

Organisation: Venture-Out

Location: various climbing walls

Risk Assessment for sessions run by suitably trained staff.

September Ian Sheldrake (Director) 2023

| Hazard | severity | Likelihood | Control Measures | Residual Risk Rating |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|----------------------|
| Medical conditions and allergies | Low to med | Low | Medical declaration on booking forms Participants alerted to strenuous nature of climbing Instructors in pre-session briefing ask participants to inform them of any changes to the medical conditions since signing the form Climbing walls have first aid provision and staff who are trained to help with emergencies Emergency contact details are brought to wall with instructor or they are available by phone call. | low |
| Lack of competence/experience/bravado of minors under 16 | Low | Med | competent supervision from an experienced instructor appropriate route grades explained and used. Rainbow holds (use anything) offered as an escape option for continuing to climb up or down. | low |
| slipping off wall | Ankle twists Ankle break | Low to med Low | Users usually jump of rather than slip of (especially on easy routes with appropriate footwear. Risk sport participation (disclaimer) signed to make participants aware of their responsibility for their own safety. | med |
| Climbing equipment - Harnesses, slings, belay devices and karabiners | severe | low | Equipment visually checked before and after use (in accordance with BMC guidelines). Once excessive wear or defect is detected item is retired. Participants all properly instructed in how to use the equipment Participants do buddy checks Instructor enforces buddy checks and monitors | low |
| Collision with others | Low | Low | Control of numbers in supervised sessions Explain vigilance and climbing etiquette (giving way to climbers above etc). | low |

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| Damage caused by jewellery | Low | Low | Require participants to remove rings – show them how they catch on holds and damage the ring. Chains – explain how they can tangle (allow them to tuck them under clothing) Remove dangling earrings (pendants and hoops). Studs permitted as are face piercings | low |
| Inappropriate footwear | Low – foot slips on easy routes usually result in the climber just falling flat against wall. Slight bruising possible | Med – training shoes will only work on large holds & easy routes | User common sense – they usually stick to holds they can use or lower off if they can't progress climbing in bare feet is not permitted. Climbing shoes can be hired for participants who want to progress | Low |
| Lack of supervision during organised sessions/courses | Low | Low | Only qualified instructors employed by Paddles Away UK Appropriate ratios for given group ability or activity adhered to Group etiquette explained and enforced. | Low |
| Ratio of supervisors to participants | Low | Low | Numbers controlled by booking system, set by course administrator, governing body regulations, maximum 1:8 for roped climbing and bouldering, 1:12 if bouldering with spotters. | low |
| ability of participants | Low | Med | Qualified coaches used, coach knowledge, planned sessions to create appropriate duration, activities and challenge for ability level. | low |
| Physical preparation/fatigue | Low | med | Adequate warm up and cool down time programmed into each session. | low |

Climbing with ropes

| Hazard | severity | Likelihood | Control Measures | Residual Risk Rating |
|---|--|------------|---|----------------------|
| Abrasions, cuts and rope burns | Low | Low | Correct belaying procedure taught and monitored, Belayers backed up if necessary | Low |
| Hair or clothing caught in belay device | Low – low injury but severe effect on progress | Low – med | Pre-session checks on hair and clothing, monitored. The climbing wall operating procedures demand that their staff be informed and used if a climber needs to be rescued. | low |
| Objects falling from climber onto belayers | Med | Low | Pre-session checks – participants must empty pockets of mobile phones, money, smoking equipment etc. Climbers must not have equipment clipped to their harness gear loops Inform participants not to stand under climbers from their group or other people | low |
| Harnesses coming loose during session (after toilet) | Severe | Low | Buddy check system used and enforced. Instructor monitors After lunch or other break, or toilet break, all climbers are checked. | low |
| Belayer dropping climber | Severe | Low | Experienced belayers only permitted or those under supervision, | Low |
| Climber slipping or falling off route and banging into wall | Low | Med | Appropriate footwear Climbing shoes available for hire Rainbow holds used if necessary | Low to med |
| Climber and belayer not attaching to rope correctly | Severe | Low | Correct attachments and buddy system taught and enforced If climbers cannot manage to retie a figure of eight then this is either done for them each time or a screwgate karabiner is used on a figure of eight bight. Instructor monitors buddy checks | Low |
| Climber freezing on wall – not allowing lowering off | Low | Low | Protocol for arriving at top of wall and being lowered off is practiced by climbers on a low wall or off a low / first runner before progressing onto higher walls | Low |
| Climber unclipping top rope when topping out | Severe | Low | Climbing walls have two top clips, one is usually a oval nut locked clip unable to be undone without spanner. If this is not the case, instructor vigilance is usually enough – watching when a nervous climber approaches top. Instructors usually come to back up the lower off anyway | Low |
| Belayer not controlling or locking off the dead end of rope | Severe | Low to med | Correct 4 point technique is coached on the ground before novices try for real. Instructor vigilance is usually enough – watching a nervous or clumsy belayer and having the climber slow down to allow belayer to work at a slow speed. If this slower speed does not help belayer can be backed up by two others If this is still too clumsy then the belayer is replaced (they will usually be | Low |

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| | | | relieved not disappointed) Instructors always come to back up the lower off of any climber with inexperienced groups | |
| Belayer unable to lower climber correctly (too fast) | Med to severe | Low | Inexperienced belayers are always backed up by instructor when the climber approaches the top. Instructor backs up the dead rope and coaches correct lock off position and lower off positions for slow, smooth, controlled lower | Low |
| Belayer unable to keep up with climber | Med to severe | Low to med | Correct 4 point technique is coached on the ground before novices try for real. Instructor vigilance is usually enough – watching a nervous or clumsy belayer and Instruct the climber to slow down to allow belayer to work at a slow speed. And not to climb when the rope is slack above them. Try different partners | low |
| Climber bouncing down wall when lowering off | Low | Low | Correct descent technique demonstrated and practice on low wall first (lean back, walking down, legs wide, looking down) Explain the risk of ankle damage | Low |
| Belayer too light to belay a heavier climber | Med to severe | Med if climber is a lot heavier than belayer | belay/ballast bags must be used when necessary. Belayer is attached to these via a lark's foot sling to the belay loop Belayer is supervised and backed up during lowering off until Instructor is confident they can manage. | Low |
| Solo climbing, inc. use of cow tails/slings | Severe | Med | Solo climbing on rope wall is prohibited by all climbing walls | low |
| Lead climbing | | | Lead climbing is not offered by Paddles Away UK and should not be attempted with their clients by any staff. Unless by agreement with the Director (Ian Sheldrake), a technical advisor, their insurance company and under a separate risk assessment. | |

Bouldering

| Hazard | severity | Likelihood | Control Measures | Residual Risk Rating |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------|
| Jumping / sliding / falling backwards off wall | Low to med | Low to med – climbers more usually step backwards off rather than fall off. Sliding down more common with poor footwear | Traversing walls have impact matting and climbers are not to climb above 50cm (i.e not to touch top of traverse wall with hands) Bouldering walls have crash matting underneath, ensure that this has not moved to leave a gap between wall and matt. Teach climbers how to climb up half way then look around and jump down – controlled jump. | low |
| Falls up to 2m | Med – crash matts are more than deep enough to absorb fall but bad landings cause ankle injury or landing on someone | Med | Experienced users only permitted or those under supervision, crash mats in place user risk explained and controlled jump down demonstrated from lower heights No safety equipment (harness with metal gear) is worn whilst bouldering. | low |
| Falls over 2m | Severe | Very unlikely | Bouldering walls used do not normally enable climbers to get their feet higher than 2m. Bouldering on climbing wall without ropes (soloing) is not permitted at climbing walls | low |
| Bouldering under rope climbers | Severe | Very unlikely | Bouldering on climbing wall without ropes (soloing) is not permitted at climbing walls | low |
| Falling off onto people / people falling on to participants | Med | Low | Controlled jump offs practiced and demoed (involves looking around first) Climbers also warned about walking or climbing under or near others above them. | low |
| Incorrect spotting | Low | Low | Spotting involves someone standing under another climber ready to push their back up to straighten them during a fall to ensure they land on their feet, not their back. Coaching on how to do this without trying to catch the climber and judge when the climber is too high for the spotter to control this. If in doubt, spotter is discouraged from continuing | low |

Notes

- All coaches should be aware of Venture-Out's emergency procedures prior to delivering any sessions.
- It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure equipment is safe and appropriate for use prior to each session.
- It is the responsibility of the coach to alert Ian Sheldrake of broken or damaged equipment, or injury or near miss and to record this information in the Accident and Emergency book. If unclear how to complete this then contact Ian immediately for support.
- If the coach is unsure of any relevant safety-related matters the problem should be resolved prior to coaching session
- This is an adventurous sport and some risk is assumed by participants. Removal of all risk is not only impossible but detrimental to the development of participants. However risk versus benefits have to be considered