

## How to Improve a Cheap Ladder Stand Chap Gleason

This is a picture of the "wings" when >>sitting<< in a ladder stand. Notice the extension of the foot area to the right and left of the ladder.



**Figure 1. Sitting in the stand with Wings**

This is a picture of an Improved Cheap Ladder Stand:



**Figure 2. Cheap Ladder Stand with Wings**

### **Assembly**

1. Cut two pieces of 3/4" plywood 37" long x 7.5" wide, screw them together with about 15 dry wall or deck screws, use 1.25" dry wall screws or deck screws. Drill three 1/4" holes thru the wood. This piece goes between your ladder and the supports that hold your foot rest in place. See Figure 3.

2. Cut two pieces of 3/4" plywood 37" long x 2.75 wide, fasten them together with about 7 dry wall crews. Drill 3 1/4" holes thru the wood. This piece goes behind the supports that hold your foot rest in place. This picture shows the two pieces of plywood, 1 between the support and the other smaller piece behind the support:



**Figure 3. Left foot on a Wing, carriage bolts**

3. Buy some green or black paint and mix two 8 oz cups of sand in about 8 to 10 oz of paint. Paint the top of the wood. Use a disposable brush that you buy for a \$1 at Walmart. This keeps you from slipping when it is freezing out and you get snow or freezing rain on the plywood. If you DON'T do that, the stand is VERY slippery in the AM with dew on and you are risking falling. The above picture shows this as green paint with some ice on it.

4. Buy six 2.5" long 1/4" carriage bolts and 2" wide flat washers also use lock washer over the regular washers to make sure it does not come out. Use these carriage bolts to fasten the wood to the foot rest of the stand. The carriage bolt heads are on TOP, the nut is below the foot rest, below the wire mesh. Figure 3. shows the top of the bolts. Figure 4 shows the bolts under the foot support. Notice the large washers and lock washers on each bolt.



**Figure 4. Underside showing how Wings are hooked to Stand**

5. When your done you have a 7.5” extension of your foot rest on each side of your \$49 tree stand, see Figure 2. This allows you to sit “side saddle” and watch to your left with your left foot on the wing extending out 7.5” or sit “side saddle” and watch to your right, with your right foot placed on the right wing. You can also stand and shoot behind you now, since you have your safety harness on and you can stand with one foot on 1 wing and the other foot on your foot rest. This gives you perfect shooting and allows you to use the tree to steady your shot.

6. I also take a 4’ or 5 foot section of 3/8” trucker’s rope and tie it above my head in the tree, in that way I have a hand hold when I turn around. I don’t want to loose my balance when I step out on a Wing. Figure 2. shows the rope used as a hand fold.

7. Another safety thing I do is place 1 foot long sections of metal cut from discarded Stop signs at the join points of the two ladders. The ladder sections fit perfectly inside the Stop sign metal. A friend of mine works for the State and they have piles of these that are broken off from accidents and wind. See Figure 2.

8. Another thing I do to strengthen up tree stands is replace all the bolts after about 3 or 5 years in the field (I leave them up all year around) with stainless steel bolts and lock washers. Much safer. Cost is \$9 for stainless bolts, nuts and lock washers. Figure 5 below shows some new bolts and washers on a tree stand.

9. Another thing I do is place a sandwich bag over the lock to keep snow and ice from getting into it and rain, make sure you cut the bottom of the bag or moisture will fill the bag and ruin your lock. Oil them with 3 and 1 oil once per year, use a lot. See figure 5.



**Figure 5. Stainless bolts and Washers on a tree stand and cover over the lock.**

The lock above is a weather proof Master Lock, however I purchased 12 keyed alike locks (all brass) from a lock company on the Internet, [www.padlocks4less.com](http://www.padlocks4less.com). I got the long shank locks. The all brass are better against rust and are water.

10. Another thing I have learned about ladder stand is that it is best to place them in a “double tree”. A double tree is a tree right next to another tree usually growing out of the same root system, try to get it about 3 or 4 feet apart. Figure 6 shows a double tree with a ladder stand in one of the trees. The advantage of the double tree is that it allows to be partially hidden, it also allows you to hang your bow or rifle in a convenient place, along with your knapsack. The third advantage is safety, you have a hand hold as you stand up, not that may not seem like a lot to young folks, but when you get a little older and you take some medications that thin your blood when you get up quick you get dizzy easy. The hand hold is a must for folks like that. Also notice the screw-in bolt on the right hand side of the tree with the trucker’s rope, you place your safety belt above this screw-in so that if you fall, you have something to keep the safety belt from sliding down the tree. Again safety is paramount.



**Figure 6. Double Tree, hand-hold, trucker's rope and hook for your safety belt.**

11. The last improvement I do is hang two 14 foot pieces of ¼" nylon rope to pull up your rifle or bow from the seat of the stand.. Make a loop both ends, so you can loop it thru on the top without tying a knot that is difficult to get out and on the bottom, to bring your gun or bow up. Place the loop thru your sling and then over the barrel to bring your rifle up into the stand. Also I place a carabiner on my knapsack so that it easy to put on the rope to pull up into the tree. You don't need an expensive one, just one that works.



This is what they look like:  
you don't have to fumble around when it is cold.

. Get a 3" one so

12. When it is raining or snowing I keep an tree stand umbrella in my knapsack. This keeps most of the moisture from hitting you. <http://tinyurl.com/d2dc93> is one from Cabelas. I have one make by Eastman Outdoor Products and it is great.



ENLARGE ZOOM

11. If you can't afford the cheap ladder stands, then consider my inexpensive Y-board tree stand. Figure 7 shows a Y-board stand with steps into the stand made from 3/8" trucker's rope again.



**Figure 7. Y-board Tree Stand with 4x4 steps.**

Complete instructions for cutting out the Y-boards from 3/4" pressure treat plywood and making the steps from pressure treated 4x4s is here:

[http://www.the-gleasons.com/low\\_cost\\_tree\\_stands\\_for\\_hunting.htm](http://www.the-gleasons.com/low_cost_tree_stands_for_hunting.htm)

You can make a complete Y-board stand for less than \$10. If you don't like the rope climbing system, you can use some other methods to get into the Y-board stand, including a ladder, which you can buy used for \$25 on craig's list, [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com). I use a Gorilla set and install it every time I use the Y-board stand. The advantage of a Y-board stand, is that they are cheap and safe and you can use them on public land if you use ratchet straps instead of nails or screws to hold them in. Here is a picture of my



Gorilla seat.

These are tricks to extending a cheap Dcik's Comfort Zone or River's Edge 15' ladder stand into a better stand.

Good Hunting,

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