



**American
Alpine Institute**
The Spirit of Alpinism

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PNW Rock Climbing Equipment Checklist

The summertime course locations of Squamish, British Columbia and Leavenworth, Washington are located in the Pacific Northwest. Squamish is on the western side of the B.C. Coast Range and because of this location it enjoys a typical maritime climate of mild temperatures throughout the year with frequent precipitation in the winter and generally pleasant summers. Leavenworth is situated just to the east of the Cascade Crest and lie in the rain shadow of the mountains. They experience far less precipitation than the western side of the mountains. Daytime temperatures in these locations are typically 60°F - 90°F, while nighttime lows are around 40°F.

If you plan to camp during this course AND are flying to the area, please prepare your camping equipment for airport security. Stoves must be emptied and cleaned, then placed into your checked baggage. Lighters must be removed and purchased upon arrival. Liquid fuel bottles (e.g. MSR) are not allowed in checked baggage. If you drive, feel free to lug along everything but the kitchen sink, (i.e. lanterns, coolers, stoves, firewood, etc). However, if you are not bringing your own car and you will be relying on someone else for storage space, keep your camping kit reasonably lightweight and compact. Food can be purchased in nearby grocery stores before (or during) the course.

Please bring any traditional climbing equipment that you own. Using your own equipment will help familiarize you with its intricacies and increase your trust in that equipment. Be sure to mark your gear well; fingernail polish or colored electrical tape is ideal for this purpose.

At AAI we take equipment and its selection seriously. Our Equipment Services department is expertly staffed by climbers, skiers and guides. Additionally, we only carry products in our store have been thoroughly field tested and approved by our guides. This intensive process ensures that all equipment that you purchase from AAI is best suited to your course and future mountain adventures. Please contact us to select equipment for your course.

Equipment items that are available for rental are designated with an (R). Please contact the Equipment Shop at 360-671-1570 for assistance in selecting equipment for your course.

Clothing & Footwear

T-Shirt: Light colors are best. This shirt can be synthetic or cotton, though cotton is excellent for summer climbing due to its wicking properties. Long sleeved shirts are nice on cool days, while short sleeve shirts are great for when it's hot.

- Materials: Synthetic, cotton, blends.

Shorts: Lightweight shorts are nice for warm days. It is unlikely that you will need shorts between mid-November and mid-March in the Desert Southwest. However, you should bring them for all other courses throughout the year.

- Weight: 4 - 8oz / 110 - 227 grams

Climbing Pants: Sweat pants, Lycra, or other light comfortable pants that don't restrict movement. Softshell pants or synthetic dress pants also work.

Base Layer Top: Long Underwear. A "lightweight" or "silksweight" long sleeve shirt. These are used mainly in the evening or on colder days while climbing. This will be your primary layer on those days.

- Weight: 5 - 8 oz / 140 - 225 grams
- Materials: Synthetic, wool.

Base Layer Bottom: Long Underwear. These are used mainly on colder days climbing. They should fit comfortably under your climbing pants.

- Weight: 5 - 8 oz / 140 - 225 grams
- Materials: Synthetic, wool.

Undergarments: Most climbers wear them underneath their base layer.

Wind Shell Jacket: Lightweight water repellent nylon is recommended. This is often worn while climbing, so keep it light and simple. No waterproof coated nylon, please. If you cannot find a lightweight wind shell, a Gore-Tex rain jacket can be substituted, but remember, a jacket is heavier, bulkier and does not allow as good freedom of movement as a wind shell.

- Weight: 8 - 16 oz / 227 - 454 grams
- Materials: Nylon
- Examples: Patagonia Houdini, Outdoor Research Marvel

Comfortable Walking Shoes: Running shoes or lightweight approach shoes are preferred. Sandals, "Crocs," or flip-flops are not appropriate.

Socks: Bring one pair per day.

- Materials: wool, synthetic, cotton

Shell Jacket: In the event of rain, a lightweight shell jacket will help protect you from the elements. Your jacket should be sized to comfortably fit over your other layers. Your hood should fit over your climbing helmet.

- Weight: 8 - 20oz / 227 - 566 grams
- Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar

Shell Pants: Made of a waterproof/breathable material, your lightweight shell bottoms should have full or hip-length side zips. This garment should be extremely lightweight and packable. A zipper fly is a nice optional luxury.

- Weight: 8 - 16oz / 227 - 453 grams
- Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar

Light Insulating Layer: The goal for this piece is to add warmth to your clothing layering system. The weight and design of this piece will vary based on the other items of clothing that you are bringing. A fleece jacket or sweatshirt is an example of this layer.

Puffy / Belay Jacket: A warm insulated jacket is recommended for winter courses in Red Rock and Joshua Tree.

- Examples: Patagonia DAS Parka, Montbell Flatiron

Gloves: Lightweight fleece gloves work well in cold weather. Leather gloves are excellent for belaying.

- Materials: fleece, leather

Beanie Hat/Toque: Bring a thin, warm hat that will fit under your climbing helmet.

- Weight: 2 – 4oz / 56 – 112 grams
- Materials: fleece, wool, windstopper, or similar

Sun hat: A baseball cap or visor helps keep the sun off.

Climbing Equipment

Course participants are encouraged to bring their own traditional gear. However, if they do not have any, they will be able to use AAI equipment.

Climbing Harness: (R) For rock climbing, choose a harness with moderate padding and a belay loop. Make sure it fits your body when wearing your climbing clothing. Gear loops are a desirable feature.

- Examples: Black Diamond Blizzard, Petzl Adjama

Climbing Helmet: (R) Lightweight, well ventilated, and comfortable. Models with a plastic shell are more durable, but are heavier than all-foam models. Must be UIAA approved for climbing.

- Examples: Petzl Elios or Altios, Black Diamond Half Dome

Carabiners: Bring a minimum of two locking carabiners.

- Example: Petzl Attache screwgate

Autoblocking Belay Device: Bring an autoblocking style belay device designed for belaying multiple ropes simultaneously on multipitch climbs.

- Examples: Black Diamond ATC-Guide, Petzl Reverso 3

Chalk Bag and Chalk: (R) Optional but highly recommended.

Rock Shoes: (R) An all-around rock shoe that performs well on cracks and edges is recommended.

Athletic Tape: Optional. Bring one roll of 1 1/2 inch wide cloth athletic tape for taping hands for crack climbing. Available in athletic supply stores and climbing shops.

Other Essentials

Camera: We recommend a small point-and-shoot cameras that can easily be carried in an outside pocket or small case outside your pack. Though some climbers bring them, SLR cameras are not recommended because of weight and bulk. If bringing a digital camera, consider your battery needs.

Climbing Backpack: (R) Used to get your equipment to the climbing area. This daypack should carry comfortably and be sized to fit all of your equipment while hiking and climbing.

- Size Range: 28 – 35 liters / 1700 - 2100 cu in.
- Examples: Black Diamond Speed 30, Cilogear Worksack

Hydration: 3 liters of water capacity are the minimum. Hydration packs or bladders like the Camelback or Platypus with a hose are recommended. At least one water bottle, usually one-quart Nalgene type, is required. Other plastic bottles, similar in nature can work as well.

Lunch Food: Look for lightweight, high energy, and 'snackable' foods. Some days it is reasonable to take a lunch break, while on others it is not. Please call our administrative office for additional guidance in the food planning process.

Sunscreen: Bring a small container with an SPF 30 or greater. For the fair skinned, the higher the SPF the better.

Lip Protection: Bring one with the highest SPF available. Some models of chapstick have SPF15 or higher.

Headlamp: High output LED models are preferred over older halogen models. Flashlights are not acceptable.

- Examples: Petzl Tikka XP, Black Diamond Spot

Personal Medical Kit: Please include prescriptions at a minimum.

Sunglasses: Choose a model with UVA/UVB protection. Keeper strings like "Croakies" are useful to prevent dropping your glasses while climbing.

Passport: Required for all Squamish, British Columbia courses.

Optional Equipment

Personal Climbing Rack: Any cams, stoppers, hexes or other equipment that you own will be useful. If you don't have a climbing rack we will provide you with the equipment needed.

Camping Equipment

These items are only required if you will be camping during your course.

Tent: (R) A lightweight 3-season tent is recommended suitable.

Sleeping Pad: (R) Bring a comfortable sleeping pad – preferably a lightweight inflatable pad. Closed cell foam pads are suitable, but don't provide as much cushion. Please bring a patch kit for inflatable pads.

- Weight: 8-20 oz / 225 – 565 grams

Sleeping Bag: (R) Bring one that is rated to around 20-25°F -- lower if taking a winter course and you sleep "cold."

- Weight: 16 – 42 oz / 453 – 1200 grams
- Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D

Stove: (R) Any small backpacking stove will do. Guides will have extra MSR fuel bottles if you fly and need to borrow one. You will need to provide fuel of course.

Fuel: Fuel can be obtained at nearby outdoor stores once in the program area.

Pots: One 1½ - 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.

- Materials: Titanium, aluminum

Eating Utensils:

- Spoon: Bigger is better. Lexan is lighter, but metals spoons are more durable.
- Thermal mug: 16-20oz with a lid. Optional.
- Bowl: A lightweight Tupperware-type bowl is recommended. The new, ultra-light folding plastic contraptions are excellent. Avoid metal bowls.

Lighter: Bring two. Lighters are no longer acceptable in checked baggage when flying.

Food: There are numerous grocery stores nearby where one can obtain camping food.

Water Jug: For Joshua Tree only. Bring a large (2-5 gallon) water storage container to fill before entering the Park. Campgrounds do not have running water.

Personal Toiletries: Bring a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, etc.

Hand Sanitizer: Any alcohol based product for hand sanitizing work well.

Car Camping Clothes: Bring an outfit or two to make your evenings more comfortable in camp.