

# Climbing

CIK 2017

## OVERVIEW:

Fear. Limits. Safety. Challenge. Rewards. Relief. Memories. A million words can describe our Climbing Wall, which puts students 30 feet up into the air, powered solely by their own effort and determination (but supported by you, the instructor). The experience is entirely safe and supportive. Afterwards students will discuss the difference between actual and perceived risk, and how it felt before, during, and after their experience.

## OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- ) Establish and experience an atmosphere that makes use of trust, support, encouragement, communication, emotional safety, and challenge by choice.
- ) Demonstrate safe and proper use of high ropes equipment and elements.
- ) Participate and successfully complete unique climbing elements using the mental, emotional, and physical resources of the group and self.
- ) Process and share what they saw, thought, felt, and learned during the initiative.
- ) Transfer and apply new knowledge to actual situations at High Trails, home, and school.

## VOCABULARY:

Belay	Carabiner	Chain of Safety	Challenge by Choice
Double-back	Dynamic Rope	Figure Eight Knot	Five-point Check
Gri-Gri	Harness	Helmet	Safety Commands
Sneeze Test	Squeeze Test	Three-point Check	Two Finger Test

## MATERIALS:

Rope  
Helmets  
Carabiners  
Belay device (Gri-Gri)  
Harnesses  
Climbing Wall

## PROCEDURES:

All students must be seated a safe distance away from the wall (at least 10 feet away). This can be on the log or behind boundary line (Pillars of Destiny)..

### 1. Introductory Questions (Climbing 1)

- A. Has anyone ever been climbing on a rock wall or outside?
- B. Why do you think people go climbing?
- C. Explain to students that today they will have the opportunity to climb the wall. Tell them people today climb because it's fun, it's good exercise, to challenge themselves, to be social, and to be outside.
- D. Tell students that while everyone is encouraged to climb, it is a **challenge by choice** activity. That means it is up to each person how far they climb or if they climb at all. As the instructor, you may decide how students may alternatively participate to earn a bead (putting on a harness, designated picture taker, etc.).

### 2. Equipment Discussion

- A. Go through equipment with students as the "**Chain of Safety**" **Me – harness – carabiner – belay device – rope – anchor/sheer reduction device – carabiner – harness – student**.
- B. Harness – this is what connects the climber to the rope. It is made of same material as seat belts, which means it is very strong.
  - i. First demonstrate how to properly put on a harness.
  - ii. Hold the harness by the waist loop with the buckle in front and step through the waist and into each leg loop like a pair of pants.

- iii. Hold the belay loop on the front of the harness up to your belly button. Now you can easily tighten the waist belt. Make sure that it is over the top of the hips and over all layers that you plan to wear while belaying/climbing.
  - iv. Explain that in order to make sure the harness is on tight enough we use the **two finger test**. If the harness is too loose and the climber goes upside down they could fall out. Tell students that to employ the two finger test you make your hand into a squirt gun with two fingers sticking straight out. Take your squirt gun and stick it in its holster (between the waist and the harness). The climber should try to twist their hand, if their fingers don't cross then the harness is not on tight enough.
  - v. Now show students the buckle on the front of the harness. Which letter does it look like? It looks like an 'O' – that stands for 'open' and we don't want to climb with an open harness.
  - vi. **Double-back** the harness by guiding the waist loop back over itself through the buckle. The buckle should now look like a backwards 'C' for 'closed'.
  - vii. Tell students they will follow the same procedure to tighten the leg straps. Demonstrate.
  - viii. Tell students they will be asked later during their **three-point check** to show the instructor that their harness is ready by using the two finger test and showing that it is double-backed.
- C. **Carabiner** – this device attaches the rope to your harness.
- i. Explain to students that these are auto-locking or screw-gate carabiners (know which ones they are).
  - ii. Tell students that when using a carabiner they should hook it through their belay loop in a downward motion – remember, scratch your belly - don't pick your nose. This ensures that the gate on the carabiner faces away from your body so it won't rub open.
  - iii. If you are using a screw-gate carabiner, make sure that it is positioned so that the gate screws down, using gravity to its advantage – screw down - so you don't screw up.
  - iv. Finally, let students know that they will need to use the **squeeze test** as part of their three-point check. This is done by squeezing the gate and carabiner at the same time to make sure it is locked – it should not open.
- A. **Rope** – we use **dynamic rope** that holds you if you come off the wall and stretches to absorb your fall so that it doesn't hurt.
- i. Explain to students that the rope is made of many tiny strands covered by a protective sheath. If dirt gets into the rope those strands can begin to wear down quickly. Do not step on the rope if it is on the ground!
  - ii. Show students the **Double Figure Eight**. Tell students that this knot is used for climbing because it is very strong and gets tighter when there is weight on it.
- B. **Gri-Gri** – this belay device is what connects the rope to the belayer who will hold the rope if you come off the wall. Explain to students that we use this device because it is auto-locking, which means even if the belayer's hands come off the rope, the device will automatically lock up and catch the climber.
- C. **Helmet** – this protects your head from hitting the wall and from anything that might fall on it.
- i. Explain to students that the front of the helmet should cover the forehead and should not wiggle.
  - ii. Demonstrate **sneeze test** or head banger's test by shaking your head up and down to ensure a proper fitting helmet. Let students know that this is the third element of their three-point check.
- D. **Belay**- This is the action of holding on to the other end of the rope in case the climber falls. The belayer is the actual person who performs this action.
- E. **Harness up your group**. Have all students stand in a row/circle, wearing the clothing they will be climbing in (Decide for comfort - jackets on or off?). As a group, methodically walk them through the harness procedure you demonstrated earlier. Take the time now to do this right, it will save time later. Review two-finger test and double-back. Have students sit down.
3. **Climbing Technique Discussion**
- A. Inform students of basic climbing technique. Ask students to feel their leg muscle, now feel their arm muscle. Which is bigger? Your leg muscle - your legs are stronger than your arms!
- i. Use your legs to push you up the wall. Use your arms and hands for balance.
  - ii. Keep your body close to the wall because this puts more weight on your legs and keeps your center of gravity closer to the wall.
  - iii. Try to keep three points of contact – two feet and one hand or two hands and one foot.

- B. Explain that two climbers will be on the wall at one time. In order to prevent swinging or crossing onto the other climbers route there are some important safety measures:
- Keep the rope between your arms.
  - Follow the rope up – there is a right course and a left course. Stay on your side of the wall.
  - Hands off the rope – if hands are on the rope, a climber may twist and hit their head on the wall. You may also remind students that this is the rope that holds them up, and pulling down on the rope that holds them up will pull them off/down.
- C. Tell students that when they are ready to come down they simply need to let their belayer know.
- Once the student has said they are ready to come down, explain that you will tell them to let go of the wall.
  - Next, explain that they will need to extend their legs straight out in front of them making an L with their body so they can walk down the wall. Demonstrate what this looks like by sitting on the ground.
  - Students may hold onto the rope to help them feel comfortable leaning back as they walk down the wall.
4. Safety, Safety, Safety
- A. Outline safety rules with students. Remind students that there is just one of you and a whole group of them. If you are being distracted by the group you are not paying attention to the climber.
- All students must be seated if not climbing.
  - A helmet must be worn within 10 feet of the climbing wall.
  - Students must do a three-point check of their equipment (harness, helmet, carabiner) for their belayer before climbing. Review the tests for harness (double-backed, two-finger), helmet (sneeze/headbanger), and carabiner (squeeze).
  - The belayer will conduct the following **five-point check**, physically touching the gear every time on themselves and the climber:
    - Harness – check for twists, correctly worn, double-backed, and the two-finger test for snugness.
    - Helmet – sneeze or head banger’s test.
    - Carabiner – squeeze test, on climber and belayer.
    - Figure Eight Knot – make sure it is tied correctly and dressed with a safety knot.
    - Belay – check yourself – make sure gri-gri is threaded correctly and carabiner is locked
- B. Tell students to be successful they will have to make a commitment. They will be asked what they would like their goal to be so that the group can encourage them to reach it.
- C. Explain that everyone needs help getting to their goals, so each climber should be encouraged by the group. This can mean loud cheering or silent support. This also means NO PUT DOWNS.
- D. Let students know that in climbing there is a set of **safety commands** that are used to ensure that the climber and belayer are ready. Practice the commands together.
- Climber – “Am I on belay?”
  - Belayer – “Belay on.”
  - Climber – “May I climb?”
  - Belayer – “Climb on.”
- A. Choose a capable volunteer to help you demonstrate the safety checks, safety commands, basic technique, and proper descent at the baby climbing wall. This will save time at Climbing 2.
- B. Move entire group (and personal items) to Climbing 2.
5. **Climb On! (Climbing 2)**
- A. Seat students behind Pillars of Destiny. Review safety rules of stay seated, helmets within 10 feet of wall, 3-point check, positive encouragement, and safety commands. Inform the group to keep their harnesses on at all times. You will instruct the removal at the end of class.
- B. Students take turns climbing the wall. The instructor determines the order of climbing (best behaved, numbers, etc.). Make sure that you pay attention to the time so that everyone gets a chance to climb.
- C. Once all students have had an opportunity to climb, instruct the proper removal of harnesses as a group. This is important. Supervise! Harnesses removed incorrectly will make it very difficult for the next instructor. Be sure to return this harness set to Climbing 1.
- D. Debrief: How do you feel you did? Was it more or less difficult than you thought it would be? Incorporate actual vs. perceived risk – Did you think climbing would be dangerous for you? Was it?

Can you think of a situation back home that was similar to this, either more or less difficult? Have you learned anything about yourself from this experience?

6. Wrap Up

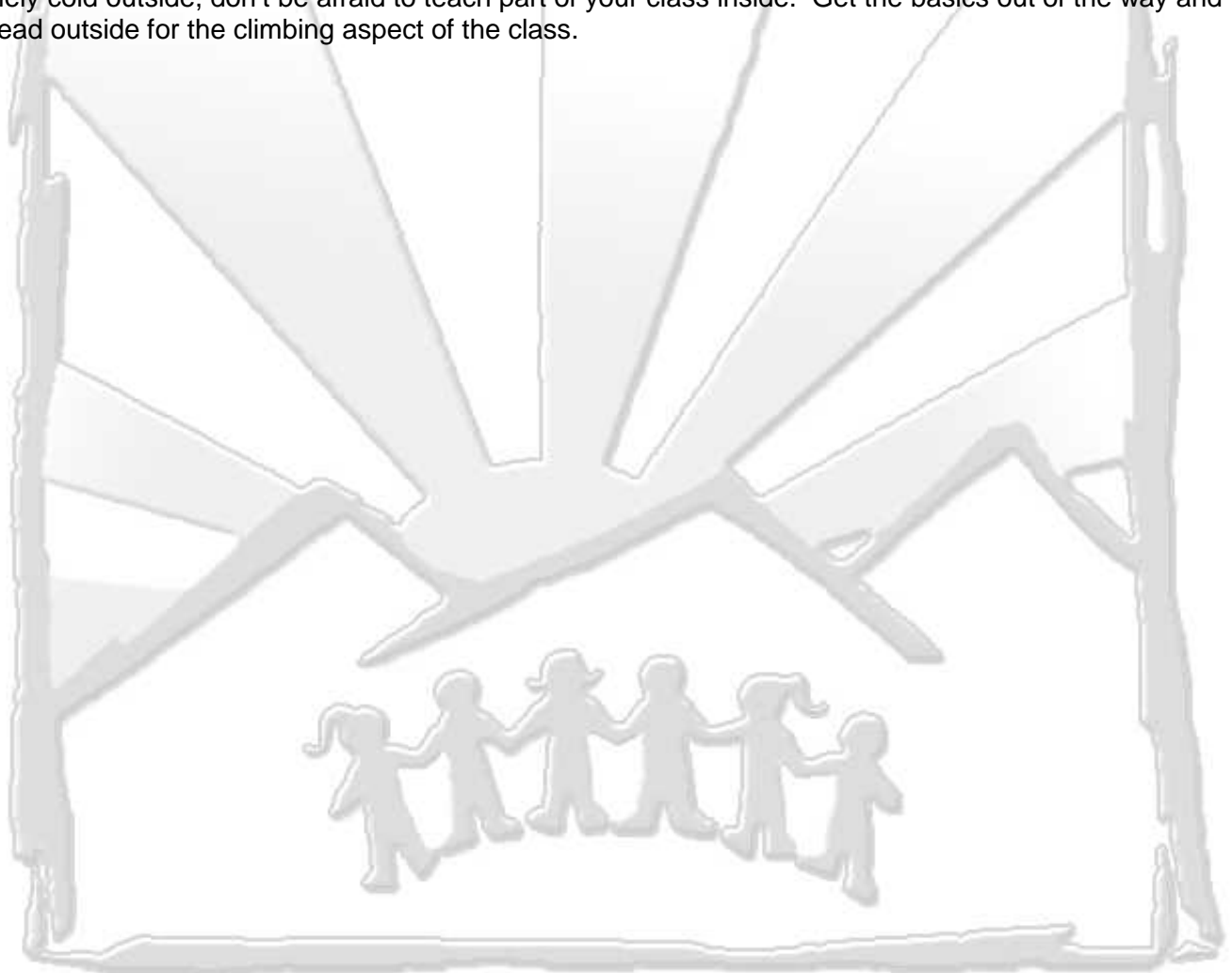
- A. Have students quickly retell the equipment, commands, and safety procedures for climbing.
- B. Remind students of their goals. Tell them to think about their climbing goals and whether they achieved them. Have them think about how hard they tried and how much they encouraged each other. There is no need to verbalize as you debriefed the climb earlier.
- C. Pass out beads.

**THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:**

*Special Needs:* Odds are you will have students who will have problems even getting on the wall and it will be a huge let down for them. If you have a situation like this, do everything you can to make them feel important and helpful.

*Time Fillers:* If you have time, throw in some knot tying.

*Weather:* We teach climbing rain or shine. However, if there is even a hint of lightening, we will call it off – stay tuned to your radio for updates and check in with the Climbing Assistant. If we hear thunder or see lightning, climbing is closed for 15 minutes. Each time you hear thunder again, restart your watch. If it is extremely cold outside, don't be afraid to teach part of your class inside. Get the basics out of the way and then head outside for the climbing aspect of the class.



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