
Ice Climbing Leadership I

4 Day Workshop

DAY 1: Sedro-Woolly to MT. BAKER BASECAMP

Day Overview

- 8:00 AM at Sedro Woolly, Northwest Mountain Shop, for orientation and gear check
- Leave to Mt. Baker Colman Ice fall.
- Hike from approximately 3,400 FT and hike to base camp at 6,000 FT. Set camp.
- Practical test covering home study materials over knots

8am We will meet at The Northwest Mountainshop, 829 Metcalf Street, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284, for orientation and gear check. A big part of developing the necessary skills starts with having the proper equipment and food to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience in the wilderness. The guides will discuss each piece of equipment and ensure that everything is in good condition and is a proper fit. Finally, the guides will evaluate conditions, discuss weather with the group, and make last-minute adjustments before departing Sedro. This is an invaluable part of the course and will often help eliminate many of the questions students have in regards to both equipment and the flow of the course.

From the shop, we will drive to Mt. Baker and depart from the Mount Baker Trail Head. From the trailhead, most of the day is spent on the moderately strenuous approach, as we start hiking from approximately 3,400-3,700' feet in sub-alpine meadows and eventually reach our camp around 6,000 feet. On the hike, we'll pass through old growth forest, high alpine meadows, and catch glimpses of the gorgeous Cascade Range. We will aim to arrive at camp by late afternoon/early evening.

An integral part of mountaineering and expeditionary climbing is being able to set up a safe and secure camp in an extreme environment. As a group, we'll practice these skills. Guides discuss the importance of personal maintenance, hygiene and sleeping in cold environments, and Leave No Trace principles, as well as address any student concerns. Finally, instruction of proper hydration, including efficient snow-melting protocols, nutrition, and backcountry-cooking techniques will be addressed.

If there is time in the afternoon we will put on crampons get our axes and do a short walk about on the "dry" or snow free parts of the glacier.

The first day will be concluded with a practical test covering the home study material.

DAY 2 - CLIMBING SCHOOL

Day Overview

- Walk out and climb on ice seracs
- Lunch
- Learn belay and ice climbing movement skills
- Coiling ropes

The foundation of climbing is belaying and we will cover safe belay technique and positioning when dealing with ice. Then we'll learn the basics of ice climbing on steep and moderate terrain . We start by working on a variety of walking techniques for moving safely and efficiently over a variety of ice angles using our ice axes and ice tools. Once we get on steeper pitches Instructors will go over climbing with ice tools and crampons and we'll have a fun day fine tuning technique for ice cragging and for use in the alpine. After lunch, we'll start to explore some of the more technical aspects of ice climbing leadership. Students will practice applying the knots from the home study portion on their own practice anchors.

Back at camp we'll demonstrate a variety of snow and ice anchors and tree anchors useful for belaying, lower and other ice climbing techniques that may serve participants in their climbing careers. Once students are comfortable constructing a variety of different anchor types and styles, we put it all to test. We fully weigh and test all of the student anchors to ensure they are constructed properly for our intended purpose.

DAY 3 - INTRO TO INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES

Day Overview

- ❑ Climb steep ice in a crevasse
- ❑ Learn anchor building and protection placement
- ❑ Intro to leading / mock leading

With the skills developed on day two, students are introduced to a variety of more advanced techniques that will help them be better followers and leaders. These skills are placement of ice screws whether it be on a "directional" to help with ice cragging, or placing screws or cleaning screws on lead.

If students feel up to it we will travel further up the glacier and find a crevasse with steep sides, difficult and strenuous ice to climb and we will do laps down in the hole!

Crevasse can be a hazardous environment, and care must be taken to mitigate the risks properly. Guides emphasize climber safety and risk assessment.

It is a demanding day, both physically and mentally, which provides great training for more advanced objectives students may encounter later in their climbing careers.

DAY 4 - CLOSING LESSONS

Day Overview

- Set out early to focus on climbing movements that need more polish
- Top down belay and station management
- Rapel and bail tactics

With the skills developed on the previous days students are introduced to a variety of more advanced techniques that will help them as a follower in more advanced climbs. We will cover top down belay techniques that may come in handy with some venues such as Ouray in the students future climbs. These techniques segue into tactics and considerations of multi pitch ice climbs and anchor stations where students will learn techniques to help them be good followers as part of a team.

We close the mornings lessons with students building V threads and taking a short rappel back to the glacier bottom.

We will break down camp in accordance with our Leave No Trace principles, and hike back down to the trailhead and return home in the evening. **It is often customary to have a group meal back in the first town we come to and celebrate four great days spent in the mountains!**

Pre Course Home Study and Prerequisite Skills Requirements

At the course start students are to be proficient in tying and hitching the most commonly used and useful knots. Home study materials and videos can be found [here](#), and opportunities will be there for students to network with other participants.

Before course start students are also required to be “belay certified” at an indoor climbing gym, or come into the workshop familiar with belaying in a recreational setting indoors or outdoors using the PBUS method of belaying, they also must be familiar with lowering a climber in a recreational rock climbing setting.

Students are expected to be self sufficient backcountry campers able to keep a tidy, Leave No Trace camp.