2023 Intensive Basic Alpine Climbing Course

Student Handbook

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Course Co-Leads

Daisy Fish

Melanie Stam

Chris Swarthout

1. Course Introduction

Welcome to the 2023 Intensive Basic Alpine Climbing Course! We are excited to work with you towards successfully completing this course, and look forward to welcoming you to the Intensive Basic and greater Mountaineers communities! The Intensive Basic Climbing Course consists of classroom and field instruction designed to equip you with the fundamental mountain skills and experience necessary to begin climbing rock, alpine, and glaciated mountains in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Students in this intensive program receive the same training as the non-compressed Basic Alpine Climbing Courses and are eligible to participate in club-wide basic alpine climbs, alpine scrambles, and many other activities offered by The Mountaineers.

a. Framework for Success

This course will be most successful and fun for students and instructors if you keep the following in-mind:

- Remember that The Mountaineers is volunteer-led, nonprofit organization and not a for-profit guide service or climbing school. Your course committee members and instructors are all volunteers who spend many hours helping make the program a success. Instructors are passionate about climbing, this program, and want you to have a positive learning experience. To that end, you are a co-equal participant and are responsible for your own safety and progress in the course and on climbs. You will always practice and climb under the guidance of our experienced instructors, but as you progress you should learn to become increasingly self-sufficient.
- Recognize that good physical fitness and conditioning are necessary not only for completing climbs, but can play a large role in mitigating risk and helping you to have an enjoyable experience on the climb.
- Be an active learner and participant. Do not be afraid to ask questions or for assistance.
- Strive to have a positive attitude throughout the course. Some days, activities, and objectives will challenge you. Do what you need to do to manage your stress levels and maximize your learning potential.
- Support and care for your class/teammates, as they're also likely feeling challenged or stressed.
- You have an obligation to be environmentally conscious and responsible. Be aware of the frailty of the alpine environment; enjoy this without loving it to death. The Mountaineers are committed to conserving the wild places where we explore.
- Make a goal to become personally involved before and after the course. As mentioned, Mountaineers activities are run entirely by our volunteer members, and that now includes you. Seek out group conditioners, participate in skills nights, and down the road, volunteer to help with other activities. Making face-to-face connections is a great way to meet people, form a community, and find out about climbs and other opportunities.

2. Pre-Course Expectations

There are a number of items for you to make sure to address prior to the start of the 9-day intensive course. Please read through this next section carefully and be sure to start working on these items sooner than later. Acquiring all the needed gear, completing the necessary readings, and learning all the required knots need to be taken care of before the course begins. You will not have additional time during the course to address these preparatory items.

a. Read *Freedom*

You will be provided with a copy of *Freedom of the Hills, 9th edition*. This book is a fundamental resource for learning the skills and techniques for climbing. You are expected to read through the following chapters of this book prior to the course:

- Chapter 1: First Steps
- Chapter 2: Clothing and Equipment
- Chapter 3: Camping, Food, and Water
- Chapter 6: Wilderness Travel
- Chapter 9: Basic Safety System
- Chapter 10: Belaying
- Chapter 11: Rappelling
- Chapter 12: Alpine Rock Climbing
- Chapter 16: Snow Travel and Climbing
- Chapter 17: Avalanche Safety
- Chapter 18: Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue
- Chapter 23: Safety

The following chapters are not required, but are recommended to read before your climbs, if not before the course itself.

- Chapter 4: Physical Conditioning
- Chapter 7: Leave No Trace
- Chapter 8: Access and Stewardship
- Chapter 13: Rock Protection
- Chapter 14: Leading on Rock
- Chapter 22: Leadership
- Chapter 26: Mountain Geology
- Chapter 27: The Cycle of Snow
- Chapter 28: Mountain Weather

b. Know The Knots

You are expected to **learn the knots prior to the course**. While instructors will help you perfect tying these knots during the course, and teach you about the "why" and "when" for using each one, you will be at a *major disadvantage* if you are not already familiar with tying these by day one of the course. It is suggested that you attend a skills night or two for instructor support on knot tying, if needed.

Here is a list of knots you should learn prior to the course:

- Butterfly Knot
- Clove Hitch
- Double Fisherman's Bend
- Figure 8 on a Bight
- Girth Hitch
- Munter Hitch
- Overhand Knot
- Prusik Hitch
- Autoblock Hitch
- Rewoven Figure 8
- Single Bowline

Aside from those above, there are other required knots we will cover within the course. You may find it beneficial to familiarize yourself with these prior to the course, but it is not a requirement.

- Water knot
- Butterfly Coil (Rope Carrying & Storage)
- Mule knot
- Slip Knot
- Klemheist Hitch

Freedom has instructions on how to tie all of the above named knots. Additionally, an excellent website for learning knots is Animated Knots by Grog | Learn how to tie knots with step-by-step animation.

c. Buy Gear

We recognize there is a lot of new gear that you will need to purchase. It's important that you acquire all of the required gear on the gear list prior to the start of the course. The more time you can spend getting familiar with your gear, the more comfortable you will be using that gear. There will not be an easy opportunity for you to purchase any gear once the course kicks off.

In Section 5 of this Handbook called "Gear", we provide you with both a detailed climbing gear guide, as well as a list of the gear you will need to purchase for this course and climbing in general. There will also

be a dedicated **Gear Night** at Ascent Outdoors (5209 Ballard Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107). The store will be open specifically for the Intensive Basic course's students, and course instructors and store staff will be available to help answer any question. **Ascent Outdoors will be generously offering 20% off all purchases made that night**, as well as 10% purchases made up until the start of the course! You can find more information and sign up for Gear Night here: Intensive Basic Gear Night.

If you have specific gear questions, skills nights are a great opportunity to ask instructors about these and see what gear they are using. If you cannot make it to a skills night, your Intensive Basic Advocate (IBA) or the course leads are always happy to answer questions via email.

One thing to be mindful of is used gear. Some gear such as harnesses, slings/runners, cordelette, and helmets are difficult to assess for safety after they have been used by someone else. The best way to know if this gear is safe is to know its entire history. How many big falls has someone taken on that piece of gear? Was it left out in the sun a lot? Has this helmet taken any hits? Generally, If the piece of gear you are acquiring is considered load-bearing or part of your safety system, we recommend purchasing that gear as new.

d. Skills nights (optional)

Skills nights are evening practice sessions dedicated to supporting basic climbing students. These evenings are entirely optional, however, they are extremely beneficial and we recommended that students attend as many as they reasonably can. Intensive Basic has a number of skills nights dedicated specifically to its cohort of students prior to the 9-day course, which you can see on the course page here: Intensive Basic Alpine Climbing Course - Seattle - 2023

Additionally, Intensive Basic students are welcome to attend the standard Basic Alpine Climbing Course skills nights. These typically happen on Mondays from 6PM to 9PM at the Seattle Program Center. You do not need to sign up for these nights. You can find the schedule for these here: Basic Alpine Climbing Course - Seattle - 2023. Instructors from the Intensive Basic course may not be in attendance, but other climbing instructors are there that you can ask for assistance. If you reach out to Intensive Basic instructors to let them know you will be attending a particular Monday evening skills night, we will do our best to meet you at these Monday events.

Finally, if none of the scheduled skills nights work for your schedule but you would still like to attend a practice session, contact the course leaders, or your IBA, and we will try to schedule a time that does fit your schedule.

e. Conditioners (at least one required)

Traveling in alpine environments comes with inherent risk. Oftentimes, we can mitigate those risks by moving quickly and efficiently through varied terrain. Prior to the start of the course, your instructors will

offer a number of conditioner hikes that you may join. You can find more information and sign up for conditioners on the course webpage, found here: Intensive Basic Alpine Climbing Course - Seattle - 2023.

These conditioner hikes will be timed hikes. They are meant to provide you and the instructors a baseline for your physical conditioning, rather than be competitive . As a frame of reference, your goal is the benchmark of reaching the **top of Mt. Si (or equivalent) in under 2 hours, with a pack weighing at least 20% of your body weight or 25lbs, whichever is heavier.**

You can find the complete offering of all available conditioning hikes on our course webpage. While you do not have to come to all of these conditioners, **you will be required to complete at least one of these timed conditioning hikes with a member of the course leadership team before the first day of the course.** If you find that your schedule conflicts with all of the hikes being offered, please notify us immediately so that we can help determine an arrangement that is mutually acceptable to you and the Intensive Basic Committee members.

3. Course Overview and Logistics

This course consists of nine continuous days of classroom and field instruction. The first five days are primarily focused on rock techniques and safety systems, while the last four days are focused entirely on glacier and snow travel. These days will feel long — there is a lot of information to work through in a short amount of time. Some liken the experience to drinking from a fire hose. You can expect to feel tired at the end of most days, and be prepared to arrive home later in the evenings after field trips. We recommend that you not make significant evening plans during the course.

a. Rock Module Overview

The first three days of the course will be spent learning the skills needed to climb on rock and safely follow on a multi-pitch alpine rock climb. We will be primarily focused on proper belay and safe rappel techniques, as well as other alpine rock skills. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to develop your friction climbing skills on the program center's various slab structures. After each class-day is complete, there will also be optional happy hour clinics for you to attend, including one devoted to crack climbing.

On day four, we hit the road for two days at Frenchman Coulee near Vantage, WA. We will spend the day practicing your rock climbing skills and getting more familiar on real rock. Instructors will set up climbing routes at various skill levels so that students can practice their skills within their comfort zone. We will set up camp for the night in a spot that allows for privacy while remaining close to where we're climbing.

For the fifth day, students will be assessed on their rock safety skills for the course. During the evaluation, you will need to demonstrate that you can climb up rock routes of various types and difficulties, rappel using a variety of different techniques, and have a firm understanding of the traits that make up a safe anchor. You will also have the opportunity to get additional friction slab climbing practice.

During the rock module, you are asked to **bring all of your rock AND glacier gear every day** unless instructed otherwise, as there will be glacier related skills covered in part on rock module days. Each day of the course will also contain special demonstrations and seminars, including how to pack your climbing packs effectively, and gear checks to ensure all students have what they need and that it fits properly.

b. Glacier Module Overview

The glacier module has only a single day at the Seattle Program Center (day six). This day will cover snow skills such as crampon use, glacier movement, and rope team travel. In the afternoon we will cover crevasse rescue.

The morning of day seven, the class heads out to Mt. Baker for a three-day weekend of field work. Upon arrival, we will hike up to the snow and spend the rest of the day practicing travel on steep snow, self arrest, and glissading. In the afternoon we will continue our travel on snow, ultimately making camp on the snow for the evening.

To promote safety during a glacier climb, it is a common practice to start early and maximize time spent in ideal snow conditions. This is often accomplished by utilizing what is known as an "alpine start." An effective alpine start involves significant preparation the evening prior to a climb, and requires waking up well before dawn to get moving while the snow is still hard and cold. On the morning of day eight, we will execute an efficient alpine start. We will spend the rest of the day practicing rope team and snow travel skills, snow anchors, and crevasse rescue work. In the afternoon, we will travel down to the Mountaineers Mt. Baker lodge, where we will spend the evening indoors.

On the last day, we will head back onto the snow for crevasse rescue evaluations. This will take most of the day. In the afternoon after all evaluations are complete, we make our way back to Seattle, stopping at Chair 9 in Glacier, WA for celebratory pizza and drinks.

c. Expectations

The Intensive Basic course covers a tremendous amount of information and skills in only nine days. In order to teach and allow for students to understand, synthesize, and demonstrate competency in these skills in such a short time, students must arrive prepared for the course as a whole. As detailed in the sections above, prior to the start of the course, we expect you to have already completed the following tasks:

- Read through the required *Freedom of the Hills* readings and be familiar with the concepts being presented.
- Know your knots.
- Purchase all of your gear.
- Complete your conditioner hike.

If any of these are going to be an issue for you, please reach out to the course leads as soon as possible for assistance.

During the nine-day course itself, students shall arrive prepared for each day's events. We ask and expect the following of you:

- Show up for every day of the course **with all of your rock AND glacier gear**. Plan to bring your pack filled with all of your gear throughout the course, unless told otherwise. You are required to wear your mountaineering boots during instruction days at the Program Center, as well as during the Baker field trip.
- **Be on time**; this is a matter of both effective preparation for climbs, as well as respect for your fellow climbers. You will be provided with a course schedule that includes an arrival time, as well as a start time for each particular day. Please **arrive at the arrival time**, and be ready to go **before the start time**. You are **considered late if you arrive at the start time.**
- Know that some of the activities will be outside regardless of the weather, so **plan accordingly with layers and weather protection**. We will discuss necessary clothing and equipment for the Vantage and Baker field days during the course.
- Come excited, with an open mind, and ready for instruction.
- Be open and receptive to constructive comments and feedback.
- Care for one another. Like one would expect during an alpine climb, everyone shares a duty to keep one another safe and supported.

Your course leadership team has worked hard making preparations for this course. We are excited and look forward to working with you! You should expect the following from us:

- We are as organized, efficient, and as prepared as possible to help you learn the alpine skills you seek to acquire.
- Timeliness. We recognize that you have set aside time to take this course. Your time is a valuable commodity, and we honor this and intend to make the most of it.
- Safety. Our goal is to ensure that you are learning these new skills in a safe manner. Please let us know if at any time you notice any outstanding safety issues.
- A respectful, warm, welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment within which to learn and grow as a human and climber.
- Too much fun, really bad jokes, and lots of laughs.
- Stoke, lots of it.

d. Provided Food

During the course, there will be food provided to you. In general, breakfast, lunch, and snacks will be provided on course days spent at the Program Center, while course days spent in the field will vary as far

as the food provided. A full, detailed list of meals provided by the course and meals you will need to supply on your own is listed below. Please review this list carefully!
You will be contacted before the start of the course to ask about any dietary restrictions or preferences.

For days spent in the field, there will not be dedicated lunch or break times, so you are expected to eat when you need to. Your food should be "on the go" and not require preparation or cooking, with the exception of your meal the evening we are snow camping (day 7, Friday evening). When we are out on Baker during our glacier field work, we cannot store food at the Baker Lodge, so you will need to be able to carry all food for yourself throughout the Baker weekend. Please plan accordingly.

- Days 1-3, & 6: For these days at the Program Center, provided food will include a continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks.
- Days 4-5: For the two rock field trip days, you will need to bring your own lunch. Snacks are provided. You may choose to eat at home or bring your breakfast to eat in the car in the morning. Dinner on day 4 can take the form of a potluck or a "set menu" (for example, we prepare spaghetti for the entire group) depending on group preference. We will discuss this in further details during days 1-3 at the Program Center.
- Day 7: We depart Seattle and start our time on Baker. You will need to provide all your own meals for this day. You may again choose to bring your breakfast to eat in the car in the morning. Your lunch and snacks should be on the go (see below). You will have time in the evening while snow camping to prepare a warm dinner, such as a backpacking meal.
- Day 8: Another full day on Baker. You will need to provide your own breakfast and lunch, which will both need to be quick meals. Please note that these meals will already need to be previously prepared at the start of the weekend and ready to eat. There also will not be time in the morning to prepare any hot food. That evening, we will be staying at the Mountaineers Baker Lodge, where dinner and snacks will be provided to you.
- Day 9: Final Baker day. Hot breakfast will be provided to you in the morning at the lodge. You will need to bring another lunch for the day. Again, please note that this meal will already need to be previously prepared at the start of the weekend and ready to eat. On the way home, we will stop for dinner at Chair 9; pizza will be paid for by the course.

4. Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the Intensive Basic Alpine Climbing Course you must complete the following:

- Attend the course and participate in the lectures, activities, and demonstrations
- Demonstrate the required skills to the instructors of the course
- Complete a conditioner hike prior to the start of the course
- Possess a valid Mountaineers Wilderness Navigation certification when you apply to graduate
- Possess a valid Mountaineers Wilderness First Aid certification when you apply to graduate
- Possess the Low Impact Recreation badge

- Perform a qualifying stewardship service activity
- Complete at least two basic climbs (one rock and one glacier)

a. In-course

To complete all necessarily in-course requirements, you must satisfy the following:

- Attend the 9-day course in its entirety. This includes all classroom days and field trips.
- Demonstrate competence of rock skills, snow travel skills, and crevasse rescue, and pass each section's evaluation during the 9-day course.

b. Conditioner

In order to participate in the course, **you will be required to complete at least one timed conditioning hike with a member of the course leadership team before the first day of the course.** This hike will be a benchmark, with the goal of **reaching the top of Mt. Si (or equivalent) in under 2 hours, with a pack weighing at least 20% of your body weight or 25lbs, whichever is heavier.** We will offer a number of hikes for you to choose from at different times and days of the week. If you find that your schedule conflicts with all of the listed hikes, please notify us immediately so that we can help find an arrangement that is mutually acceptable to you and the Intensive Basic Committee members.

c. Navigation

In addition to GPS Navigation, knowing how to utilize a map and compass is a critical mountaineering skill. **You must take a Mountaineers Navigation course prior to graduating**. Mountaineers navigation courses are listed online here: Navigation courses. Held in November, February, and March, the course includes at least one evening workshop and one full-day field trip. Navigation certifications are valid for three years, so you do not need to repeat the course if your certification is current (but we encourage you to volunteer and help instruct the Navigation course).

Please note that you will be required to have a specific type of compass for the navigation course, as described at www.mountaineers.org/seattle/navigation/ under "Compass." **DO NOT buy a compass without reading the guidelines!**

Further reading: *Freedom 9*, chapter 5.

d. First Aid

Mountaineering is inherently hazardous. Some knowledge of first aid is essential to safe climbing. **You are required to complete at minimum a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) course that includes an alpine scenario practice session to graduate from this course.**

The Mountaineers, in conjunction with Remote Medical International (RMI), offers a reputable WFA course. This is a first aid course, which you must sign up for and take separately from this climbing course. The course consists of a total of 24 hours of classroom training, and provides an interactive, hands-on, broad overview of first aid assessment and treatment for the average outdoor traveler. There are no prerequisites for the WFA course. Sessions are offered throughout the year but space is limited. Students who wait until mid-season often find they cannot get into an WFA session before the October graduation. It's in your best interest to sign up for your wilderness first aid course ASAP. Search for WFA sessions here: Wilderness First Aid Courses.

If you have a current WFA that was completed elsewhere, that may exempt you from re-taking the didactic classroom course, however, you will likely still need to sign up for a "scenarios" evening. Other more advanced wilderness medical certifications may also satisfy the first aid requirement. Wilderness First Responder (WFR), Wilderness EMT (WEMT) and Remote Medicine for Advanced Practitioners (RMAP) are accepted. Unfortunately, The Mountaineers do not have a provision that allows for RN, PA-C, ARNP, and MD level providers to be exempt from taking the First Aid requirement for graduation. If you have further questions or would like to discuss acquiring an exemption, contact the First Aid Committee.

e. Stewardship

The Mountaineers is the Northwest's largest outdoor education nonprofit. We have a great impact on the wilderness environment we love and use, and we want it to be a positive one. As Mountaineers, it is important that we become stewards of the wilderness. This means using "Leave No Trace" travel and camping techniques, and actively contributing our labor to environmental projects.

All Basic climbing students are required to complete at least one day of volunteer stewardship as a graduation requirement. The definition is broad, so you may choose an activity that appeals to your interests and fits your schedule. Usually it is one day of volunteer physical labor, and preferably it will relate to places used by The Mountaineers. Typical activities are trail work, habitat restoration, tree planting, or invasive species removal. Other types of activities may be accepted. See Stewardship Credit for more information.

To find stewardship activities, check The Mountaineers web site at:
https://www.mountaineers.org/activities/activities#b_start=0&c4=Stewardship

You may also consider contacting the following organizations directly:
Washington Trails Association: www.wta.org
EarthCorps: www.earthcorps.org
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust: www.mtsgreenway.org
Volunteers for Outdoor Washington: www.trailvolunteers.org
Washington Wilderness Coalition: www.wawild.org

f. Low Impact Recreation Awareness

As consumers and stewards of our wild spaces, it is our responsibility to do all we can to minimize our impact on the environment during our time recreating within it. Adhering to “leave no trace” principles and understanding the overall fragility of wildlife is critical to preserving these places for generations to come. To receive this Low Impact Recreation badge you will need to watch our low impact recreation videos, and then take a short quiz. Please visit the following link to complete this: Low Impact Recreation Badge.

g. Successfully Complete Two Basic Climbs (minimum)

Basic Climbs give the opportunity to develop climbing skills by applying the methods and techniques learned in the lectures and field trips on actual climbs. The climbs are for you to gain experience, have fun, and learn more about your abilities, your team around you, and the mountains.

Changing weather, route finding problems, variable mountain conditions, and sometimes bad karma can keep you from summiting. As such, not all students will get their two required summits in just two tries. Additionally, some scheduled climbs may be canceled due to weather. Your Intensive Basic climb leaders will schedule climbs specifically for Intensive students only, but you can also look on the website and sign up for any basic climbs that are available with open space for basic students (see below for more details on the sign up process). Plan and make time for the possibility of several climbs. Note also that there is a considerable range of difficulty among the basic climbs offered. Choose trips in your comfort zone, and be realistic about your physical and technical abilities. Not all climbs are for all climbers. Your instructors can help you determine which climbs may be appropriate for you.

There are three types of Basic Climbs you will see listed on the Mountaineers website:

- Basic Rock Climb: Must be at least two roped pitches (minimum Class 4), where a “pitch” is understood to mean the maximum usable distance between belay points (usually 120-150ft).
- Basic Glacier Climb: A minimum of 2 hours of roped travel on a glacier.
- Basic Alpine Climb: Roped climbs that may have some rock and/or glacier climbing, but not enough of either to count as a rock or glacier climb. Notes: these climbs do not count as a credit towards graduation requirements, but are excellent climbs to participate in for gaining experience in the alpine.

In order for a climb to count for graduation, all of the following must occur:

- The trip is led by an approved Mountaineers Climb Leader.
- The route done is on the Mountaineers list of acceptable Basic Climbs, or is pre-approved by the Climbs Coordinator.
- The climb leader reports that you reached the summit and/or reached the appropriate end of the climb AND that you performed acceptably.
- The party size for a rock climb is at least three, and at least two rope teams on a glacier climb.
- A rope was used for the “technical” portions, i.e. Class 4 and above on rock and/or glacier travel.

A partial list of approved Basic Climbs can be found toward the end of this handbook in the Appendix.

i. Basic Climb sign-up process via website

Climb leaders from all branches post Basic Climbs on the main Mountaineers website. As a basic student who has fulfilled all course work, you are eligible to sign up for these types of climbs. Basic Climbs include Glacier, Rock and Alpine climbs.

To sign-up for a climb online, log-in with your member id and password at www.mountaineers.org. After log-in, click on “Explore” and then “Find Activities.”

- Search for a Specific Climb (Optional). If you are aware of a specific climb that has been posted, you can enter the leader’s name, keywords like the summit name, etc.
- Specify the Type of Activity. In the second section, specify the type of activity you are searching for. In this case, the type of activity is Climbing. Check the box to limit the results to climbs.
- Select A Date Range. You can also specify a range of dates in which you are looking for a climb. You can only list yourself for one climb during these dates. If you try to sign up for a climb in a date range where you are already listed, you will have to cancel yourself from the other climb first. Note that this might not make you popular with the first climb leader!
- You can also select the branch, and whether you are searching for a Basic or Intermediate climb.
- After a successful search, a list of Activities will be returned to you. Click on the activity you wish to sign up for and click the Register button to register for the climb.

You can also sign up to receive immediate notification when a climb or course is listed. Please be aware of when the event opens up for registrations and be respectful of the leader. The process is outlined in this Mountaineers blog post.

Some climbs or activities require leader permission before registering. You are responsible for contacting the leader and asking for permission. This is typically done through email. It is recommended that you read through what the leader wrote before contacting them. After getting permission you may register by selecting that you have received permission and then following the normal registration process.

Once you are signed up, the climb leader will contact you with further information.

Etiquette for signing up for basic climbs dictates that you should not sign up for multiple climbs on the same weekend (hedging your bets). You should commit yourself to any particular climb that you sign up for and do everything you can to be on the climb. Climb leaders give up their time to climb with you and do a lot of work to organize a climb. Be respectful of their time and dedication to you as a student. Do not bail on a climb leaving the climb leader to find a new climber. This is disrespectful to the climb leader and your fellow students. Climb leaders may make notes on the website if you bail at the last minute or no show which will discourage other climb leaders from allowing you on their climbs in the future.

h. Graduation

Graduation from the Intensive Basic Alpine Climbing course is contingent upon your completion of the in-course requirements, pre-course conditioner hike, at least two basic climbs, a navigation course, a first aid course, a low impact awareness training, and at least one stewardship activity. You will be sent an email at the end of the course with a link to the graduation application. Be sure to submit your graduation application as soon as you have completed all of the above requirements. The graduation ceremony, our annual Climbers' Reunion, is typically held towards the end of October. File your application by early October to ensure that you are recognized at the ceremony.

i. Conditional Graduation

If you have completed all course requirements, but have not yet completed your First Aid course, Navigation course, and/or stewardship, you do NOT need to apply for extension (see below). You may apply for conditional graduation status, noting which of the three requirements you lack. You will become fully graduated conditional upon completion of those missing requirements, and you will be recognized at the Climbers Reunion ceremony. However, you may not participate in club activities requiring full Basic graduate status until all requirements are satisfied. Pending graduates have until the end of May the following year to complete missing requirements.

j. 2nd Year Status

The Basic Alpine Climbing courses are intended to be one-year courses, but can be completed in two years if circumstances necessitate additional time. Extension requests to complete these requirements for graduation can be completed using the same form as used for graduation and conditional graduation. Students applying for 2nd year status should indicate:

- That as an Intensive Basic student you have completed all 9 days of the course including all field trips which were held during the course.
- If you have completed any basic climbs, give the peak name, date, and leader's name for each.
- A list of completed first aid and/or navigation courses, and/or stewardship activities
- Explanation of circumstances that kept you from completing the course graduation requirements.

You may apply for an extension at any time after the 9-day course when you realize you will be unable to complete the requirements needed for graduation, but the deadline for request submission is November 1st. Extensions beyond a second year will not be allowed. If you do get an extension, you must complete your First Aid course within seven months of the normal graduation date for your class.

k. Course Extension

You are expected to attend and complete all 9 days of the course. Requests to complete any portion of Intensive Basic 9-day course during the next course year are considered on a case-by-case basis, for

highly extenuating circumstances only, and solely at the discretion of the Intensive Basic committee. These requests should be submitted to the course leader at basic.intense@gmail.com.

5. Conditioning / Conditioning Requirements

You don't need to be a competitive athlete or marathon runner to succeed in this course, but you should be as fit as possible in order to increase your chance of success during this course and on climbs, and to help maximize your enjoyment of the program. A climber in poor condition may slow the party enough to prevent reaching the summit, or even jeopardize party safety. Inadequate conditioning can also contribute to a loss of alertness and an inability to respond properly to the demands of the environment.

You will learn far more during the course field trips and on climbs if you can focus your attention on mastering technical skills taught during the course, rather than worrying about your overall fitness. Be prepared to carry a 30 pound pack for 10 miles while gaining 4,000 feet of elevation on day trips, or a 40 pound pack covering six miles per day while gaining 3,000 feet on overnight trips.

We strongly recommend that you develop a training regimen leading up to the course that will prepare you for the physical demands of both the course and climbs. A significant amount of literature has been researched and developed over time on such training, pertaining specifically to fitness for alpine climbing. One excellent resource includes the Uphill Athlete.

As noted earlier, **you will be required to complete at least one timed conditioning hike with a member of the course leadership team before the first day of the course.** This hike will be a benchmark, with the goal of **reaching the top of Mt. Si (or equivalent) in under 2 hours, with a pack weighing at least 20% of your body weight or 25lbs, whichever is heavier.**

Further reading: *Freedom 9*, chapter 4.

6. Gear

a. Climbing Gear: Guidelines for Selecting Equipment

You are responsible for providing your own personal equipment. It is likely that you may already own some of the necessary clothing, camping, and other outdoors associated items. While you may be able to rent, borrow, or share some items for this course, alpine climbing will usually require a significant investment. Typically, there is a direct relationship between affordability, durability, comfort, and light-weight; optimizing for two if not three of these qualities will often come at the expense of the fourth. From our experience, expect to invest at least $1000 towards gear that is required for the course.

This amount may be less if you already own gear from scrambling or climbing. It is also realistic to expect to invest more as you discover your own preferences and expand your alpine endeavors over time.

The following section has some guidelines, tips, and things you should consider when making gear purchases. At times, we provide specific examples of gear. While these examples will work they are meant to be a reference point and are not an endorsement for a particular brand, style, or cost level. Safety is the most important item to consider when buying gear and should never be compromised. All climbing gear must be rated for climbing and used appropriately. If at any time you have more specific questions about gear such as sizing, gender specific questions, preferences among instructors, rating, etc. then please do not hesitate to ask.

We also realize that students come into the course with various levels of experience. If you already have experience with a particular type of gear then parts of this section may not be as applicable to you. For students coming in with experience and gear we ask that you check that your gear meets the requirements for this course.

Important to-do: all new gear looks alike! As soon as you have acquired your gear, begin to create and apply a system for marking and identifying your gear from others. This could be a use of colored tapes, or nail polish.

Climbing helmet

Your climbing helmet must be UIAA and/or CE approved for the purposes of climbing, as these are designed to provide:

- Protection from rock fall impact to the top of the head
- Protection to the side of the head in a tumbling or pendulum fall
- Retention of helmet on the head in a tumbling fall
- Unobstructed upward visibility
- Ventilation
- Adjustable fit, both for comfort and to wear a warm hat if you want

When purchasing a helmet, find one that fits well and is comfortable. You will be wearing your helmet for long periods at a time. You do not need to purchase anything fancy and a basic climbing helmet is a great choice for most students. A more expensive helmet will often increase the ventilation, decrease the weight, and decrease the overall durability, though the safety will be the same. Some climbing helmet manufacturers include Black Diamond, C.A.M.P., Grivel, Mammut, and Petzl. Bicycle, kayak, motorcycle, snow sport, and other types of helmets are not acceptable.
[Relevant links: climbing helmets]

Belay/Rappel Gloves

Gloves are used both for rappelling and belaying, and should be well-fitting and comfortable. If purchasing climbing-specific gloves, you can choose a fingered or fingerless option. Fingerless will afford your greater dexterity, while full-fingered will offer greater abrasion and weather protection. This choice is purely a matter of preference. A reasonable, affordable compromise can be a good pair of leather garden/work gloves, however, fit can be an issue with these. We ask that everyone own and use belay/rappel gloves during this course and subsequent climbs. Outside of this course you may choose to not use belay/rappel gloves.
[Relevant links: belay/rappel gloves]

Climbing harness
Assuming you are purchasing your first and only climbing harness, your harness will need to be versatile for both rock and glacier climbing. The most comfortable harnesses are expensive, bulky, and heavy big wall harnesses; while on the other extreme, the lightest, most compact, no-frills harnesses are glacier harnesses. Our recommendation is to purchase something in the middle, a more common standard climbing harness. This is the type of harness you will often see at the climbing gym or the crag.

Arguably, the most important factor when it comes to choosing a harness is fit; the belt portion should sit at your waist and you should be able to sit comfortably while hanging in your harness. You should be able to do so sitting upright without difficulty. If it is an effort to remain sitting upright, the rise of the harness (the distance between the wait belt and the leg loops) may be too short; if the belt sits at your rib cage while hanging, the rise may be too long; and if it is simply not comfortable to hang in, it may just not be the right one for you. Make sure that the weight feels well distributed between your leg loops and the waist belt, that there are no problematic rub spots, pinches, and binds, and that you feel in balance. Bottom line, try many different models among many different brands to find the right one for you. When you go shopping for a harness, most local retailers will let you put the harness on and they will have a spot where you can hang and test the harness for comfort. This is a great way to determine if a harness is right for you. There are also plenty of resources online to help choose the right climbing harness for you.

A useful feature to lookout for is adjustable leg loops because they allow you to wear the harness over different types of layers (thin pants at the crag and. thicker layers on a glacier). Generally, women's specific models offer a longer seat rise and belt contour for a better fit. Whatever the harness you purchase, *we do require that your harness has a belay loop* (the vertical piece of sewn material at the front of the harness).
[Relevant links: climbing harnesses]

Belay/Rappel Device
There are many different types of belay and rappel devices on the market. For this course you must have a tube-style device. We typically recommend a tube-style device with high friction grooves, as this device can help to stabilize your speed on a rappel and add control when lowering your partner on belay. Consider picking up a device with guide mode capability (the additional loop on the device) if you're eventually interested in leading multi-pitch routes.

Some tube-style devices have an additional benefit of assisted-braking. These particular models require additional training and are not easily usable by your climbing partners. You may also choose to purchase a mechanical belay device such as the Petzl GriGri. While these devices add an extra layer of safety they do not have the versatility of the tube style devices necessary for alpine climbing and this course. **You will need a tube style device for this course**. Assisted-braking devices are not acceptable.
[Relevant links: belay/rappel devices]

Personal Anchor (aka PA)
A personal anchor is used to temporarily tether oneself to an anchor when in a situation that is exposed or otherwise dangerous. For the purposes of this course, this can be an ~18 mm wide sewn nylon double runner (120 cm) which has the advantages of being affordable and versatile. Alternatively, commercially available personal anchor systems have the advantage of being easily adjusted to the correct length. Both of the above options can be used in your rappel system to "extend the rappel," which is why we recommend selecting from one of these two types. If you do not know which to purchase, the sewn nylon double runner is a good bet because it's already required and will be useful throughout the course.

While there are other types of personal anchors, such as the Petzl Connect or a homemade Purcell Prusik, you will still need a system, such as those mentioned above, to extend your rappels.

Do NOT select a "daisy chain" for your personal anchor, as these are not safe to use as a personal anchor.
[Relevant links: nylon double runner, personal anchor system]

Mountaineering Boots
Plastic mountaineering boots are boots that have a hard plastic shell on the outside and are intended for colder temperatures and higher elevations than those seen in this course. **Do not buy plastic mountaineering boots.**

Mountaineering boots can be very different from the typical hiking boots; they are much studier, have a piece of metal through the sole (called a shank), and are specifically designed for alpine environments. Whichever mountaineering boot you choose they should offer:

- Durability
- Waterproofing
- Be stiff enough to kick steps into hard snow
- Have aggressive tread for mud and snow
- Accept crampons with heel and possibly toe welts

In principle, mountaineering boots come in 3-season and 4-season variants. Three-season boots are typically more comfortable, more flexible and lighter. Four-season boots are warmer and sturdier. Oftentimes, the steel shank in 3-season boots will extend only ¾ of the length of the boot, which makes walking much easier. Some 3-season models include the Scarpa Charmoz, Salewa Rapace, and La

Sportiva Trango. A few 4-season models include the Scarpa Mont Blanc, Salewa Vultur, and La Sportiva Nepal Evo/Cube. For the climbs related to this course, a 3-season boot works fine, but it ultimately comes down to fit and personal preference.

There are a number of adequate "how-to purchase" boots guides online which go into more depth about mountaineering boots. As fit is the most important aspect we recommend visiting your local retailer and trying boots on. If you are Seattle based this would include REI, Feathered Friends, Ascent Outdoors, Miyar. Work with the bootfitter and try on a variety of types, models, and sizes. Be fussy and take your time. Practice kicking steps with your boots on (kicking a hard wall or floor with the front of your boot). If your toes start to touch the front of the boot, they are too small. Generally, consider sizing up slightly from street shoes to accommodate larger socks and foot swelling. If the boots don't feel comfortable in store, they won't get any better in the field, as they do not typically "break in" owing to their durable construction and steel shanks.
[Relevant links: mountaineering boots]

Rock Shoes
While rock climbing shoes are not required for this course, as all basic rock climbs can be done in mountaineering boots, you will have a much more enjoyable experience with rock shoes. When purchasing shoes make sure to purchase shoes that are not aggressively tight, such as a bouldering shoe. You will want your shoes to be comfortable for an all-day fit. Your local retailer will allow you to try on a number of different sizes and styles to help give you an idea of what works best for you. The staff will work with you to find a shoe that fit your needs.

Rock shoes, especially those made of leather, will have a break-in period which requires stretching out the shoe. This can be uncomfortable especially for those who are not used to rock shoes. Synthetic rock shoes will have significantly less stretch and may allow you to purchase the shoe with more true-to-fit sizing. You might also consider sizing the shoe so that you can comfortably wear socks with your rock shoes on, which some prefer with climbs in the alpine. Regardless of the type of shoe, if you decide to purchase a rock shoe, it is highly recommended to break-in your shoes prior to the course.
[Relevant links: rock climbing shoes]

Other Climbing Footwear
You will be able to complete the approach/hike/scramble up to the start of the rock climbing portion of any Basic Rock Climb using some combination of hiking boots, mountaineering boots, trail running shoes, etc. While entirely optional, one additional shoe type worth mentioning are "approach shoes", which are a type of hybrid hiking and climbing shoe made for the approach. Although they may be comfortable and convenient, they are certainly an additional expense, and can be additional weight added to a pack. Due to their hybrid climbing sole, they are sometimes worn during some rock climbs by a more confident and experienced climber. If you are new to climbing, approach shoes are not a good idea for use during actual climbing. Additionally some leaders outside of IB may not allow approach shoes on the climbing sections. If you are new to alpine climbing, focus for now on finding the right mountaineering boots for you, and regard this section as purely informational.

Mens Approach Shoes Examples: https://www.rei.com/c/mens-approach-shoes
Womens Approach Shoes Examples: https://www.rei.com/c/womens-approach-shoes

Crampons
When purchasing crampons some features to consider are fastening style, number of points, and material(s).

Crampons come in various fastening styles:

- Step-in or automatic crampons require both front and back welts
- Hybrid or semi-automatic crampons require a back welt
- Strap-on crampons do not require either a front or back welt

You should purchase your crampons based on the type of boot you own and if it has a toe and/or heel welts. As a note, some crampons will allow you to change the type of toe attachment.

Your crampons may be either aluminum or steel with the forward pair of points (front points) protruding forward and down from the front of the boots such as with these crampons and not these crampons which are intended for ice climbing. While aluminum crampons are entirely acceptable for this course, other instructors within the Mountaineers may prefer you to have steel crampons. The trade-off between aluminum and steel is that aluminum will be much lighter than steel but steel will be more durable. Ideally, look for crampons with anti-balling plates, as these plastic pieces under the foot help mitigate snow packing under the feet.

Look for crampons with either 10 or 12 points. The tradeoff with the number of points is less weight (10 points) for more stability and traction (12 points). Either choice is acceptable and will come down to personal preference.

Traction devices such as microspikes, while useful on hikes, are not sufficient for this course.
[Relevant links: crampons]

Ice Axe
Our recommendation is to purchase a general, all-purpose alpine ice axe for this course. This ice axe will serve you for years to come on most Pacific Northwest glacier climbs. Ice aces are typically sized by grasping the entire head of the axe with your hand and allowing the axe to hang freely by your side. The spike (that is, the tip) of the axe should come approximately down to the side of the ankle bone. This article has more details on sizing.

Some models are designed to be notably lighter or shorter. These ice axes are significantly more expensive and can be more dangerous to use as they require advanced techniques. For this course we require an ice axe with a straight shaft.

We do generally recommend having an ice axe leash of some type to prevent the axe from escaping you inadvertently; this can be purchased commercially or made affordably with a length of nylon webbing, accessory cord, or spare double runner. Purchasing spike and pick guards are entirely optional; some choose to simply apply some duct tape over the sharp edges to guard them. We will require you to use guards during the self-arrest portions of the course.

Note: do not be confused by and purchase an ice tool, as these are not designed for glacier travel.
[Relevant links: ice axes]

Pack

You will need a large enough pack to carry your gear -- climbing gear, food, water, clothing, 10-essentials, portion of shared gear, etc -- not only throughout this course, but for climbs that could last as long as 3 days. All told, this can often weigh between 35-50 lbs and generally requires a bag capacity in the range of anywhere between 45-65 liters. As with so many other pieces of gear discussed in this guide, we recommend that appropriate, comfortable fitment is the primary priority, especially considering the distances over which you will be carrying these loads. Make sure the pack has the appropriate gear loops for properly attaching items such as an ice axe. Additional features that can be useful include hydration bladder compatibility, straps for cinching the pack down into a smaller size, and varied pockets.

Alpine climbing specific packs may offer such things as an external helmet carrier, among other technical features or customizations but are not necessary for this course. If you already own and are comfortable with a pack that meets the above size requirements, then there is no immediate need to purchase an additional pack. Many students entering this course have a backpacking pack which most often fits their needs. As you become a more experienced climber, the amount of gear you carry, the volume you need, and the features you want out of a pack will become more clear so it may be worthwhile to wait on purchasing a new pack for this course if you already own an acceptable pack.
[Relevant links: pack selecting online guide; some examples]

Snow Picket

We require all Basic students to have and carry a picket on glacier climbs. This should be 24 inches (60 cm) long, and can be the traditional aluminum I-beam, which is more cost effective, or a Yates, which is more packable. Both work well as a snow anchor. Some pickets may include a pre-attached cable. This will cost more and is entirely optional. For the sake of versatility, we instead typically recommend girth-hitching a 120 cm dyneema runner through the picket in place of purchasing a picket with a pre-attached cable. Either style of picket with or without a cable is acceptable.
[Relevant links: aluminum picket, Yates picket]

Accessory Cord

You will need to pick up some accessory cord (perlon cord) and have this cut to various lengths to create your waist prusik, foot prusik, hero loop, and cordelette. The two prusiks will be used for ascending a rope (aka Texas Prusiks), the hero look is used as a backup during rappels and crevasse rescue, and the cordelette is used for building anchors.

Accessory cord comes in various diameters, strengths, colors, and consistencies. There is no perfect size (diameter) for accessory cord as it depends on the diameter of the rope being used and the required cord strength. For this course we require 6mm cord for the prusiks and hero loops as this is will grab onto most of the Mountaineers' rope used for the course.

Due to the low cost of accessory cord we recommend not purchasing the cheapest cord available. The more expensive cord will only be a few dollars more but will be much easier to use as it is less rigid. Brands such as Petzl, Edelweiss, Edelrid, and Bluewater all make good accessory cord. Feathered Friends, Ascent Outdoors, and Pro Mountain Sports all carry these or comparable brands. The only brand we recommend avoiding is PMI which is carried by REI.

When purchasing cord ask for the staff for assistance to cut the following lengths of **6 mm cord**:

- 1 waist prusik, approximate length of cord to get varies based on your height:
    - For someone near 5'0", get a 5' length
    - For someone near 5'6", get a 5'6" length
    - For someone near 6'0", get a 6' length
    - For someone near 6'6, get a 6'6" length
- 1 foot prusik, approximate length of cord to get varies based on your height:
    - For someone near 5'0", get a 11' length
    - For someone near 5'6", get a 11'6" length
    - For someone near 6'0", get a 12' length
    - For someone near 6'6", get a 13' length
- 1 hero loops, get a 4' length

Additionally, we are asking each student to carry a cordelette with them for anchor building. To create this, please purchase a single length of **7 mm cord** approximately 20 to 25 ft (21 ft is often a standard length).

Slings, aka Runners

You will need a number of slings/runners for this course. You may hand-make these out of lengths of 1-in tubular nylon (aka webbing) and tie these into a loop with a water knot. This option is more cost effective and better tolerates a shock load but they are also much bulkier, heavier, and unwieldy compared to sewn runners. While either option is acceptable we have seen most students who start with tied webbing runners will switch to sewn runners. As such, our recommendation would be to acquire sewn runners (i.e. permanently intact loops) rather than the lengths of nylon webbing. In terms of sizes, useful and typical sewn runner sizes are 60 cm (aka single runner) and 120 cm (aka double runner).

Sewn runners typically come in two different types of material, nylon and Dyneema. Dyneema includes a variety of brand name versions such as Dyneema, Dynex, and Spectra. Because these are only brand name differences they are most commonly referred to as Dyneema.

We will cover the differences between nylon and Dyneema during the course, and reasoning for when to use a runner of a particular material type. For now, know that some of your runners must be nylon and the rest can be either nylon or Dyneema. Often the initial investment to purchase as many of your runners as possible in dyneema pays off in terms of weight and space savings, but that choice is entirely personal. If you want to learn more about the differences between the two types of runners/slings this article goes into much more detail: https://blog.weighmyrack.com/sling-materials-dyneema-vs-nylon/

Glacier Glasses

Glacier glasses are special sunglasses designed to block out significantly more light than traditional sunglasses. There are various articles worth reading that go into the details of what glacier glasses are and why they are necessary when walking on glaciers.

We do recommend that you purchase glacier glasses with side shields. Whatever model you do end up buying, consider getting one with lenses rated as Category 4, which are the darkest the rated lenses. The glacier can be very bright, and Category 3 is often not strong enough. Fit is the most important aspect of glacier glasses. You will want glasses that are comfortable to wear, with and without your helmet, and block out the most amount of light underneath and to the sides of your eyes. Try on a number of different glacier glasses to find what works best for you.

Some glasses lenses have the added feature of being photochromic, meaning they will darken according to the degree of light present; these also tend to be considerably more expensive but can be useful to avoid needing to bring both sunglasses and glacier glasses.
[Relevant links: glacier glasses]

Hooded Sunshirt

An optional but highly recommended piece of gear to purchase is a sun-shirt with a hood. These breathe well and offer tremendous UV protection. They can be worn for long days climbing at a crag or walking all day on a glacier. Ideally the hood will be able to fit over your helmet.
[Relevant links: women's example, men's example]

Gaiters

You will want a pair of gaiters for keeping dry during snow travel, as well as to provide some protection against stray contact against your sharp crampons. Look for a gaiter which fully covers your calf. You may consider that in your first year, as you get used to traveling with crampons, you'll likely put your gaiters through a bit of abuse so no need to grab an expensive, top-of-the-line version.
[Relevant links: additional gaiter example]

Pulley

You will need one rescue pulley for crevasse rescue. The pulley does not need to be fancy; as long as a glacier rope can run along its wheel and is capable of self-tending a prusik, it's fine. You may bring a micro-traxion device if you so desire and your budget permits, but this is not necessary nor in any way

required. Some instructors have found that the SMC pulley will tend a prusik more consistently than its Petzl pulley counterpart.

Nut tool/Chock Pick

Nut tools (aka chock pick) are used for removing protection placed by a climb leader when on a rock climb. Look for something sturdy. This tool has the added feature of a leash attachment, but any tool with a carabiner and/or length of string attached will do.

Carabiners

There is never a right answer to the type, size, and even the number of carabiners to carry. This comes down to personal preference. This online guide is a useful reference describing the different types, sizes, and strengths. For this course we will provide the following guidance:

- Have at least 4 locking carabiners. We recommend that one of these is a larger "pearbiner" (aka HMS) type carabiner, such as the Rocklock, William, or Attache. This is often useful for building a masterpoint in an anchor, where numerous other pieces may be connecting to this carabiner, and is ideal for use when performing a munter belay. Your other locking carabiners may be pearbiner shaped, or asymmetric shaped (aka asymmetric D carabiners, offset D, modified D carabiners), which work well as general, all-purpose locking carabiners. To give you a reference for the size of these carabiners when you make your own selections, some examples our instructors use include the Nitron, Vaporlock, Mini Pearbiner, Spirit, and Photon Lock. Note: we are recommending against purchasing auto-locking or magnetic locking gates, our rationale being that not only are they rather heavy, but also that these tend to be conducive to building poor habits, including not screwing shut or subsequently checking the gate on carabiners. If you already own auto-locking carabiners, you do not need to replace these with regular locking carabiners for the course.
- Have at least 7 non-locking carabiners. These will be used in a variety of ways, from racking your personal gear, to building aspects of various anchors or rescue systems. Our preference is for wire gates carabiners since they are lighter; some examples being these or these. We typically will avoid getting super-mini ones like the Nano 22 for the present time being, as manipulating them with gloves can be problematic, and they have a tendency to freeze. Ultimately, your choice of non-locking carabiner will depend on your preference for carabiner's size, how the gate feels as it opens/closes in your hand, its weight, and cost.

The Ten Essentials

For all Mountaineers climbs (and frankly, for any outdoor pursuit), you will always be required to carry your own "Ten Essentials." This should be the foundation of your packing list for any given trip. For more information on what these Ten Essentials are, please have a look at this excellent resource.

Toileting

Fact: everybody pees, everybody poops. We'll have more discussion about doing this in the alpine during the course, however, it's worth mentioning a couple of items now. There are commercially available "blue bags" for retrieving and transporting one's solid waste. You can also pick these up for free from

almost any park ranger station or make them yourself at home. You will want to eventually acquire one of these before going out on your climbs but you do not need to do anything prior to the course.

There are stories about people who have misused various medication agents such as Imodium (Loperamide) for the purposes of deliberately constipating themselves on a climb, so as to avoid having a bowel movement. Please do not do this; it is neither healthy, nor safe. And you'll be pretty damn miserable.

Some women may find using a urinary funnel convenient and discreet, however, ducking behind trees or rocks is also reasonable; this is entirely a matter of preference.

Water Treatment

You should plan to have at least one type of water treatment. This could be tabs, pump filter, UV, etc. You may not need to bring your own water treatment on every trip but at least having the option to bring one method will be good. On rock climbs it can be a good idea to have an lightweight emergency purification system such as tabs (chemical). On glacier climbs one pump filter will often be needed for every 3-4 people. Melting snow takes a surprising amount of time and boiling that much water isn't feasible. Instead water is melted in stoves and then purified, most often with pump filters.

Squeeze and straw purification methods can work for individuals but are typically not fast enough to help out a group. Gravity filters can be great if camping near running water. Boiling water takes too much fuel to be effective.

You do not need any water treatment for the course itself but you may want to invest in something prior to your climbs. Chat with us in person if you would like more beta.

b. Gear Matrix

The following matrix is provided to you as an outline of all the gear you'll need, not only for the Intensive Basic course, but for your climbing career.

The above discussion was limited to guidelines related specifically to climbing gear. Below, we also include a broader list of items, including clothing/layers, camp gear, etc. We will have the opportunity and be very happy to discuss further our thoughts and recommendations about these items during the course, as well. Many of your instructors love nothing more than to talk about the finer details of gear.

You will need all of the listed climbing gear for the course. During the course itself, you may have some time to pick up an item you were not sure about and wanted to receive further clarification on, however, *you will need the rock climbing gear in particular right from the very start of the course*, and will not have time to complete your climbing gear shopping needs during the course itself. You'll also be learning how to actually PACK your gear; a skill to develop over experience and time. At and leading up to the course, we'll have examples and provide you with assistance on packing your gear efficiently and effectively.

Please plan ahead! Contact us with any questions about gear. Ask your IBA or come to skills nights/conditioner hikes with your thoughts or gear clarification needs. We are excited, eager, and ready to help you get outfitted and succeed!

It will also be necessary to have your alpine clothing for the course. However, we fully recognize that these pieces in particular are especially subject to user preferences and personal needs. Some of us run colder than others; some of us sweat within seconds of starting any given activity! You may already have a good idea for your needs in this area; if you are outfitting pieces for the first time, be thoughtful about your initial choices. In some cases, it may be beneficial to start off with a bargain model and later graduate to a more technical piece as you advance in climbing. In other cases, you may want to invest more money into a piece now, knowing that it will work well and last you possibly a lifetime.

Our advice is to develop a layering system with pieces that can be easily taken on and off to optimize your level of warmth, dryness, and overall comfort. This can take time and experience to determine, as well as an understanding for how various types of fabrics behave under particular conditions. Again, reach out to us and ask as many questions as you need about gear selection -- we are here for you, and want to help you get the most out of your time and monetary investments, thereby helping you to have a better experience in the alpine!

Where possible, the matrix also makes note of items that are optional, or are typically group shared gear. For gear that is specifically related to our evening snow camping during the course, if you do not have experience with this or with camping in general in the backcountry, let us know and we'll make sure to help you with these selections. If you already have a good sense of your snow and alpine camping preferences, then hopefully our list just serves to confirm your intuitions and helps streamline your gear accounting.

Key:
Y = Yes
N = No
M = Multiday
O = Optional

Climbing Gear		
Gear Item	**Used during rock module**	**Used during glacier module**
Climbing helmet	Y	Y
Harness (with belay loop)	Y	Y
Belay/rappel device	Y	N

Locking carabiners x 4	Y	Y
Non-locking carabiners x 7	Y	Y
Hollow block (provided to you)	Y	Y
Personal anchor/rappel extension (can be a commercially purchased pre-fabricated version, or you may simply use your 120 cm sewn nylon runner listed below)	Y	Y
Sewn runners ● 120 cm sewn nylon runner (18 mm wide) x 1 ● 60 cm sewn dyneema or nylon runners x 2 ● 120 cm sewn dyneema runners x 2	 Y Y Y	 Y Y Y
Accessory cord, 6 mm diameter, used to make the following items (see guide above for length details): ● Hero loop (made from 4 ft length) ● Foot prusik (length varies depending on height) ● Waist prusik (length varies depending on height)	 Y N N	 Y Y Y
Accessory cord, 7 mm diameter, used to make a cordelette, 20 - 25 feet	Y	N
Ice axe (leash optional)	N	Y
Crampons	N	Y
Rescue Pulley	N	Y
Picket	N	Y
Nut tool (chock pick)	Y	N
Belay/rappel gloves	Y	N
Pack	Y	Y
Rock shoes	O	N

Clothing		
Gear Item	**Used during**	**Used during**

	rock climbs	glacier climbs
Mountaineering boots	Y	Y
Rock shoes	O	N
Gaiters	N	Y
Socks and underwear	Y	Y
Wicking baselayer	Y	Y
Insulating layer(s)	Y	Y
Waterproof shell jacket	Y	Y
Pants	Y	Y
Rain or waterproof pants (ideally full side zip)	Y	Y
Brim hat	O	O
Buff, bandana, balaclava	O	O
Gloves (ideal to have multiple weight/types)	O	Y
Hooded sun shirt	O	O

Camping		
Gear Item	**Used during rock climbs**	**Used during glacier climbs**
Sleeping pad	M	M
Sleeping bag	M	M
Eating utensils, plate/bowl/cup (if desired)	M	M
Camp stove, fuel	O	O
Snacks	Y	Y
Meals	Y	Y

Water filter/purification	M	M
Snow/avalanche shovel	O	M
Tent/bivy/tarp	M	M
Sleeping pad	M	M
Pack cover/garbage bag	O	O

Other		
Gear Item	**Used during rock climbs**	**Used during glacier climbs**
Summit pack	O	O
Blue bags/TP	Y	Y
Toiletries	M	M
Bug repellent	O	O
Insulated sit pad	O	O
Cell phone	O	O
Personal Locator Beacon	O	O
Trekking poles	O	O
Altimeter or GPS	O	O
Face mask, ear plugs, melatonin, caffeine	O	O
Permits (NWFP, NP Pass, Discover Pass)	O	O
Money for food, gas reimbursement	O	O
Food, water, fresh clothes to leave in the car	O	O

Ten Essentials		
Gear Item	**Used during rock climbs**	**Used during glacier climbs**
Navigation	Y	Y
Sun protection	Y	Y
Illumination	Y	Y
Insulation	Y	Y
First Aid	Y	Y
Fire	Y	Y
Repair kit and tools	Y	Y
Nutrition	Y	Y
Hydration	Y	Y
Emergency shelter	Y	Y

7. Climbing code

Participants on all Mountaineers sponsored climbs must adhere to the climbing code:

- Leave the trip itinerary with a responsible person.
- Carry the necessary clothing, food, and equipment.
- A climbing party of three is the minimum, unless adequate prearranged support is available.
- On glaciers, a minimum of two rope teams is recommended.
- Rope up on all exposed places and for all glacier travel. Anchor all belays.
- Keep the party together, and obey the leader or majority rule.
- Never climb beyond your ability and knowledge.
- Never let judgment be overruled by desire when choosing the route or deciding whether to turn back.
- Follow the precepts of sound mountaineering as set forth in books of recognized merit.
- Behave at all times in a manner that reflects favorably upon mountaineering, including adherence to Leave No Trace principles.

8. Club Standards

In order to attain the Club's purposes – to explore, study, preserve and enjoy the natural beauty of Northwest America – all members of The Mountaineers shall subscribe to the following standards while participating in Club activities or while on Club premises:

- Exercise personal responsibility and conduct yourself in a manner that will not impair the safety of the party or prevent the collective participation and enjoyment of others.
- Respect private property.
- Abstain from drugs or medications, when their effect on ability and judgment would affect the safety of the party or impair the collective participation and enjoyment of others.
- Enter the outdoors as a visitor, leave behind no debris, environmental scars, or other indications of your visit that could reduce the enjoyment of those who follow.
- Pets, firearms, or any other items which impair the safety or enjoyment of others shall not be brought on Club activities or premises
- Minimize environmental impact on the outdoors by using campfires only in properly designated areas and extinguishing them completely after use. Conduct human sanitation and washing away from water sources and carry out all solid waste.
- Obey specific regulations imposed by the Board of Trustees, Branches and Divisions of The Mountaineers, which are necessary to implement the above.

Please also reference the Mountaineers Board Policies on Harassment and Problem Behavior found in the appendix.

Members who deviate from this philosophy and from the specific Club regulations may be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the Club, including expulsion.

9. Feedback

After each trip or event you will be asked for feedback. This feedback is done through the webpage and is completely anonymous. We take the feedback we receive seriously. If you have feedback for us, we would love to hear it. It's how we make this course better. Please let us know!

10. Resources

- Member Benefits including deals on gear
    - Member Benefits
    - Make sure to sign up for ExpertVoice!
- Crevasse Rescue
    - An Illustration of Crevasse Rescue
- Mountaineers Standard Techniques
    - Standard Techniques
- Animated Knots

- Animated Knots by Grog | Learn how to tie knots with step-by-step animation
- Extensive Video on Climbing Anchors
  - A Primer on Climbing Anchors

11. Appendix

Appendix A – Basic Climbs Quick Reference Guide

The link below provides a table which gives a brief comparison of the most common basic experience climbs. The T/S column refers to the technical difficulty/strenuousness of a given climb. The scale compares basic climbs only to other basic climbs. The scale is from 1 to 5, with 1 being easiest compared to other basic climbs and 5 being hardest. (Ratings represent an average of the opinions of several experienced climb leaders.) Technical difficulty refers to the technical challenge as well as exposure. Strenuousness refers to the physical demands or the level of conditioning required. In the season column, each letter represents a month. The suggested best season will vary depending on the current year's weather patterns and snowpack.

You can find this guide here: Basic Climbs Guide.

Appendix B -- Other Resources

Accidents in North American Mountaineering, The American Alpine Club
Alpine Climbing: Techniques to Take You Higher, Mark Houston & Kathy Cosley
Cascade Alpine Guide, Volumes 1-3, Fred Beckey
Classic Climbs in the Northwest, Alan Kearney
Climber's Guide to the Olympic Mountains, Olympic Mountain Rescue Council
Climbing the Cascade Volcanoes, Jeff Smoot
Climbing: Training for Peak Performance, Clyde Soles
Climbing Washington's Mountains, Jeff Smoot
Conditioning for Outdoor Fitness, David Musnick & Mark Pierce
Extreme Alpinism: Climbing Light, Fast and High, Mark Twight, James Martin, & Don Graydon
Mountaineering: A Woman's Guide, Andrea Gabbard
Rock Climbing Anchors: A Comprehensive Guide, Craig Luebben
Rock Climbing: Mastering Basic Skills, Craig Luebben
Selected Climbs in the Cascades, Volumes 1-2, Jim Nelson & Peter Potterfield
Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain, Bruce Tremper
The Outdoor Athlete, Courtenay & Doug Schurman
The Rock Warrior's Way: Mental Training for Climbers, Arno Ilgner
Train to Climb Mt. Rainier, DVD, Courtenay & Doug Schurman
Training for the New Alpinism: A Manual for Climber as Athlete, Steve House et al.
Training for the Uphill Athlete: A Manual for Mountain Runner & Ski Mountaineers, Steve House et al.

If you are looking for books to add to your personal library, The Mountaineers bookstore has a wide selection of titles available at a discount to members. For more information, click on the Library and Bookstore under the “About Us” tab on www.mountaineers.org.

Appendix C -- Mountaineers Board Policies on Harassment and Problem Behavior

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Mountaineers that harassment shall not be tolerated.

Application

1. The Mountaineers is committed to maintaining an environment within our organization and during our sponsored activities that is free of verbal, physical and visual forms of harassment so that everyone can enjoy our club activities in a productive, respectful and dynamic environment.
    a. The Mountaineers does not allow harassment of any kind by one member towards another including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or marital or veteran status.
    b. The Mountaineers does not tolerate harassment by one member towards another whether the member is a leader, volunteer, trustee, or officer.
2. Members who violate this policy may have their membership privileges restricted, up to and including expulsion.
3. The Mountaineers seek to prevent harassment from occurring and will take immediate and appropriate action when we know that harassment has occurred. To do this, however, we need the cooperation of all members at all levels as described in “Responsibilities.”
4. The Mountaineers will promptly and thoroughly investigate claims of harassment.
    a. The Executive Director will use his or her judgment to determine how to accomplish a timely, fair and effective investigation.
    b. Complaints of harassment will be handled with sensitivity, discretion and confidentiality to the extent allowed by the circumstances. Generally this means that allegations of harassment are shared by the investigator with those who have a need to know (such as witnesses or members of certain board committees, such as the Executive Committee so that The Mountaineers can conduct an effective investigation and take appropriate remedial action.
    c. The complaining member is usually requested to provide as many details as possible, such as the dates(s), location(s), names(s) of witnesses, or information about the alleged offender(s).
    d. If The Mountaineers determines that a person may have helpful and relevant information, the person will be interviewed.

e. During the investigation, steps may be taken, when appropriate, to minimize contact between the complaining member and the alleged offender.
f. After the investigation is completed, The Mountaineers will share its findings with the complaining member, the alleged offender, and, if appropriate, others directly concerned with the incident or the investigation.

5. If The Mountaineers concludes that harassment occurred, prompt and effective remedial action will be taken.
    a. This may include limiting the membership activities of the harasser and other actions to remedy the effects of the harassment and prevent further harassment.
    b. If expulsion is recommended, such action will be referred to the board as described in the bylaws.

6. No action will be taken against any member, who in good faith files a complaint of harassment or assists in the investigation of such a complaint, solely because the member filed a complaint or assisted in an investigation.
    a. Members who believe they have been retaliated against for having reported harassment or participated in an investigation must promptly report any concerns about retaliation either to the person(s) who are conducting the investigation, or if the investigation is concluded, to the Executive Director.
    b. Concerns about retaliation will be investigated.
    c. Appropriate corrective measures will be taken if allegations of retaliation are substantiated

Responsibilities

Each member is responsible for supporting and adhering to this policy.

- Members should never tolerate inappropriate behavior. They should make their feelings known to the offending person. In many cases if a member makes his or her feelings known to offending persons, tells them the conduct is not appropriate, and asks them to stop, this may take care of the situation.
- However, if any member is not comfortable doing this, or has tried doing this but the offending behavior has continued, then the member must promptly report any offending behavior, whether such behavior is directed towards them personally or to another member, to The Mountaineers' Executive Director. Reports of offending behavior must be made as soon as practical.
- Members are strongly encouraged to report concerns about harassment before offensive behaviors become severe or pervasive, as The Mountaineers prefers to stop harassment before it escalates. Group leaders, volunteers, board members or officers who know or receive reports or complaints of offending behavior must promptly notify the Executive Director so that appropriate action can be taken.

The Executive Director is responsible for administering this policy.

Examples of Harassment

In general terms, harassment is a knowing and willful course of conduct directed by one member towards another that under the circumstances seriously alarms, annoys, harasses or embarrasses the person towards whom the conduct was directed. However, constructive criticism, offered appropriately during activities or courses, though it may be embarrassing, is not harassment.

Examples of harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion age or disability can include, but are not limited to:

- Cartoons or other visual displays, like objects, pictures or posters, that depict these groups in a derogatory way; or
- Verbal conduct, including making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs and jokes about racial or religious groups, the disabled, or a person's ethnic or national origin

Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of participating in a club activity;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct affects course enrollment, graduation, on-going participation; or
- This type of conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for club activities.

Sexual harassment includes harassment based on another person's gender or harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. It also includes harassment of another member of the same gender as the harasser.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following types of behavior:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, like propositions for sexual favors;
- Excessive, one-sided, romantic attention in the form of requests for dates, love letters, telephone calls, emails or gifts;
- Making or threatening reprisals, after a member has turned down a sexual advance;
- Visual or physical conduct, like leering, making sexual gestures, or sharing pornography or other sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, calendars or posters;
- Verbal conduct, like making or using sexually derogatory comments, epithets, teasing or dirty jokes of a sexual nature;
- Graphic verbal or written comments (including emails or other electronic documents) about an individual's sex life or body;
- Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual;
- Suggestive or obscene letters, emails, notes or invitations; and

- Unwelcome physical contact, including pats, hugs, brushes, touches, shoulder rubs, assaults, or impeding or blocking movements.

Note: Members from time to time may experience other problematic behavior that is not harassment, but that nevertheless intrudes on the enjoyment or safety of others. Such problem behaviors are addressed by the board policy called “Problem Behaviors.”