



# intro to rope climbing



# sharing our passion for climbing

**Thank you for joining us today.** We are confident that the course you took today was an important and exciting step to start climbing with us on our roped walls. You now have a solid foundation of skills and techniques to build upon as you practice and enhance what you've learned.

The purpose of this booklet is to aid you in maintaining and building on this foundation. It contains several different sections covering the following topics: a review of the skills learned in class, a study guide to our gym's belay check, suggestions for continuing your growth as a climber, and information about gear.

We hope this guide will be a handy reference in the future. Remember to check out the next steps in our Intro Series. These classes are designed to help you systematically progress as a climber. Ask our staff questions you might have about climbing or the Intro Series. We look forward to helping you as you explore the challenging and rewarding sport of climbing.

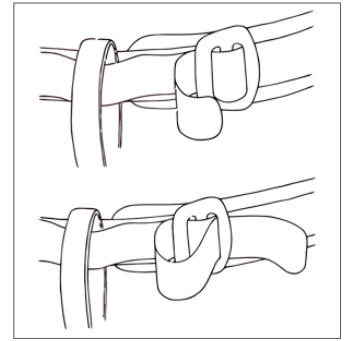
## warning:

Climbing is an inherently dangerous sport and participants must assume all risks. Even with proper instruction and training, risks cannot be eliminated. Do not solely depend on information gained from this booklet for your safety. Your climbing safety depends on your judgment, training, experience, and a realistic assessment of your climbing ability. The information provided in this booklet should be used only to supplement competent in-person instruction and training from a qualified climbing instructor or guide. There is no substitute for professional instruction in climbing. Education is widely available. You are responsible for your safety and the safety of those around you.



## Putting on the Harness

There are dozens of different harnesses on the market today, but the basic safety principles are the same. **With any harness, be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions carefully, follow them to the letter, and always double-check both fit and buckles before you or your partner leaves the ground.**



*example of double backed harness belt*

## Tying In

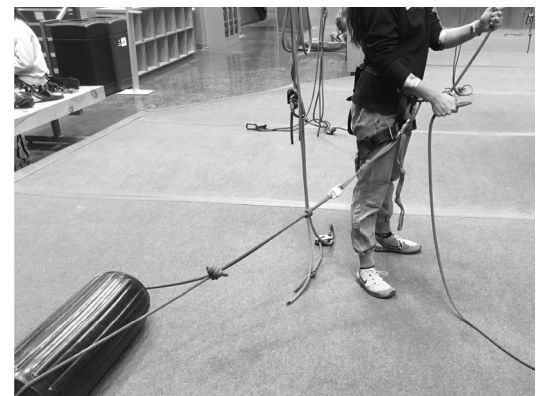
The Figure Eight Retrace is the standard way to attach a climbing rope to a harness. It's strong, secure, and easy to visually check. Be sure to attach the rope through the harness's appropriate tie-in points as indicated in the manufacturer's instructions. After tying the knot, be sure that there is at least 6" of the tail (extra rope). **Always double-check your knot and tie-in point(s) and your partner's gear before climbing.**



## Anchoring In

Inside the gym, our top rope anchors are double-wrapped, to add friction and decrease the weight you feel from your partner when they sit in their harness to rest or lower. It may be necessary for some partners with a significant weight difference to anchor down the lighter partner while belaying to prevent being pulled off the ground. Follow these steps to anchor in:

1. Find the correct anchor system in your gym (usually webbing or mobile belay buoys).
2. Clip the anchor to your belay loop using a different carabiner than the one used for belaying.
3. Attach the anchor carabiner below the carabiner with the belay device.
4. Be sure to pull the anchor to full extension in line with the direction of pull from the climbing rope.
5. If you're unsure of any of these setups, please ask a staff member for assistance.



*Example of how to clip into a webbing or buoy system*

## Belaying the Climber

Belaying, or managing the rope for your partner, is a relatively simple but important process with one critical rule: always keep your brake hand on the brake strand. Your brake hand must remain around the brake strand, ready to catch a fall at any time. To catch a fall, bring your brake hand below the belay device. The additional bend in the rope and the mechanical action from the GRIGRI's cam create friction, which helps the belayer arrest the climber's fall. Remember, the GRIGRI's cam helps assist with braking but does not always or automatically engage. Remain attentive and never take your brake hand off the brake strand.

**Always complete a harness-to-harness safety check with your partner before leaving the ground: harness buckles fastened and doubled backed if necessary; knot correctly tied with 6" of tail; GRIGRI correctly loaded and a carabiner attached to the correct attachment point and locked.** After completing safety checks, you and your partner will exchange commands as a final safety check before climbing and belaying one another. See the following page for Climbing Commands.

## Lowering the Climber

**The belayer is responsible for lowering their partner. When the climber reaches the top of the route, or wants to come down, carefully follow these steps:**

1. Take in any slack in the rope and then bring your brake hand firmly down. Then, wrap the brake strand over the GRIGRI's flange and hold on tight with your brake hand.
2. Take your guide hand off the rope so you can pull back on the lever, which will disengage the cam or assisted braking device on the GRIGRI.
3. While opening the cam with the lever, slowly relax your grip with the brake hand until the rope starts moving at a smooth, controlled rate.
4. If your partner begins to descend too rapidly, tighten your grip with your brake hand and release the lever to re-engage the cam. Lowering a climber too fast can burn your hands and cause you to drop your climber.

## Harness-to-Harness Check

**Before climbing, both climber and belayer must do a harness-to-harness safety check. This is a final double-check to ensure the system is set up correctly. It's yours and your partner's life. This is a critical step. Make sure to do it EVERY time.**

1. First, double-check the climber's harness: buckles are doubled back if necessary, the waist belt is above the hip bones and snug, per manufacturer's instruction, and no twists in the webbing.
2. Next, check: climber's attachment points, and knot, are attached to the manufacturer's recommended tie-in point(s); retrace the figure-eight knot to ensure there are five sets of parallel lines on each side and at least a 6" tail.
3. Follow the climber's side of the rope to the anchor, making sure there are no twists in the rope and that the climber and belayer are on the same rope.
4. Check the belayer's equipment: The rope is loaded correctly in the GRIGRI and attached appropriately to the carabiner, which is locked and attached to the belay loop.
5. Finish up by double-checking the belayer's harness, per manufacturer's instructions: buckles are doubled-back; the waist belt is snug above the hip bones, and no twists in the webbing.

# climbing commands

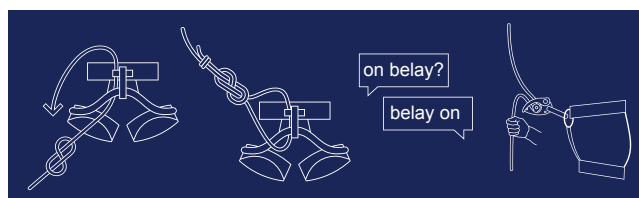
<b>ON BELAY</b>	Climber is asking the belayer if they're ready to begin. Belayer is in full control of the brake strand and all slack has been taken in.
<b>BELAY ON</b>	Belayer's response to climber when the belay is ready.
<b>CLIMBING</b>	Climber is letting belayer know they are starting the climb.
<b>CLIMB ON</b>	The final go-ahead from the belayer for the climber to start.
<b>UP ROPE</b>	Climber's command to belayer to take in some rope.
<b>SLACK</b>	Climber's request to belayer to feed out some rope, creating slack.
<b>TAKE</b>	Climber's command to belayer to remove any slack in the system and hold the climber while in the brake position.
<b>GOTCHA</b>	Belayer's response to climber after taking any slack out of the system; immediately going to the brake position.
<b>FALLING</b>	Climber's attempt to warn belayer of an impending fall.
<b>READY TO LOWER</b>	Climber's command to belayer stating they are ready to be lowered to the ground.
<b>LOWERING</b>	Response to climber stating they will begin lowering the climber.
<b>OFF BELAY</b>	Climber's signal to belayer that they have returned to the ground and the belay should end.
<b>BELAY OFF</b>	Belayer's response to climber stating the belay has ended.

# belay check cliff notes

**The belay check is necessary for your safety and the safety of the climbing community at large.** While you must demonstrate the required skills with competence and minimal guidance to pass, we encourage you to ask questions and practice briefly before starting your belay check. Climbers must wait a minimum of one day after taking the Intro to Rope Climbing class or between attempts if they do not pass their belay check.

**As part of your belay check, you will be asked to:**

- Put on and tie into a harness using a Figure Eight Retrace knot with at least 6" of tail.
- Set up to belay a climber.
- Demonstrate pre-climbing checks and commands.
- Belay (manage the rope) such that a brake hand is maintained on the rope at all times.
- Catch simulated falls and demonstrate the proper lowering technique.



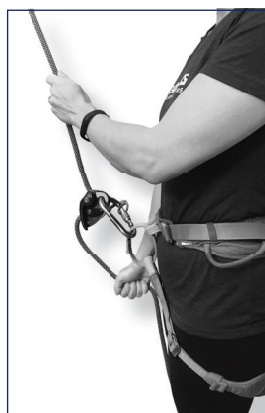
## Follow These Five Steps For Good PBUS Belaying Technique



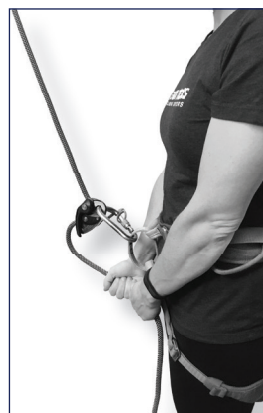
*start*



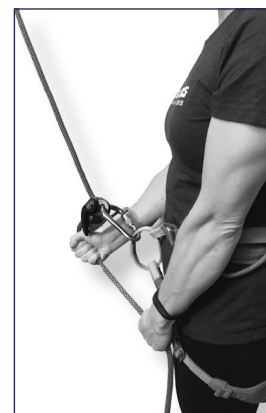
*pull*



*brake*



*under*



*slide*



# climb on!

**We have many class options for you. Ask your instructors or staff for more information on the following classes:**

## Intro to Bouldering

Learn movement skills necessary for the overhanging terrain common in bouldering, falling skills (yes, you need to learn to fall), and bouldering etiquette. If you are bouldering in the V Intro – V2 range or your climbing experience is limited to roped climbing thus far, this is the perfect class to jump start your bouldering experience.

## Intro to Technique

Feeling comfortable on the wall and ready to begin honing your craft? Our two-part technique course will teach the principles needed to drive movement from your toes, position your body efficiently, and use the breath to support your mind and movement. Leave ready to start practicing these in your day-to-day climbing.

## Intro to Training

Feeling comfortable on the wall and looking to get more out of each climbing session? Experience some foundational climbing exercises and principles of training. Leave understanding how to set goals and build climbing routines that develop your strength, stamina, and skill while still leaving room to have fun.

## Intro to Leading

Throughout two classes, learn the critical techniques necessary to both lead climb and belay in the gym. Participants will be given the opportunity to take and catch practice lead falls. This course is also a great first step for those with aspirations of leading outdoors.

## Private Coaching

Are you looking for more personalized instruction rather than a group class? We offer private coaching for all ability levels. Check out our website or talk to one of our staff, and we'll get you connected with the right coach to help you achieve your goals.

Initiation fee will be waived for Intro+ participants who sign up for a membership **within 30 days** of the Intro to Rope Climbing class.

# join the community

## membership benefits

- + Unlimited access to all Earth Treks, Planet Granite, and Movement gyms
- + Free Member Clinics, Yoga and Fitness Classes
- + Discounts on climbing courses
- + Six free guest passes per year
- + 10% off all gear and apparel
- + One time 20% off gear coupon at sign-up

Questions? Visit us at [el-cap.com](http://el-cap.com)

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## keep climbing with us!

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