A high-altitude mountain landscape with snow patches and a climber. The scene shows a vast, rugged mountain range with numerous peaks and ridges. The mountains are covered in dark, rocky terrain interspersed with large, irregular patches of snow. In the foreground, a rocky outcrop is visible, and a climber wearing a red helmet and blue jacket is seen from behind, looking down at the terrain. The background features a deep valley with a winding river and more distant mountain ranges under a clear sky.

What is an alpine rock climb?

Submit your response in the group chat.

Basic Lecture 2: Alpine Rock Climbing

March 4, 2026

Agenda:

- Alpine Rock Climbing Fundamentals
- Case Study
- Q & A (optional)



Liberty Bell,
North Cascade NP

Who is this yahoo and why should I listen to him?



I willingly share my experiences with you.
I bring you information with humility.
I am not an expert in anything.

Be present.

You may find it helpful to have a piece of paper and something in which to write.

Learning Objectives for Basic Lecture 2

1. Understand the difference between gym, sport, crag, and alpine rock climbing.
2. Understand the fundamentals of alpine rock climbing.
3. Understand the mechanics of an alpine rock climb (from sign up to celebration) in *The Mountaineers*.
4. Discuss what constitutes “a successful trip?”

Question 1

Gym, Sport, Crag/Trad or Alpine?

Create a list of the *characteristics* between gym, sport, crag, and alpine climbing.

Type of climbing	Characteristics
Gym	
Sport	
Crag/Trad	
Alpine	

Question 1

Would anyone like to share their thoughts?

Create a list of the *characteristics* between gym, sport, crag, and alpine climbing.

Type of climbing	Characteristics
Gym	
Sport	
Crag/Trad	
Alpine	

Question 1

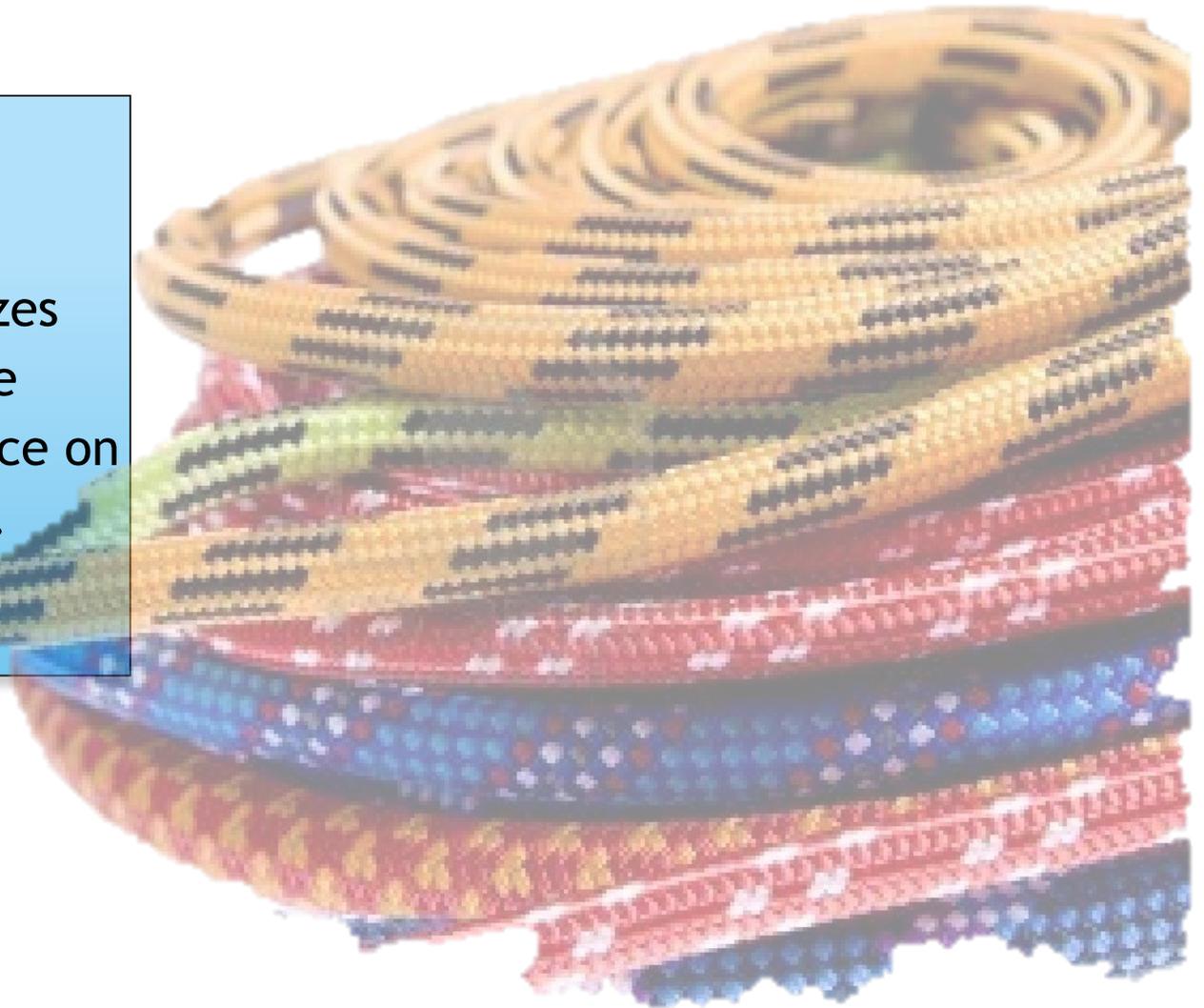
Gym, Sport, Crag/Trad or Alpine?

Create a list of the *characteristics* between gym, sport, crag, and alpine climbing.

Type of climbing	Characteristics
Gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Good for strength building-Top rope or lead climbing-Safest form of climbing-Least risk
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Good way to practice climbing technique-Don't need a lot of gear-More risk
Crag/Trad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Good way to practice techniques for alpine climbs-More risk
Alpine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Best views!-Most remote-Wide range of skills needed-Most risk involved

Know your Equipment

The rope symbolizes climbing and the climber's dependence on another person.



Question 2

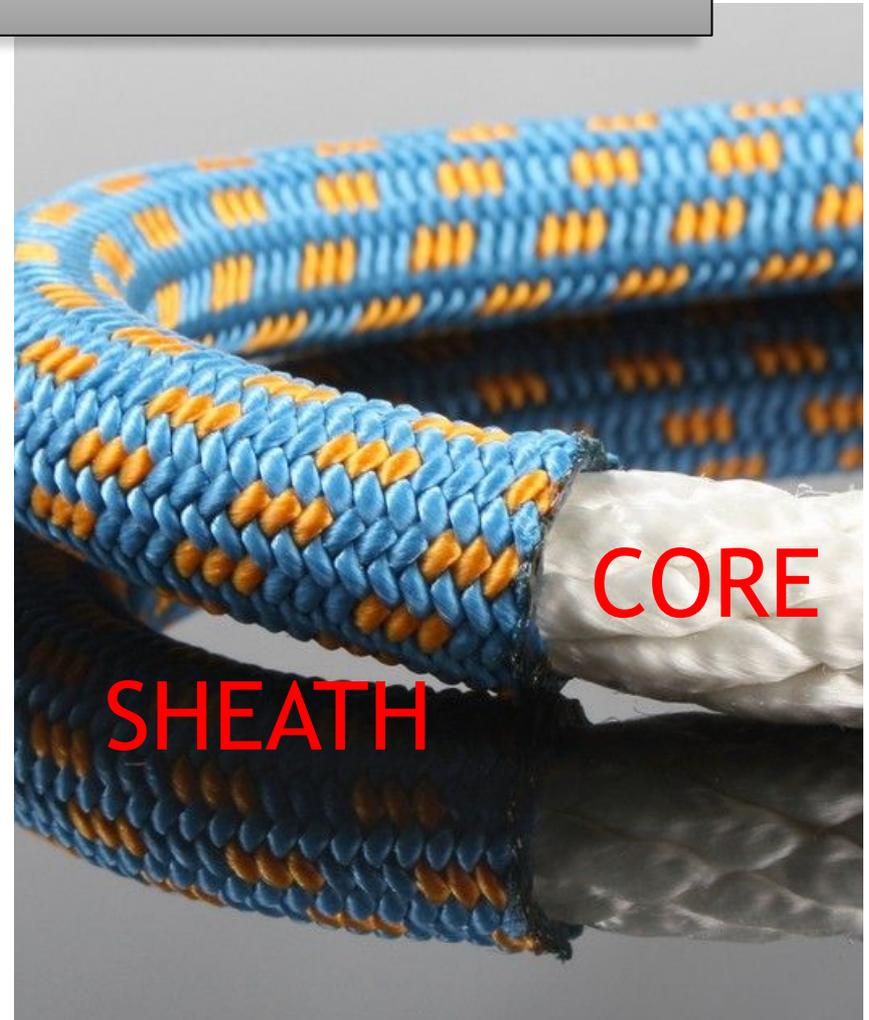
Know your Equipment

What are the 2 main
parts of a rope.



Question 2

**Know your
Equipment**



Question 3

Know your Equipment

List the required equipment necessary for most alpine rock climbs.

Question 3



10
Essentials

Equipment necessary for most alpine rock climbs.

Know your Equipment



*What other equipment or clothing
should you bring for the climb?*

Know your Equipment

There is no steadfast rule.

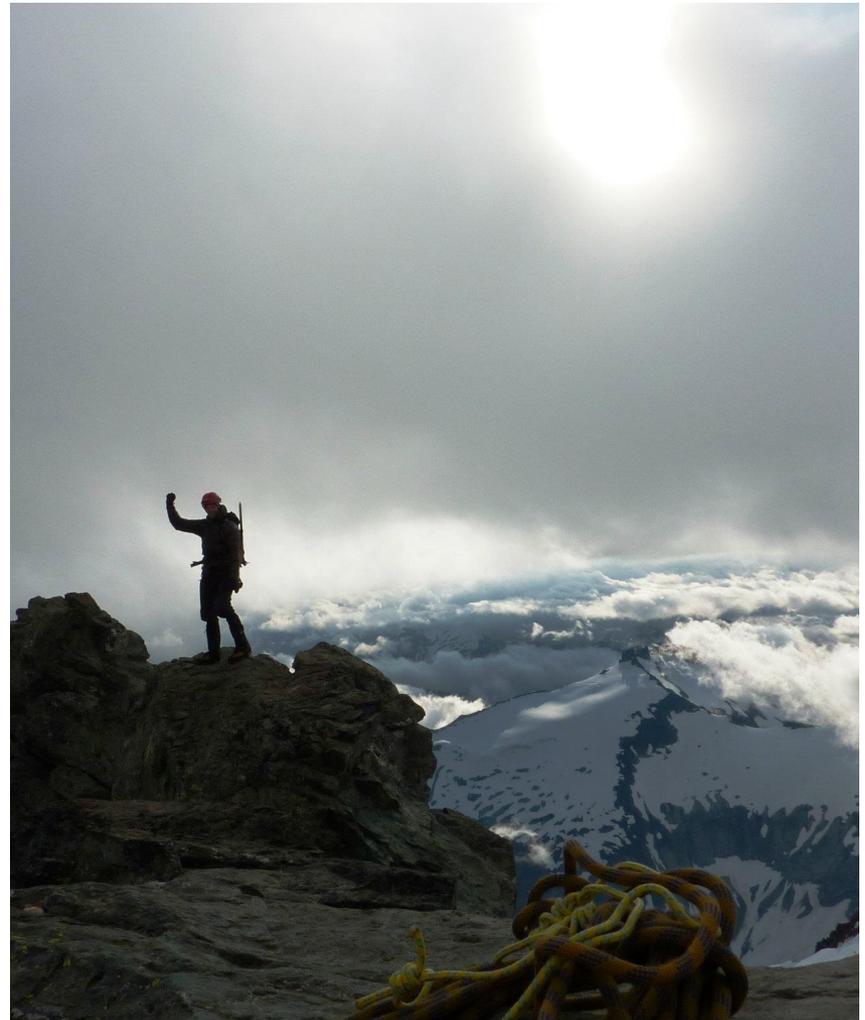
Make the decision based on individual skill, advice from the climb leader, and your assessment of conditions.

What other equipment or clothing should you bring for the climb?

Alpine Rock Climbing Fundamentals

Alpine rock climbing can range from moderate routes only a few hours from the trailhead to multi day climbs in remote settings.

~Freedom of the Hills



View from summit of Mt. Shuksan, WA

What happens on an alpine rock climb?



Before
During
After

View of Mt. Stuart
from summit of Ingalls Peak, WA

Before the Climb

- Research the route
- Sign up
- The Plan
- Leader's responsibility
- Your responsibility



The Tetons, WY

Question 4

As you plan for a climb,
what should you consider?

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Create a list of “to do’s” before you
start your climb.

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**Would anyone like
to share their
thoughts?**

Question 4

As you plan for a climb,
what should
you consider?

Create a list of “to do’s” before you start your climb.

- Gear
- Food
- Conditioning / Pace
- Weather / Avy forecast
- Route / Grade of climb
- Teams
- Turn around time
- Emergency contact info

During the Climb

- Approach & Route Description
- Hazards
- Rope Teams
- Cleaning gear
- Anchors



Dorado Needle, WA

Question 5

Terrain Considerations & Hazards

List any hazards that may give you grief during an alpine rock climb?

Question 5

Terrain Considerations & Hazards

Please put your considerations of terrain and other hazards in the group chat.

Question 5

Terrain Considerations & Hazards

What may give you grief?

- Unmaintained trails
- Stream crossings
- Steep snow gullies
- Moats
- Wildlife
- Rock fall

Party-inflicted rock fall

The climb leader leads

and the follower follows

During the climb...

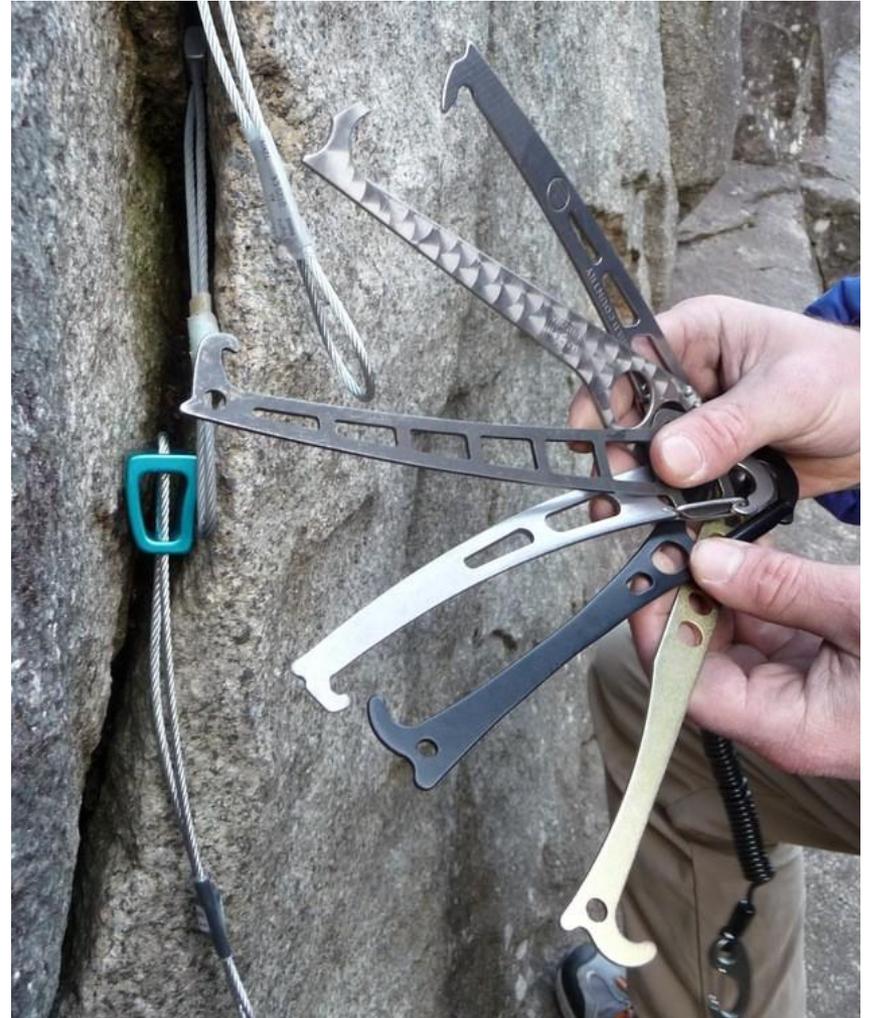
You are either on belay or attached to the anchor.



Icicle Canyon, WA

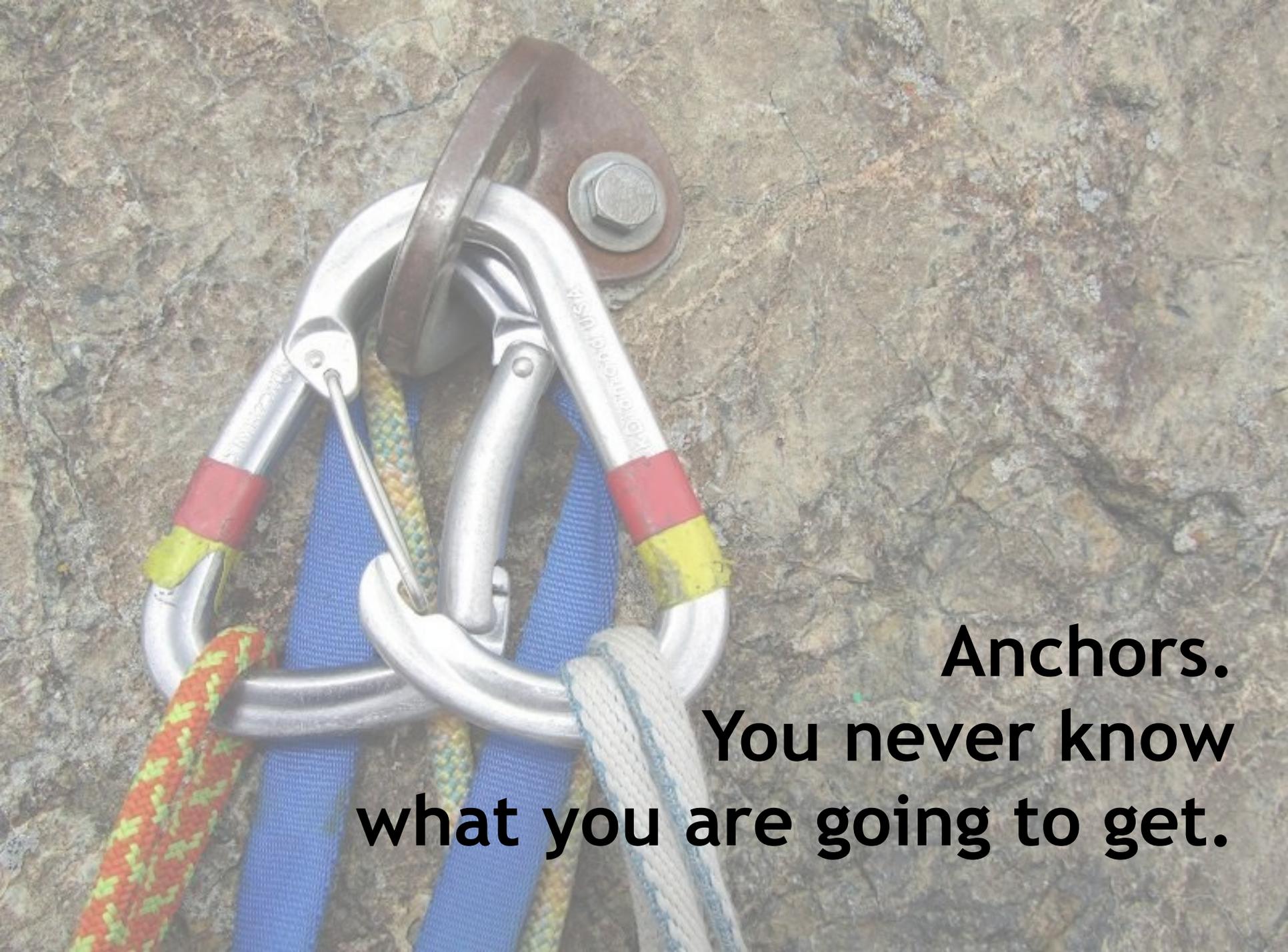
As a “follower” you must:

- *Have a nut tool*
- *Keep gear attached to rope or harness*
- *Rack efficiently*



Guidelines for removing gear





**Anchors.
You never know
what you are going to get.**

Possible Anchors in the Alpine



- 1) Live trees
- 2) Bolts
- 3) Gear
- 4) Boulders or rock horns

Attached to the rock of Ingalls via bolts on the second pitch.

**Remember,
while climbing...**

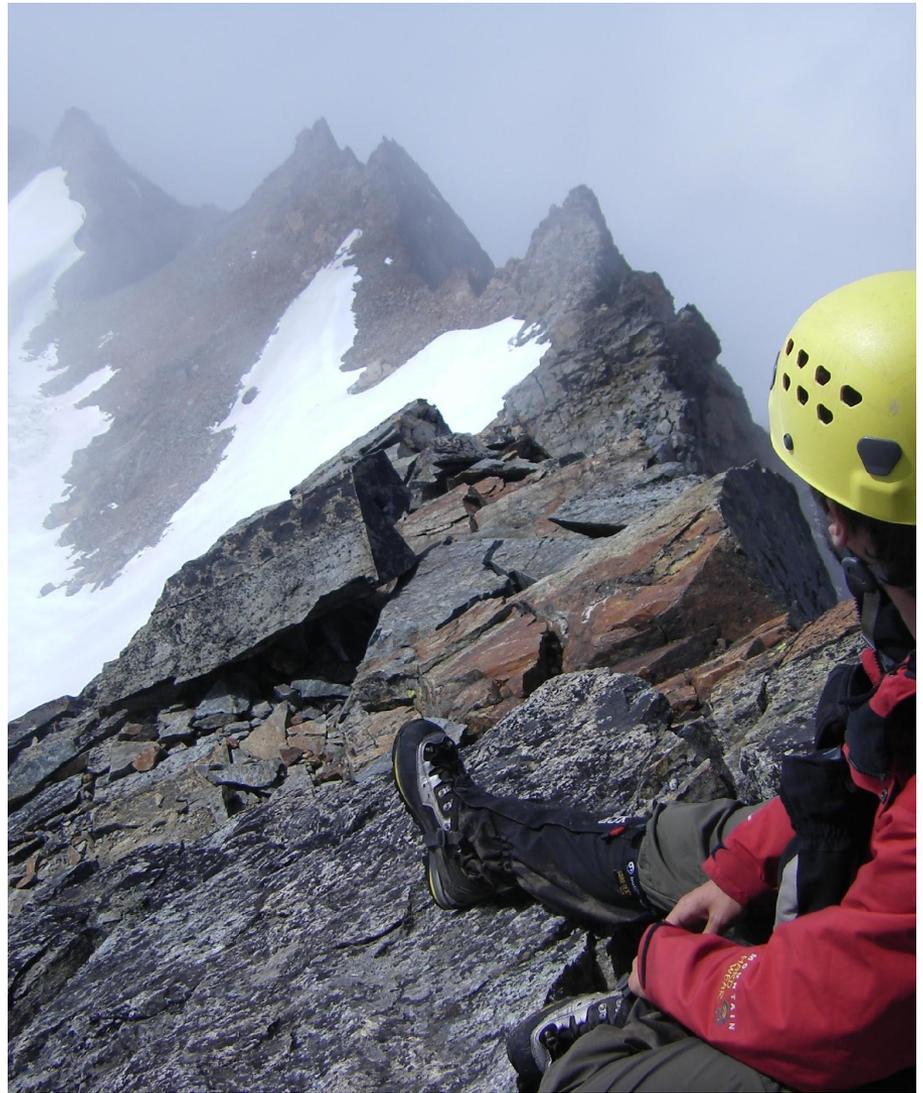


You are either on belay or attached to the anchor.

Icicle Canyon, WA

Although the leader in some ways incurs additional risk while “on the sharp end of the rope,” the belayer and leader both play a critical role in making each pitch safe and successful.

~Freedom of the Hills



Summit of Sahale Peak, WA

After the Climb (Post Summit)

- Getting down
- Back to the TH
- Celebrating & Sharing



Rappelling from the summit of
Mt. Something Awesome, WA.

Questions?

Next up...Case Study

What happens on an alpine rock climb?

Case Study: The Tooth, WA

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South Early Winter Spire/South Arête

A popular three or four pitch climb with a short approach, two 5.5 moves but mostly easy climbing, a real chockstone chimney, and great scrambling. Scenic views of Liberty Bell and the North Cascades. Snow melts off rock early so climb can be done shortly after Highway 20 is opened in the spring. Times: 5-7 hr trailhead to summit. A great first alpine rock climb.

GETTING THERE

Take Exit 232 (Cook Road) off of I-5 at Burlington, turning east to Sedro Wooley and SR-20. Continue on SR-20 to the Blue Lake Trailhead (5,200 ft), 1.5 mi west of the pass.

APPROACH

From the parking area, hike the Blue Lake Trail about 1.5 mi to a clearing. Leave the trail at a minor stream (might be a cairn). Work your way up through slabs on a climber's trail, and then up across open country parallel to the



[Log in and send us updates, images and resources](#)

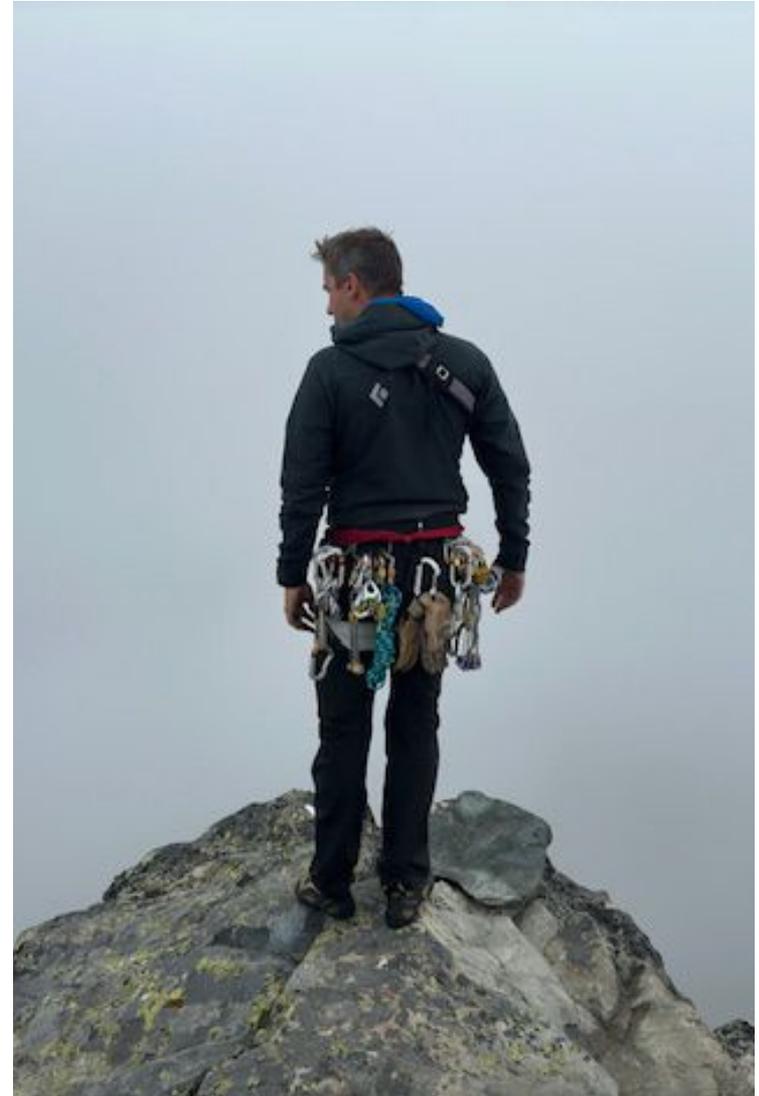
What are we doing? Where is the trailhead?

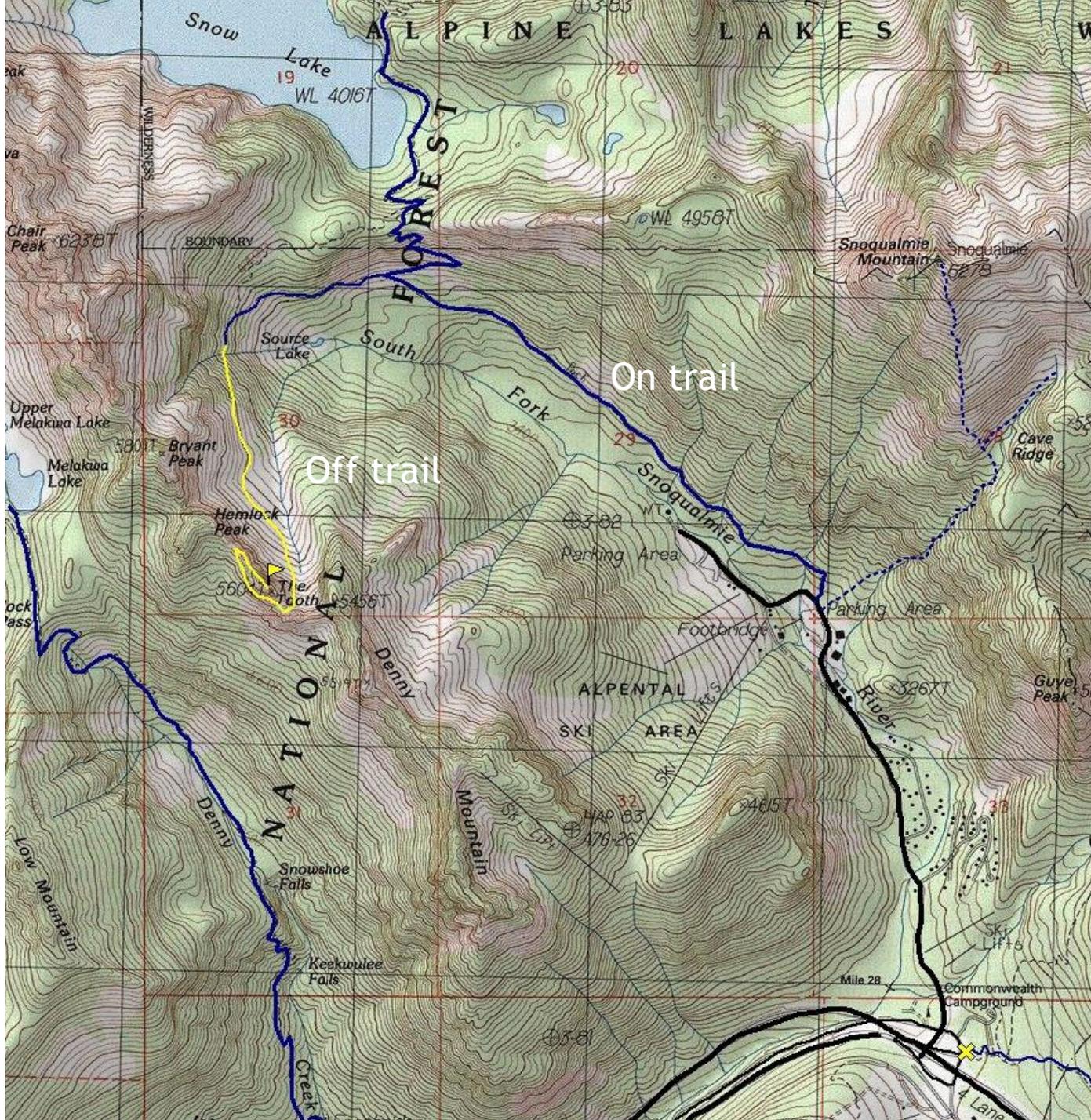
The Tooth - Snoqualmie Pass

Take I90 to the West Summit Exit for Snoqualmie Pass. Turn right towards the Snoqualmie Pass ski resort (lots of signs), then park at the end lot (if you have a parking pass) or the lot before that.

Hike up the main trail, until a sign designating the start of the Source Lake Overlook trail. Take this trail, which avoids losing elevation, to the valley to the south below the east face of The Tooth. There is a good climbers path with cairns to guide you.

The final approach involves scrambling up to the notch one south of Pineapple Pass then contouring around clockwise to get to the start of the climb. A direct scramble up to Pineapple Pass is not recommended, as this is the rappel route. The final portion of the contour around involves some class 3 to 4 scrambling, but it is short and unexposed. Some parties have elected to do a running belay here, but it is not necessary.





On trail

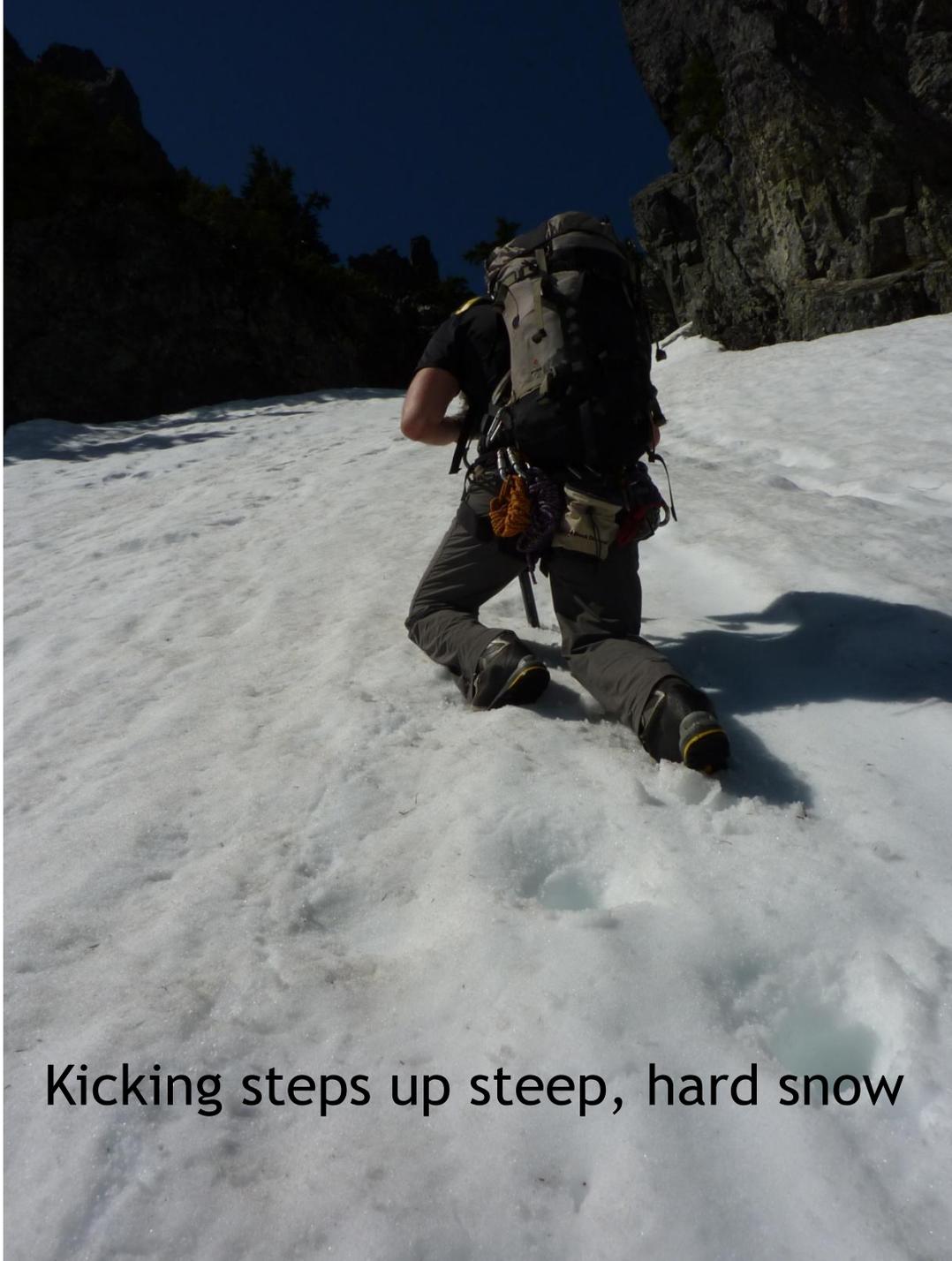
Off trail

Walking on the trail towards the Tooth





Walking up towards Pineapple Pass



Kicking steps up steep, hard snow



Looking down from Pineapple Pass

Route description

The Tooth - Snoqualmie Pass

From Pineapple Pass, start the route about 20 feet up at the first vertical crack with good pro for a directional. Climb cracks and slabs with lots of big holds making your way directly up the center of the face. Use slings to reduce rope drag. If you keep going until about 170 feet up, there is a really nice ledge with a large tree to belay from. From here, the summit can be reached with a long 190 foot pitch on moderate terrain. The finish is via ledges on the west side of the south face.

Note: There are numerous places to belay on this face. Long pitches as described above, are not necessary.

The rappel down can be done with one or two ropes. 4 raps with one rope, 2 with twin ropes. The rappel is on the east side of the south face. From the bottom, rappel off the east side of Pineapple Pass, down to the talus fields with one 60 meter rap, or 2 30 meters.





First pitch of the Tooth

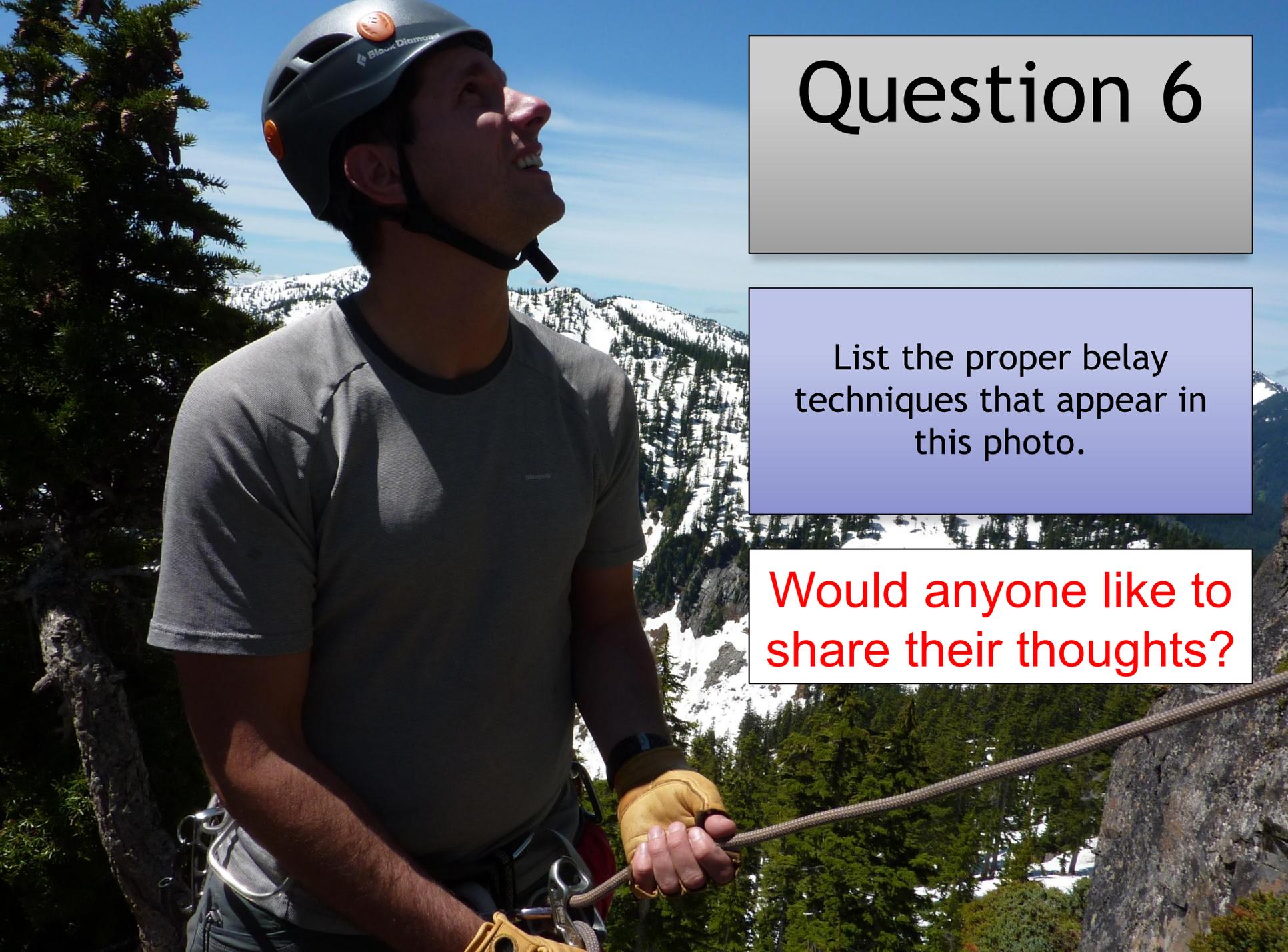
A man wearing a grey helmet with an orange logo, a grey t-shirt, and yellow climbing gloves is looking upwards and to the right. He is holding a rope, suggesting he is a climber or rappeller. The background features a vast, scenic view of a mountain range with patches of snow and dense evergreen forests under a clear blue sky. The man's expression is one of focus and enjoyment.

Belaying in the alpine:
Serious business



Question 6

List the proper belay techniques that appear in this photo.



Question 6

List the proper belay techniques that appear in this photo.

Would anyone like to share their thoughts?



Question 6

List the proper belay techniques that appear in this photo.

Helmet on snugly
Looking at lead climber
Hands in good position
Gloves on
Attached to anchor
Proper amount of slack



Celebrate at the summit...
but remember, you are only half done!

Rappelling in the alpine,
serious business!



A hiker is seen from behind, walking on a dirt trail in a mountain valley. The hiker is wearing a white cap, a blue backpack, and grey pants. A yellow gear bag is attached to the bottom of the backpack. The trail leads down a grassy slope towards a river. In the background, there are rocky mountains with patches of snow under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

● Down-climbing

● Scrambling

● Hiking out

Getting back to the TH

What constitutes a
successful trip?

Add your thoughts to the group chat!

Thank You for Your Participation!



Questions?

Ingalls Peak, WA