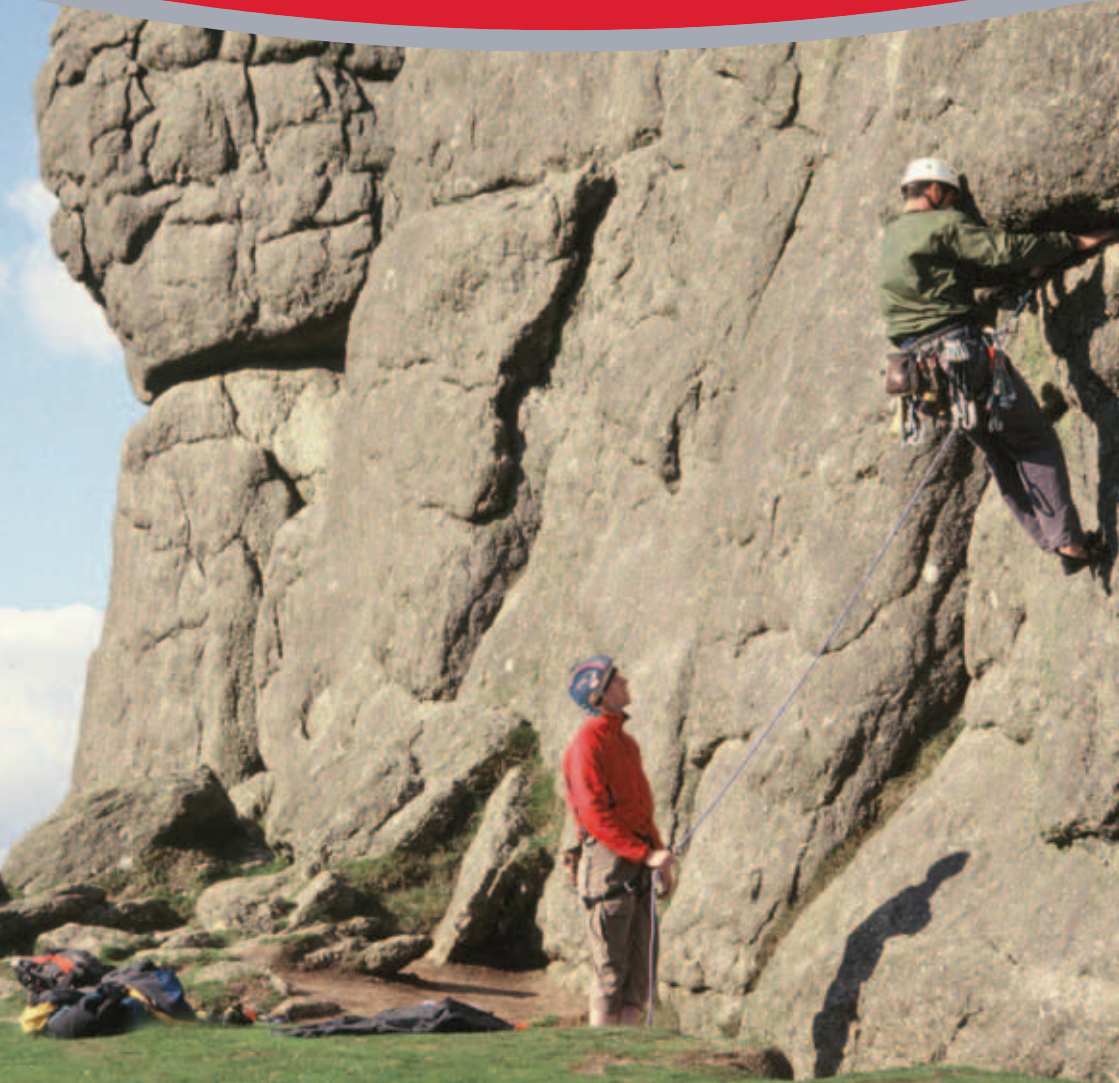


Climbing on Dartmoor



NATIONAL PARKS
Britain's breathing spaces

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Dartmoor National Park Authority and the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) - the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers (BMC) recognise that climbing is an activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in this activity should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

When climbing outside please remember that the Dartmoor environment presents particular challenges and that the level of risk to which the climber is exposed does not equate to a route’s difficulty. Develop the art of balancing the skills you have against the challenges provided by the environment and ensure that you wear suitable clothing and use appropriate safety equipment.

This booklet aims to provide general information about climbing on Dartmoor. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the Dartmoor National Park Authority cannot accept responsibility for any inaccurate, incomplete or out of date information, or any loss or damage that may result from reliance on it.

Further information, including information about emergency services, Dartmoor Rescue Group and other organisations, can be found at the end of this booklet.

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

One of Britain's breathing spaces

Dartmoor offers an unspoilt and challenging environment, enabling you to try things that are different and new. It is a protected and cared for place, helping you reconnect with what's important in life - a place where you can be changed and affected by the experience.

Escape the hustle and bustle and discover the moors. Experience the solitude and tranquility, the towns and villages, and the magic of Dartmoor.

climb higher



Climbing with Moor Care and Less Wear

Dartmoor is a wonderful place for both groups and individuals to climb. The granite tors for which the National Park is famous offer both challenging routes and exciting bouldering opportunities amongst some of the wildest country in the south west of England.

Where you can climb

The public has legal open access to approximately 47,000 hectares of Dartmoor.

Of this total, public access on foot (and horseback) to the Dartmoor commons extending for some 35,200 hectares, was secured under the *Dartmoor Commons Act 1985*. New walking and climbing opportunities on Dartmoor specifically arising from the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*, extend to approximately 7,000 hectares.

Generally accessing Dartmoor's open country is relatively straightforward. However, because of the *Dartmoor Commons Act*, the open access situation on Dartmoor is different from that for the rest of the country.

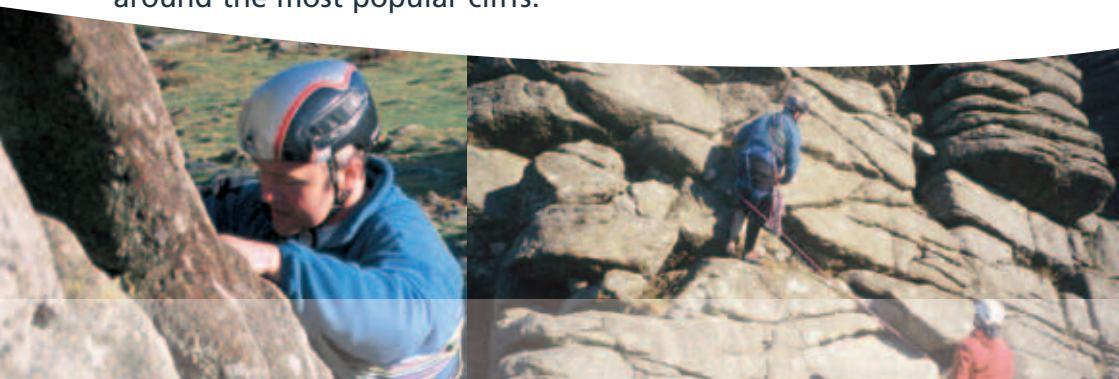


Understanding your rights and responsibilities associated with the different types of open access on Dartmoor is important for your enjoyment, for land and livestock management reasons, and for wildlife conservation. For more detailed information on the different types of access land please pick up a copy of *Walking on Dartmoor*.

A number of the most popular crags with single or multiple pitch routes are highlighted in this leaflet. There are many other sites where you can climb, but please find out about the access situation before you visit. Where booking is requested please do so; it is in everyone's interest to reduce the problems of overcrowding and help to minimise ground erosion around the most popular cliffs.

Can climbing cause any problems on Dartmoor?

Climbing is a popular activity which tends to be concentrated in a few special areas. These areas are often important landscape features and wildlife habitats. To conserve the unique qualities of these sites it is important that climbers adopt the code of conduct outlined in this booklet. By doing so you will maximise your own enjoyment and that of others.



Code of conduct

Care of the environment

Always aim to leave the crag in the state you find it. When climbing on Dartmoor you should:

- check the access situation before visiting a site - if in doubt ask at a National Park Information Centre (see back cover for contact details);
- be aware of your impact on the fragile natural environment and avoid damaging plants and lichens on the rock face;
- tread carefully and seek to minimise erosion;
- learn to recognise archaeological features and do not move any stones or climb on the remains of old buildings;
- never leave any rubbish;
- remember that on a still day your voice can carry a long way. Please ensure that your climbing partner can hear you in a way that you do not disturb the enjoyment of others;

- take care to avoid disturbing livestock when approaching or leaving crags, and keep dogs under close control at all times.

Belays

Climbers can contribute towards preserving the sensitive crag habitats and fragile soils by careful rigging of belays; please:

- minimise rope wear on fragile areas by the use of padding, static ropes and long slings;
- use long slings when top roping on tree belays;
- avoid using tree belays, unless there is no other option;
- do not leave ropes hanging over routes when not in use.

Anchors

Choice of anchors is another area where climbers can contribute towards conserving the crag environment. Whenever possible use traditional removable protection (ie nuts and friends) for belays.

However, if there is no alternative anchor point please consider the following:

- ropes tied around tree trunks will damage the bark - pad out the ropes, use wide webbing, or wrap the rope round several times to spread the load;
- reduce the leverage on the tree by securing slings at ground level on the trunk;
- minimise trampling on the roots and surrounding top soil.

Abseiling

Consider whether you need to include abseiling in your climbing activities at the crag. If you do, try to avoid named climbs if at all possible.

Fixed equipment

There is a very limited amount of fixed equipment on Dartmoor. It should always be treated with caution and never relied upon. It is BMC regional policy that use of bolts and other drilled equipment is not permitted on the Dartmoor granite crags.

Due to the sensitivity of the whole area, any new fixed protection will be removed by the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

Transport

Keep car usage down by car sharing with friends or family or using public transport.

Many of the more popular Dartmoor tors can be accessed by bus - for local bus services call Traveline (see back cover).

If you do travel by car please:

- keep to a sensible speed throughout the National Park and, in particular, keep within the 40 mph limit in high moorland areas;
- show consideration for the local community and other National Park users when parking;
- park in designated areas to avoid eroding the moor edge and do not obstruct gates or tracks;

- consider whether the nearest parking to the crag is the best for all concerned;
- discourage break-ins by ensuring that no valuable kit is left in vehicles.

A longer walk may enable other aspects of the National Park to be enjoyed and act as a warm up for the day's activities.



Group management

In addition to the above points, group leaders are asked to take extra care and consider the following when climbing within the National Park.

When choosing a route please:

- take into account the current access situation. Is group use acceptable on that crag at that time? Is it sensitive?
- consider which day of the week it would be best to visit - weekends, Bank Holidays and evenings are usually best avoided;
- liaise with other users to prevent overcrowding;
- take into account the number of suitable climbs, bearing in mind the size of your group and the site's popularity with individual climbers or the general public.



Environmental education

Explain the sensitive nature of many climbing areas to your group. Novice climbers are heavily influenced by their first experience of climbing. Make sure they get off to a good start by making them aware of their responsibilities.

Base camp

Establish a base camp area for your group. This should be a hardwearing site to prevent soil erosion (eg a cluster of rocks) which does not interfere with other users and is safe from falling objects.

Choice of routes

- respect the needs of other climbers who may be climbing alongside you. A system of rotating around different routes (rather than staying on one route all day) could add variety to your day and help to reduce conflicts with other climbers;
- consider whether you need a starred climb for

your instruction - it may be more appropriate to use an area of the crag which has no recorded climbs. Please check that the area has not been left because of its conservation importance.

(For further information please contact the Natural Environment Service of Dartmoor National Park Authority.)

Numbers in your group

No one group should dominate a site. If you have a large group then consider dividing them up or visiting another venue. Two groups of 10-15 people can be much less intrusive than one group of 20-30.

Numbers of groups at a site

Every area has a carrying capacity and this may be as little as one group. Get in the habit of liaising with other potential users. If a crag is crowded when you arrive, consider moving to another venue.

For your own safety and the safety of others

Please adopt the British Mountaineering Council's best practise guidelines (see Further information on page 13).

Always:

- think - be aware of your safety needs;
- check - harnesses and knots before climbing;

- stay alert - equipment, rocks and climbers might fall from above. If you're not involved stand well clear;
- protect your head - consider wearing a helmet;
- belay safely - stay alert, pay attention and watch the climber. Know how to belay correctly with the device you are using;
- communicate - develop a clear communication system. Use each other's names. Warn others of hazards.



Military ranges and training areas

If you intend to climb on the northern moor check whether firing is scheduled within the Merrivale, Okehampton or Willsworthy training areas. The boundaries of the three Range Danger Areas are marked on the ground by a series of red and white posts and warning notices.

The firing programme for the following week is published in local newspapers, at Information Centres, and is available on freephone 0800 4584868 and www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk

BBC Radio Devon broadcasts daily updates. Please remember that there is always a risk you could come across unexploded ordnance anywhere on the moor. Please do not touch or tamper with any strange or metal object, it may be dangerous. Leave it alone, mark and note the location, and inform the Commandant (01837 650010), Okehampton Camp, the police or staff at an Information Centre.



Crag information

At the time of writing there is no public access to, and no climbing allowed on, Vixen Tor.

Please check the National Park Authority's web site for up-to-date information.

Site	Public transport available	Parking	Landowner	Contact with landowner required
The Dewerstone	Yes	Yes	National Trust	(01752) 341377 (groups of 6+)
Haytor	Yes	Yes	Dartmoor National Park Authority	(01626) 832093 (groups of 6+)
Hound Tor	No	Yes	Private	(01647) 221254
Leigh Tor	Yes	Limited	Private	No
Foggintor Quarry	Yes	Princetown	Maristow Estate	(01752) 695945





Further information

Recreation, Ranger & Estates Service

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton
Abbot, Devon TQ13 9JQ

Tel: (01626) 832093

E-mail: recreation@
dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

Dartmoor National Park
Authority web site

www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

The National Trust

Dartmoor Office, Home Farm,
Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton
Abbot, Devon TQ13 9JQ

Tel: (01626) 834748

British Mountaineering Council (BMC)

177 Burton Road, West
Didsbury, Manchester,
M20 2BB

Tel: 0870 010 4878

E-mail: office@thebmc.co.uk

The BMC produces
publications covering safety
and conservation. These are
available from the address
above or can be viewed at
www.thebmc.co.uk

Emergency information

Search and rescue operations
on Dartmoor are carried out
by the Dartmoor Rescue
Group. The Group operates
at the request of the police.
Therefore, if you are lost or
injured or are aware of
someone who is lost or
injured on Dartmoor dial 999.

Publications

*South Devon and Dartmoor:
A Climbers' Guide*
by Nick White - Cordee

Further information

For further information
on walking in the National Park,
pick up the free *Walking on Dartmoor*
booklet available from National
Park Authority Information Centres.
This is packed with advice including
sections on access and rights of way,
safety, the military ranges, finding your
way around, the Countryside Code,
and taking your dog into the countryside.

www.openaccess.gov.uk
www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

**Dartmoor National Park Authority,
High Moorland Visitor Centre, Princetown,
Yelverton, Devon PL20 6QF.
Tel: (01822) 890414
www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk**



For south west England timetable enquires phone
Traveline: 0871 200 22 33