



Self Rescue for Climbers

As climbers we operate in a potentially dangerous environment and need to take personal responsibility for ourselves and the consequences of our actions. But only Rube Goldberg could imagine all the weird and difficult situations that climbers might find themselves in as a result of an accident or other emergency while climbing. Rather than learning by creating and then solving complicated rescue scenarios it's more important to be familiar with improvised rescue tools such as knots and cordelettes and to understand systems that including rope ascending or rappelling with an injured person. Familiarity with these techniques will give you the skill and confidence you need to be able to handle an emergency rescue, should the need arise.

Itinerary: Self Rescue is a complex problem. Every situation is different and it will never be possible to give a complete list of solutions to an infinite variety of problem. You will be encouraged to self solve the problems and the most common phrase you will hear will be, "Well what do you think?" There may be a number of ways to achieve a given goal and you will be encouraged to develop a wide range of skills. The technique we have developed is not to attempt to teach solutions. Our progression introduces a variety of different tools and once you are comfortable with these you will be shown how to combine them into a variety of techniques. Then it is up to you to apply these techniques in various combinations to arrive at a solution to your problem.

These problems may include; rescuing a second, rescuing a leader, evacuating a victim off the cliff by descending or raising or simply solving a climbing problem.

As well, we will discuss how not to get into these situations to start with which is by far the most elegant solution.

Topics covered will include:

Day one: Equipment necessary for prepared self rescue anchoring and knot skill check, rescue overview, belay escape using various systems, ascending ropes with friction hitches, long lowers with two ropes tied together including how to pass the knot, rappelling safety, passing knots in rappels, descending with an injured person.

Day two: Haul systems and putting it all together in scenarios. We'll also practice the American Mountain Guides Association rescue drill which gives you a list of required tasks to be completed within a limited time frame.

Meeting place and time: We will meet the first day at 8.00 a.m. at the world headquarters of Sierra Mountain Center, 174 W. Line Street, in Bishop. Line Street is an east/west street marked by the southern-most traffic light on Main Street/Highway 395, in town. We're west of the light, on the south side of the street next to the health food store. A large parking lot is located on the south side of the building. Plan on already having had a good breakfast.

Dates and Prices: Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site and locate on the first page the pull down menu for downloadable schedules and rates. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Price includes guiding and all necessary group climbing gear. We can assist with hotel reservations should you require them

Ratios: a maximum of six participants to one instructor.

Notes and other information: We recommend reading the following books.

American Alpine Club Safety Committee: *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*, AAC, yearly

Fasulo, David J. *How To Rock Climb: Self Rescue*, Falcon Press, 1996

Long, John. *How To Rock Climb: Climbing Anchors*, Falcon Press, 1993

Long, John. *How To Rock Climb: More Climbing Anchors*, Falcon Press, 1996

Luebben, Craig. *How To Rock Climb: Knots for Climbers*, Falcon Press, 1996

Selters, Andy. *Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue. The Mountaineers*, 1990

Prerequisites: This course assumes that you are competent at creating and assessing anchors appropriate to any climbing situation. Additionally, you should have a good repertoire of knots, be familiar with rappelling, and have experience with multi pitch climbing

Equipment List for the Self Rescue Course

The following list is a general guide and will assist you in packing for the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have specific questions regarding equipment and if you need assistance prior to making a purchase. Items marked with a * are items that we have available for rent.

Climbing equipment

- Harness*. An adjustable leg loop type such as the Black Diamond Bod or Wild Things Espresso will accommodate layering changes. Arcteryx harnesses are recommended for rock and sport climbing.
- Helmet. New models such as the Grivel Cap or the Black Diamond Hemisphere are comfortable and light weight. We can provide these if you do not have one. (But you should!!)
- Carabiners*. Two locking carabiners (Screwgates are more secure than twist lock style and easier to manipulate).
- Small rack of hardware, extra locking and non locking carabiners
- Belay/rappel device*. An ATC or Tuber type
- 3–16 to 20' cordelettes made from either 7mm nylon or 5.5 mm Spectra. (Personal preference: 7mm is bulky but easier to handle, 5.5mm Spectra is stronger and lighter but difficult to tie and untie.)
- Several shoulder length slings
- 2 prussik slings made from 6mm or 7mm fabric. If you haven't practiced with these before the course you may just want to bring 15 to 20 feet of the material and custom tie them to suit your size.
- Rope. Don't bring your favorite new lead cord, any reasonable top rope will work.
- Rack. We do provide the necessary equipment but if you have your own gear bring it since you will be more familiar with it.

Etc.

- Sun glasses. Good quality with side shields.
- Water Bottles. Two quart (1 liter) wide mouth bottles and or a hydration system holding up to 50oz. (2 liters).
- Approach shoes. You don't need rock shoes.
- Lunch and snacks for both days.
- Day pack to carry it all.
- Clothing for warm or cold, wet or dry.
- Personal toiletries. Include some TP and a bag to pack out the used from the crags.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. A 1 oz. bottle will be enough. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen.
- Bug repellent. Only needed in the early season.

Knots to know before coming to the course. We will review these, but practice them beforehand if possible.

- Figure eight follow through, figure eight on a bight
- Bowline and variations: great for anchoring top ropes when using a static rope as an anchoring tool.
- Clove Hitch
- Water knot, double/triple grapevine (fisherman's),
- Friction hitches: Prussik, kemheist, autoblock, Bachman
- Mule knot
- Munter hitch