

PREFACE

This booklet contains all the information needed to progress through the Rock Skills scheme. In addition, Mountain Training produces *Rock Climbing* by Libby Peter, the publication that illustrates the range of evolving techniques required for operating as a climber in the UK and Ireland and this can be used to support your learning during any of the Rock Skills courses.

PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Mountain Training recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.

Mountain Training provides personal skills training courses and associated literature to help people understand and manage these risks and to have positive experiences while learning about their responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to the preparation of this handbook and to the creation of the Rock Skills scheme. Grateful thanks are due to many volunteer members of Mountain Training's national organisations, the Mountain Training staff team and its technical officers.



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INTRODUCTION TO ROCK SKILLS

People climb outdoors for many reasons and a significant motivating factor is the sense of freedom that you gain from exploring crags and routes that are new to you. Discovering new places and challenging yourself adds to the whole experience and within the UK and Ireland there are many rock types and crags to explore and enjoy with likeminded people.

Climbing partnerships forged during the early days of a climbing career are often friendships for life. Rock climbing can be an exciting and sometimes daunting prospect if you have never tried it before. The Rock Skills scheme has been developed by Mountain Training and is nationally accredited in

the UK and Ireland. The courses are widely available and are delivered by approved course providers and tutors, who are all experienced and appropriately qualified.

Mountain Training Rock Skills courses provide a progressive introduction to the basic skills and techniques of rock climbing, which will help you stay safe, enjoy climbing to the full and provide the foundations required for participation and development of your own rock climbing activities. Your Rock Skills tutor will introduce you to the key technical skills in a progressive and well-structured format and provide you with safely managed opportunities to try them out at the crag.



THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

One registration gives you access to all four courses.

To be eligible to attend any accredited Rock Skills course, you must register with Mountain Training, (candidates in Ireland can also register directly with Mountaineering Ireland).

How

UNDER 18s

- Contact your course provider and they will take care of the registration process for you; or
- Ask a parent/guardian to create an account on our candidate management system (CMS), add you as a child and then register you for the Rock Skills scheme.

ADULTS

- Create an account on our candidate management system (CMS) and click on the 'Register' button to register for the Rock Skills scheme.

WHY

- Registration is free for under 18s and £20 for adults. This fee contributes towards the administration and quality assurance of the Rock Skills Scheme, gives you access to DLOG (a digital logbook for recording your activities) and material to help you develop as a rock climber.



REGISTRATION FEE

Under
18s **FREE**

18
+ **£20**

The registration fee includes the following:

UNDER 18s

- Access to all four courses with any approved provider*.
- Lifetime use of DLOG (the digital logbook) for recording all climbing related activities.
- A certificate of attendance for each course attended.

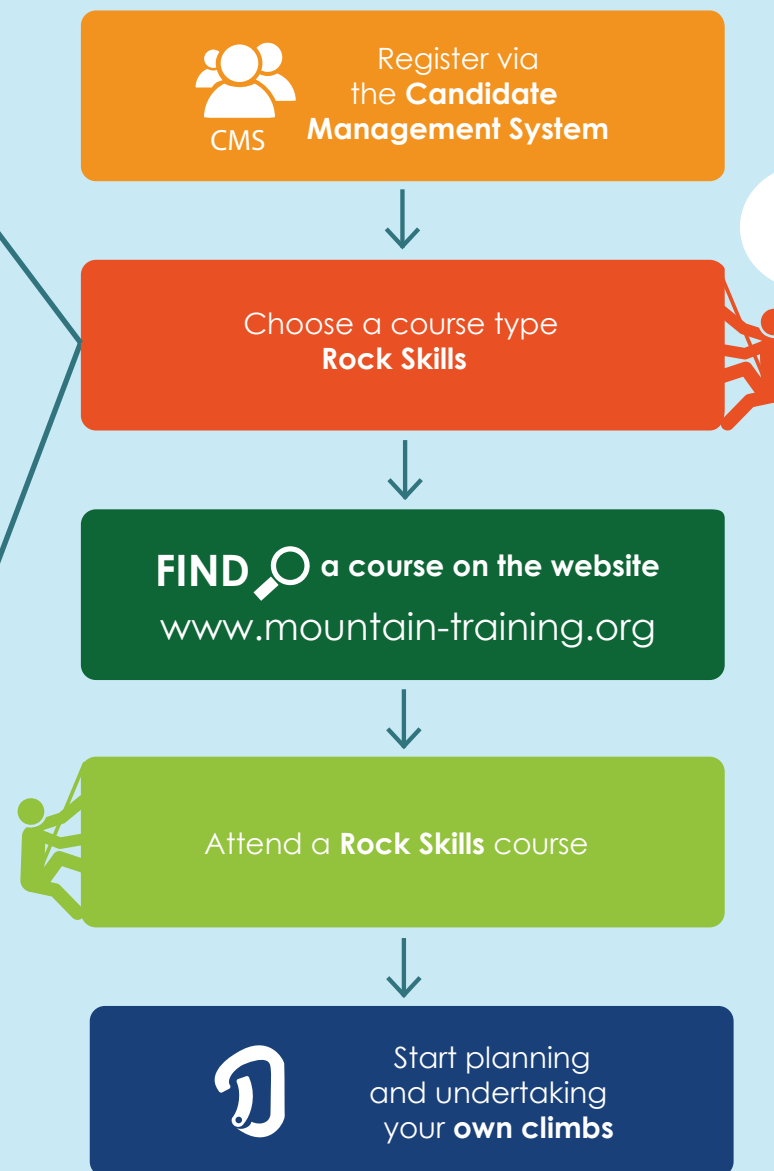
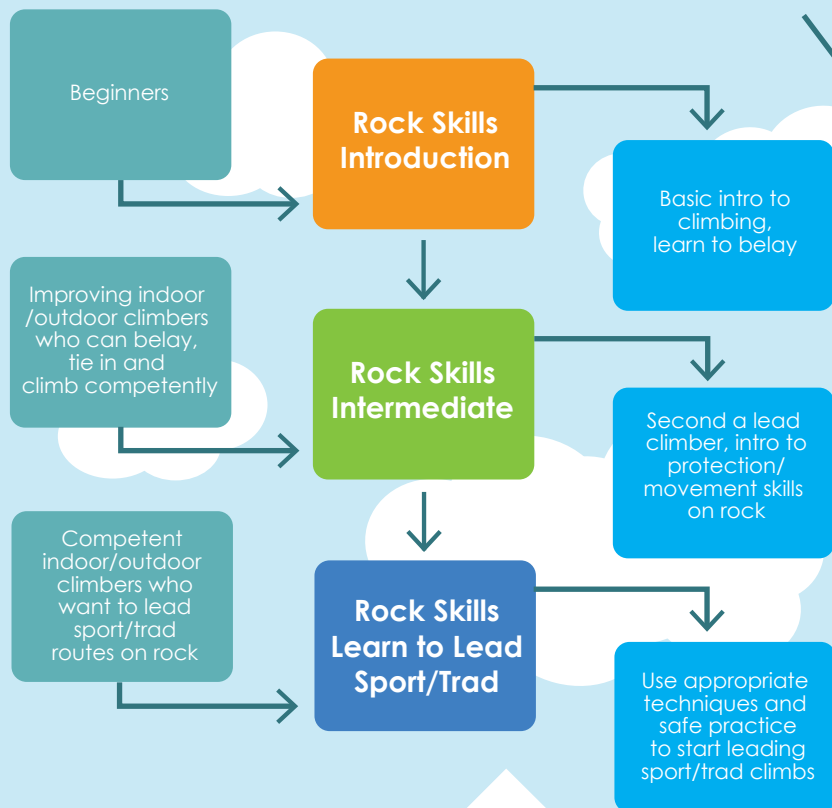
ADULTS

- Access to all four courses with any approved provider*.
- Lifetime use of DLOG (the digital logbook) for recording all climbing related activities.
- A certificate of attendance for each course attended.
- A copy of New Rock Climbers.

* Providers meet the quality assurance requirements of their national Mountain Training organisation and are required to maintain their currency and provider approval.

The registration fee does NOT include:

- The cost of the course (this is managed by the providers).
- Equipment needed for participation in the course (this may be supplied by the provider).
- Personal accident insurance (this can be accessed by joining a mountaineering council).



ROCK SKILLS INTRODUCTION

This course is your key to getting started! No previous experience of climbing is required to attend a Rock Skills Introduction course because the content of the course is aimed at complete beginners.

If you do have some experience of climbing but aren't confident about using the equipment required, finding the crags, locating the routes you want to do and how to stay safe on the crag then a Rock Skills Introduction course is an ideal way to learn.

Minimum
Age **12**

Contact
time **8 hours**
minimum

CLIMBING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED: None



What does the Rock Skills Introduction course cover?

- **Background and Planning.** An awareness of the types of places you can climb in the UK and Ireland, how to use guidebooks and mobile devices to find crags and routes, crag etiquette and the work of the mountaineering councils.
- **Technical Skills.** Tying into a harness, belaying, spotting and how to abseil.
- **Environmental Knowledge.** The impact of climbers at the crag, ethics, access and environmental considerations for climbers.
- **Climbing Skills.** Fundamental movement skills and climbing styles.
- **Hazards and Emergency Procedures.** Identifying hazards, managing risk, understanding common injuries, how to get help and the role of Mountain Rescue and associated emergency services.
- **Footwear and Equipment.** Footwear and equipment selection and how to use the kit you choose.

By the end of a Rock Skills Introduction course, you can expect to:

- Have covered the course content in a safe and enjoyable outdoor environment and classroom-style setting;
 - Have climbed outside for a good proportion of the day on an appropriate crag;
 - Be in a strong position to take a climbing wall belay test; and
 - Be ready to attend a Rock Skills Intermediate course.
- Progression after this course could involve gaining further climbing experience with friends or through a climbing club.
- A Rock Skills Intermediate course is the next step in the Rock Skills pathway.



ROCK CLIMBING - buy the supporting book

ROCK SKILLS INTERMEDIATE

The main aims of this course are to learn how to be a safe belayer, how to second routes competently and how to belay a lead climber.

You will develop your climbing movement skills and learn how to place protection and construct belays.

Minimum
Age **13**

Contact
time **16 hours**
minimum

CLIMBING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:

Completion of a Rock Skills Introduction course.

OR

Have logged 10 routes on walls or outdoor crags; and

Have logged 10 belays of a fellow climber.



What does the Rock Skills Intermediate course cover?

- **Background and Planning.** Choosing a suitable venue, how to use guidebooks and mobile devices to find crags and routes, crag etiquette and the work of the mountaineering councils.
- **Technical Skills.** Building anchors, selecting runners, ropework, belaying, holding falls, lowering, seconding a route and personal abseiling.
- **Climbing Skills.** Warming up and injury avoidance, developing your movement skills and widening your repertoire of climbing moves.
- **Environmental Knowledge.** The impact of climbers at the crag, ethics, access and environmental considerations.
- **Footwear and Equipment.** Rock boot fit, selecting the right equipment for improved performance and an introduction to climbing protection.
- **Hazards and Emergency Procedures.** Identifying hazards, managing risk when climbing, abseiling and bouldering, understanding common injuries, how to get help and the role of Mountain Rescue.

By the end of a Rock Skills Intermediate course, you can expect to:

- Have covered the course content in a safe and enjoyable outdoor environment and classroom-style setting;
- Have climbed outside for a good proportion of each day on an accessible crag; and
- Be in a strong position to second a lead climber on natural rock and participate safely in a climbing session.

Progression from this course could involve gaining further climbing experience with friends or through a climbing club.

Learn to Lead Sport or Learn to Lead Trad courses are the next step in the Rock Skills pathway.



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ROCK SKILLS

LEARN TO LEAD SPORT CLIMBS

The Rock Skills Learn to Lead Sport Climbs course will provide you with the skills you need to participate in bolted sport climbing, including an introduction to leading bolt protected climbs.

This course is also perfect if you are ready to progress to leading sport routes outside, if you are looking to improve your lead climbing confidence or refresh your leading skills. This course does not cover the skills required for leading trad routes.

Minimum
Age **14**

Contact
time **16 hours**
minimum

CLIMBING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED: ESSENTIAL

Have logged 20 indoor or outdoor climbs
Have belayed on at least 20 occasions

DESIRABLE

Completion of Rock Skills Intermediate



What does the Rock Skills Learn to Lead Sport Climbs course cover?

- **Background and Planning.** Choosing suitable venues and routes, how to use guidebooks and mobile devices to find crags and routes, crag etiquette, the importance of the climbing partnership, the work of the mountaineering councils.
- **Climbing Skills.** Safe and assured movement on the lead and optimising natural rests for clipping bolts.
- **Equipment.** Ropes and technical equipment for sport climbing.
- **Technical Skills.** Fixed equipment, anchors, ropework, belaying, holding/taking falls in a controlled environment, lowering, lower offs and abseiling.
- **Environmental Knowledge.** The impact of climbers at the crag, ethics, access and environmental considerations for climbers.
- **Hazards and Emergency Procedures.** Identifying hazards, decision making and managing risk, understanding common injuries, what to do in the event of an incident, managing common problems, how to get help and the role of the Mountain Rescue.

By the end of a Rock Skills Learn to Lead Sport Climbs course, you can expect to:

- Have covered the course content in a safe and enjoyable outdoor environment and classroom-style setting;
 - Have climbed outside for a good proportion of each day on an accessible crag; and
 - Be in a strong position to lead bolted sport routes on rock and indoors, using appropriate techniques and safe practice.
- Progression from this course could involve gaining further climbing experience with friends or through a climbing club.
- A Learn to Lead Trad course is the next step in the Rock Skills pathway.



ROCK CLIMBING - buy the supporting book

ROCK SKILLS

LEARN TO LEAD TRAD CLIMBS

The Rock Skills Learn to Lead Trad Climbs course will provide you with the skills you need to participate in traditionally (trad) protected climbing, including an introduction to leading simple trad climbs.

This course is also ideal if you are looking to improve your confidence or refresh your personal trad leading skills with the aim of helping you to become an independent climber and for those planning to complete the Rock Climbing Instructor scheme.

Minimum
Age **14**

Contact
time **16 hours**

CLIMBING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED: ESSENTIAL

Have belayed on at least 20 occasions;

AND

Have seconded a minimum of 20 rock climbs at Very Difficult (VDiff) or above;

OR

Have led 20 sport climbs (indoors or outdoors).

DESIRABLE

Completion of Rock Skills Intermediate and/or Rock Skills Learn to Lead Sport.



What does the Rock Skills Learn to Lead Sport Climbs course cover?

- **Background and Planning.** Selecting suitable venues and routes, how to use guidebooks and mobile devices to find crags and routes, crag etiquette, the importance of the climbing partnership and the work of the mountaineering councils.
- **Technical Skills.** Selection and placement of suitable gear to protect leader and second, choosing anchors, effective ropework, attaching to multiple anchors, belaying, holding leader and second falls in a controlled environment.
- **Climbing Skills.** Safe and assured movement when leading climbs and optimising natural rests for placing gear.
- **Environmental Knowledge.** The impact of climbers at the crag, ethics and environmental considerations for climbers.
- **Equipment.** Ropes and technical equipment for lead climbing, contents of a lead rack and how to carry it, selection and function of gear.
- **Hazards and Emergency Procedures.** Identifying hazards, decision making and managing risk, understanding common injuries, what to do in the event of an incident, managing common problems, how to get help and learning how Mountain Rescue works.

By the end of a Rock Skills Learn to Lead Trad course, you can expect to:

- Have covered the course content in a safe and enjoyable outdoor environment and classroom-style setting;
- Have climbed outside for a good proportion of each day on an accessible crag; and
- Be in a stronger position to lead trad routes on rock, using appropriate techniques and safe practice.

Progression from this course could involve gaining further climbing experience with friends or through a climbing club.

A Learn to Lead Sport course is the next step in the Rock Skills pathway if you haven't already done one.

Once you are a competent trad leader you may want to consider becoming a Rock Climbing Instructor.



ROCK CLIMBING - buy the supporting book

AGE AND PHYSICAL ABILITY

Minimum
Age **ROCK SKILLS**

Introduction: **12**

Intermediate: **13**

Learn to Lead: **14**

Maximum
Age **NONE**

Rock Skills courses require a moderate level of fitness. They are all practical courses where you will be climbing outside for a good part of each day and learning as you go. To get the most out of the course you will need to be reasonably fit, able to walk for half an hour at a time carrying a day pack plus climbing gear (approx. 7 kg) and able to cope with the demands of a day's climbing. If you are unsure about your fitness or experience, then speak to one of our approved providers.

Rock Skills courses are designed as a clear progression from Introduction level through to Learning to Lead Trad Climbs. Outdoor venues will normally be crags that require between 10-30 minutes approach

time on foot. Appropriate consideration can be made to accommodate the needs of individual participants. Be assured that any concerns can and should be talked through with the course provider prior to booking onto the course.

Mountain Training is committed to promoting the principles of equality and works with the mountaineering councils and other key partners to remove barriers to participation.

Providers and tutors are aware of their obligations with respect to the Equality Act 2010 which is also supported by Mountain Training's ethos.



Providers and tutors have the discretion to make appropriate adjustments to accommodate the needs of their participants. Mountain Training encourages participants to discuss such adjustments with their trainer in advance.

Although the Rock Skills courses are designed as a progression from beginner to leading your own routes, depending on your experience at the time of registration you may choose to enter the scheme at any stage. If you are in doubt as to which course would be suitable for you, speak to one of our approved providers or see the Rock Skills Pathway page 5.

Clothing and Equipment

The right clothing and equipment is an important element of rock climbing. Once you have registered for the scheme and booked onto a course, your provider will send you an equipment list of the items you will need for the course.

Some of our providers offer personal equipment such as climbing harnesses and helmets as part of the course fee, so if this would benefit you then look

for a provider who can offer this as part of the package. Ask your provider for further information about kit.

The New Rock Climbers book that you receive when you register for the scheme is another useful source of information and has a section on climbing equipment to assist you in deciding what gear you might need.

INSURANCE

Personal accident insurance is recommended for undertaking any of the courses. The mountaineering councils are well placed to offer such policies:

- Mountaineering Scotland - www.mountaineering-scot-insurance.co.uk/members
- British Mountaineering Council - www.thebmc.co.uk/members-liability-insurance
- Mountaineering Ireland - www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/Insurance/default.aspx

What's Next?

Enjoy practising your new skills and exploring the crags and climbs of the UK and Ireland! Use the Rock Skills pathway graphic (page 5) to choose which course to do next or you may find it beneficial to join a climbing club so you can climb and learn more with likeminded people.

Useful links:

British Mountaineering Council - www.thebmc.co.uk

Mountaineering Scotland - www.mountaineering.scot

Mountaineering Ireland - www.mountaineering.ie



DLOG

As well as the Rock Skills courses, Mountain Training oversees a number of leadership, coaching and instructing qualifications. DLOG (the digital logbook) is used by candidates of these schemes to record their experience and is also available to people who have registered on the Rock Skills scheme.

Whether or not you choose to progress on to one of our qualifications, DLOG is a great place to record your experience and is available for life.

- You can log entries for fourteen different activities including: trad climbing, sport climbing, outdoor bouldering, indoor climbing, winter climbing, scrambling and alpine climbing as well as walking, lowland walking, winter walking and international trekking.
- You can choose to share your logbook with other people so they can see what you've done (particularly useful if you're at school/college/university or working towards one of our qualifications).
- There's no danger of losing it or the dog eating it (as might be the case with a paper logbook!).

Feedback

We are always pleased to hear about your experience on a course with one of our approved providers. Should any element of the course be deemed unsatisfactory then please raise your concerns with the provider at the earliest opportunity.

Following completion of any Rock Skills course, a feedback form will be provided. This feedback is electronic and allows Mountain Training to review the standard of course provision among providers.

APPENDIX I ROCK SKILLS INTRODUCTION COURSE SYLLABUS

1. BACKGROUND AND PLANNING

- 1.1. Overview of the climbing and bouldering areas of the UK and Ireland.
- 1.2. Use of guidebooks, mobile devices and online resources.
- 1.3. Crag etiquette.
- 1.4. The work of the mountaineering councils.

2. CLIMBING SKILLS

- 2.1. Fundamental movement skills – balance, agility and coordination as the foundation of climbing movement.
- 2.2. Climbing style – an introduction to footwork, handholds and climbing.

3. FOOTWEAR AND EQUIPMENT

- 3.1. Footwear selection – rock shoe comfort and suitability for climbing outside.
- 3.2. Equipment selection and functions – harness, helmets, clothing, ropes, belay devices, locking karabiners, bouldering pads.

4. TECHNICAL SKILLS

- 4.1. Ropework – knots for tying on and attaching to simple anchors, rope management.
- 4.2. Belaying – top and bottom rope belaying, holding falls and lowering.
- 4.3. Spotting – with and without pads, landings, position of pads, effective spotting and its limits.
- 4.4. Abseiling – complete an abseil with a safety back up.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

- 5.1. Understand the impact of climbers at the crag.
- 5.2. Environmental considerations when climbing.
- 5.3. Leave no trace and positive impact ethos.
- 5.4. Access considerations when climbing.

6. HAZARDS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 6.1. Identifying potential hazards at climbing and bouldering venues.
- 6.2. Managing risk while bouldering.
- 6.3. Gaining an understanding of common injuries.
- 6.4. Calling for help.
- 6.5. Understanding how Mountain Rescue is organised in the UK and Ireland.

APPENDIX I ROCK SKILLS INTERMEDIATE COURSE SYLLABUS

1. BACKGROUND AND PLANNING

- 1.1. Choosing a suitable venue.
- 1.2. Use of guidebooks, mobile devices and online resources.
- 1.3. Crag etiquette.
- 1.4. The climbing partnership – importance of trust and knowledge within a climbing partnership.
- 1.5. The work of the mountaineering councils.

2. CLIMBING SKILLS

- 2.1. Warming up and avoiding injuries.
- 2.2. Developing movement skills – body position and techniques for steeper terrain.
- 2.3. Climbing style – widening the repertoire of climbing moves.

3. FOOTWEAR AND EQUIPMENT

- 3.1. Footwear selection – rock shoe fit and type for improved performance.
- 3.2. Technical equipment – an introduction to climbing protection.

4. TECHNICAL SKILLS

- 4.1. Anchors and runners – how to select and place sound anchors and remove runners.
- 4.2. Ropework – attaching to anchors for top-rope systems, setting up top and bottom-rope systems, managing the rope and rigging for abseils.
- 4.3. Belaying – belaying a lead climber, belaying from the top and bottom of the crag using top-rope systems.
- 4.4. Holding falls and lowering – holding a lead fall and a falling second.
- 4.5. Abseiling – set up and complete a retrievable personal abseil with a prusik back up.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

- 5.1. Understand the impact of climbers at climbing venues.
- 5.2. Environmental considerations when climbing.
- 5.3. Leave no trace and positive impact ethos.
- 5.4. Access considerations when climbing.

6. HAZARDS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 6.1. Identifying potential hazards at climbing and bouldering venues.
- 6.2. Managing risk when climbing, abseiling and bouldering.
- 6.3. Gaining an understanding of common injuries.
- 6.4. Calling for help.
- 6.5. Understanding how Mountain Rescue is organised in the UK and Ireland.

APPENDIX I ROCK SKILLS

LEARN TO LEAD SPORT COURSE SYLLABUS

1. BACKGROUND AND PLANNING

- 1.1. Selecting suitable venues and routes.
- 1.2. Use of guidebooks, mobile devices and online resources.
- 1.3. Crag etiquette.
- 1.4. The climbing partnership – importance of trust and knowledge within a climbing partnership.
- 1.5. Decision making – understanding risk evaluation and management.
- 1.6 . The work of the mountaineering councils.

2. CLIMBING SKILLS

- 2.1. Movement techniques – safe and assured movement on the lead.
- 2.2. Climbing style – optimising natural rests for clipping bolts.

3. EQUIPMENT

- 3.1. Ropes – choosing a rope for leading, understanding rope specifications and systems.
- 3.2. Technical equipment - selection and function of all gear for sport climbing.

4. TECHNICAL SKILLS

- 4.1. Fixed equipment – recognising types and assessing quality of bolts, pre-clipping first bolts.
- 4.2. Anchors – types, how to rig for bottom-roping and lowering off.
- 4.3. Ropework – minimising rope drag, attaching to multiple anchors.
- 4.4. Belaying and holding/taking falls – leader and second falls.
- 4.5. Abseiling – set up and complete a retrievable personal abseil with a prusik back up.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

- 5.1. Understand the impact of climbers at climbing venues.
- 5.2. Environmental considerations when climbing.
- 5.3. Leave no trace and positive impact ethos.
- 5.4. Access considerations when climbing

6. HAZARDS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 6.1. Identifying potential hazards at climbing venues.
- 6.2. Gaining an understanding of common injuries.
- 6.3. What do to in the event of an incident and managing common problems.
- 6.4 . Calling for help.
- 6.5. Understanding how Mountain Rescue is organised in the UK and Ireland.

APPENDIX I ROCK SKILLS

LEARN TO LEAD TRAD COURSE SYLLABUS

1. BACKGROUND AND PLANNING

- 1.1. Selecting suitable venues and routes.
- 1.2. Use of guidebooks, mobile devices and online resources.
- 1.3. Crag etiquette.
- 1.4. The climbing partnership – importance of trust and knowledge within a climbing partnership.
- 1.5. Decision making – understanding risk evaluation and management.
- 1.6 . The work of the mountaineering councils.

2. CLIMBING SKILLS

- 2.1. Movement techniques – safe and assured movement on the lead, climbing in a more efficient style.
- 2.2. Climbing style – optimising natural rests for placing gear.

3. EQUIPMENT

- 3.1. Ropes – choosing a rope for leading, understanding rope specifications and systems.
- 3.2. Technical equipment - selection and function of all gear, contents of a lead rack and how to carry it.

4. TECHNICAL SKILLS

- 4.1. Runners - selection and placement of suitable gear to protect leader and second.
- 4.2. Anchors – choosing the best anchor available.
- 4.3. Ropework – minimising rope drag, attaching to multiple anchors.
- 4.4. Belaying and holding falls – leader and second falls.
- 4.5. Abseiling – set up and complete a retrievable personal abseil with a prusik back up and locking off to retrieve gear.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

- 5.1. Understand the impact of humans at climbing venues.
- 5.2. Environmental considerations when climbing.
- 5.3. Leave no trace and positive impact ethos.
- 5.4. Access considerations when climbing.

6. HAZARDS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 6.1. Identifying potential hazards at climbing venues.
- 6.2. Gaining an understanding of common injuries.
- 6.3. Take appropriate action in the event of an incident, accident or common occurrences.
- 6.4. Calling for help.
- 6.5. Understanding how Mountain Rescue is organised in the UK and Ireland.

APPENDIX II

MOUNTAIN TRAINING AND THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCILS

Mountain Training is the collective term used to describe all of the national Mountain Training organisations of the UK and Ireland. Each national organisation is responsible for managing skills and qualification schemes along with approving and quality assuring course providers.

Generally the procedures for providers and tutors are equivalent across each of the national organisations. However, slight variations may be required to accommodate regional differences and organisational structures.

THE NATIONAL MOUNTAIN TRAINING ORGANISATIONS:

- Mountain Training Cymru (Wales)
- Mountain Training England
- Mountain Training Scotland
- Mountain Training Board Ireland

MOUNTAIN TRAINING UK

The role of Mountain Training UK is to coordinate the combined global objectives of the national Mountain Training organisations. Its areas of work include:

- Coordination of the global objectives of the national Mountain Training organisations;
- Development and management of the Candidate Management System (CMS);
- Administration of the Mountaineering Instructor and International Mountain Leader Awards;
- Liaison with government and other external bodies;
- Creation of the official publications that support the schemes;
- Development of the Mountain Training Association (MTA); and
- Providing services for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI), British Association of Mountain Leaders (BAIML) and the British Mountain Guides (BMG).

MOUNTAINEERING COUNCILS

The mountaineering councils are the representative bodies for climbers, hillwalkers and mountaineers and work to promote their interests and protect their freedoms. They provide a wide range of services for members and hold regular area meetings.

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL (BMC)

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