



American
Alpine Institute

The Spirit of Alpinism

www.AlpineInstitute.com

Info@AlpineInstitute.com

Administrative Office: 360-671-1505

Equipment Shop: 360-671-1570

Aid Climbing and Big Wall Techniques – Rocky Mountain National Park – Equipment List

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This equipment list has been developed specifically for the conditions you will experience in Rocky Mountain National Park during the summer season, with considerations for fall and spring climbing. The equipment you bring must function well in a wide variety of conditions. While each piece of gear you bring is crucial to your success and safety, what you leave out of your pack can benefit you in similar ways by lightening your load, allowing you to move quickly and efficiently over alpine terrain. Our aim is to have you bring only the essential gear for your mountain adventures.

Please understand that weather varies throughout the year and that this list is designed to outfit you for severe conditions that you may not actually experience during your course. Everything you bring should fit inside your backpack while still allowing space for a bear canister. Sleeping pads and water bottles may be the only exceptions to this, if they are positioned securely in water bottle pouches, and not clipped and swinging.

Temperatures and weather conditions in the Rockies are often conducive to great climbing conditions. Thunderstorms, however, are somewhat common and intense rainstorms often last a few hours in the afternoons. Nighttime low temperatures in the high peaks often drop to slightly above freezing in the summer, while daytime highs range anywhere from 35°F to 70°F. Mountain breezes are common and should be taken into consideration when planning your clothing system.

Please take the time to carefully prepare and understand your equipment. If possible, it is best to use it in the field beforehand, perhaps on a backpacking trip or training hike. Take the time to properly *label and identify* all personal gear items. Many items that climbers bring are almost identical. Your name on a garment tag or a piece of colored electrical tape is an easy way to label your gear; fingernail polish on hard goods is excellent. If using tape or colored markers, make sure your labeling method is durable and water resistant.

When preparing your equipment for travel to Colorado, please remember that *lighters and stove fuel are not allowed on aircraft*. Stoves that have been thoroughly cleaned can be put in your checked baggage.

Please contact the Equipment Shop at 360–671–1570 for assistance in selecting equipment for your course.

Rentals: Equipment items that may be available for rent are designated with an **(R)**. *If you will be needing any rental equipment please let your Program Coordinator know as soon as possible so that we can best guarantee rental availability for your course.*

Climbing Gear

All climbing gear items are required

If you have any questions about climbing gear needed for your particular course, please contact your Program Coordinator or guide.

Climbing Harness (R) – Should fit with a few layers of clothing on, have a belay loop and at least 4 gear loops.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	Rent <input type="checkbox"/>
Climbing Shoes – There are many different kinds, but make sure you have some you can stay all day and are comfortable. An all-around rock shoe that performs well (both in cracks and while edging) is recommended.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Carabiners – At least 4locking and 4 non-locking carabiners. 2 should be large, pear shaped (or MÜNTER) locking carabiners.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Nylon cord: A 4 foot length of 6mm nylon cord. Easily found at most gear shops. Cord of a smaller or larger diameter will not work.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Cordellete: Bring two. 18–20 feet lengths of 7mm cord.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Climbing Helmet (R) – Kayak or bicycle helmets are not acceptable. Must be a UIAA rated helmet in good condition.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	Rent <input type="checkbox"/>
Chalk Bag and Chalk	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Belay Device and Large Locking Carabiner – Bring an autoblocking device like the Petzl Reverso and Black Diamond ATC–Guide. You should also have a Petzl Gri–Gri or Trango Cinch.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reverso or Black Diamond ATC – If you have a Petzl Gri–Gri or Trango Synch bring this as well.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	
Rock Climbing Rack – This generally includes an assortment of wired nuts, cams, hexes, nut tool etc. Bring what you have, if you don't own any trad gear, we will provide this for you during the course.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>	

Aid Climbing Gear

The more personal gear you have, the better. Please bring any and all aid climbing equipment that you own. We provide this equipment if needed; please let us know ahead of time.

Ascenders – Mechanical ascenders with handles. The Petzl “Ascension” is preferred over the Black Diamond “nForce”.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
Daisy Chains (2) – There are many different types and models and all have their pro’s and con’s. Bring a pair of the same model in different colors.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
Aiders (or eitrers) (2) – Again, a pair of the same model in different colors is better. Get a five step ladder. Ladder–style aiders are better for sustained wall climbing. Our favorite is the Yates “Speed Wall” but there are many appropriate models.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
Fifi hook – Bring one.	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>

Clothing & Footwear

Base Layer Top – This will be your base layer and should be “lightweight” or “silk weight” synthetic or wool. No cotton. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 5–8oz/140–225 grams • Materials: Synthetic, wool • Example: Patagonia Capilene 2 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
Base Layer Bottom – <i>Optional. Not required July–September.</i> Look for the same features as your Base Layer Top. One pair is sufficient. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 5–8oz/140–225 grams • Materials: Synthetic, wool • Example: Patagonia Capilene 2 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Layer Top – <i>Optional. Not required July–September.</i> A lightweight, 200–weight fleece or wind shirt. A chest pocket is a helpful feature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 13–16oz / 368–454 grams • Materials: Nylon, micro weave fabrics, fleece, wind stopper • Examples: Patagonia Houdini, Outdoor Research Marvel, Patagonia R1 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
Soft Shell Jacket – A thin, light, stretchy, breathable, but wind and snow–resistant layer, that is comfortable to wear is ideal. This will be your “action layer” and the outer layer that you spend the most time in. <i>Hoods are optional but highly recommended.</i> Size your jacket to be trim fitting, but large enough to fit over your base and second layers. Light to moderate insulation/thickness is recommended. This layer will go over your base and insulation layers, but under your shell and parka. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 4–14oz/120–400 grams • Materials: Schoeller, Powerstretch, Powerdry, or similar • Examples: Patagonia Houdini, Outdoor Research Ferrosi, Rab Alpine and Scimitar 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Waterproof Shell Jacket – Choose the lightest, most packable, waterproof shell that will still get the job done. This will be your outermost layer and it needs to be waterproof, breathable, and durable. Two or three-ply Gore-tex or other waterproof breathable materials are required. Your shell should be sized to comfortably fit over your other base and mid-layers (minus your insulating layer).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 8 – 20oz / 227 – 566 grams • Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar • Examples: Rab Latok Alpine, Patagonia Jetstream, Marmot Precip 	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Mid-weight Insulation Jacket – <i>Not required July–September.</i> A warm puffy jacket with an optional hood. These come in many shapes, sizes, and temperature ratings, and are often called “belay jackets.” If you tend to get cold easily, opt for a slightly warmer and more substantial parka.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 20 – 40oz / 566 – 1133 grams • Fill Materials: Primaloft, down • Shell Materials: nylon, epic, eVent • Examples: Patagonia DAS Parka, Montbell Flatiron Parka 	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Undergarments – Many climbers wear them underneath their base layer. 1–2 pairs depending on personal preference for changing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials: Synthetic, wool 	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Hiking Pants – Look for synthetic lightweight hiking or climbing pants. This will be your outermost layer most of the time for your legs. A thigh pocket is a useful feature for storing small items. Your base layers need to fit under these pants comfortably. Your pants should not restrict your range of motion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 16 – 30oz / 450 – 850 grams • Materials: Schoeller, Powershield, Powerdry, or similar 	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Mid-weight Fleece/Schoeller/Leather Gloves – The most desirable glove is one that is comfortable and dexterous, so that it can be worn all day. It should be durable enough (leather palms) to handle ropes, ice axes, and a bit of rock scrambling. <i>Choose a mid-weight model for early/late season climbing (Oct–May).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 4–8oz/110–200grams • Materials: softshell, windstopper fleece, leather or similar • Note: From June–September, lightweight polypropylene gloves are recommended 	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Beanie Hat/Toque – Bring a warm hat that will fit under your climbing helmet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight: 2–4oz/56–112grams • Materials: fleece, wool, windstopper, or similar 	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Sun hat – A baseball cap or visor serves well. Models with a “tail” provide increased sun protection.</p>	<p>Own <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Buy <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p>Socks – Bring two complete changes. Adjust your sock system ahead of time to perfect your boot fit. No cotton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials: wool, synthetic 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>T-shirt – Light colors are best. This shirt can be synthetic or cotton. If you plan to hike in it, synthetic is better. A cotton shirt can be a nice break from the synthetics while at camp.</p>	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Shorts – Lightweight shorts are nice for warm days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight: 4–8oz/110–227grams • Materials: Nylon 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Approach Shoes/Comfortable Hiking Shoes – Comfortable, lightweight shoes to use on the approach to hikes and scrambling sections of climbs.</p>	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Post-Climbing Clothing – A clean set of clothing is an excellent item to leave in the vehicle to change into upon your return.</p>		

Camping Equipment

If you choose to camp you will need to come prepared with personal camping gear. We will not be able to rent you any on the spot. The Campground is a typical car camping type campground with pit toilets and no showers. During the busier times in the spring and fall the campground can fill up so please be prepared to make other arrangements. Campers should be aware that being camping in the desert in the Las Vegas area, 13 Mile included, offers very little in the way of shade and wind protection because of the lack of vegetation. When conditions are calm camping can be pleasant, if it is windy and or very hot the campground can be an uncomfortable place to be. If you drive your own car you may choose to lug along everything but the kitchen sink, i.e. Coleman lanterns, coolers, stoves, firewood, etc. However, if you are not bringing your own car you will be relying on someone else for storage space, so please keep your camping kit reasonably lightweight and compact.

<p>Tent – A lightweight, three-season, two-person tent is recommended. It should be able to withstand short, but intense rain storms. Single-wall models are lighter, but suffer from more condensation than heavier double wall models. Generally, your shelter should weigh no more than 3 lbs. per person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight: 3.5–5.5lbs / 1.6–2.5 kg 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Sleeping Bag – Rated to around 20°F from late June to mid-September. Down is preferred. To help keep your sleeping bag dry, bring an extra large garbage bag with you to line your sleeping bag stuff sack and use for storage in the tent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight: 16–42oz/453–1200 grams Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Sleeping Pad – Please bring a patch kit for inflatable pads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight: 8–20 oz / 225 – 565 grams Example: Thermarest Neo Air, Exped Down Mat 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Stove – Liquid fuel or canister stoves are acceptable. We'll likely pair up on stoves at the Rendezvous to save weight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples: MSR Whisperlite, Jetboil, MSR Reactor 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fuel – White gas or gas canister. 22oz of white gas or two 8oz canisters are usually sufficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel is available to purchase at the rendezvous for your course 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Pots – One 1.5 – 2 quart pot is enough for one person. Two people sharing a stove might want to bring two pots if their meals are significantly different. Bring a large thermal mug, spoon and bowl.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials: Titanium, aluminum 	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Lighter (2) – Note: lighters are no longer acceptable in checked baggage when flying.</p>	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Headlamp – Bring extra batteries.</p>	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Multi-tool – Bring one if you have one. Any multi-tool similar to a Leatherman is great. One can be shared amongst tent-mates.</p>	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Buy <input type="checkbox"/>

Optional Items

The items listed below are not required, but many are nice “luxury extras” that can make your course more enjoyable. With this in mind, remember that a few ounces here, and there, add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your course.

<p>Summit Pack – For multi-pitch climbing. 14 L to 25 L or 1300 to 1800 cubic inches.</p>
<p>Cragging Pack – 30 L to 60 L. Something that can carry all of your things for the day, plus some group gear.</p>
<p>Camera – We recommend a small point-and-shoot camera that can easily be carried in an outside pocket or small case outside your pack. If you can't comfortably and safely carry your camera outside your pack, even in bad weather, you'll miss the best photo opportunities. Though some climbers bring them, SLR cameras are not recommended because of weight and bulk. If bringing a digital camera, consider your battery needs.</p>
<p>Hydration – 3 liters of water capacity are the minimum. Hydration packs or bladders like the Camelback or Platypus with appropriate accessories are preferred. Water bottle work well too.</p>
<p>Lunch Food – Lightweight and high energy.</p>
<p>Sunscreen – With a protection factor of at least 16. For the fair an SPF of 20 is better.</p>
<p>Lip Protection – With a protection factor of at least 16. For the fair an SPF of 20 is better.</p>
<p>Wet Wipes – The mountain shower. For personal hygiene and general use.</p>

Bandana – A cotton bandana has many uses on the mountain.

Sunglasses

Ear Plugs – Defense against snoring and high winds in the area.

Buff – Buffs are a multifunctional neck gaiter that can substitute for a lightweight balaclava.

Sandals/Flip flop/Crocs – These are great for relaxing in camp in the evenings.

Personal Medical Kit – For sunburn, blisters, cuts, scrapes, etc.

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute provides clothing and equipment for purchase, rental gear, and advice. Shop staff members are great climbers themselves and deeply involved in evaluating and testing gear. They are considered by many outdoor gear manufacturers to be the most expert in the country. They thoroughly understand the needs of climbers who will be rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, or exploring the world on international expeditions.

Please consider our staff members part of your resource team in preparing for your trip. AAI Equipment Specialists are on hand to consult with you on specific gear needs, to answer questions on the latest equipment and innovations, and to make recommendations on best choices of clothing and equipment. They can assure that you are equipped with the best possible gear for your climbs. And if you have any difficulty determining if some particular items of clothing or equipment you already own will serve you well on a particular trip, they can help you answer that question.

Guides Choice International Field Testing

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute also administers AAI’s prestigious Guide’s Choice Award. Equipment and clothing that have been awarded the Guide’s Choice designation have proven to be the top items in their product category. The awards are made on the basis of excellence in design, performance, and durability demonstrated in rigorous international field tests carried out by the professional guides of the Institute. All of the products at the Equipment Shop and on the website have been field–tested, or they have been vetted and are in the process of being field–tested.

Call or E–mail the Equipment Shop for Advice or Gear

Please feel free to contact us and to let us help you get ready for your climbing trip. Your comfort and safety depend on being well–equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we’re here to help you prepare.

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