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## General

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## General Climbing Wall Etiquette

New climbers may be unfamiliar with the general etiquette at an indoor wall. Basically, it comes down to being

polite, respecting other climbers and having common sense. Here are a few things you should be aware of:

### Be Considerate

Walk around climbers and belayers, not between or underneath them. If someone is climbing a route that you want to do, feel free to get in line behind them, or maybe just find another route that's free.

Usually climbers alternate in a logical order for busy routes or boulder problems. So after you've had your turn, let someone else give it a try. Don't be greedy!

### Noise

Climbing walls are noisy enough with loud music playing and everyone talking at the same time. It's important, however, not to shout across the room unless you have to — climbers and belayers need to communicate to stay safe. Please be respectful of others by not interrupting their communication.

### Ropes

There are lots of ropes hanging around at indoor walls — don't swing on them. Sometimes there are belay devices clipped to top ropes. Just leave them as they are so they don't swing out and hit someone.

If you're bouldering on the roped climbing wall it's OK to put the ropes to one side while you're climbing, but make sure to move them back after.

### Bolts

Never put your finger through a bolt hanger! It can be tempting to hold onto a bolt if you're about to fall, but if you fall with your finger in a bolt hanger, you'll probably break your finger. Only use bolts for clipping quickdraws. They are not holds!



## Coiling Your Rope

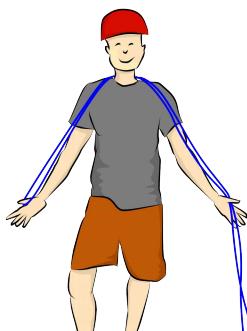
If you are storing your rope for a while, or stuffing it away in a backpack, coiling your rope will help to prevent

mysterious knots tying themselves in the middle of it.

### Step 1

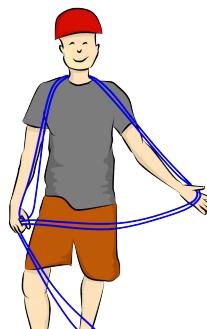
Hold the middle of your rope in one hand and loop both strands over your shoulders.

Some ropes have a convenient middle marker to make this easy. If yours doesn't, find both ends and hold them together. Then shuffle both the strands of rope through your hands until you get to the middle point.



### Step 2

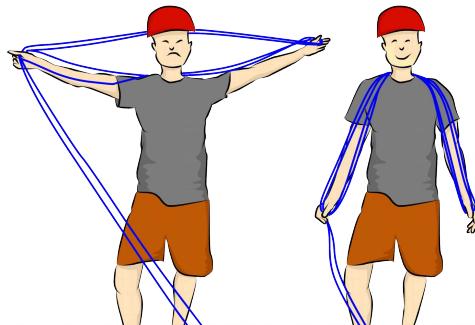
Reach across and grab the rope below your other hand.



### Step 3

Pull your hand along the rope, creating enough space to flick the next two strands over your head, so they rest on your shoulders with the first two.

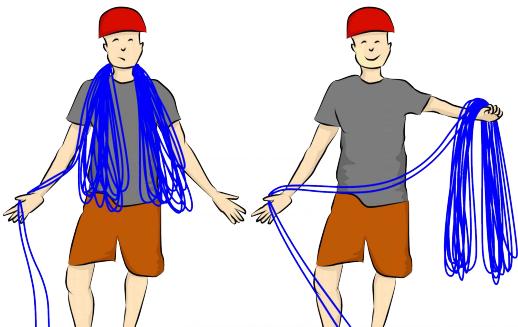
Repeat this with your other hand in the opposite direction.



#### **Step 4**

Keep draping the rope over your shoulders until there is about four meters left.

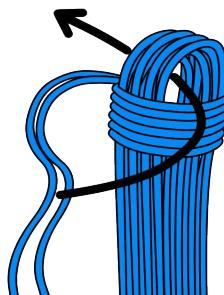
Use both hands to take the rope off your shoulders, and drape the middle of the loops over your arm.



#### **Step 5**

Wrap the two ends of the rope tightly around all the coils near the top. Do this three or four times.

It's best to go from the bottom upwards.



#### **Step 6**

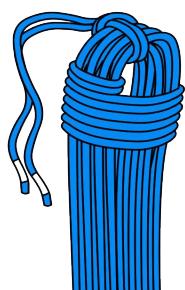
Push a loop of each end through the top of the main coils as shown.



#### **Step 7**

Pass the two ends of the rope through these loops.

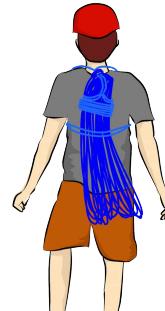
Pull it all tight and your rope is coiled!



### Step 8

If the tails of rope are long enough (at least 1 meter), you can tie the rope on your back.

Pull the tails over your shoulders, cross them over your chest, then wrap them in opposite directions around your back. Bring the ends in front of you and tie them together around your waist.



## Warming Up

Like any sport, you should warm up before your workout to avoid injury. For climbing, this can be split into three parts.

### Pulse Raiser

If you didn't walk to the climbing wall, consider skipping, jogging on the spot or doing some star jumps for a couple of minutes. The point is to get your heart rate up a little. Many walls have a separate stretching room for this.

### Stretch Gently

You'll benefit from stretching after climbing, but it's important for injury prevention to perform a few gentle stretch exercises before climbing too.

Focus on your upper body, moving each joint through its range of motion. The goal is to lubricate your joints and loosen up your muscles.

### Climb Easy Routes

It's a smart idea to climb a few easy routes to warm up your muscles and tendons before trying anything difficult.

Choose routes which you find easy and which have big holds. Don't worry about grades. Climb slowly and in control, focusing on technique and balance. This will also help you avoid getting 'pumped' too soon.



# Bouldering

Bouldering is a simple form of climbing low down without using ropes. Indoor boulders are generally around three or four meters tall with padded mats beneath them to absorb your fall.

There are a few things to be aware of to boulder safely:

## Clear Landing Zone

Assess where you might fall before you start. Clear away any water bottles, chalk bags and other objects that are in your fall zone. Ask anyone who's sitting on the mats to move away.

While you're climbing, keep an eye out for unobservant climbers or stray children who may wander underneath you. Your spotter can help with this too.

## Be Aware

Climbing walls can get busy. Make sure to stay out of the potential landing zone of other climbers.

Many routes share space on the wall, so be aware of where your route goes compared to others. Keep a reasonable distance between yourself and the next climber, so that you won't swing into each other if you fall.

## Climb Down

When possible, climb down from the top of the wall instead of jumping. Use the biggest holds to make this easier. Not only is it safer for you and those around you, but you'll save your knees too.



## Spotters

A spotter is someone who stands beneath a climber and helps them fall correctly. The point of spotting is to push the climber so they land on their feet — you are not trying to catch them! Hold out your arms and be ready to push them onto the centre of the pad, aiming for their mid back or shoulders.

Some climbers prefer to tuck their thumbs in to their palms to avoid dislocating them.

Some boulder problems cause the climber to change the way they lean from holds. This changes the trajectory of a potential fall and can be difficult to spot. For problems like this, consider having two or more spotters, each with their own spotting zone.

## Rest

Rest sufficiently between attempts. Avoid trying the same problem too much in a short space of time. Move on and try something else on a different angle and with a different style of holds, or have a break and review your sequences.

### Fall Properly

You will fall a lot when bouldering, sometimes with no warning. Practise using your cat-like reflexes to land on your feet.

When you hit the pad, buckle your knees, then collapse your torso and use your hands and arms as the final shock absorbers. Bend your elbows to avoid injuring them.

Some moves, such as heel hooks, may cause you to ‘helicopter’ off. Think about the fall before you commit to a high heel hook. If your hand slips, will you be able to release the heel in time to get your feet under you?

Unless you are positive that you can make the next move, set your heel lightly so you can release it instantly. Alternatively, avoid the hook and try a different sequence. Intentionally avoiding a heel hook usually makes a problem harder, but the fall safer.

Dyno falls can be dangerous too. If you lunge for a hold and stick it for a second while your feet swing out, you risk a twisting fall that you are unlikely to control. Doing a lot of dynos is a great way to get injured.

### Bouldering on the Main Wall

Some climbing walls allow you to boulder low down on the main roped wall. If yours does, find out how high you’re allowed to go (often there’s a painted line) and remember that roped climbers have priority.

Never boulder underneath a roped climber, even if they’re high up.

### Be Subtle

Beware of small pockets, underclings or sidepulls which may stress your finger tendons. The least damaging grip is the open-hand.

Also watch out for sholdery moves and big dynos. Consider making subtle changes to the moves rather than just trying to pull harder with each attempt.

### Pads

Make sure the pads are underneath you and you know where the edges of the pads are. You could twist your ankle if you land with your foot on the very edge of a pad, or between pads. Ask your spotter to move the pad as you climb if needed.

If climbing with multiple pads, lie them flat, rather than stacked. Arrange pads so there are no gaps between them, and check the pads after every fall because they can move. Fit them together like a jigsaw puzzle so they present as few exposed edges as possible. If bouldering alone, carefully visualize where you are most likely to land, and set the pad there.

### Warm Up

Bouldering is generally very powerful and dynamic. It puts a lot of strain on your body. Make sure to warm up properly before you start. Be especially careful with your fingers — climb on big holds first, slowly warming up your finger tendons before using smaller holds.

Remember to warm up again after breaks of longer than 15 minutes. Cool down at the end of your session too.



## Want To Climb Outside?

Once you've mastered lead climbing and belaying indoors, you're probably wondering what's next.

Many people want to start climbing outside but don't know where to start.

### Take a Course

Consider hiring a guide or joining a group session for a good introduction to outdoor climbing.

Your indoor wall should be able to give you more information about this.

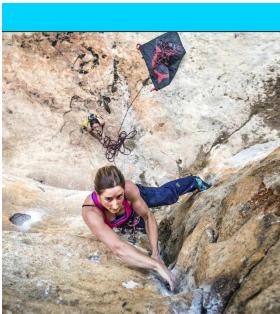
### Read Up

Read up on how to get started with different types of outdoor climbing.

Visit [www.vdiffclimbing.com](http://www.vdiffclimbing.com) for huge amounts of free information about trad and sport climbing.



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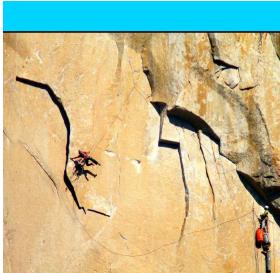
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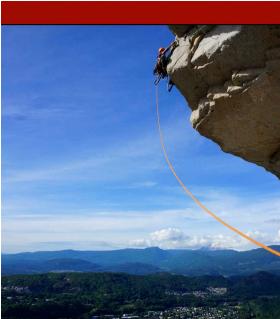
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### Squamish Big Walls

Aid Climbs on the Squamish Chief

Matt Maddaloni  
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