

Climbing Checklist

By Jefferey Rondman

Training

- Climbing instruction** Seek out an indoor rock climbing studio in your area and sign up for lessons.
- Experience** Your first few 'real' outdoor climbs should be in a group with a qualified instructor.
- Equipment** You may be able to rent at first, but eventually you will need your own gear.
- Join a club** Membership in a rock climbing club makes it easier to find a climbing buddy and may give you more opportunities for fun climbing adventures.

Gear

- Helmet** Never climb bare-headed. You can survive a broken leg - a cracked skull is more dubious!
- Harness** Buy new if possible; second hand gear should be thoroughly checked over by a professional. A seat harness is better than a simple waist harness.
- Rope** Choose one that is a different color on each end, meeting in the middle - that makes it easy to see when you have reached the halfway point.
- Shoes** Real climbing shoes are the only safe footwear to take on a climb. Make sure you wear good socks, too.
- Carbiners** Locking biners latch securely to your belt harness, so you can tether yourself with confidence. Non-locking biners let you shift ropes and gear as needed.

Carry along

- Identification** You need photo ID, medical insurance cards, and emergency contact info.
- Sunscreen.** Even in winter, the sun can still burn!
- Warm accessories** Gloves, hat, and even a bandana to tie around your lower face can stave off frostbite in freezing temps.
- First Aid** A regular first aid kit plus some pressure bandages.
- Food/water** Choose lightweight nonperishable high energy food and carry plenty of water.
- Communication** Cell phones with GPS and 2 way radios are best.
- Directions** A hard copy map plus a compass should be packed.
- Miscellaneous** A camera, flashlight and matches should also be part of your climbing kit.

On the climb

- Stay together** Everyone should have radios, cell phones, and everyone else's number in case of separation.
- Stay hydrated** Drink plenty of water leading up to the day of the climb, and drink water at regular intervals.
- Meeting point** Have a predetermined meeting point in case of separation.

- Turn back time** Decide on a time that all parties should turn back.
- Search and Rescue** Know who to call if you get into trouble.