

# Rock Climbing (Sandy)

## *Standard Operating Procedure* Cataract Scout Park

*Version 1*

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## **Location**

The Sandy Rock Climbing site is located at Sandy Plateau on the left-hand side of the track after leaving the lookout on the way to Platypus Pool. To Get to the rock climbing site from sandy you will need to walk from the car turning point turn left and head past the Climbing anchors to the gentler slope walk to the bottom of the cliff and turn right and walk back to the climbing area.

## **Aims of the Rock Climbing Activity**

- To implement 'challenge by choice' by:
  - enabling participants to expand their comfort zones, take initiatives and stretch their limits. (Necessary information and details are provided so that all participants can make an informed decision whether to participate in the activity and to what extent.)
  - respecting each individual's limits, strengths and weaknesses so that no participant is 'forced' to do anything outside their wishes.
  - encouraging others no matter what their decision.
- To overcome the fear of heights through determination and communication.

## **Pre-Activity Checks**

- Check weather forecast as below.
- Complete usage log – insert tally mark on the correct date. Check for any previous comments regarding equipment and if there are any, ensure they have been addressed.
- Ensure all equipment is accounted for.
- Check all equipment before the activity begins to ensure that it is safe, clean and in working order.
- Check the activity site for hazards (fallen trees, branches, excessive leaves, snakes, etc.).
- Ensure **liability forms** have been signed and participants are present during the Essential Briefing.

## **Weather conditions appropriate**

- A BOM Weather check should be done first thing in the morning.
- Activity cannot be conducted during storms, heavy rain, lightning or heavy winds.
- Specific consideration must be given to:
  - Water on climbing surfaces making them slippery.
  - Mud/sand/softfall causing damage to equipment.
  - General health and wellbeing of the group (it is extremely important to consider the effects of the weather on the participants, not only on the infrastructure and equipment).

## **Medical**

- Obtain briefing from Supervising Adult/Teacher on particular medical needs for each group.
- Instructor must carry a first-aid kit at all times, located in the kitchen of the office.  
NB: Instructor must have current first-aid qualifications.

## **Supervision**

- 1 Qualified Activity Instructor
- 1 Assisting Activity Instructor
- 1 Supervising Adult/Teacher

## **Equipment**

- 6 Participant waist harnesses
- 6 Participant helmets
- 2 Instructor waist harnesses\*
- 2 Instructor helmets\*
- 2 climbing ropes
- 2 rigging ropes
- 8 Tri-lock carabiners
- 6 Screw gate carabiners
- 2 Belay devices
- 2 Belay strops
- 5 Prusiks

## **Activity Setup**

NB: Instructors must ensure that they are made 'safe' at the top of the cliff, by connecting to a bolt, before beginning to set up the rock climbing anchors and lines.

- Ensure that all of the following rock climbing equipment has been inspected and is in safe working order before use. If any equipment is unsafe to use, it must be reported to the Program Coordinator immediately and taken out of service to prevent anyone else using it:
  - Anchors – check for excess wear, alteration of original shape, surface cracks, sharp edges, burrs, corrosion or heat damage.
  - Belay device– check as for anchors and that the device is operating in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
  - Carabiners – check as for anchors and belay device.
  - Ropes/Belay slings – check, by 'flaking' the rope out, for abrasion, glossy or glazed areas, signs of melting, inconsistent diameter, discolouration, inconsistency in texture and stiffness.

NB: Both rock climb set-ups are the same. Directions below are to set up one rock climb. Repeat for the second one. (*See images...*)

- Tie a 'figure 8 on the bight' knot, and finish with a stopper, on each end of the rigging rope. Ensure there is little to no gap between the 2 knots .
- Connect the rigging rope, via a tri-lock carabiner, to the appropriate bolts at the top of the cliff. (for the 'left' climb, when looking over the edge, ensure that the rigging rope passes *around* the tree before being connected to the bolt).

*\*If an instructor uses their own personal gear, it must be in proper condition and maintained to the same equipment standards as Cataract Scout Park.*

- Tie two 'double figure 8' knots in the rigging rope to create an 'isolation loop' and two attachment points (image 1.1). Ensure that these are correctly equalized according to the climb.
- Connect 2 tri-lock carabiner, through the two attachment points ensuring the gates are back to back.
- The Focal point must be at least half a meter over the cliff edge to stop people toping out.
- Feed the climbing rope through the caribeanas so that both ends of the rope are touching the ground.
- Place a tarp between the anchor rope and the trees to provide protection to both the trees and the rope.
- Connect a belay stop to the appropriate ground anchor via a tri-lock carabiner.
- Connect the belay device, via a screwgate carabiner, to the loose end of the belay stop and thread correctly with the climbing rope. Tie a stopper knot in this end of the rope. Double check that the belay device is correctly threaded (image 1.2).
- Connect a screwgate carabiner to the same point of the belay stop as the belay device, for the belayers attachment. (image 1.2)
- Tie a 'single figure 8' knot in the end of the climbing rope that is closest to the cliff face.
- Repeat all of the above for the second climb set-up.
- Place all helmets and harnesses in a plastic box/bag on the 'safe' side of the boundary rope at the bottom of the rock climb.

## **IMAGES**

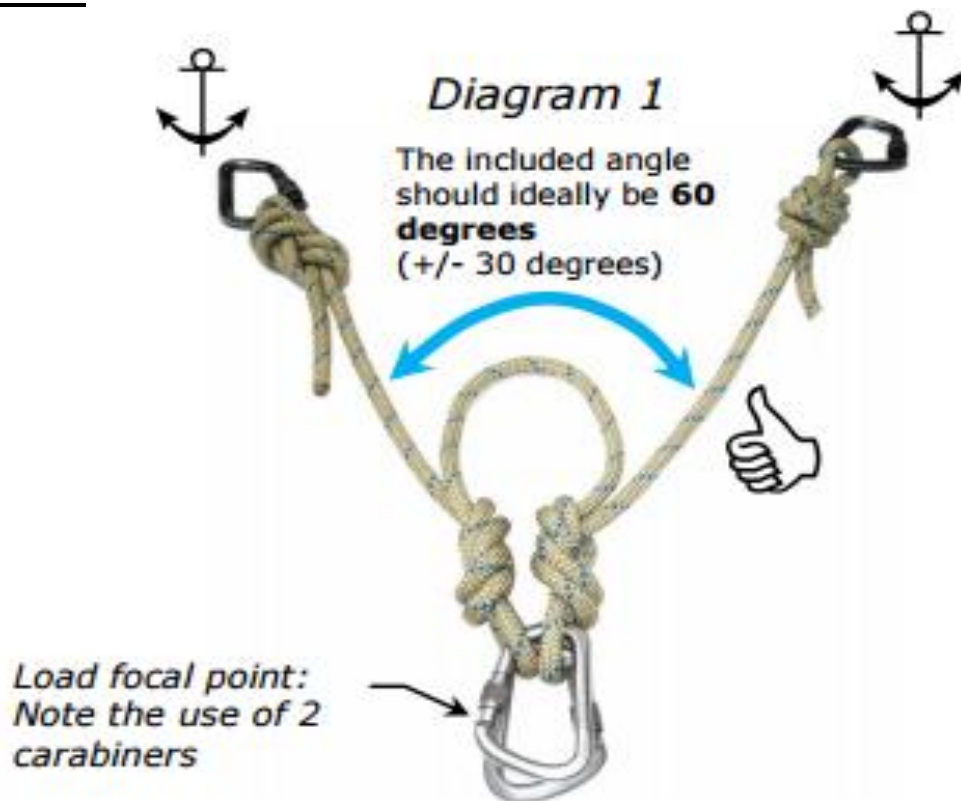


Image 1.1



Image 1.2

### **Roles of the Qualified and Assisting Activity Instructors**

- The Qualified Activity Instructor must be signed off on induction and competent in operating the Rock Climbing activity before taking responsibility for the session.
- The Assisting Activity Instructor must be signed off on induction and competent in operating the Rock Climbing activity before assisting for the session.
- The Qualified Activity Instructor must ensure all essential briefings have been conducted before the activity commences (see 'Essential Briefing' below).
- During the activity session the Qualified and Assisting Activity Instructors will need to:
  - Ensure that all participants are aware of their surroundings and the proximity of the cliffs before walking down the track down to the rock climbing site.
  - Ensure that all participants remain behind the boundary line and do not walk into the 'drop zone' area unless instructed to do so.
  - Ensure that all persons, including Instructors, are wearing a helmet whilst in the 'drop zone' or belaying.
  - Call over the climbing participant and tie them onto the green static rope with a 'rethreaded figure 8 knot' through the belay loop of their harness.
  - Ensure that the belayer and back up belayer is ready and that all safety calls are completed.
  - Watch as each participant climbs the wall and ensure that the belayer is belaying correctly.
  - Untie the climbing participant once they have returned to the ground.

## **Essential Briefing**

**Supervising Adult /Teacher's Role:**

- A Supervising Adult/Teacher works in conjunction with a Qualified Activity Instructor and does not assume responsibility for technical aspects of the activity.
- Supervising Adults/Teachers are responsible for supervising participants waiting in the designated area and exercise a duty of care to all participants.
- The Supervising Adult/Teacher is expected to:
  - Be a role model and exemplar for the participants and follow all safety rules.
  - Assist with the fitting of helmets and harnesses as necessary.
  - Supervise the participants on the ground during the activity.
  - Provide positive reinforcement and support for all levels of achievement.

**Note: If time allows for the Supervising Adult /Teacher to participate they should wait until the end of the session.**

## **Participant Briefing**

The following sets out all the essential points that must be explained before any participant is allowed to attempt the activity.

It is the responsibility of the Qualified Activity Instructor to ensure that all participants have fully understood the Essential Briefing before commencing the activity. It is the decision of the Instructors regarding whether or not a participant is ready to take part in the activity safely.

### ***General***

- Introduce yourself and the activity.
- Point out the boundaries as follows:
  - Do not step into the 'drop zone' until asked to do so by the Instructors.
  - Do not leave the open area without permission from the Instructors.
- Explain the 'aims' of the activity and what 'challenge by choice' means (see 'Aims' section of this document).
- Explain the type of activity and what it consists of, namely, a nine metre natural rock climbing wall.

### ***Helmet***

- Explain that all hats and hair clips etc. must be removed and long hair must be tied in a low pony tail at the base of the neck.
- Explain 'happy turtle': if helmet is ever put down, it must be placed upright, and not on its 'shell', to avoid damage to the helmet.
- Hold a helmet up to the participants and show them how to identify the front by the Edelrid brand name.
- Show them the rear adjustment strap and how to tighten/loosen the helmet as follows:
  - open the clip on the strap so the strap moves freely,
  - ensure that the strap remains threaded through the clip,
  - keep the clip open and hold strap in place whilst placing the helmet on your head,
  - pull the strap so it becomes tight on your head and then push the clip closed to secure it.
- Do a 'shake test': shake your head around or hold your head upside down to show the helmet can stay on even while the chin strap is not done up (the rear adjustment strap holds it on tight).
- Explain that there should be two fingers distance between their eyebrows and the lip of the helmet.
- Do the chin strap up and explain that, just like a bike helmet, participants should be able to run two fingers inside the strap from ear to ear to ensure that the helmet is neither too tight nor too loose and so the strap won't be able to pass over their chin.

## *Harness* (see image 2.1 and 2.2)

- Explain to the participants the type of harness they are wearing (waist harness).
- Demonstrate the correct fitting of the harness (see images below). Mention that the harness must be kept out of the dirt.
- Point out the key features of the waist harness (one waist loop, two leg loops and three buckles). Show them how to hold the harness so it's not tangled (three buckles pointing to the sky).
- Show them how to step into the harness (like a pair of shorts).
- Black harness loop must be at the level of their belly button, the waist loop above their hip bones.
- Tighten the **waist strap first**, then both leg loops.
- Show the participants how to check that it's tight enough using the paper rock method: Create a flat hand (paper) and slide it down the side of their harness, then make a fist (rock). If they can pull the fist back out of the harness without flattening their hand, then they will need to tighten the waist loop more.
- Tuck all extra straps away in the black elastic loops.



Image 2.1



Image 2.2

## *Climbing*

- Explain that the participants will be tied onto the rope by one of the Instructors.
- Explain the safety calls as follows:
  - Before climbing, the following calls must be performed to ensure the safety of all participants:
    - CLIMBER – “ON AND CHECKED”
    - BELAYER – “ON BELAY”
    - CLIMBER – “TAKE IN”.....“THAT’S ME”
    - BELAYER – “CLIMB WHEN READY”
- Explain and demonstrate how to recover from a fall, and the best technique for rock climbing, such as using their legs more than their arms and keeping their feet turned in.
- Explain and/or demonstrate how to descend the climbing wall.



## *Belaying*

NB: It is the Qualified Activity Instructor's decision whether or not the participants are adequate to belay each other. If not, the Instructors must do the belaying.

If the participants are deemed adequate, one Instructor climbs the wall, and the other explains and demonstrates the following:

- The main belayer will need a harness and a helmet and there will be two back up belayers who do not need any equipment.
- How to clip into the screw gate carabiner on the belay strop and ensure it is done up correctly.
- The correct stance for belaying and how to adjust the length of the belay strop if necessary.
- The three step belaying technique as follows:
  - Hold with both hands, as though holding bicycle handles, the white static rope that is hanging towards the ground next to the ATC.
  - Perform the safety calls before the climber commences to ascend the wall.
  - Pull up on the rope.
  - 'Lock off' the rope by pulling it down towards your knee
  - Slide your hands up the rope so they are next to the ATC and ready to pull more rope through again every time the rope becomes loose as the climber ascends the wall.
  - Emphasize that the 'lock off' position is the only safe position, and that the belayer must always be watching the climber and have both hands on the rope at all times.
- The backup belay
  - Hold 1 hand on the prussic and use the other hand to pull the rope through the prussic.
  - Always keep a small loop between you and the main belay so that they have room to move
  - What we do not want is a large loop or a straight line between you and the main belay
- How to lower the participant to the ground.

## *During the activity session*

- Instruct the first participants to put on a harness and helmet.
- Check all harnesses and helmets are fitted correctly before each participant climbs or belays.
- Continuously scan to check that all people in the drop zone are wearing helmets correctly.
- Tie in each climber and ensure all safety calls are performed.
- Watch each belayer for their first time to ensure they are belaying correctly.
- Continuously scan, and correct as necessary, all climbers and belayers to ensure the safety of all.

## **Rescue Procedure**

If you should need to escape from belay for any reason, follow the method below:

- Ensure that the climber knows what you are doing and ceases to climb.
- Tie off the climber's belay line by pulling a bight of the belay rope through the carabiner that is connected to the belay device, and securing the rope with three half hitches. Ensure you have a 30cm tail (bight of rope) once the half hitches have been tied.
- If for any reason you need to lift the participant, attach a prusik to the taught belay line and haul down on this. You may ask for assistance from the teacher or other participants if necessary. Ensure that the belay device takes up the slack with each haul.

**Item in belay device.**

- Ask supervising adult/teacher or assistant instructor to hold onto the dead rope to ensure the lock off is achieved.
- Doing a classic Prussic knot around the live rope (at least 3 wraps) (image 3.1 & 4.) and attach a carabiner
- Tie the tape into a sling using a tape knot (image 3.2) and then at the middle point tie an overhand knot attach middle loop to prussic carabiner and attach a carabiner to the each of the other loops (image 3.3).
- Ask 2 participants wearing harnesses to come forward and attach them to each loop with the carabiners. Ask them to sit into their harness.
- Attach a strop to one of the 2 volunteers and the other to the ground anchor and pull to tighten
- Ask teacher/adult or assistant instructor to release the rope and remove item from belay device

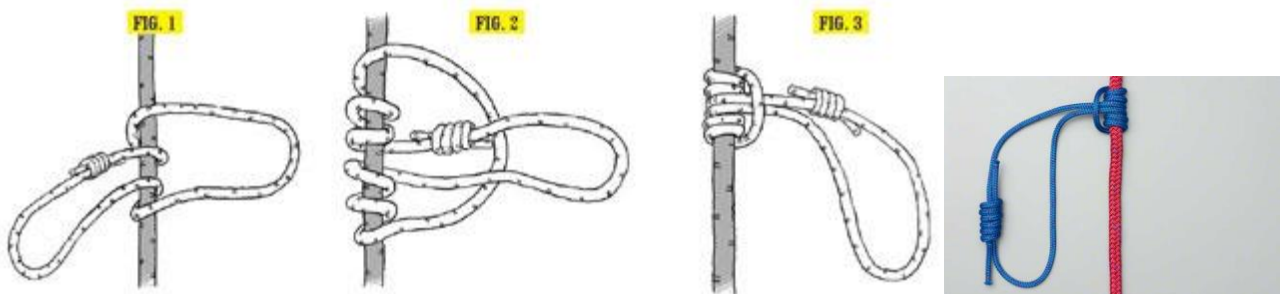


Image 3.1

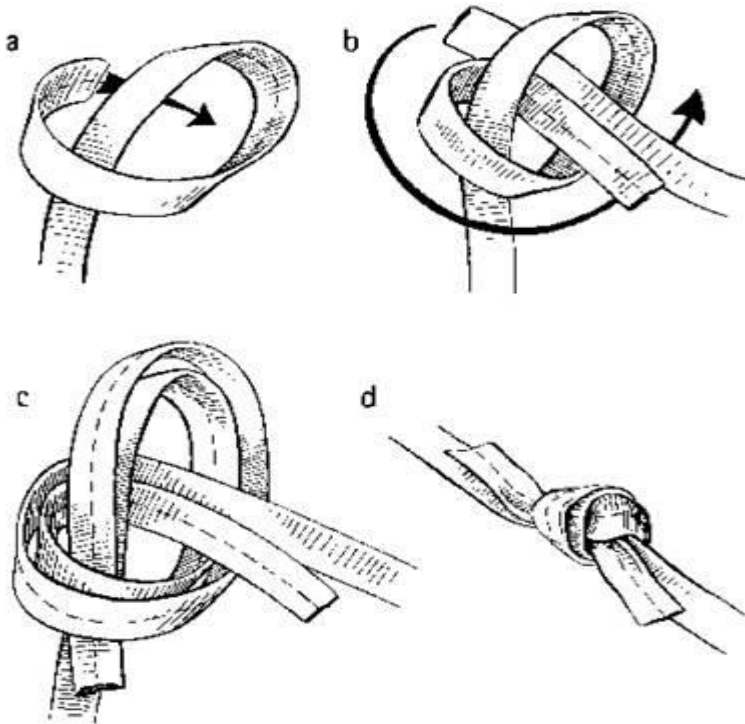


Image 3.2

To undo ask adult helper/teacher or assistant to hold rope in the lock off position and reverse the above.



Image 3.3

## Debriefing

As Activity Instructors we assist participants in understanding and realizing what they have achieved and how it can apply in everyday life. A debrief works best if the participants feel they can contribute most of the input and ideas themselves.

- Address 'aims' (see page one) and discuss the participants' successes and challenges.
- Discuss overcoming their fear of heights, their personal choices, and respect for other people's choices as to limits, strengths and weaknesses.
- What was their perception of rock climbing at the start ("where were you in your comfort zone")? What are their feelings towards it now ("has your comfort zone expanded")?
- Discuss the teamwork and trust elements of the activity and how it can apply in everyday life.

## Packing Up

### *On site*

- Participants should fully loosen the harnesses and place them back in the plastic box/bag, along with the helmets.
- Instructors should pack up the rock climbing ropes the same way as they would have set them up as above.
- Coil all ropes and place in plastic box/bag.
- Unclip all carabiners, pulleys and belay device from the belay strops and anchors, and place everything in the plastic box/bag.

### *Final pack up at Equipment Shed*

- Any issues/problems with any equipment should be noted on the tally sheet and explained as soon as possible to the Program Coordinator.
- Hang ropes and harnesses, and place helmets and hardware on the bench, in the Equipment Shed.
- If necessary, an Incident, Accident and Near Miss Report Form must be filled out (*located in the green instructor's folder or in the office*). Any completed forms must be handed to the Program Coordinator at the earliest convenience.

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and Signature)