

While on the path between boulders, I like to...

Explore a little!

Depending on how I'm feeling that day, I'll add a few lines to my circuit. Or subtract/substitute. There are many boulders with lines on them that are too 'easy' to be recorded in the guidebooks. I like to scramble up/down as many as I feel up to that day. Also makes for a pleasant warmup/cool-down!

## Un-named Homeless Slab (5, 3)



Do not let this problem's poor name fool you, it's rich in fun!

Start on the left of the south face. A xenolith knob provides an opportunity to pull yourself onto smears.

Continue up the pretty, textured slab. There are many different ways to skin this cat. I like to lap it a few times, using each repetition to explore new methods.

For an extra challenge, try climbing it without grabbing anything with your hands. Allow your creativity to flow in finding different solutions to this unusual dilemma.



Robinson's has a few fun variations, all of which are worth trying!

Robinson's Right starts up the positive sloping ridge that veers right and ends on the slab above.

You can try climbing 'direct', which means to follow the straightest path up possible.

It has been climbed barefoot and no-hands.

See if you can come up with your own variation and challenge your friends!

## Yo! Basecamp (7, 1)

This small but mighty problem is found on the south face of the Womb boulder (known for the classic 'Birthing Experience'!) It is the east-most problem in the circuit, meaning you have made it to the end!

Start by crimping or palming nubbins and pull yourself onto smears under the bulge. Find a protruding xenolith nub to mount a high foot on and pistol squat your way to a victory slab.

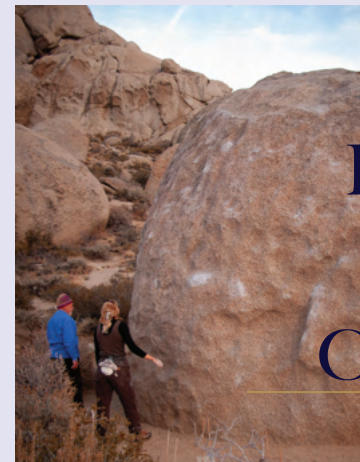
## We hope you enjoyed this little circuit.

In truth, we are not the first to come up with this kind of idea. We are a group of climbers passionate about a bygone style of climbing. From Smoke Blanchard to you, today, folks have been lacing their shoes to scramble these exalted formations since time immemorial. What better a place to connect to the rich history of rock climbing than the beautiful Bishop landscape. You'll find that the mountains are terrible gatekeepers. Listen close, and you will hear them whispering the same secrets to you as to those who came before.

"There is no way that I know of to pass on by paper the feeling that permeates the person who steps out of the shower with epidermis cleaned and tingling from crystal scrapes, muscles pleasantly tired, joints well-oiled, mind and spirit glowing from a full day of Buttermilking."

- Smoke Blanchard

Want more like this?  
Smoke's Rock Course  
guide by Doug Robinson



## The Pad-less Slab Circuit

Work sucks,

I want to go bouldering!



Just bring scrambling shoes and presence of mind.  
Chalk optional.

A project by:

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Andy Gohlich  
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A few things to remember...

## Everything is better with a friend!

Before the time of crash pads, fledgling boulderers ventured out with almost nothing in the way of protection.

Except a good friend of course!

The purpose of a spotter is not to catch the falling climber, but to break their fall.

A good spotter will try to square up the climber, preventing them from falling in a position that would result in injury.



Pad-less

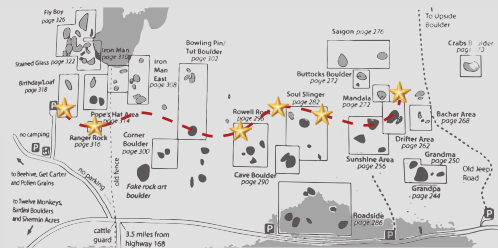
Slab

Circuit

A problem is referred to as a 'slab' when the rock face is slanting away from the climber. Slab angles can be steep, where only foot placements are needed, or subtle, where the climber must balance on slight hand and foot holds in a nearly vertical position.

Circuit climbing originated in the forests of Fontainebleau.

In the early 20th century, French alpinists flocked to the boulders to hone their skills in a new training ground.



The path of the pad-less slab circuit.

There they found short, punchy climbs that challenged them physically with little commitment. Soon they were stringing their exercises into circuits in an effort to see how many one could climb in a day.

Circuit climbing has now come into its own as a rich method of approaching bouldering - the aim is not to reach the limits of the climber's personal difficulty threshold, but to explore movement in a relatively low-intensity, low-commitment setting.

Without any further ado,

## Let's jump in to the circuit!

This circuit's problems are organized from east to west - or west to east! The circuiter can choose to start at either end and enjoy a walk through some of the most popular boulder problems in the Buttermilks. Parking can be found at either Buttermilks main or the Birthday boulders.

### Birthday Mantel (1, 7)\*

\*each problem is numbered in the following notation: the first number indicates the problem's order when starting from the west, the second when starting from the east.



The circuit opens with this lovely mantel problem, located on the west face of the Birthday boulder. Start on a flat rail + sidepull. Use smears for your feet to execute a techy mantel until you find yourself standing on the start holds. From there, navigate a few thin but secure moves up the slab until you reach a jug rail.

Summit!

The problems in this circuit share an important common attribute: the intensity, or 'crux' is concentrated somewhere near the bottom, while the topouts are low-intensity. Somewhere in between there may be a few 'slabby' movements, where you must be balanced and confident in your footwork. However, you should never feel like you might take a fall from a height that would be consequential!

### Birthday Rib (2, 6)

The next door neighbour of Birthday Mantel, the second stop on the circuit is located directly to the right of the first!

Start on incut sidepulls at head height. Find dishes for your feet and pull a few thin moves to get over the bulge. Top out on an engaging but low-intensity slab.

Trickier than it looks!



## Ranger Rock Slab (3, 5)

Standing in front of the previous wall, the next problem on the circuit can be found by looking east and slightly downhill.

The starting position of this problem is perhaps the most cryptic of the circuit, but the juice is worth the squeeze! A few inches above the ground, you will see a deep sloping rail. Find smears and step with confidence into the wall. You won't find much for your hands yet, but just out of reach lie decent holds. Narrowly compress two, get a high left foot and palm/reach for a good left hand.

Work your way up the delicate slab to finish.

### Mind the rewind.

Buttermilks boulders tend to be tall and stay vertical on all sides, meaning you will have to climb down about as often as you climb up!

Always scope a downclimb before getting out of your comfort zone.

### Buttermilk Stem (4, 4)

This classic boulder problem needs no introduction.



Start in an opposing position with a high left smear on the ridge and your right palm pressing on a shelf behind you.

Stand (or dynamically hop) onto your left foot and reach for a flat gaston with your left hand.

You should now find yourself in a comfortable stem position.

Congratulations!

You have passed the crux.



Now, press hard with your right palm as you prepare to place your right foot next to it.

Finish the problem by grabbing the juggy pockets and executing a very easy mantel.