

From Gym To Crag Ultimate Transition Guide



Why & How
With Detailed
Images



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BE SAFE WHILE
PUSHING YOUR LIMITS



Introduction: Mastering the Transition from Gym to Outdoor Climbing

Welcome, intrepid climber! If you're reading this, you're probably looking to take your climbing skills from the comfy confines of the gym to the unpredictable wilderness of the great outdoors.

Buckle up, because outdoor climbing is like gym climbing's wilder cousin who loves to party in the rain and occasionally bully you and hurl a rock your way.

This guide will walk you through what you need to know, from gear to ethics and keep you smiling as you scale new heights.



Introduction: Mastering the Transition from Gym to Outdoor Climbing

Here's what the gym doesn't fully prepare you for:

- Unpredictable Rock Faces: Outdoor routes feature varied rock textures and formations, requiring a different approach to route reading and climbing technique.
- Weather Variability: Weather conditions can change rapidly, affecting everything from grip to visibility.
- Natural Features: Climbing outdoors means dealing with natural obstacles like loose rock, varying rock types, and uneven surfaces.
- Self-Reliance: Outdoor climbing requires additional skills in setting anchors, managing gear, and making safety decisions.
- Crag Etiquette: Understanding and practicing proper crag etiquette is essential for a respectful and enjoyable climbing experience.

If you have the basics down i.e. top rope belaying, tying figure 8s, climbing communication, pre-flight safety checks, basic climbing movements & indoor lead climbing then you are ready to take the next step. Congratulations!



Chapter 1: Understanding the Differences

Gym vs. Outdoor Climbing

- **Controlled Environment:** In the gym, routes are like carefully crafted IKEA furniture—predetermined and reliable. Outdoors, it's like trying to assemble a bookshelf with a random assortment of lumber and tools. Expect varying rock types, weather that changes its mind, and the occasional surprise rock.
- **Physical and Mental Adjustments:** The gym gives you a controlled workout, while outdoor climbing tests your strength, endurance, and fortitude. It's like upgrading from a treadmill to a treadmill that occasionally throws in a few life or death obstacles.





Chapter 1: Understanding the Differences

The Road To Key Adjustments

- **Physical:** Prepare for climbing specific strength training that's less about posing in the mirror and more about lifting yourself up repeatedly. Your muscles will reward you (eventually) with many, many great memories of climbing adventures.
- **Mental:** This is THE BIGGEST key difference...Develop the mental fortitude of a Jedi warrior. Outdoor climbing requires quick thinking, mental toughness and adaptability. You might find yourself using the Force to figure out how to use that oddly shaped rock as a hold and to forge ahead on routes. Retreat sometimes is trickier than finishing the send. Gyms DO NOT prepare you for this major mental adjustment.



Keeping Your
Mind Strong

A green rectangular highway sign with rounded corners and a white border, mounted on a metal structure. The sign features the text "Keeping Your Mind Strong" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The background of the sign is a solid green color. The sign is set against a backdrop of a sunset or sunrise sky with soft, colorful clouds in shades of purple, pink, and orange. The metal structure of the sign is visible, showing beams and supports.



Chapter 1: Understanding the Differences

Safety and Risk Management

- **Risk Awareness:** Outdoor climbing involves natural hazards like loose rocks and surprise weather. It's like a game of Minesweeper, but with a lot more at stake.
- **Risk Management:** Embrace your inner boy scout. Be prepared with gear checks, safety protocols, and maybe a small army of well-wishers ready to call for help if needed. If you have a way of maintaining communication with the outside world DO IT





Chapter 2: Gear Up for the Outdoors

Essential Outdoor Climbing Gear

- Climbing Rope: Choose a **DYNAMIC** rope that's **LONGER** than you need and as reliable as your morning coffee. Whether you're going for a single, half, or twin rope, make sure it's up to the task of holding you up when your climbing skills have a minor hiccup.
- Harness: Pick a harness that fits better than your favorite pair of jeans. It should be comfy, supportive, and capable of holding up all your gear—and your hopes.





Chapter 2: Gear Up for the Outdoors

Essential Outdoor Climbing Gear

- **Climbing Shoes:** Your outdoor shoes should be tough enough to handle the rough stuff and fit snugly so you don't end up with blisters the size of grapefruits. Think of them as the ultimate fashion statement for your feet. If you plan on doing long or multi pitched routes, ditch the downturned toe bouldering slippers and get yourself some nice lace 'em ups.
- **Helmet:** Protect your noggin with a helmet that says, "I'm serious about safety, but I also like looking cool." A CLIMBING helmet designed for CLIMBING will protect you from falling debris and, occasionally, from yourself.
- **Locking Carabines:** Can you really have enough climbing gear? Of course not! Load up on these babies- you'll need them and they'll bring you an added layer of extra protection and peace of mind for anchors and a whole host of other applications. In my experience these have a mystical power to vanish from your collection one by one so keep them stocked.
- **Slings and Webbing:** Like locking carabiners, it's impossible to have too many slings. Gear hauling, anchor building, rigging a jumbled heap climbing gear, back up personal anchors, home made quick draws, Christmas ornaments... you get the picture. These are the most useful pieces of climbing gear you can have. Get many, inspect them often and retire when needed.



Chapter 2: Gear Up for the Outdoors

Clothing and Other Essentials

- **Clothing:** Go for layers that are as versatile as your climbing ambitions. Moisture-wicking, quick-drying layers will keep you comfy, even if you end up hanging from a cliff in a surprise rainstorm. Oh yeah, get a cheap poncho too!
- **Additional Gear:** Bring a first-aid kit, headlamp, and a multi-tool—because you never know when you’ll need to fix a broken strap or perform minor surgery on your climbing gear.
- **Back Pack:** You don’t need the most expensive pack on the market. I suggest something large enough to hold all your gear and go in knowing it will get abused repeatedly.





Chapter 2: Gear Up for the Outdoors

Maintenance and Inspection

- **Gear Inspection:** Regularly check your gear for wear and tear. If your rope looks like it's been through a blender, it might be time for a new one.
- **Proper Care:** Store your gear like you store fine wine—carefully and in a cool, dry place. Clean your ropes and inspect your gear to ensure they're in top condition.
- **Be Patient:** Acquiring all this gear takes time and money. You're not gonna suddenly go from gym to El Cap so relax and enjoy the process. Soon every single piece will have a story and a memory to go along with it.





Chapter 3: Building Outdoor-Specific Skills

Understanding 3 Common Rock Types

- **Granite**: Solid. Granite requires precise footwork, balance, confident movements and a good crimpin' grip. It's like climbing a giant, rough-textured coffee table that's not exactly stable.
- **Limestone**: Features sporty pockets and edges that can be bomber. Most akin to indoor climbing. Think of it as a rock face with a personality disorder, sometimes friendly, sometimes just plain confusing.
- **Sandstone**: Softer and sandier, most respected. Sandstone can be fragile and prone to erosion, so tread lightly and be careful with those face holds. The world's best splitter cracks are often found here.





Chapter 3: Building Outdoor-Specific Skills

Route Reading: Sorry, no color coded tape here! Imagine you're gazing at an abstract painting—every crux, hold, and feature is a brushstroke in a complex masterpiece. Route reading is about deciphering this art to craft a strategy for your climb.

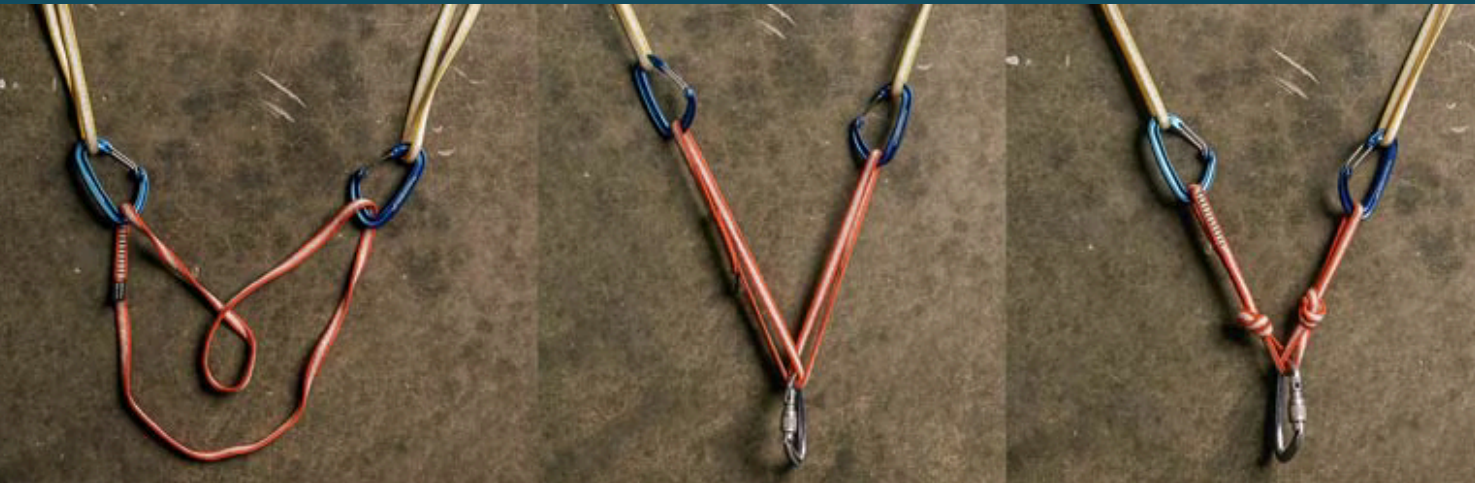
- Analyze the Rock Face: Before you start climbing, take a few moments to study the route as you would a painting. Look at the arrangement of holds, the rock texture, and any potential footholds or handholds. Note any features like cracks, ledges, or overhangs. **IMPORTANT:** Have a pre-plan with your belayer for either lowering or rappelling.
- Identify Holds and Features: Categorize the holds you see—are they crimps, jugs, or slopers? Are there obvious handholds and footholds, or do you need to use the rock's natural features? This step is crucial for planning your route.
- Plan Your Movements: Visualize your climbing sequence. Where will you place your feet and hands? Which holds will provide the best support and where might you need to use more dynamic moves? Planning ahead helps in executing a smooth ascent.
- Prepare for Surprises: Be ready for unexpected challenges. Rock faces are dynamic, and holds might be less secure or different from what you expect. Stay adaptable and ready to adjust your plan as you climb.



EXAMPLE of 3 Point Trad Anchor



EXAMPLE of 2 Point Anchor Sliding "X"



We suggest you practice these 2 fundamental types of anchors on the ground before going outside or getting vertical. Get them down so that you can do them with your eyes closed!



Chapter 3: Building Outdoor-Specific Skills

Setting Anchors: Anchors are your lifeline, so setting them securely is crucial. Typically, climbers use 2 point anchors for sport and 3(+) point anchors for traditional climbing. We don't go in-depth here. If you don't know how to set stable, equalized anchors with confidence - you need to hold off on climbing outside and seek further education.

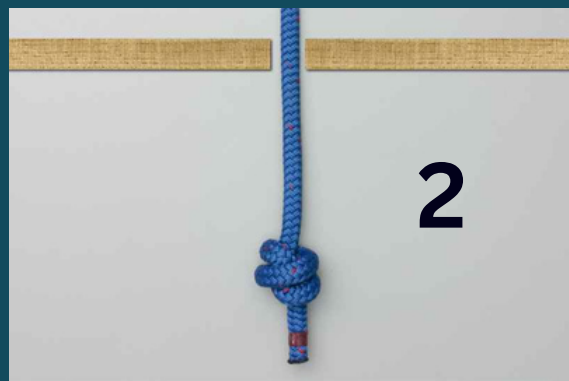
- **Natural Features vs. Hardware:** You can use natural features like trees, rocks, or cracks, or hardware like cams and nuts. Ensure that whatever you use is stable and can handle the load. When using natural features, check for stability and soundness. Diversify your gear placements for added security.
- **Secure and Reliable:** Your anchors should be as dependable as grandma's hugs—solid and comforting. Double-check your knots and connections, and *always test your setup before trusting it with your safety.*
- **Anchor Placement:** Place your anchor in a way that distributes the load evenly. The magic Sliding X is a popular anchor for this. For natural anchors, ensure the feature can hold the weight and won't deteriorate under pressure. For hardware, make sure it's correctly placed and tightened.
- **Practice Indoors:** You'll want to have a very solid grasp on anchors before heading out. Good news is you can practice all of this **ON THE GROUND** which we highly recommend!



Chapter 3: Building Outdoor-Specific Skills

Rappelling: Not trying to scare you but according to statistics, more climbing accidents happen on the descent. Here's how to get it right. Every year people tragically rap off the end of ropes.

- **Double-Check Everything**: Before you rappel, meticulously check all knots, harness connections, and the setup of your rappel device. Ensure that everything is secure, locked and correctly rigged.
- **Practice Precision**: Practice rappelling in a controlled environment to build confidence. Focus on smooth, steady movements and avoid sudden jerks that could cause equipment failure.
- **Safety First**: Always ensure your rappel anchor is solid and that you have enough rope for the descent. Communicate clearly with your climbing partners, and use proper rappel techniques to avoid accidents.
- **Use Auto Blocks & Stopper Knots**: These 2 things are your 2 best friends when it comes to staying alive on rappel.

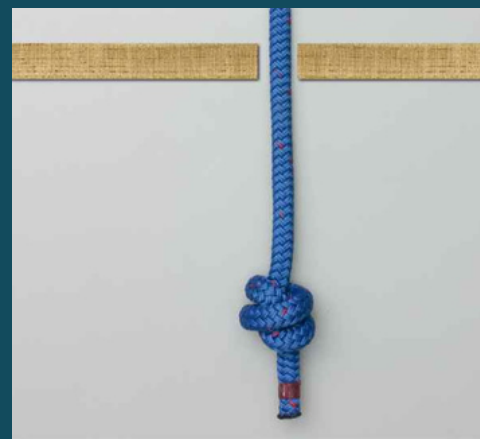
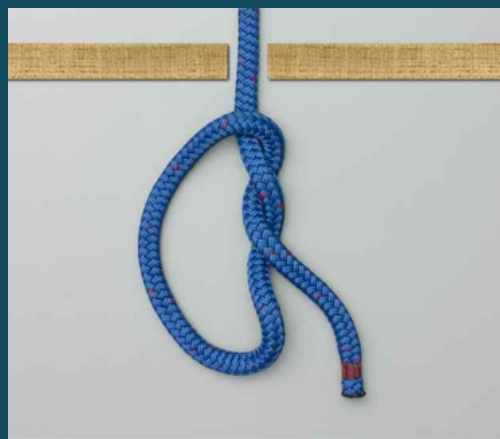
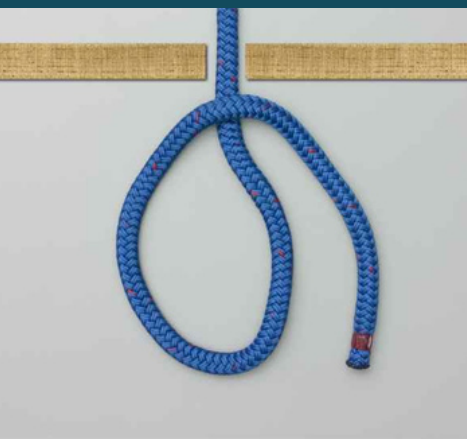




EXAMPLE of auto block on rappel. Prevents both rope burn and sliding down the rope



EXAMPLE of stopper knot on rappel. Prevents climbers from sliding off the end of their rope.





Chapter 4: Crag Etiquette – How to Be a Climbing Rockstar (Without Becoming a Crag Disaster)

To be a true crag superstar, you need to master the art of crag etiquette. Buckle up, because this is going to be as much fun as watching your friends try to navigate a multi-pitch climb with a dog.

Gyms fall very short of teaching this standard to aspiring outdoor climbers. Luckily, it's pretty easy basic common sense stuff here. Get this part right and everything will fall into place. Get it wrong and you might find yourself blacklisted from the local scene.





Chapter 4: Crag Etiquette – How to Be a Climbing Rockstar (Without Becoming a Crag Disaster)

Respect the Environment

Leave No Trace:

- **Pack It In, Pack It Out:** Think of the crag as the world's most beautiful living room—if you wouldn't leave a trail of energy bar wrappers and used tape in your grandma's house, don't do it here. The crag isn't your personal trash can. Treat it with the respect it deserves.
- **Avoid Damaging Vegetation:** If you see a patch of delicate wildflowers, don't take it as a challenge to your balancing skills. Stay on established paths and avoid creating new ones. Plants don't appreciate being trampled any more than your grandma's prize roses do.





Chapter 4: Crag Etiquette – How to Be a Climbing Rockstar (Without Becoming a Crag Disaster)

Respect the Environment

Dog Waste:

- **Pick Up After Your Dog:** If your dog decides to leave a “present” on the crag, you’re the one who has to deal with it. Carry poop bags like you carry chalk—religiously. The crag is not a canine toilet.
- **Proper Disposal:** If there’s no dog waste bin, carry the poop out with you. Your dog’s mess shouldn’t be part of the crag’s decor.





Chapter 4: Crag Etiquette – How to Be a Climbing Rockstar (Without Becoming a Crag Disaster)

Volume Control:

- **Keep It Low:** You may think your climbing playlist is the best thing since carabiners, but not everyone wants to hear it blasting. Use headphones or keep your portable speaker at a volume that won't make you the crag's resident DJ.
- **Respect Quiet Spaces:** Some climbers are there for the serenity of nature, not for your top-40 hits. If you see someone trying to channel their inner zen, keep your music to yourself. Nature doesn't need a soundtrack.





Chapter 4: Crag Etiquette – How to Be a Climbing Rockstar (Without Becoming a Crag Disaster)

Share the Space:

- **Communicate Preferences:** If you're unsure about the noise level or music, ask your fellow climbers. It's like asking if someone prefers vanilla or chocolate ice cream—everyone has their flavor!

3. Share the Crag

Respect Other Climbers:

- **Wait Your Turn:** If someone is climbing a route you're eyeing, wait until they're done. Climbing is not a race, and the crag is not a competition for the quickest ascent.
- **Share Routes and Areas:** Crag can get crowded, so be prepared to share. Avoid being the crag's version of a route hog—everybody wants a turn at the fun!

Climbing Etiquette:

- **Maintain Safe Distances:** Avoid swinging your gear or accidentally dropping things that could turn into projectile hazards. You're climbing, not conducting a circus performance!



Chapter 4: Crag Etiquette – How to Be a Climbing Rockstar (Without Becoming a Crag Disaster)

- **Follow Local Customs:** Different crags have their own quirks. Observe and respect these customs—think of it as learning the secret handshake of the climbing community.

4. General Courtesy

- **Greet Fellow Climbers:** engage and earn some climbing buds!
- **Friendly Introductions:** A simple “hello” or a “how’s it going?” can set a positive tone. Introduce yourself if you’re new to the crag or just passing through.
- **Offer Assistance:** If you see someone struggling, offer help. The climbing community thrives on camaraderie, so lend a hand (or a belay) whenever you can.

Follow Crag Guidelines:

- **Check Regulations:** Some crags have specific rules or permits. Make sure you’re in the know before you go. It’s like knowing the rules of a game before you play.
- **Respect Wildlife:** Keep a respectful distance from wildlife. They’re not part of your climbing experience, and they definitely don’t need your beta.



Conclusion

As you wrap up this guide to transitioning from gym climbing to the crag, there are two things this book can't quite teach you:

1. **Common Sense**
2. **Intuition**



But hey, I'll give it my best shot in the next few paragraphs.

When climbing outside, your best tool isn't your gear or your muscles—it's your judgment. Climbing in the wild requires developing what I like to call "mountain sense." It's that inner compass that tells you, "Hey, something feels off," or "This doesn't seem right." Trust it. If you're not feeling 100% about a climb or if you get a weird vibe, don't push it. Just don't.

Yes, pushing your limits is a big part of climbing. But don't let the rush to keep up with others or meet some self-imposed deadline cloud your judgment. Hurrying and comparing yourself to others can lead to unnecessary risks. Peer pressure has no place in the crag.

Remember, climbing is a deeply personal journey. The thrill of progress can be tempting, but the real reward is enjoying the journey itself. You'll reach your goals when you're truly ready, and you'll know it in your gut.

Stick to these principles, and you'll find yourself climbing for a lifetime with passion and safety.



Thank You for Reading!

We hope this guide has equipped you with essential skills to enhance your climbing experiences safely and confidently.

Continue Your Climbing Journey:

For more resources and to deepen your climbing knowledge, consider:

- **Safety Education: Access our in-depth safety guides and tutorials.**
- **Community Engagement: Join our forums to connect with fellow climbers and share your experiences.**
- **Gear Insights: Explore reviews and recommendations for the latest climbing equipment.**
- **Hire a Guide - AMGA has a list of certified guides. If ever in Arizona look up Kokopelli Climbing Tours**

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Release of Liability:

By using the information and techniques described in this eBook, you acknowledge and accept that Dyno Sky, its authors, and affiliates are not responsible for any injuries, damages, or losses that may occur. Proper training, supervision, and judgment are essential for safe climbing practices. Always consult with a qualified climbing instructor or professional before attempting new techniques or equipment.

Climbing Safety:

Always prioritize safety by:

- **Using Proper Equipment:** Ensure all climbing gear is in good condition and used correctly.
- **Receiving Professional Instruction:** Seek guidance from certified climbing instructors.
- **Climbing Responsibly:** Adhere to all safety protocols and best practices.

We hope you enjoy your climbing adventures and stay safe.



Thank You for Reading

Feedback & Support:

We value your feedback!

Reach out with questions or comments at info@dynosky.com or visit our website: dynosky.com.

Your input helps us improve and continue to serve the climbing community effectively.

Happy Climbing,

Bennett Musick & The Dyno Sky Team

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