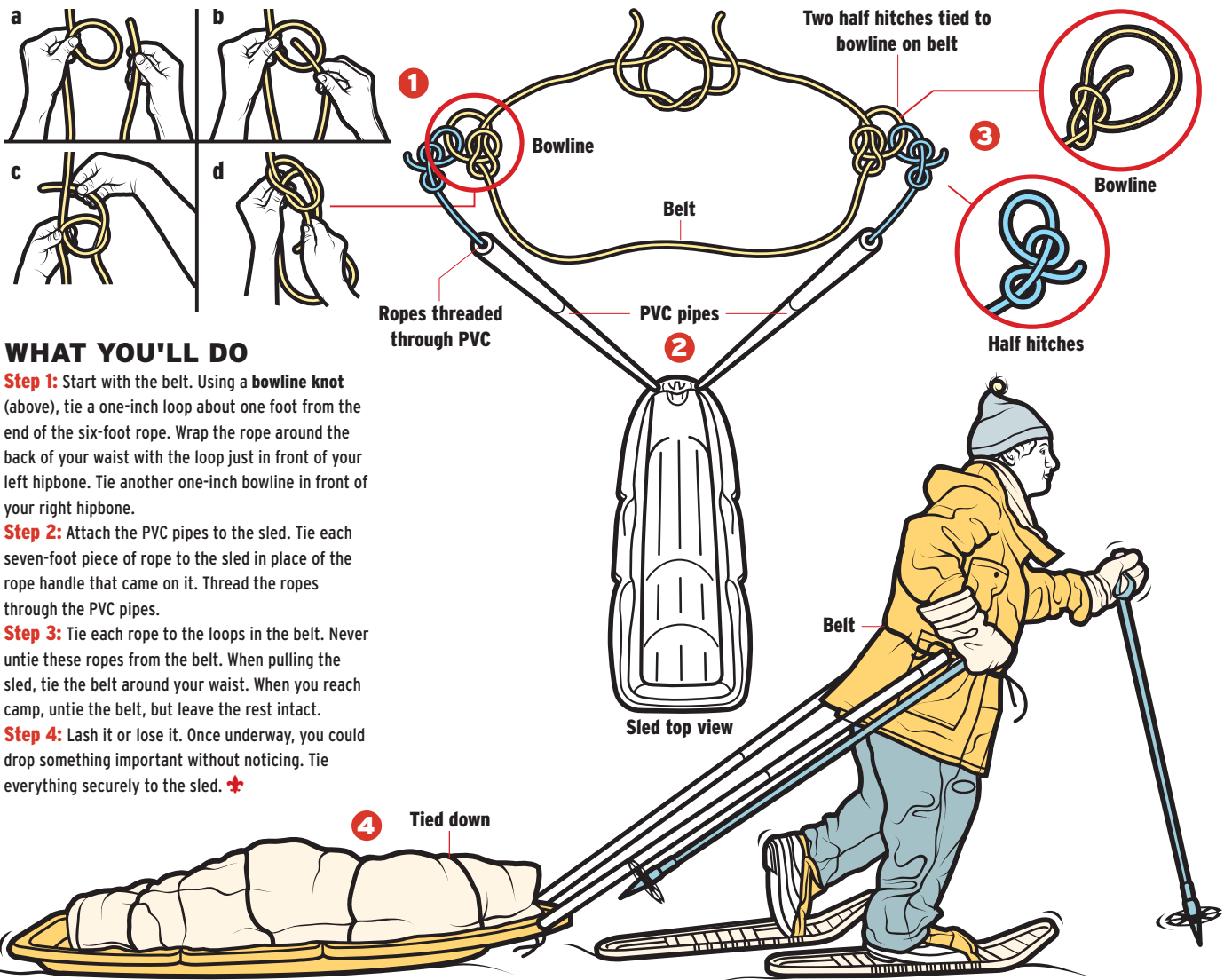
Use a sled to handle the extra weight of winter camping gear.

It's typical to have hard hikes in the winter. You need more gear to stay warm. And soft snow makes walking with heavy backpacks even more difficult. Don't worry. With a little time and a plastic sled, you are well on your way to an easier hike. Build this back-saver with a rope belt for easy pulling and with two PVC handles that will help keep the sled from running you over on downhills.

BY TOM NADER • ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMESON SIMPSON

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Two sections of 1/2-inch PVC pipe, each 6 feet long.
- Manila or hemp rope, two 7-foot lengths and one 6-foot
- A plastic sled, 3 to 4 feet long. Use a plastic toboggan, with ridges on the bottom. These ridges help keep the sled behind you.



WHAT YOU'LL DO

Step 1: Start with the belt. Using a **bowline knot** (above), tie a one-inch loop about one foot from the end of the six-foot rope. Wrap the rope around the back of your waist with the loop just in front of your left hipbone. Tie another one-inch bowline in front of your right hipbone.

Step 2: Attach the PVC pipes to the sled. Tie each seven-foot piece of rope to the sled in place of the rope handle that came on it. Thread the ropes through the PVC pipes.

Step 3: Tie each rope to the loops in the belt. Never untie these ropes from the belt. When pulling the sled, tie the belt around your waist. When you reach camp, untie the belt, but leave the rest intact.

Step 4: Lash it or lose it. Once underway, you could drop something important without noticing. Tie everything securely to the sled. ✦