

How to Climb Safely

Introduction

We do our best to ensure that all climbers who use Brunel Wall during a Rock Frog session or lesson are suitably informed of the risks involved and what the wall user can do to minimise the risk of possible injury however, we must bring to your attention what is said in the BMC (British Mountaineering Council) Participation Statement which can be seen on the Brunel Wall notice board. The very nature of climbing determines that there is a potential risk for injury.

While we do not wish to scare people by reminding users and the parents of child users of the fact that injuries, major and minor, can occur, it is necessary to stress that injuries can, from time to time occur even on an indoor wall with adequate supervision and safety measures in place. Bumps, grazes, cuts, sprains, pulled muscles, ligament damage and even bone fractures and breaks are all possible.

We are very proud of our safety record and we do everything possible to inform our climbers on how to use the climbing wall safely.

Please read the following safety guidelines and apply them each time you use the wall. Also, if you see someone not adhering to the safety guidelines then please tell Rock Frog staff about it. Please bear in mind that these rules are designed to cover adults and juniors using the wall.

General

- When juniors under the age of 18 are on the wall there must be a competent adult climber present. A parent who has no knowledge of climbing is not a “competent adult” in these circumstances.
- No-one under the age of 18 may manage a group of novices without being overseen by a competent adult climber. This means that if you are a Rock Frog Junior Leader this does not mean that you can bring groups of friends to the wall to climb out of club hours.
- Novice juniors who are top-roping must work in groups of 3 or 4 and those not tied in to climb or on belay (i.e. the 3rd and 4th person) must actively back up the belayer.
- All those doing top-roped climbs must do pre-climb safety checks and use the recognised climbing calls.
- All novice children doing Rock Frog sessions under the age of 14 will be required to wear climbing helmets on the wall. Non-novice climbers or climbers over the age of 14 may be given the choice but with parental agreement. Over 18's may wear helmets if they wish. Helmets shall be worn by children (as above) whilst on any climbing area i.e. area with thick blue crash mats.
- Anyone on the wall, adult or child, should act in a responsible, sensible manner. There should be no running about and no “horse play”. Any person, adult or child, may be asked to leave the wall or be told they cannot climb any more if their behaviour is deemed to be dangerous, irresponsible or is detracting from other's enjoyment of the wall.
- If you need to walk from one end of the main wall to the other this must be done on the floor and not on the mats.

- The mats are crash mats, designed to break a fall. Anyone on the mats should be paying attention to what is around them and nobody should lie on the mats and if you are sitting on the mats your feet should be on the floor.
- Particular care must be taken when walking from the main wall in to the pump room area. Going to the pump room or coming from it involves walking under the main wall and people must check if climbers are on that part of the wall before entering or exiting the pump room.
- Climbers on the main wall area must not use wall bolts to assist their climb. Hooking fingers in to the bolts to help pull yourself up may result in broken fingers.
- Do not climb if you feel unwell or have recently been ill.
- Do not climb following an injury unless you have been told you can do so by a doctor.
- Make sure you adequately warm up before a climbing session. This may be done by using standard sports warm up techniques or, if you are a regular climber, by doing a low-level traverse on the wall.
- High level traversing is not recommended due to the risk of falls causing serious injuries, however, confident and able adults, in full knowledge of the dangers may wish to climb at a higher level. As with any potentially dangerous activity a child is not legally allowed to take the responsibility for assessing risk and therefore a competent adult has to be present to assess the risk for them. .

While in the pump room:

- If you are a child novice you will only be allowed to climb in the pump room if you are supervised by a competent climber. In these circumstances this may be an adult climber, a Junior Leader or, in some circumstances, your parent. Your parent must have been given guidance on safety in the pump room.
- Do not use the finger boards (where you do pull-ups) to climb on. They are not designed for this and the matting beneath them is minimal.
- Only climb as high as you feel comfortable with. You are not on a rope and therefore cannot be lowered off or “rescued” if you cannot climb down yourself.
- Do not jump off the wall when you reach the top. Climb down until you are able to step off the wall
- Do not run around in the pump room. The only exception to this is when there are supervised “games periods”.
- Do not climb too close to other climbers or climb above or below other climbers.
- Keep an eye out for climbers around you and what they are doing.

- If you are not actively climbing or preparing to climb then remove yourself to the bench area. Standing around, walking around or running around on the mats creates another hazard for other climbers.
- You should not lie on the mats as you are creating a hazard for other climbers and run the risk of someone falling on you.

In all areas of the wall:

- Do everything your instructors tell you to do regarding safety. They will be telling you to do things to ensure the safe enjoyment of the wall for everyone and they will be happy to give you a reason for everything they tell you to do.
- If you are not sure about anything then ask.