

## **Welcome to Climbing!**

Thanks for coming on the course. It is expected that by the end of the three sessions you will be competent to undergo the Centre's registration process as an 'unsupervised climber'. That is, you won't need an instructor there with you holding onto the rope.

You will be able to go and register at any climbing wall in the UK. Some may ask you to physically demonstrate you can put a harness on, tie in and belay, others may ask you to spot the errors in some pictures. Everybody registering will have to do that whether they are just another experienced climber or a qualified British Mountain Guide.

I've put together a short reminder checklist for you about the different areas of a typical climbing wall.

Specific Bouldering Walls tend to specialise in bouldering and may not have roped climbing areas. You may need to check with the staff if you can borrow a harness, belay plate and climbing shoes if you don't have your own. If you are bringing young kids, they may need to wear a helmet. Be aware that with smaller kids, their centre of gravity is higher than with adults and you may need to hire/get a body harness for them. If in doubt, Check with the staff.

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### **Beforehand**

- Hair tied back, no loose clothing, no jewellery & rings.
- Men – briefs or hugging boxer shorts are strongly recommended.
- Don't stand in the yellow boxes.
- No standing too close to or under other climbers.

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### **Warm up**

- Cardio vascular is good (if you can cycle to the wall that's perfect)
  - Otherwise do some simple stretches – including your wrists and fingers. Jog up and down.
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# Roped Climbing

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## Climbing

- **Harness** sits above hips and needs to be snug as it will hold you in.
- **Leg loops** – not as tight but not half way down your leg. Adjustable elastic straps at the back to prevent them from slipping down.
- **Tie-in loops** for the rope – top one is most important but we tie in both to equalise the harness and prevent you flipping over if you fall.
- **Belay loop** – to clip belay equipment into - carabina, belay device, auto-belay clips.
- **Line Numbers** - You'll see these all around the centre. The colours represent a climb and the numbers are the grade, the higher the number the tougher the climb.
- **Routes** - Several per line and they are set directly underneath each climb. Important to stick to them rather than going off to the side.
- **Top-roped systems** are set up for you with a rope. If there isn't a rope, it'll be a lead climbing line. Lead climbing is a more advanced level and not covered in this course.
- **Top of the climb** - Do not climb above the rope loop at the top. You have reached the top of the climb when you get one or both hands on the highest colour of your route.

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## Tying in

- **Remember:**
  1. Tying the figure of 8 (with measuring),
  2. Threading through harness,
  3. Refiguring (doubling the tram lines),
  4. stopper knot.
- Always buddy check – It is easy to assume your climbing buddy has done it properly and you may not want to get your hands too close to someone else's crotch (in normal circumstances that's probably understandable). However, check their knot. Get them to check yours. It's better than a serious injury or death.
- **Refer to the videos that you've been sent the link for**

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## Belaying

**The belayer is there to ensure the climber will not fall. Or if they do come off the route, won't plummet to the ground.**

- As your climber climbs up on their rope, it creates slack in the system. It is our job to collect that slack and make sure our climber is safe.
- Belayer is the most important person. They are in control. If the belayer has too much slack the climber isn't safe if they fall.
- Belayer can ask the climber to stop or go slower so that they regain control and excess slack out of the system.
- The most common belay devices require friction to work! They have a retaining loop to keep it attached to your...
- ...carabiner. We always use a screwgate carabiner for belaying – so-called because it's got a gate, and you screw it shut.
- When performing your buddy check, ensure your belayer has put the rope in the right way round (live rope comes out at the top) and has clipped in correctly into the belay loop and done the carabina up.

**Remember the five stages**

- **Refer to the videos that you've been sent the link for**
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## Autobelays

- Auto-belays allow you to climb without a partner.
- Works in a similar way to a car seatbelt. As we climb up the wall it will collect the slack. When we get to the top we jump off the wall and we will be slowly lowered to the bottom.
- Just a reminder of the safety points.
  1. **Yellow box** - Check if anyone is climbing before entering the yellow box. If they are, stay out of it. When climbing, it's a good idea to check no one is beneath you before you jump off.
  2. **No helmets or loose stuff.** You'll see people, particularly kids climbing with helmets on - no helmets should ever be worn on the auto-belay, if you fall it could get caught on a hold and it's a choking hazard. Kids have to take their helmets off on the auto-belays. Loose hair, jewellery & clothing can cause similar entrapment problems.
  3. **Test cord by pulling webbing** to ensure cord takes in slack. This shows it's working.
  4. **Clip in** - there is a big locking carabiner, these often have a 2-part locking mechanism that requires you to both push on the gate, and twist it simultaneously. Clip this onto your belay loop. Clipping in is the most important part of using the auto belay - it's very easy to get carried away and forget that part of the process, so always make sure you've clipped in, and double check its on your belay loop, and the gate is closed and locked.
  5. **Only climb directly up toward auto-belay**, not out to the side – shockload and a massive swing. When you've gotten to the top just let go. It feels a little counter intuitive, but the machine will lower you safely and slowly to the ground. It might take a second or so to feel the resistance but this is normal. Its important to bear in mind that as you don't have a belayer you can't sit down and take rest, the machine will just lower you to the ground each time.
  6. **Don't pull on the cord.** If you get something caught or trapped, unlike a human belayer who is in control of you and your descent, the auto-belay will keep trying to lower you with weight on it. Likewise if you get scared and try and grip onto the cord, it might think you're trying to jump off and start lowering you down!

## Bouldering

- The bouldering room is the most dangerous room in the centre.
- Although there are soft mats to catch you if you fall, injuries can still happen, but you can minimise the risk of injury by following these safety rules.
  1. **No harnesses, helmets or other loose things in your pockets (there are lockers).**
  2. **No walking under anyone.**
  3. **Don't climb next to someone.**
  4. **No jumping off, climb down.**
- Training aids - generally we don't recommend using these until you've been climbing for a year, tendonitis etc.
- Definitely no under 18's should ever use training aids - growth issues.
- Graded as with the main climbing wall, but these are strictly colour coded and follow a different grading system.
- These double tags represent the start of a route and you need to have both hands on the hold to begin.
- If they are separated, one hand on each of the holds.
- The top of the route is the last hold in your colour.