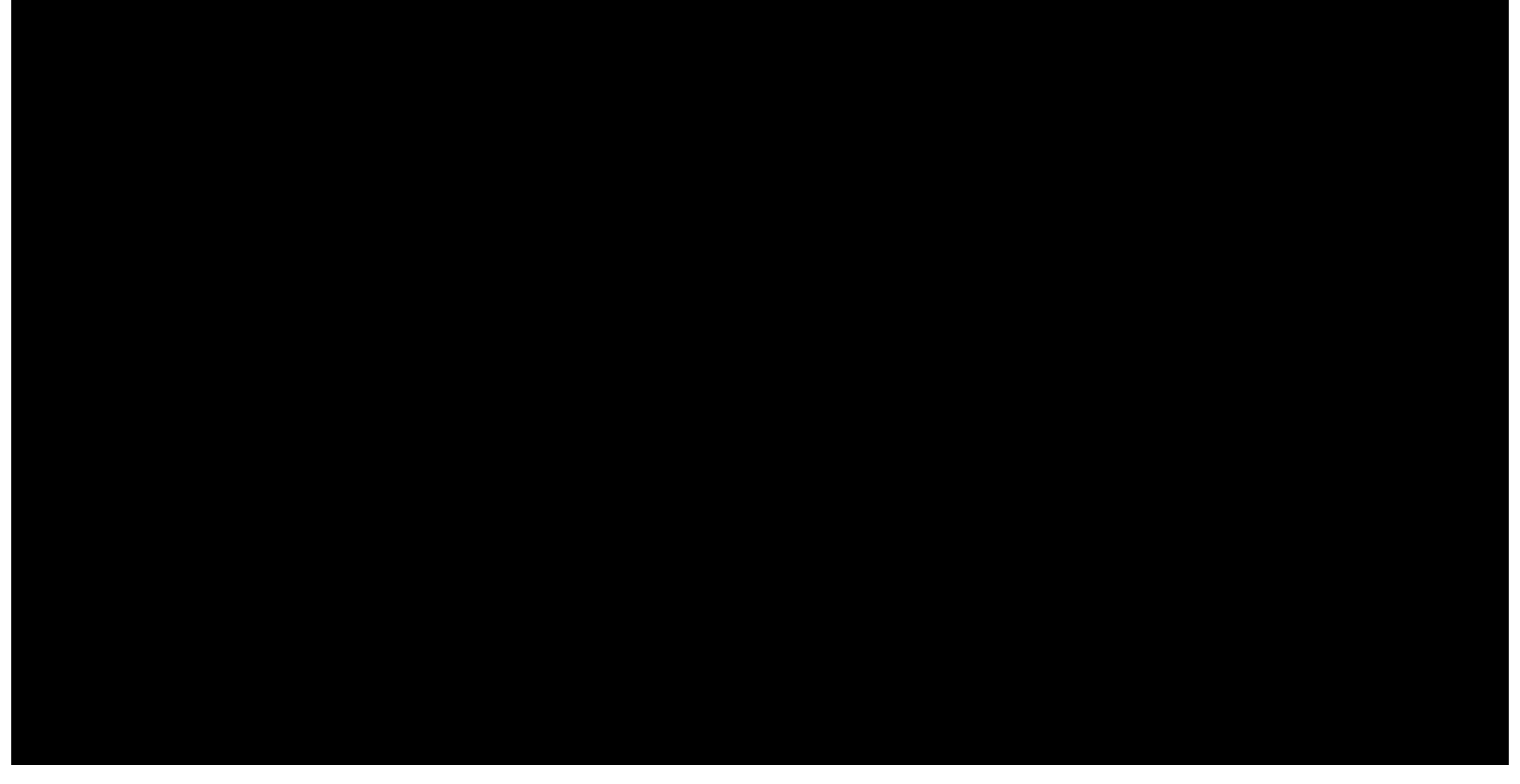




I hear this from people all the time:

*"How Do I Get Into Climbing?"*

A lot of people are intimidated by rock climbing. And granted, there are incredible climbers out there that would make any of us self-conscious. Like this guy. (PLEASE DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME.)



But you don't have to be world-class to have a great time. I'm certainly not, and I love climbing.

A good way to jump in is to [jump on a beginner course with us](#) or get a [day pass at a local gym](#) (the Crux gym is awesome)!

Get an experienced friend or bring a fellow beginner. It's also a great way to meet friends!

You can also check out some of these climbing books to get a good introduction, either at the library or Amazon:

- The Self-Coached Climber: The Guide to Movement Training Performance
- 9 out of 10 climbers make the same mistakes

If you're looking for some great training and to improve as a climber, this is a great resource.

And finally, here's a great [glossary of climbing terms from Wikipedia](#) so you can talk the talk before you walk the walk. Or climb the climb. Or whatever.

Now, let's dive into the world of rock climbing.

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## The Different Types Of Climbing

This is a list covering most types of climbing.

- Bouldering** – This is where you climb without a rope. Typically, it's short sequences of powerful/technical moves to challenge yourself. Often, climbers will put down a pad and have a climbing partner spotting to make sure they're okay. (An indoor gym we love: [Austin Bouldering Project](#).)
- Free Soloing** – This is EXTREMELY dangerous. Only the best climbers in the world should even think about this. This is where climbers will do climbs with no protection.
- Deep Water Soloing** – This is where you climb without ropes above water, so when you fall, you fall into water. ([We're super excited to be offering this now!](#))
- Roped Climbing** – This is where you climb tall vertical walls, and a pad is not enough for protection.
  - **Top Rope** – The rope is attached safely at the top of the route. This is the safest way to climb routes, and usually how beginners start with route climbing.
  - **Sport** – This is where you set your protection as you climb. Climbers use carabiners (quick-draws) to clip (or attach) the rope into bolts that have been drilled into the rock. The first person that sets the protection on a route is doing something called "lead climbing" or "leading".
  - **Traditional (aka Trad)** – This is lead climbing, but without the bolts. You set your protection by using natural features of the rock (often cracks are used) and trad gear (like cams, nuts, tricams and hexes).
  - **Aid** – You place gear in the rock as protection, but also to help you climb. When you're just beginning, you might be pulling on a quickdraw. When you're more experienced, there is more specialized equipment. Etriers, jumars and daisy chains can be used for climbing. Pitons, copperheads and skyhooks can be used for protection. And sometimes climbers place bolts too.
  - **Rope-Solo** – Only advanced climbers should even attempt this. If this is you, you can safely arrest a fall by using a rope – without a partner.

Some people also climb ice and mixed routes (like ice/snow/rock) with any of the styles above.

## General Rules To Follow

**Be mindful of human error.** Climbing equipment almost never fails when it is used correctly. NEVER relax about your protections. ALWAYS be mindful and pay attention. Did you actually do the checks your guide said you were supposed to? Or did you just go through the motions? Be safe. That's always #1.

**Nothing is ever completely safe.** There is risk with everything, but you can make that risk as small as possible. It's good to have backups, but you usually only need one backup for safety. Don't feel like you have to go overboard.

**Hard on soft, soft on hard.** As a general rule, you want to use carabiners to join slings and ropes. Avoid connecting carabiners directly or having fabric rubbing on fabric. Do not run a rope directly through a sling and put slings together.

## What Kind Of Shoes & Equipment Do You Need?

Luckily, you don't need a ton of equipment to go rock climbing!

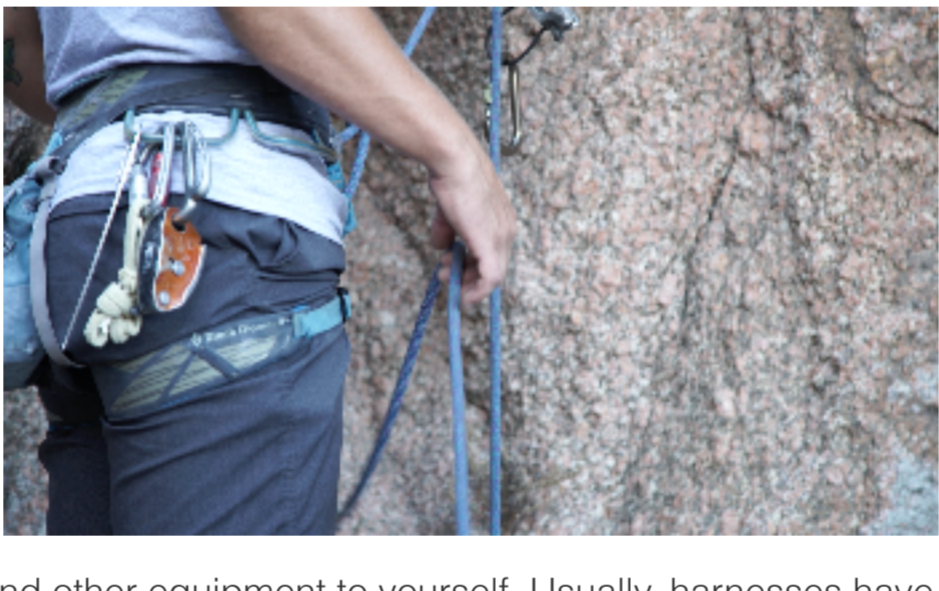
### Shoes



The most important equipment for rock climbing are the shoes. But as a beginner, don't stress out about having the best and most expensive shoes. Just make sure that you get a pair of shoes that doesn't hurt but fits so you can feel your toes hitting the end of the shoe.

[Here's a really great climbing shoe guide on how to buy shoes that fit.](#)

### Harnesses



These are used to attach the rope and other equipment to yourself. Usually, harnesses have 3 loops for your waist and your legs. Get one that fits comfortable and snugly around your waist. You can get one with lots of gear loops if you think trad climbing is in your future, but if you're only going to top rope and do sport climbs, don't worry about it.

### Ropes



Climbing ropes are also super important to climbing. They're usually dynamic, which means the rope "stretches" to decrease the force transferred to your body when you fall.

### Quickdraws



Quickdraws are the main form of protection used when you are sport climbing. The straight-gate carabiner is clipped into the bolt and the rope is clipped in the curved or wire gate carabiner. The curve in the gate is to make clipping a rope into that carabiner easier with only one hand.

### Other Equipment



When you are trad climbing, there are passive and active forms of protection. This protection is placed into rock (like cracks) while you are climbing. Usually, there is no fixed bolts. This takes years of expertise to master and you SHOULD NOT attempt this without proper training.

If you ever go ice climbing, you'll use equipment like ice-axes, crampons, ice-screws, warthogs and ice-hooks. Again, a really cool sport, but DO NOT attempt this unless you have years of experience and training.

## Avoid These Common Mistakes

Here are a list of mistakes that you CANNOT do when you are climbing. Rock climbing is a ton of fun, but **you need to be safe**.

- Don't take your brake hand off the rope when you are belaying
- Do not use a very obviously worn out piece of gear
- Skipping the pre-belay buddy check and getting too comfortable
- Belaying off a harness gear loop (PLEASE DON'T DO THIS)
- Trying to climb when your head is trying to deal with fear and pain (you're not a coward, you're being safe – you can always come back)
- DO practice new climbing techniques while you on the ground, NOT when you're high up in the air

## Be Kind To Others, The Environment...Have Fun!

First off, do not leave trash when you're climbing outdoors (in the climbing gym too). Remove trash if you see it! Be the bigger person and help us get rid of finger tape, food waste and keep our earth clean. Pick up after yourself please!

Secondly, be kind to others. Talk out any conflicts with others, and if you're having trouble, move on to a different climbing route. It's not worth it to get in a conflict with others, the route isn't going anywhere and you're the bigger person, remember?

And if there are non-climbers that are hanging out, be good to them. They have the right to this space too.

Lastly, have a TON of fun!

I love rock climbing and I want as many people as possible to enjoy the sport of rock climbing like I do. I hope you enjoyed this; I enjoyed creating it!

If you have anything else you'd like to see, any feedback or any questions, [please feel free to contact us](#).

**Happy climbing,**

**-Adam Mitchell**