

ROCK CLIMBING AND SELF-RESCUE TECHNIQUES©

SEVENTH EDITION
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Teaching rock-climbing since 1964

for
THE ARIZONA MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
BASIC CLIMBING SCHOOL

by

AMC Training & Schools Committee

Basic Rock Climbing and Self-Rescue Techniques ©
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Seventh Edition

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To make written inquiries about this textbook, the Arizona Mountaineering Club schools or club activities write:

Arizona Mountaineering Club
4340 E. Indian School Road, Suite 21-164
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

CLIMBING IN ANY FORM OR SETTING IS AN INHERENTLY HAZARDOUS AND DANGEROUS ACTIVITY THAT MAY RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH.

ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMBING, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, RAPELLING, SCRAMBLING, BOULDERING, HIKING, AND JUST WATCHING, ALSO EXPOSE PEOPLE TO RISKS THAT CAN RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH.

THIS TEXT IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR A COMPLETE COURSE OF FORMAL INSTRUCTION. NO PERSON SHOULD RELY ONLY ON THIS TEXT OR SIMILAR MATERIAL TO PREPARE HIM OR HER FOR CLIMBING AND ITS ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES.

FORMAL INSTRUCTION, IN ANY FORM OR SETTING, NO MATTER HOW COMPLETE, CAN ONLY BE AN INTRODUCTION TO CLIMBING AND ITS ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES. THE SAFETY OF CLIMBERS, REGARDLESS OF THE FORM OR SETTING, EVEN AFTER COMPLETION OF A COURSE OF FORMAL INSTRUCTION, ALWAYS DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION, THE CARE AND SKILL OF EACH INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED, AND FACTORS BEYOND THE CONTROL OF ANY PARTICIPANT. THERE IS ALWAYS A RISK OF INJURY OR DEATH INHERENT IN CLIMBING AND ITS ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES.

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DEDICATION

This manual is dedicated to all the AMC instructors, AMC Training and Schools committee members, and climbers who have taught our instructors and us over the years. It is only because they took the time to teach us that we have been able to climb safely and teach others to do so. Each generation of climbers improves on what is passed down to them, and we hope that the readers of this manual and students of the AMC Basic School will take what we present and make it safer yet as they in turn pass it on.

Although there are too many people to thank individually, special thanks must go to Humberto Urbina, Bob Box, John and Pat Brinnand, Herb North Sr., Jack Webb, Caryl Parker, Charly Gullet, Tim Bombaci, Doug Fletcher, Dan Stough, Gary Youngblood, Stan Marks, Mick Strole, Tim Medlock, Rogil Schroeter, Wayne Schroeter, Tom Conner, Sally Larimer, Jeff Hatfield and Paul Diefenderfer, who put 18 years of his life into this climbing school.

Here is “Rock Climbing and Self-Rescue Techniques.” Be good to yourself.

INTRODUCTION TO THE VERTICAL WORLD

Welcome to a strange and wonderful way of life in a new, vertical world. In it you will experience many sensations. Among those are: butterflies, elation, fatigue, adrenalin, fear of heights, conquering that fear, climbing, falling, saving your friends' lives, camaraderie, the excitement of buying lots of new equipment, being out of shape, getting into shape, making new friends, finding your physical limits, competitiveness, teamwork and, most of all, FUN . . . and that's just on your first climbing day!

Nothing gets your attention like struggling at a certain move on a popular climb, possibly taking a fall or two. While you are doing that move, **THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ELSE** in your universe but the holds you are standing on. No job, no personalities, no arguments, no stock brokers, no traffic . . . just you and that next hold. **TOTAL FOCUS.** But, before you start jamming your hands into cracks, let's look at just how rock climbing fits into the outdoor world.

Mountaineering is the "parent sport" of several different outdoor activities: backpacking, rock climbing, ice climbing, skiing, orienteering, caving and rescue operations. But, several aspects of technical rock climbing extend into most of those other activities. So, something you learn in one of these technical pastimes can usually be applied to another.

Over the last hundred years of climbers refining their sport, several specialized forms of rock climbing have evolved: traditional free roped climbing, aid climbing, scrambling, bouldering, sport climbing, indoor climbing, ice climbing and whatever comes out of California this week! Bungee jumping and rappelling are not rock climbing. I'm sorry, your ROTC instructor lied to you. That's like riding your bicycle downhill everywhere. Your main objective must be to go up, to be considered a climber.

You may have been introduced to rock climbing by a friend who climbs and only wants to do "sport climbing" in a climbing gym. The gal next to you may have backpacked for years and all she wants to do is learn how to rappel into and climb back out of a favorite slot canyon. The guy two rows up may quit his real job to become next year's top climbing star. You might just want to try a new sport, get some exercise, experience a thrill and make friends. Whatever your reasons (which you can sort out on a belay ledge some day), you have made the sane choice to learn your technical skills from an established climbing school.

The AMC Training and Schools Committee updates these manuals periodically. We read, test new techniques, talk to gear manufacturers and climbing experts all over the country, brainstorm and write. However, when you take a class, **YOU** must listen and ask pertinent questions. When you get a manual, **YOU** must read it and practice the techniques in a controlled environment, before you get up on the rock. This manual is written expressly for the AMC Climbing School. Although there are no guarantees of safety in this sport, the chapters we present here show you commonly accepted techniques and expound on some of the insight behind them.