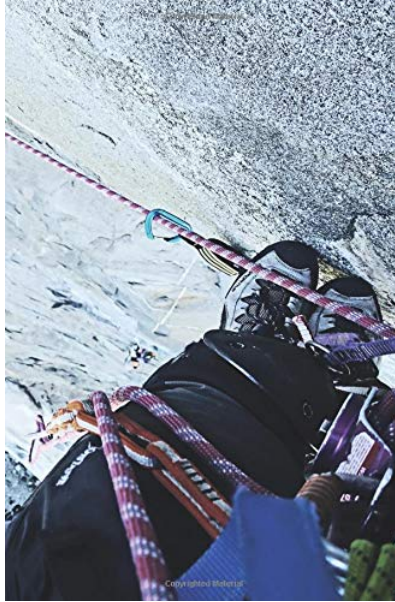


[Download] Higher Education: A Big Wall Manual



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Do you want to climb a big wall, wake with a start in the dark clipped to a ledge the size of a dustbin lid? Do you have dreams of nailing pin scar cracks a kilometre up, or maybe hand jamming your way to victory? Have you read other books, watched endless videos, asked around but still dont have a bloody clue how to go about it? Yes you can climb 5.12 but youve been shut down by hauling? Maybe youve never even set foot on a big wall because the weight of questions cannot be resolved, even though youve read all the books. If only there was a way to long jump some of that learning curve. Behind the book Last year, sat on the El Caps East Ledges descent, someone asked me how many days Id spent up on big walls in my life. I did a quick count, my brain a bit fried after nineteen days soloing South Seas, thinking about the walls and faces, totting up the numbers on battered fingers. The rough answer was about three hundred days, maybe over a year if I included bivys and camps at the bases of walls. If I threw in just being in the mountains then it would be twice as long. You must understand rock at the granular level? they said. I thought back to the last two weeks, where placing a cam or hook one millimetre either way would see me fall, taking a whip that may yank out piece after carefully placed piece, my body free-falling down the wall. Yes - youre probably right. Ive climbed walls fast, sped up El Cap in a day, but really Im a man who likes to take his time, believing in the Karma Sutras dictum that, Whatever youre doing, do it at half the speed. When you take your time you have time to consider things, to get things right, to think of better ways rather than simply the way. Learning all the techniques necessary to climb big walls has become as much the kick of climbing as the climbing itself, to be able to scale not only clean and sunny walls, but cold and chossy ones too, any new wall just an excuse to learn new skills. This obsession with climbing big walls has seen me spending many months living the high life, from thirty+ ascents of El Cap (including 5 solos, 2 one day ascents, 1 winter ascent), routes on the Troll Wall, Dru, Eiger, places like Patagonia, Zion, Alaska and Antarctica, five failures for every summit. My solo climbs led to a lot of questions from climbers about that black art, and so led to the writing of Me, Myself and I, one of the few big wall soloing manuals around (maybe the only one?). When I wrote Me, Myself and I, I imagined it so niche that few would buy it, and gave it a heavy price tag to match. In the end I found there were many climbers who wanted this book, a good percentage who went on to solo walls with its help, but also many who just liked to know more stuff about the sport they love. Since then the number of questions about big walls has steadily increased, with at least one person a day asking me how to do something wall related, from small technical details to more expansive questions about motivation and getting it done. At the moment there are a small number of dedicated big wall books, all excellent, but most were written over twenty years ago, and so tend to feature outdated ideas, advice, or are missing new cutting edge techniques. Another issue is that they tend to be limited in their detail due to the need to keep the book within reasonable cost, meaning the real nitty gritty, the granular stuff, tends to be missing, as books like this need to be sold for about 20, meaning much of the good stuff is left out (a war is won on details!). But climbers love the nitty gritty, like how to remove a beak without breaking it, drilling a rivet or bat hook, how to rig a portaledge in a storm or rig a parachute for a wildness retreat (on that last one, dont buy a 19 parachute off eBay!). Its often these little details that make or break a climb, not the big things.

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