

YEOVIL MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

CLIMBING WALL AND HAM HILL- SAFETY AND ETIQUETTE

Issue 5 - [2011 AGM updates]

The practice sessions made available by the club are for members and authorised aspirant members only. It is not permitted to bring guests for climbing unless authorised by the committee* (guests may, of course, watch but must observe relevant safety guidelines).

All climbers must either be members of the club, or if aspirants/guests (authorised as above) must have completed and signed a prospective membership form.

Non-members are only allowed to climb with top-rope protection (whilst under close supervision of an existing YMC member) and are not permitted to lead climb or to belay during club sessions unless they have been advised that they are safe to do so by a committee member*.

A parent or adult member acting in loco-parentis must accompany children under- 18.

We do not currently charge a weekly fee at club sessions, your access to the wall is granted by the payment of your annual club membership.

All new members should already have sufficient level of competence to belay and climb safely at the climbing wall or at Ham Hill when they apply to join the club, and will be asked to demonstrate this to a YMC committee member* on joining the club.

If you are uncertain about anything then please ask; don't take any unnecessary risks.

Double-check your tie-in knot before leaving the ground. Make sure your belayer has you properly attached and he/she is paying attention.

Helmet on and secure? (NOTE: near-essential at Ham Hill even when belaying, due to falling stones and other potential debris)

Do not distract belayers.

Do not stand underneath anybody climbing; if they fall or knock a hold off, you get hurt. At Ham Hill tie-in to belay well back from the rock face. At the climbing wall try to stand slightly to one side and not too far out. If you need advice on correct sport belaying techniques then make sure you ask an experienced member at the wall.

At the climbing wall: stand behind the boundary rope unless you are climbing or belaying. At Ham Hill: stand well back because loose rock sometimes becomes dislodged from the top.

Queuing; clip your belay device behind the others on the anchor rope for your selected route (Ham Hill) or beside the route number tag on the boundary rope (at the wall). When your turn comes up you firstly belay for the person in front, then get your turn to climb.

Do not clip in to the queuing system until you are properly geared-up and ready to go, and do not clip in again until you have finished your climb. Please respect the queuing system – it works well and gives everybody an equal chance to try the most popular routes.

If you fall then consider coming down. Please don't hang around endlessly shaking out your arms. Time is short and others are waiting for their turn to climb.

If new to leading then take it easy. Start on climbs within your capabilities to build your confidence. This may take several weeks.

Clip the quick-draws from 'behind' and across the back-bar in the direction of climb; (if you don't know what this means then please ask an experienced member).

When leading, try not to reach too high to clip the quick-draw unless you are in a very safe position. Try to clip at waist level or not much above. Reaching high increases the fall height and greatly increases the chances of hitting the ground (which hurts a lot more than the falling off bit!) You may also injure your belayer.

When leading you must clip all the quick draws. There should be two karabiners at the top of the route; ensure that you clip the rope through both karabiners and make sure that you do up any screw gates – the next climber may wish to top-rope the route after you.

If you are belaying then tell your climber if he/she clips incorrectly or is clipping too high....it could be you they land on!

Rope Specifics

The ropes used at the climbing wall belong to the club but are stored on site. We are asked to leave promptly at the end of the session (usually this is 10pm). Please assist in putting ropes up when we start, and clearing them from the routes and packing them away at the end.

At Ham Hill the ropes arrive with whoever brings them and leave with whoever takes them away. If you can assist in putting the ropes up this would take some of the pressure from the few who do it. The people who start early also often leave early and therefore may leave the ropes for others still climbing. It is the responsibility of the last people to take the ropes down and take them away. If you take ropes home then please ensure they arrive early next week. If you don't expect to be able to do this then the simplest thing to do is to bring them to the pub and pass them to somebody who can. After climbing we normally meet and eat at the Nelson in Norton-sub Hamdon, about 5 minutes down the hill. This is also where club issues- are discussed and *meet's* lists debated, and much of the ad-hoc climbing is arranged, so it's worth a visit anyway.

It is the Committee's responsibility to ensure we do all that we can to minimise the possibility of an accident. The guidance above was written by experienced climbers and has been shown to work in practice. This document will periodically be updated because location, techniques and equipment in use may change as we move forwards.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable time whilst climbing with YMC and finally-welcome to our club.

* In some instances where Committee Members are not available, this authority may be delegated out to other experienced members of the club.