

LET'S GO MOUNTAINEERING

Educating mountain climbers about
safety, preparation and equipment





What is mountaineering?

Mountaineering is a sport where people climb mountains. It can involve hiking, walking, scrambling and rock climbing. Mountain climbers use the strength in their arms and legs to climb mountains. They also use specialist equipment to keep safe. It is an enjoyable hobby for people who love the outdoors and want to learn new skills.

How to prepare

Mountaineering can be a dangerous activity so you need to prepare well to stay safe. Firstly, you need to ensure you are physically fit. Climbing can be challenging so choose a route that is not too difficult for your ability. Mount Everest may not be the best place to start. Instead, try a smaller climb, such as Snowdon in Gwynedd or Pen-y-ghent in Yorkshire. After a while, you can move on to more challenging peaks.

Before you go, make sure you understand your route and the potential dangers. As a precaution, leave important information, such as the number of climbers and their ability, with somebody at base camp. They can give your details to the emergency services if there is an accident.



What to pack



An important purchase for climbers is a light, hard-wearing rucksack. You will need to pack appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast and likely conditions on your route. For example, take waterproof clothing for rain or snow and a fleece, hat and gloves for the cold. A sun hat or bandana will be useful in the summer months.

You will also need to plan your meals with food that is high in energy. The energy required for mountain climbing is approximately 3000 calories per day for an adult. Make sure you take enough water or know the location of safe water sources on the mountain.



Specialist equipment

- belay
- climbing boots
- climbing helmet
- crampons
- first aid kit
- harness



- ice axe
- pulley
- rope
- survival bag
- whistle

Potential risks

There are risks when climbing a mountain. Without warning, there can be hazards caused by extreme weather, such as high winds, rain and snow. Depending on where you climb, there could be the risk of an avalanche, mudslides or falling rocks. Contact the local tourist information and mountaineering associations near the site for more details. As climbing is a hazardous activity, you must take a first aid kit and whistle. Before your trip, plan for every possible outcome.



Next steps

Finally, if you need some help getting started, there are lots of professional organisations that offer climbing and outdoor instruction for adults and children. Many organisations advertise in specialist climbing magazines as well as on the internet.

We hope that the information in this leaflet is a useful starting point and that you enjoy your first mountaineering experience.



Glossary

avalanche

A large amount of ice, snow and rock falling quickly down the side of a mountain.

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base camp

A place where food and supplies are kept for people climbing a mountain.

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belay

A device used to fix a climbing rope.

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crampon

A metal frame with sharp points that is fastened to the bottom of a boot to make it easier to walk on snow or ice.

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harness

A piece of equipment that is used to hold a person in place when they are climbing.

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ice axe

A tool used to help climbers in icy conditions.

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precaution

An action that is done to stop something dangerous from happening.

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pulley

A simple machine for moving heavy objects up or down using ropes.

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survival bag

A large bag made of foil or plastic that climbers use to protect themselves from harsh weather conditions.

