

BUILD ROCK CLIMBING SKILLS AT HOME

Advanced Skills

- Belaying
 - Belaying is the critical act of managing a climber's rope. An efficient belayer is crucial to any climb. Belaying requires a few essential pieces of gear: a belay device (either a "tube style" [Black Diamond ATC] or an "assisted braking" [Petzl Gri Gri]), and a carabiner to attach the belay device to the harness/secure the rope. The techniques vary slightly depending on the belay device being used, but in general, the technique for belaying top-rope is called PBUS. **Pull** the slack in the rope through the belay device, **Brake** the rope in the teeth or ridge of the belay device to prevent any rope slippage, put your other hand **Under** the hand on the brake strand, and **Slide** it up the rope to your beginning position.
- Rock climbing shoes
 - While there are hundreds of models of climbing shoes, they can all be broadly be put into 3 categories: Neutral, Moderate, and Aggressive. All 3 have their uses and drawbacks.
 - Neutral Shoes: Have a flat sole and allow your toes to spread out comfortably through the shoe. They are largely sought after for their comfort, and their support while climbing up slab walls. Their comfort makes them ideal for traditional ("Trad") climbing and big wall climbing, because they can be worn for hours at a time without pain. They are the climbing shoe style a majority of climbers start with. They are not ideal for overhung boulder problems. *Ex. La Sportiva TC Pros, Black Diamond Momentums, Evolv Defys.*
 - Moderate Shoes: Have a slight asymmetry to their toe box, scrunching the toes together towards the front to centralize their pushing power to one spot. Not as tight as aggressive shoes, they are the middle ground for climbing shoes. Adept at all, but masters of none, they are less comfortable to wear than neutrals, but more comfortable than aggressive shoes. Ideal for sport climbing, where the climber spends more time on the wall than they would bouldering, but not as much as they would trad climbing. *Ex. La Sportiva Finale, Black Diamond Zone, Scarpa Force V, Boreal Lynx*
 - Aggressive Shoes: Have a radical asymmetry to their toe box, forcing all of the toes to be scrunched together in one area. Maximizing the amount of pushing power on the tiniest surface area. Furthermore, they allow the climber to slip their feet into areas that would require the leg to bend with other shoes, making them ideal for overhung boulder problems. They tend

to be extremely uncomfortable, and usually only able to be worn for short periods of time. This makes them ideal for boulder problems, or single pitches of super hard sport climbing. *Ex. La Sportiva Solution, Black Diamond Shadow, Butora Narsha*

- ***An Important Note:*** More expensive shoes do **not** make you a better climber. Do your bank account a favor and gradually work your way up to the shoes you need.
- Gym etiquette
 - Gym etiquette is usually well posted around gyms, and is essential to be followed to keep everyone safe as they learn the ropes with the sport. Some essential points of gym etiquette to follow are to know (and respect) the differences between the Leading areas and Top Rope areas of walls, allow others a chance to try the problem you are working on, even if it is your “project.” Finally, never boulder with a harness on, and take your climbing shoes off before going into the bathroom.
- Crag etiquette
 - Crag etiquette is very important for climbers to follow, to keep the experience of being at a crag enjoyable for everyone, and to keep climbers in good standing with park services/land management services. In general, follow Leave No Trace principles, and don’t be disruptive (with loud music or “crag rage”.) Keep an eye on any children or pets brought to the crag, and do not (unless it’s an emergency,) rappel off of trees, if it is marked. Furthermore, be sure to respect seasonal crag closures, as these are usually to allow vulnerable bird species (such as Peregrine Falcons) to nest and raise their young without the stress of climbers.
- Climbing and COVID
 - Climbing during the COVID-19 Pandemic is significantly more different than it was previously. As a general courtesy, climbers have been instructed to stay away from iconic crags across the country that are nearby vulnerable areas, such as small towns (ex. New Paltz, NY & The Shawangunk ridge.) or areas nearby marginalized Populations (The Lakota population & Devil’s Tower.)
- Chalk
 - There are two different types of climbing chalk one might encounter in climbing gyms or at crags. Powder (dust chalk) and Liquid Chalk. While the former is more popular due to the fact that it can be easily stored in a chalk bag and brought up the wall with the climber, Liquid Chalk (especially those with alcohol concentrations) have become the standard at most gyms during COVID 19.

- How to use a harness
 - Hold the harness out in front of you and make sure it is untangled. Check that the waste band is in the correct position and the leg loops are not crossed or twisted. Loosen the straps on the waist belt and leg loops. Set the harness on the ground with the leg loops inside the waist belt ready to step into (picture shown below). Step into the leg loops and pull the harness up like a pair of pants. The waist belt should be positioned just above your hip bones. Tighten so that if you put two fingers between your side and the harness they will cross over when you turn them sideways. Tighten leg loops the same way. They should be positioned on your upper thigh. If you can't untangle the harness on your own, can't get it tightened, or can't figure out the correct orientation of it, ask for help. Harnesses are tricky to use at first but are essential to a safe climbing experience.



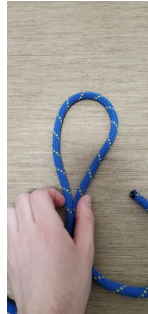
Knots

- Figure 8 follow through
 - The Figure 8 Follow-Through, also known as the Flemish Loop, is the quintessential climbing knot to tie into harnesses. A newcomer in the knot world the Figure 8 Follow through quickly replaced Yosemite Bowlines and other forms of Bowlines that were traditionally used. This knot is generally the first knot climbers learn how to tie.

Tying the Knot:

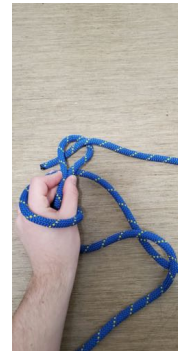
Begin with a length of rope, ideally, the length of rope should be towards one end of the rope.





Make a **Bight** in the rope. A bight is a place where you pinch a bend into the rope.

Wrap the free end of the rope around your hands and Behind the bight. Then take it (like a dart) and put it through the loop of the bight. This can be explained As “Giving the snowman a scarf, and then a carrot nose.”



This will produce the basic figure 8 Loop.



From there, you want to begin re-tracing the original figure 8. The best way to do this is the “hard in-easy out” method. Push aside the lower bend of the original figure 8 and then place the free end up through the hole, this creates a loop below the original figure 8, and begins the retracing process.

Retrace the Figure 8, bringing the rope around the Bends of the original Figure 8. You should find, if done correctly, the final length of rope will easily pass through the top of the original figure 8.



Congratulations! You have tied a Figure 8 Follow Through!

