



American
Alpine Institute

The Spirit of Alpinism

www.alpineinstitute.com

info@alpineinstitute.com

Equipment Shop: 360-671-1570

Administrative Office: 360-671-1505

1515 12th st

Bellingham, WA 98225

AID CLIMBING AND BIG WALL TECHNIQUES

Index, WA

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The primary goal of any alpine climber should always be to carry as little as possible. What is left out of a backpack is often just as important as what is placed inside. Conditions in the mountains vary dramatically from season-to-season and sometimes even throughout the same day. This can make the process of preparing equipment for an alpine climb difficult. On the one hand, a climber wants to be light. But on the other, a climber wants to have everything he or she needs if there is a storm.

This list was designed for the “worst case scenario” trip with significant inclement weather. In serious conditions it’s not uncommon for a climber to need every piece of clothing and equipment on this list. However, if a program does not encounter significant weather, there may be items here that are not used. As you prepare for your trip, it’s important to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

On the first day of your program, an AAI guide will work with you to refine your mountain kit to ensure that you bring exactly what’s needed given the forecast. It is acceptable to bring too much clothing or equipment to your initial meeting. And it is acceptable to bring things that you have questions about. Extra equipment can always be left behind at the AAI shop.

The Cascade climbing season is defined as May 1st through October 1st. This list references Early, Mid, and Late-season conditions. These periods of the climbing season are roughly defined by the different types of weather and snow conditions you are likely to encounter:

- **Early-Season Conditions** (May 1st-July 1st): Overnight temperatures range from 15° to 40°F (-9-4°C). Daytime highs range from 35° to 70°F (1-21°C). Precipitation is likely in the early-season.
- **Mid-Season Conditions** (July 1st-September 1st): Temperatures range from 40 to 50°F (4-10°C) at night, with occasional dips down below freezing. Daytime temperatures often reach 70°F (21°C). And though mid-season tends to be dryer in the Cascades, the possibility of rain is still always there.
- **Late-Season Conditions** (September 1st-October 1st): September is a varied month. Temperatures begin to drop both during the day and at night. Late in the month, it is possible that you will encounter an increase in snow or rain.

Please be sure to check the forecast several days prior to your course to ensure that you are properly prepared.

PROVIDED EQUIPMENT: Climbing rope, anchors, additional aid equipment, solid waste bags

RENTALS: Equipment that is available for rent through the AAI Equipment Shop is designated with a “ Rent” check box. These items may be rented on the first morning of your course during your rendezvous. It is possible to reserve rentals ahead of time but due to an extensive inventory it is not necessary. Please call the shop if you have unusual sizing issues (either large or small), as those items are limited.

Underlined items in this form are hyperlinked to examples available in our Equipment Shop. Don't forget that AAI climbers receive a 15% discount off full-price items purchased through our gear shop!

Call or E-mail the Equipment Shop for Advice on 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.

Call: (360) 671-1570 Email: shop@AlpineInstitute.com
 Equipment Shop Website: www.Shop.AlpineInstitute.com

| Clothing | Packing Checklist |
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| <p>Beanie/Toque Wool or synthetic, must fit under helmet. Easily replaced with hooded layers after early-season.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Sun Hat Preferred to fit under helmet.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Buff/Neck Gaiter Look for one that is UPF rated. Brighter colors work better for warmer conditions and darker colors for colder conditions.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Sun Glasses</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Headlamp Bring extra batteries or if it has a rechargeable battery make sure and bring a charger. 200-350 Lumens is an ideal range.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Sports Bra Wool or synthetic, comfortable, active wear.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Base Layer Wool or synthetic shirt, long sleeves preferred, ideally a “sun hoody” with UPF 30+ sun protection.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Active Insulation Layer Lightweight “gridded fleece” or lightweight down or synthetic insulated jacket. Hood preferred.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |

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| <p>☆ Weight: 250g-350g ideal weight.</p> | |
| <p>Soft Shell Jacket or Windshirt A soft shell is a weather resistant, breathable, and stretchy freedom of movement piece. This piece is versatile in the sense of movement. It is often called an “action layer.” It is weather resistant, meaning it can put up with light showers and wind. Also if it gets wet it dries fairly quickly. This enables you to not have to stop and put on another piece when the wind picks up or a light shower happens. Because it is water resistant, and not waterproof, it also breathes fairly well. This enables you to move without overheating, so you don’t have to constantly stop to change out layers to regulate body temperature. They are also made of a stretchy material so there are no restrictions to your movement during activity. Put all those together and you have a pretty versatile layer, the Soft Shell. Hood preferred. ☆ Materials: Exolite, Matrix, Schoeller ☆ Windshirt: Patagonia Houdini or similar.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Insulation Jacket AKA the “puffy.” Down or Synthetic. This piece is worn in cold conditions or when not moving. Hood preferred. If choosing Down, water-resistant Down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the jacket gets wet. ☆ Weight: 350g-450g ideal weight.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Hard Shell Jacket Non-insulated jacket with a waterproof and breathable membrane. Three layer construction is recommended. It must have a hood, ideally a helmet compatible hood. When sizing make sure it can fit over other layers. ☆ Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Undergarments Wool or synthetic.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Base Layer Pant (aka “Long Johns”) Wool or synthetic. Bring one for early or late-season conditions, optional for mid-season conditions (depending on the weather).</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Hiking or Climbing 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> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Hard Shell Pant Non-insulated, waterproof and breathable membrane. Full side zips are recommended. When sizing make sure to it is able to fit over a base layer and soft shell pants. ☆ Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Socks Wool or synthetic socks that are over the ankle height. Focus on getting insulation from the boot and using a lighter weight sock, instead of using a heavy weight sock for warmth. Wearing a “silk-weight” liner sock beneath your hiking sock can reduce friction on the skin directly and mitigate blister development. Bringing 1-2 pairs is recommended for this 12 day course. Two pairs mainly used while climbing that can be switched out if one gets wet.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Approach Shoes</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |

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| <p>These will be used for approaches and some climbing. Look for approach shoes with “sticky rubber” on them as they will climb better. Waterproof approach shoes are not recommended. Size them to be snug and comfortable.</p> | |
| <p>Comfortable Pants or Shorts Comfortable cotton clothing that will be used in the front country and for car camping.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <h2>Climbing</h2> | Packing Checklist |
| <p>Harness Make sure the harness has a belay loop and gear loops. When sizing make sure it can fit over your clothing layers when you have multiple layers on.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Helmet Must be UIAA rated for climbing.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Rock Shoes Focus on comfort, so they can be worn all day. Avoid technical or aggressive rock shoes with a downturn. Avoid curled toes when sizing.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Chalk Bag and Chalk</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Cordellete Bring two. 18–20 foot lengths of 7mm cord. 5.5mm Tech cord acceptable</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>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.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Slings Bring one 48in.(120cm) and one 24in.(60cm) pre-sewn nylon sling. Slings must be UIAA rated for climbing.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Belay Device Bring an auto-blocking device that accepts two ropes like the Petzl Reverso or Black Diamond ATC Guide.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Carabiners Must be UIAA rated for climbing. - Four large pear shaped munter-style locking carabiners, minimum. - Five non-locking wire gate carabiners, minimum. *If you have more lockers and non-lockers, bring them.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Day Pack 25L to 35L is an ideal size. This will be used during rock climbing portions and can also be used as a summit pack.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Internal Frame Pack</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own |

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| <p>50L or more. Mountaineering specific packs instead of backpacking packs are a good way to shave weight. Should also have to ability to carry weight well (45 lbs+).</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Rappel Backup Sterling Hollow Block 13.5” or 4ft length of 6mm nylon accessory cord. Must be nylon, Dyneema has a lower melting point. This is used as a rappel backup, the Sterling Hollow Block is recommended for its heat resistant properties.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Belay Gloves Lightweight and breathable glove with a durable leather palm. They protect your hands from rope burn, pinching, and sharp elements.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Assisted Braking Device If you have a Petzl GriGri or similar assisted braking device bring it with you for front country climbing.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Nut Tool For removing gear from the rock.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Aid Equipment</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">The more personal gear you have, the better. Please bring any and all aid climbing equipment that you own. If you do not have equipment, then we can provide it.</p> | |
| <p>Ascenders Mechanical ascenders with handles.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Daisy Chains Bring two. There are many different types and models and all have their pro's and cons. Bring a pair of the same model in different colors. Preferably Nylon. Longer is better, around 140cm. Speed daisies not recommended.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Aiders Bring two. Again, a pair of the same but in different colors is better. Ladder-style with spreader bars are strongly recommended for sustained wall climbing, as are sewn ladders instead of adjustable ones.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Fifi Hook Bring one attached to a sewn loop instead of an adjustable one.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Camping</h2> | |
| <p>Tent 3 season tents can be used if the rain flies goes all the way to the ground on all sides. A “bathtub” floor for the inner tent is also recommended. This means that the inner tent isn’t all mesh but has water resistant floor material that scoops up from the floor for 4-12” before changing to mesh, like a bathtub. If there are any questions please consult our Equipment Shop to see if your tent is okay to use.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |

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| <p>Sleeping Bag Synthetic or Down. If you bring a synthetic bag bring one on the lower end of the temperature range since synthetic bags tend not to be as warm as Down. If you sleep cold it is recommended that you bring a warmer bag than required for the seasonal conditions. If choosing Down, water-resistant Down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the sleeping bag gets wet. -<u>Early-season</u>: 0°F to 20°F (-18°C to -6°C) -<u>Mid-season</u>: 20°F to 30°F (-6°C to -1°C) -<u>Late-season</u>: 15°F to 20°F (-10°C to -6°C)</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Compression Stuff Sack For your sleeping bag. If it is a Down bag, a waterproof compression sack is recommended.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Sleeping Pad One inflatable or closed cell foam pad.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Stove and Fuel Liquid fuel or canister stove. Fuel is available at AAI the morning of the course.</p> <p>☆ NOTE: Many people choose to share stoves, fuel and tents to decrease weight. However, some people prefer to camp in their own tents and use their own stoves. This can be determined on the morning of the first day of your program.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Pots Bring one pot. 0.5L to 1L</p> <p>☆ NOTE: If you have a complete stove system like the Jetboil or MSR Reactor and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you do not need to bring a pot.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Utensils Don't forget the official "most forgotten item ever;" the spoon, or spork.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Bowl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Early-season</u>: Bring a plastic bowl or mug, preferably with insulation. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mid or late-season</u>: Bring a plastic bowl, insulation is not necessary. <p>☆ NOTE: If you have a Jetboil or MSR Reactor type stove and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you don't need to bring a bowl. The same applies if you plan on only using commercially packaged dehydrated or freeze-dried meals.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Lighters Bring two. You will have the opportunity to buy them the morning of the course.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Hydration 3L capacity is recommended, though some people need more and some people need less.</p> <p>Some people bring a bladder and a hard sided bottle. The bottle is an important backup to the bladder if it gets punctured. A hard-sided bottle may also double as a mug for hot water, though not every bottle is designed to hold boiling water.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Water Purification</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |

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| <p>Water purification tablets are recommended. Pills that take an hour or less to purify are recommended. Steripens are an acceptable alternative to purification tablets. Do not bring a pump or gravity filter, glacial till clogs these and they become ineffective.</p> | |
| <p>Food You are responsible to bring your own food for the duration of the course. Please consult our meal planning page.</p> <p>You should arrive on the first morning of your course with at least four-days of backcountry food.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Other Essentials</h2> | |
| <p>Trekking Poles One is required, but two are highly recommended. These increase balance while wearing a heavy pack and making stream crossings, while also decreasing pressure on the knees during steep descents. For the early-season, your poles should have a snow basket.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent* |
| <p>Toothbrush and Toothpaste Travel size recommended.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Hand Sanitizer and/or Wet Wipes Required. Used after going to the bathroom and before eating. Wet wipes can be used for the “mountain shower.”</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Toilet Paper The provided solid waste bags have a small amount of toilet paper with them, but most people do not find this to be adequate. Estimate how much you’ll need for a program of this length and place that in a plastic zip lock bag. An extra zip lock bag can be helpful for pack-out of used paper.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Sunscreen SPF 30+, zinc based is preferred. Small travel size tubes are recommended so you can put them in a close by pocket for easy access.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Lip Balm Make sure it is SPF rated.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Personal First Aid Kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Band aids <input type="checkbox"/> Blister treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription drugs <input type="checkbox"/> Ibuprofen etc. <input type="checkbox"/> If you wear contacts make sure and have spares if you can't see without them. | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Repair Kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable sleeping pad patch kit <input type="checkbox"/> Duct tape (Can be wrapped around trekking poles or water bottle. Gorilla Tape tends to be the best brand for the mountains.) <input type="checkbox"/> Zip ties <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10ft of 3mm accessory cord <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Trash bags that are big enough to line the inside of your pack with. | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |

| <h2 style="text-align: center;">Other Optional Items</h2> <p>The items below are not required, although many are nice “luxury” items that can make your expedition more enjoyable. Remember that a few ounces here and there add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your expedition.</p> | <h3 style="text-align: center;">Packing Checklist</h3> |
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| <p>Rock Climbing Rack If you have it then bring it. Make sure and mark your gear so it doesn't get mixed up. Nail polish works well for marking, electrical tape tends to turn into trash. Bring any specialty or 'micro' traditional protection. Examples: Hooks, micro stoppers, brass nuts, balls nuts, offset cams or totem cams.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Gaia Navigation App Optional Smartphone App.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Pee Bottle Used at night or when the weather is poor so you don't have to get out of your tent.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Women's Specific Items</p> <p>Female Urination Device Pee funnel such as the GoGirl or Freshette. Many female guides prefer a rigid pee funnel.</p> <p>Click here for more info</p> <p>Menstruation Collection Cup There are many things to consider concerning backcountry menstruation.</p> <p>Click here for more info</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Entertainment Books, games, cards, music player, kindle, etc. For evenings or rainy days in the tent.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Portable Charging Device Phone charger, battery pack, or solar panel.</p> <p>☆ NOTE: Solar panels should only be used to charge battery packs. Battery packs should be used to charge devices. Inappropriate use of a solar panel could lead to the depletion of a device's power.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Ear Plugs For defense against snoring and high winds.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Insect Repellent Biting insects such as mosquitoes and blackflies can be prevalent during different times of the season depending upon conditions and location. This is a nice item to have just in case.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Camera Phone cameras or small point-and-shoot cameras are preferred. SLR cameras are not recommended due to their size and bulk.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |
| <p>Car Charger Consider bringing an extra battery pack as well, having a lot of people using car charger cables is difficult.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy |

