

# General Trip Leader Skills/Traits

## **General skills for all trips including hiking, canyoning and climbing**

- Run a trip brief, including acknowledgement of country, asking about medical conditions, gear checks, and expected obstacles and outline of the days activities
- Log trip intentions, assign safety contacts and report safety incidents through the club
- Plan a trip and know when to call off a trip (weather, time, trip participant skill level, etc.)
- Identify when to prevent a participant from participating due to safety concerns
- Demonstrate navigation skills required for trips (GPS, topos, trip notes)
- Practice and enforce general cliff safety, including being connected to safety within two body lengths distance from the cliff edge, helmet use, and calls such as “rock” and “rope”
- Understands and implements Leave No Trace principles
- Consistently check on your participants throughout the day, ensuring they are all hydrated, well fed, feel safe, and comfortable
- Is comfortable engaging with trip participants and fellow trip leader and encourages a safe, inclusive environment

# Bouldering Skills

## The skills required to run a bouldering trip -

<https://unswoc.org/wordpress/petzl-access-book-6-bouldering/>

### Self Sufficiency:

- Is self-sufficient on a trip, not requiring any guidance in safe and effective movement at the crag, and management of self including sun, eating and drinking, and management of gear.
- Consistently demonstrates good crag etiquette - <https://unswoc.org/wordpress/safety/sustainability/>
- Consistently spots effectively

### Group Management:

- Select appropriate crag for the groups ability levels and encourage participants to climb suitable climbs
- Encourages safe and inclusive environment
- Understand and teach safe storage of group gear; away from the fall zone and not in the way of other climbers
- Understand and teach the importance of not walking below other climbers
- Understand and teach the importance of ensuring your chosen route does not cross another climber's route
- Understand and teach the importance of picking up and placing pads to move them rather than dragging them- protect the pads and the ground

### Falling:

- Understand and teach the importance of visualizing the route before climbing to anticipate falls
- Understand and teach the importance of knowing how to get back down before starting to climb - opt for down climbing or topping out
- Understand and teach safe falling:
  - Fall aiming for the centre of the landing zone
  - During the fall limit any unnecessary movements in order to protect the spotter
  - Break the fall with your legs, then butt, and back. Tuck in your arms
  - If necessary, roll. Slap your arms against the ground once you start to roll to minimise the chance of rolling off the mat
  - Do not absorb the fall with your back or land with your arms straight behind you

### Spotting:

- Understand and teach safe spotting:
  - Adapt technique to climb height, climbers weight and hazards
  - Locate safe landing zone, guide the falling climber to it
  - Have good technique: Legs spread, knees and arms bent, hands at the climbers hip level is possible

- Use multiple spotters if the situation demands
- Understand and teach effective bouldering pad placement:
  - Consider where the climber will fall
  - Cover hazards (roots, rocks, etc)
  - Use multiple pads as necessary next to each other or stacking vertically as the situation demands
  - Move mats as the climber moves to maintain maximum protection for the climber, where possible this should be done by someone other than the main spotter

# General Ropework Skills

## Skills common to both ropework sports

### Level 1

- Identify common mistakes in relation to participant harnesses, helmets and knots, including correct sizing of harness and helmets, wrong knots, and not double threading buckles
- Demonstrate and inspect knots including , Figure Eight rethreaded, Figure Eight on a bight
- Demonstrate and inspect a Munter Hitch and Clove Hitch
- Demonstrate and inspect a Stopper Knot/Barrel Knot
- Identify static and dynamic ropes, and when to use each
- Coil a rope neatly with a suitable girth finish
- Explain the uses of different rope diameters (accessory, prusik, climbing, canyoning and caving ropes)
- Practice the maintenance and storage of ropes including not standing on ropes and storing in temperature controlled, dry, dark, and non-chemical environments
- Identify unsafe/safe ropes with the pinch test, observing excessive sheath abrasion, and by seeing the core

### Level 2

- Demonstrate and inspect a Double Fisherman's Bend, Tape/Water Knot, and European Death Knot
- Demonstrate and inspect an Alpine Butterfly and its use on isolating a section of rope
- Understand the kernmantle construction of a rope

# Canyoning Level 1 Skills

## **Skills for a trip leader to contribute constructively to a canyoning trip - self sufficient and can run a simple anchor start to finish.**

### Self Sufficiency:

- Is self-sufficient on a trip, not requiring any guidance in management of self including sun, eating and drinking, and management of gear
- Demonstrate self-rescue
  - Can self rescue from a jammed descender by tying a prusik above a jammed abseil device and stand up on it to take weight off the descender and unjamming it, then continue the abseil
  - Can self rescue from a jammed prussic by leg wrapping rope to transfer the weight to the descender releasing the prussic
- Understand and practice whistle, verbal and hand signals for communication in abseiling and canyoning
- Demonstrate rope management rigging with a rope flaked into a bag
- Demonstrate tying off a simple 8 descender (and your descender if they are different)
- Demonstrate and understand the use of a third hand above and below the abseil device, and the use cases of each and understand the associated hazards
- Demonstrates 3 rope grabbing methods: Klemheist, French, Classic and understands their uses.

### Navigate the Canyon safely:

- Competently navigates canyon safely and effectively
- Demonstrate appropriate jumping techniques into water (arms across chest, knees bend, L sits)
- Does not encourage jumping
- Has an awareness of weather considerations, is conservative on weather decision making

### Manage Trip Participants:

- Competent in managing participants on trips
- Encourages safe and inclusive environment
- Inspect participants, loading device to abseil, attaching to safety, ABCDEF and weighing abseil strand checks
- Practice and inspect loading up on Eights and Modified Eights
- Understand the importance and demonstrate correct method of bottom belay
- Give canyon movement briefing and cliff edge safety brief

### Rigging & Ropework:

- Inspect and assess the safety of anchors (discolouration of tape, stability and strength of trees, abrasion of tape, strength of mallions, cracking and fissures surrounding bolts, inspect and identify water knot, double fishermans)
- Inspect the rigging of other trip leaders e.g. top to bottom check
- Demonstrate the rigging of single strand techniques including releasable abseils with tape and bolt anchors, and the applications of each (Eight block and Biner Block)
- Demonstrate the lowering of appropriate loads on a releasable setups

- Demonstrate setting **unweighted** rope length as both an anchor manager and first person down (between abseilers)
- Understand the importance of end knots, including appropriate knots and when to use them
- Identify potential hazards at anchors and on pitches (sharp edges, approach to anchor, overhanging abseil)
- Identify a safe abseiling line for both people and rope and know when to ask for help managing.

Water Awareness:

- Identify a drowning participant (thrashing/head dropping below water)
- Understand the importance of self-preservation in aquatic rescue (Throw bags, Buoyant object rescue)
- Demonstrate indirect rescue (bag/rope throw)

# Canyoning Level 2 Skills

**The minimum skills required by at least one trip leader on the trip for the trip to go ahead.**

Self Sufficiency:

- Demonstrate a high degree of confidence and competence in all L1 skills (has the ability to teach them)

Navigate the Canyon safely:

- Make decisions about suitability of no belay
- **Identify to avoid** aquatic hazards such as boils, hydraulics, siphons, sieves
- Knows the limits of one's skill and can identify canyons and conditions they should **NOT** run trips in (weather, water levels etc)

Manage Trip Participants:

- Competent AND Confident in managing participants on trips
- Demonstrate the setting up and use of top belay
- Identify when jumps are appropriate, including identifying: appropriate landings, take-off points, depths and heights

Rigging & Ropework:

- Demonstrate rigging using an MMO and when its use is more suitable than an 8 block
- Demonstrate ascending ropes ensuring two points of contact with the rope
- Demonstrate lowering past a knot with an MMO or Eight block
- Replacement of tape anchors and malleon/quicklinks
- Demonstrate abseiling past knots in free-hanging abseil
- Demonstrate the lowering of appropriate loads on a releasable setups, **including how to retie when loaded**
- Demonstrate setting **weighted** rope length as both an anchor manager and first person down (lowering)
- Choose an abseiling line in **complex** conditions, considering flow, swing of the abseiler, risk to the rope etc
- Can Identify things which can damage the rope and the solutions to minimise the risk of this such as bleeding the rope or applying some kind of rope protection, e.g. foot, bag, etc

## A selection of additional skills the authors recommend...

- Understand and identify rope materials and their uses (nylon, polyester, dyneema, technora)
- Demonstrate meat anchors and know how to safely use them
- Practice with emergency descenders (Super munter, biner brake bar)
- Demonstrate the rigging of double strand techniques for abseils with tape and bolt anchors
- Demonstrate rescue and traverse techniques such as tensioned line traverse and supported river crossing
- Understand the importance of self-preservation in aquatic rescue (Throw bags, Buoyant object rescue)
- Demonstrate the setup and retrieval of retrievable traverse lines (Self belay and Munter belay)
- Demonstrate setups for hauling (2:1 (Counterweight), 3:1, 4:1 (Pig Rig Haul), Complex hauling)
- Understand and implement progress capture devices on hauling setups (Microtraxion, tibloc, prussiks)
- Understand the importance of efficiency on mechanical advantage (Biners vs Pulleys)
- Demonstrate the conversion to a haul (using appropriate loads) starting from releasable setup and biner block setup.
- Demonstrate ascending past knots in free-hanging abseil
- Demonstrate direct rescue (defensive swimming position)

# Climbing Level 1 Skills

**Skills for a trip leader to contribute constructively to a climbing trip - self sufficient and can run set up a simple sport climb start to finish.**

<https://unswoc.org/wordpress/petzl-access-book-5-sport-climbing/>

## Self Sufficiency:

- Is self-sufficient on a trip, not requiring any guidance in safe and effective movement at the crag, and management of self including sun, eating and drinking, and management of gear.
- Understand and practice climbing calls such as 'TAKE!', 'SLACK!', 'IN HARD!', 'LOWER!'
- Demonstrate tying off a belay device (ATC or Gri Gri)
- Consistently demonstrates good lead belay technique and etiquette (avoids distractions etc)
- Consistently demonstrates genuine partner checks
- Consistently demonstrates good crag etiquette - <https://unswoc.org/wordpress/safety/sustainability/>
- Demonstrate effective rope management, flaking then climbing/belaying with a rope in a rope bag/tarp
- Understands own limits and communicates with other trip leader to choose paring/crag suitable crag for the abilities of the group

## Manage Trip Participants:

- Competent in managing participants on trips including edge management
- Encourages safe and inclusive environment
- Teach the 5 step belaying process with an ATC or GriGri
- Teach partner checks and ensures that all trip participants undertakes them before every climb - Check the knot, check the belay device, check you're on the same rope

## Climbing Skills:

- Teach and identify mistakes when lead belaying with an ATC or GriGri (or similar) including avoiding tunnelling, keeping hand on the brake strand at all times, correctly giving slack, keeping fingers off the cam and hands below the device
- Understand and teach the safe clipping (stick clip high first bolt, avoiding z-clipping and back-clipping, when to clip high or clip at waist height)
- Understand and teach the correct technique for clipping a quickdraw to a carrot bolt and fixed hanger with each hand and gate combination
- Understand and teach the effects of rope drag
- Understand and teach the importance of avoiding foot faults when lead climbing (not having leg/foot between wall and rope, must be on outside)
- Understand and teach the importance of correct quickdraw orientation (spine facing direction of climb and rope in dogbone stiff side, loose side to bolt)
- Understand and teach the cleaning of a climb from double bolts ensuring two points of contact at all times
- Understand and teach spotting a climber when they are not yet on belay

#### Rope Work:

- Understand and be able to identify rope types and their uses (single, double, half)
- Understand the importance of end knots, including appropriate knots and when to use them
- Understand fall factors and its impact on rope longevity
- Set up and inspect a top rope setup with a quad anchor ensuring screws on gates are facing down, gates are opposite and opposed, locking carabiners are used instead of quickdraws, and that the anchor is redundant and load is distributed
- Identify potential hazards to the rope at anchors and on climbs (sharp edges, Ironstone knives etc), knows to ask for assistance with rope protection

## Climbing Level 2 Skills

**The minimum skills required by at least one trip leader on the trip for the trip to go ahead.**

#### Self Sufficiency:

- Demonstrate a high degree of confidence and competence in all L1 skills (has the ability to teach them)

#### Manage Trip Participants:

- Knows the limits of one's skill and can identify crags and conditions they should **NOT** run trips in (weather, difficulty levels etc)

#### Climbing Skills:

- Demonstrate ascending of ropes ensuring two point of contact with rope
- Demonstrate bailing off a single bolt (Rethreading for eye bolts, and a using a mallion/quicklinks or spare carabiner for carrot plates to lower off)
- Demonstrate cleaning a roof route
- Demonstrate transferring a belay.

#### Rope Work:

- Inspect and assess the safety of anchors, including the replacement of tape anchors (discolouration of tape, stability and strength of trees, abrasion of tape, strength of mallions, cracking and fissures surrounding bolts, replacing tape anchors)
- Understand and inspect different bolts such as U-bolts, carrot bolts with bolt plates, expansion bolts.
- Can identify, manage and / or mitigate situations where excess damage to the rope may occur, such as sharp edges, natural hazardous rock features, or loose boulders.

# Rap-in Crag Additional Skills

## E.g. Point Perp, Linked Reservoir Dogs

- Inspect the rigging of other trip leaders, participants loading device to abseil, attaching to safety, ABCDE and weighing abseil strand checks
- Knows to use a static rope for abseiling
- Choose an abseiling line considering factors such as: swing of the abseiler, risk to the rope etc.
- Can Identify things which can damage the rope and the solutions to minimise the risk of this such as bleeding the rope or applying some kind of rope protection, e.g. foot.
- Understand and teach verbal signals for communication in abseiling
- Demonstrate setting up a top belay with an ATC Guide and GriGri, and understand the importance of redundancy at a belay
- Demonstrate the lowering of a top belay setup with an ATC Guide and GriGri
- Practice and inspect the loading up on different descender categories (GriGri, tubular devices)
- Understand the importance and demonstrate setting up of belays (top, bottom and third hand)
- Demonstrate and understand the use of a third hand below the abseil device and how to self rescue should something jam:
  - Can self rescue from a jammed descender by tying a prusik above a jammed abseil device and stand up on it to take weight off the descender and unjamming it, then continue the abseil
  - Can self rescue from a jammed prussic by leg wrapping rope to transfer the weight to the descender releasing the prussic, then continue the abseil
- Demonstrate the rigging of a releasable abseil (e.g. MMO, Eight bloc, Gi-Gi/ATC)
- Demonstrate the lowering of appropriate loads on a releasable abseil setups

# Trad Climbing Additional Skills

- Understand the importance of SERENE principles when building and assessing trad anchors
- Identify and build suitable natural anchors including trees, chicken heads, etc.
- Demonstrate and understand the correct use of alpine draws and how to make them
- Identify good and poor placements of active and passive trad gear (Cams, Nuts, Hexes)
- Understand the importance of rope drag and its effect on loads placed on trad pieces during a fall
- Understand the importance of extending pieces in preventing “walking” of trad protection
- Understand the predicted loads placed on trad pieces during a fall, and the importance of correct direction of pull on trad pieces
- Understand the importance of checking and resetting trad pieces when seconding a climb
- Can place gear effectively with suitable spacing
- Understands the impact of gear placement on the second when traversing

## Multi Pitch In Additional Skills

- Read and appreciate track notes, climb considerations, climb commitment etc
- Understanding and applying common sense when choosing multi pitches, considering approaches, weather patterns, gear selection and quantities, hydration, nutrition, and on the day queuing of that climb. Making smart and appropriate decisions is a baseline for multi pitching. If in doubt, don't go.
- Consider if to use a static rope for abseiling
- Choose an abseiling line considering factors such as: swing of the abseiler, risk to the rope etc.
- Can identify things which can damage the rope on an abseil and the solutions to minimise the risk of this such as bleeding the rope or applying some kind of rope protection, e.g. foot.
- Build different anchor configurations ensuring they follow the SERENE principle including self-equalising (quad anchor, sliding x) and isolated anchors
  - List appropriate anchors for multis that the club approves of?
    - Quad
    - Sliding x
    - Girth hitched/clove hitched carabiner
    - Overhand/eight on bight in sling (BFK)
- Inspect the rigging of other trip leaders, participants loading device to abseil, attaching to safety, ABCDE and weighing abseil strand checks
- Demonstrate good rope management, including coiling ropes at hanging belays
- Make decisions on when to continue climbing or bail depending on environmental, physical and psychological factors
- Understand and teach verbal signals for communication in abseiling
- Demonstrate setting up a top belay with an ATC Guide and GriGri, and understand the importance of redundancy at a belay
- Demonstrate the lowering of a top belay setup with an ATC Guide and GriGri
- Practice and inspect the loading up on different descender categories (GriGri, tubular devices)
- Understand the importance and demonstrate setting up of belays for abseiling (top, bottom and third hand)
- Demonstrate and understand the use of a third hand below the abseil device and how to self rescue should something jam:
  - Can self rescue from a jammed descender by tying a prusik above a jammed abseil device and stand up on it to take weight of the descender and unjamming it, then continue the abseil
  - Can self rescue from a jammed prussic by leg wrapping rope to transfer the weight to the descender releasing the prussic, then continue the abseil
- Demonstrate the rigging of a releasable abseil (e.g. MMO, Eight bloc, Gi-Gi/ATC)
- Demonstrate the lowering of appropriate loads on a releasable abseil setups
- Demonstrate ascending past knots in a free-hanging abseil
- Demonstrate abseiling past knots in a free-hanging abseil

# Caving Level 1 Skills

- Confident and competent in managing participants on trips
- Understand the importance of cave preservation
- Read and interpret caving maps
- Identify foul air using a lighter, and identify ventilating and non-ventilating cave structures
- Understand and be able to identify rope materials and their uses (Nylon, polyester, dyneema, technora)
- Inspect and assess the safety of anchors, including the replacement of anchors (discolouration of tape, stability and strength of trees, abrasion of tape, strength of mallions, cracking and fissures surrounding bolts, replacing tape anchors)
- Demonstrate the rigging of static and releasable abseils with tape and bolt anchors, and the suitability of each in different situations (MMO, Eight block, Biner Block, Static Lines with figure eight, figure nine, and fusion knot)
- Inspect the rigging of other trip leaders, participants loading device to abseil, attaching to safety, ABCDE and weighing abseil strand checks
- Understand the importance of rope wear on edges, and the importance of using redirects, rebelays, and rope protection in minimising these effects
- Demonstrate tying and inspecting a Figure Nine, Double Figure Eight Loop (Bunny Ears), Fusion Knot, and Bowline
- Understand the importance of end knots, including appropriate knots and when to use them
- Understand and practice whistle, verbal and hand signals for communication in abseiling
- Understand the importance and demonstrate setting up of belays (top, bottom and third hand)
- Demonstrate three third hand techniques: Klemheist, French, Classic and understand their uses and associated hazards
- Demonstrate and understand the use of a prussik above and below the abseil device, and the use cases of each
- Practice and inspect the loading up on three different descender categories (Eights and Modified Eights, Tubular Devices, Inline Devices, caving descender (Petzl Stop, Rap Rack))
- Practice with emergency descenders (Super munter, biner brake bar)
- Demonstrate tying off a variety of abseiling devices
- Demonstrate adding friction to a variety of abseil devices
- Demonstrate ascending of ropes using prussiks ensuring two points of contact with rope
- Demonstrate ascending of ropes using mechanical ascenders ensuring two points of contact with rope
- Demonstrate crossing redirects and rebelays
- Understand and demonstrate the use, rigging, coiling and storing of cave ladders
- Understand and instruct on false floor and squeezing safety
- Demonstrate self-rescue and is self-sufficient on a trip

## Caving Level 2 Skills

- Demonstrate setups for hauling including 2:1 (Counterweight), 3:1, 4:1 (Pig Rig Haul), Complex hauling
- Understand the importance of efficiency on mechanical advantage, including biners vs pulleys
- Understand and implement progress capture devices on hauling setups, including Microtraxion, tibloc, prussiks
- Demonstrate the lowering of appropriate loads on a releasable setups, including how to retie when loaded
- Demonstrate the conversion to a haul (using appropriate loads) starting from static setups
- Demonstrate lowering past a knot with a releasable system
- Demonstrate abseiling past knots in free-hanging abseil
- Demonstrate tying redirects and rebelay
- Demonstrate the setup of traverse lines, including self belay, Munter belay
- Demonstrate croll to croll, pick off and counterbalance rescue techniques.