



Climbing Wall Policy Handbook

These policies were developed from procedures described by the Professional Climbing Instructors Association (PCIA) and recommendations from the manufacturer of the CU Denver Climbing Wall, Eldorado Climbing Walls.

Daily Operations:

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Section 1: Patrons and Memberships

Patron requirements to climb

- A SWC membership is REQUIRED to climb. Waivers are linked to memberships.
 - Day pass members are permitted to use the wall on the day that their pass was purchased, but must undergo the Wall Orientation
 - Non-CUD students are permitted to climb as long as they have a day pass or wellness center membership.
- ID: All patrons coming to wall must scan in with their Lynx card on the ID reader
 - If they are not a CUD student, their account must be manually looked up in Fusion and granted access to the wall
- Any patron coming to the wall for the first time must be given a [Wall Orientation](#) by staff
 - Once an orientation has been completed, a **Basic Climbing** membership must be applied to the patron's account in Fusion.
 - Patrons that already have a Basic Climbing membership do not need another orientation

Patron requirements to check out equipment

- Shoes, chalk, and harnesses:
 - All patrons with a Basic Climbing membership may check these out
- ATC and locking carabiner:
 - Only patrons with Basic Climbing AND Top-Rope ATC Memberships or those with Lead Climbing
- GriGri and locking carabiner:



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- Only patrons with Basic Climbing AND Top-Rope ATC AND Top-Rope GriGri Memberships or those with Lead Climbing GriGri
- Lead Rope:
 - Only patrons with Basic Climbing AND Top-Rope ATC AND Lead Climbing Memberships

Types of Memberships

all memberships are valid for one year after being applied to an account

- **Basic Climbing:** applied to the account once a patron has undergone the Wall Orientation. This membership only lasts for 1 year. After 1 year, it must be renewed. If the patron has not frequented the wall in the semester prior to expiration, they will need to undergo the orientation again before renewal.
- **Top Rope ATC:** This membership is applied to a patron's account once they have completed an ATC belay test administered by an Outdoor Adventure Associate. The test must be given at least one day after the patron has learned to belay (i.e, you cannot test the same day you learn). Once passed, the belay test must be signed by the patron and associate, then stored in the belay test binder. A top-rope ATC membership will be applied to their account in Fusion. The patron may then check out aperture style (ATC) belay devices.
 - This membership may be revoked at any time by any OA associate if unsafe behavior is observed*
- **Top Rope GriGri:** The prerequisite for this membership is a Top Rope ATC membership. Only patrons with an ATC membership may be tested for a GriGri membership. Once passed, the belay test must be signed by the patron and associate, then stored in the belay test binder. A top-rope GriGri membership will be applied to their account in Fusion. The patron may then check out GriGri belay devices.
 - This membership may be revoked at any time by any OA associate if unsafe behavior is observed*
- **Lead Climbing ATC/GriGri:** The prerequisite for this membership is Top Rope ATC AND Top Rope GriGri memberships. The patron may choose to test with either an ATC or GriGri. Once passed, the patron may check out lead ropes and the belay device they tested with. Lead climbing tests are to be signed by the patron and OA associate then stored in the belay test binder.
 - This membership may be revoked at any time by any OA associate if unsafe behavior is observed*

Unsafe or poor behavior includes but is not limited to:



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- Incorrect belay technique (not using PBUS, hand off brake strand, too much slack, improper catch of falls, unlocked carabiner, incorrect belay device loading or usage, etc)
- Failure to perform necessary climber/belayer partner checks
- Failure to be aware of surroundings or interfere with other climbers (i.e climbing under or over other climbers)
- Not listening to the Associates or policies listed

Section 2: Bouldering Policies

General Bouldering Wall Rules

- The bouldering wall is open for climbing during Wellness Center open hours.
- No food or drink is permitted with the exception of water in closed containers.
- No loose chalk. All chalk is to be contained in a chalk bag.
- Climbing shoes or closed toed shoes are required
 - Climbing shoes must be removed before going to the bathroom
- Shoes and chalk are available to check out while bouldering. Patrons will be held accountable for lost/damaged equipment. Climbing Wall equipment is not to be used outside or removed from the Climbing Wall area.
- Patrons should remove rings, jewelry, and empty pockets before climbing
 - No loose clothing or jewelry permitted (scarves, necklaces)
- Refrain from foul language
- No rough play
- Shirts and pants/shorts are required. Any patron removing clothing will be asked to re-clothe or leave the wall.

Bouldering Technique Policies

- Only 3 people on the bouldering wall at a time
- No water bottles or phones are to be stored on the bouldering mat. They can be placed on the desk or the mat edge.
- Proper spotting is encouraged for bouldering. Ensure the fall zone is clear at all times.
- Down climbing rather than jumping down while bouldering is encouraged
- Hands may not go above the top of the bouldering wall.
- Remain aware of other climbers while walking around or climbing on the bouldering wall.
- Bouldering is permitted on the top-rope wall ONLY when:
 - The top rope wall is open
 - The patron has received confirmation from an Associate
 - There are no climbers actively being belayed in the area that the patron would like to boulder
 - The patron remains below the first clip



Section 3: Top-Rope Wall Policies

General Top-Rope Wall Rules

- The top-rope wall is only open during scheduled open hours. When not open, the area must be blocked off.
- No food or drink is permitted with the exception of water in closed containers.
- No loose chalk. All chalk is to be contained in a chalk bag.
- Climbing shoes or clean closed toed shoes are required
 - Climbing shoes must be removed before going to the bathroom
- Climbing equipment is available to check out while climbing. Patrons will be held accountable for lost/damaged equipment.
 - Patrons must fulfill requirements (see Section 1) to check out certain equipment
 - Returned climbing shoes must be sprayed with Lysol
 - Returned harness buckles must be completely loosened for next patron
- Patrons should remove rings, jewelry, and empty pockets before climbing
 - No loose clothing or jewelry permitted (scarves, necklaces)
- Refrain from foul language
- No rough play
- Shirts and pants/shorts are required. Any patron removing clothing will be asked to re-clothe or leave the wall.
- Belayers with long hair are REQUIRED to put hair in a ponytail or bun.

Top-Rope Climbing Policies

- To minimize the potential for hazardous swinging, climb straight up the route. Traversing may be done on the bouldering wall as well as the top rope wall when it is not busy.
- No swinging on the ropes
- No walking between a belayer and the wall. Always walk behind the belayer.
- Climbers should climb only on the routes associated with the rope they are tied into.
- Absolutely no belaying without passing a belay test.
- All harnesses must be double backed and worn based upon manufacturer specifications.
- Climbers must tie in with a figure-8 follow through knot with at least 6 inches of tail.
 - No finishing knots allowed for leaders
 - MUST be tied into the correct points. For a single hardpoint harness, this is the belay loop. For a double-hardpoint harness, these are the two hardpoints (NOT the belay loop).
- All climber/belayer partners must go through system checks with one another before climbing
 - Check one another's harness, belay system, stopper knot, tie in knot.



Section 4: Belaying

Belay Tests

- All belayers **MUST** pass a belay test prior to checking out belay devices or belaying climbers. The belay test consists of both a belaying and a climbing assessment
- Patrons may request a belay test at any time
- Belay tests may not be performed on the same day that a patron learned to belay (i.e immediately after an intro to top rope class).
- An ATC belay test must be passed first before testing with a GriGri
- Upon passing a test, a paper copy of the test must be signed by the patron and the Associate that administered the test, then stored alphabetically in the belay test binder.
- Lead tests must be performed with a partner

Belaying Policies

**All belayers must use CU belay devices and have passed a belay test*

- Use belay commands at all times (On Belay, Belay On, Climbing, Climb On, Slack, Tension, Up Rope, Falling, Take, Lower, Off Belay, and Belay is Off).
- The only acceptable belay technique is **PBUS**
 - Pull, Brake, Under, Slide
 - Any removal of the brake hand while belaying will result in immediate referral to Associates to re-test.
- Belayers must remain in the brake/lowering position at all times that the climber is at rest or not climbing.
- Belayers must maintain visual contact with their climber. Excessive slack is not permitted.
- The brake hand should not lose contact with the rope at any time.
- Slow and controlled two-handed lowering is required.
- A standing position is required during lead belaying.
- Perma-Draws (metal lead clips) should not be used for hand holds.

Lead Climbing and Belaying Policies

- No personal lead ropes, draws, or belay devices are permitted
- Helmets are encouraged
- Anchor is to be clipped in an opposite and opposing manner
- Backclips and z-clips must be immediately fixed
- Two hands on the brake strand to catch a fall
- Fingers should never be in the carabiner when clipping
- Rope should be clipped between hips and head. Climbers should announce when they are clipping to alert the belayer.
- Lead belayers must not have excessive slack (greater than a soft smile) in the system unless feeding out rope for clipping.



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- For weight differences greater than 50 pounds, the lead belayer must have a ground anchor.
 - The red sand-filled buoys can be used to weigh down the lead belayer.
 - An Associate may girth hitch a sling to their harness and connect it to the belayers belay loop with a locker to act as a ground anchor
 - Do not connect ground anchors to gear loops

Section 5: Routesetting

General Policies for all Setting:

Facility Usage

- Setting shifts are to be scheduled outside of facility events and climbing wall open hours as to not disrupt others
- The wall must be closed off prior to setting. This includes roping off the bouldering wall area when setting boulders.
- After setting or stripping routes, the mats must be mopped/vacuumed before reopening wall to public
- When setting is occurring, the climbing walls are not available for use.
- Setting occurs once monthly, alternating between the top rope and bouldering walls, or upon the discretion of staff.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Helmets: all people within the roped off setting area must have a helmet on
- Closed toed shoes are required
- Ear protection is encouraged
- Employees utilizing a drill are encouraged to wear safety glasses
- Personal harnesses or setting harnesses may be worn but UIAA certification and gear loops are required
 - Personal gear must be inspected before use for any wear or damage and can't be used if damage or wear is present

Section 6: Maintenance Schedules

Shoes & Harnesses: Everyday

- These are to be inspected before and after they are checked out to patrons
- Harnesses are inspected according to these guidelines: [How to inspect a harness - Google Docs](#)
- Shoes should be inspected for wear, especially on the inner edges and soles.
 - Shoes that need repair are to be set aside and the damaged gear report should be completed

Belay devices: visual inspection upon checkout/return, yearly function inspection



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Grigri_inspection_procedure.pdf

- Aperture devices are inspected for wear in the metal and keeper cord. Damaged devices must be immediately removed from use.
- Grigris are to be visually inspected for wear on the plate, cam action, and for handle condition and spring return
- Yearly Grigri inspection is to be follow the above procedure (Petzl guidelines)

Ropes: Monthly

- Inspected every month, mid-month.
- Worn ropes are to be replaced immediately
- All ropes are flipped monthly (switch belayers and climbers ends)

Anchor Points: Every Semester

Climbing Wall: every 2-3 years, or upon recommendation from previous inspection