
Mountaineering Leadership II

4 Day Workshop

DAY 1: Sedro-Woolley to Baker Basecamp

Day Overview

- 8:30 AM at Sedro Woolly, Northwest Mountain Shop, for orientation and gear check
- Leave to Mt. Baker
- Hike from approximately 3,400 FT and hike to base camp at 6,000 FT.
- Practical test covering home study materials

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 Seattle. 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 appropriate trailhead. There are two excellent moderate routes to the summit that we can use on this course—the Easton Glacier and the Coleman-Deming Glacier. Depending on mountain conditions, the team will base on the route that is the safest and will give the greatest venue for practical training. 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.

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

DAY 2 - SNOW SCHOOL

Day Overview

- Snow school for snow travel and self-arrest
- Lunch
- Learn and drill rope skills
- Learn belay and anchor skills

We'll learn the basics of traveling on snowy and icy surfaces. We start by working on a variety of walking techniques for moving safely and efficiently over a variety of snowy slopes. Good footwork, balance and rest techniques are invaluable skills that we use throughout the course. Guides then introduce the use of the ice axe and students conclude by practicing a variety of self-arrest positions.

After lunch, we'll start to explore some of the more technical aspects of mountaineering. Students will practice apply the knots from the home study portion to the glacier travel rope.

After this, we develop rope work often neglected in other mountaineering courses, including how to transition from glacier travel rope configuration to short rope

configuration for travel through loose and rocky areas.

If conditions and time permit, we go for a short glacier tour, winding our way through seemingly bottomless crevasses in both classical and echelon formations. As we sally out of camp we develop a route plan, assessing the hazards, preparing one's summit pack, climbing and descending safely through massive glaciers and seracs to an icy Cascades summit is a rewarding experience with breathtaking views in every direction.

Here, there will be emphasis is on proper rope interval, shortening and lengthening the rope, communication, route finding and hazard assessment.

Back at camp we'll demonstrate a variety of snow and ice anchors useful for belaying, running protection and rescue scenarios. Once students are comfortable constructing a variety of different anchor types and styles, we put it all to test. We fully weight and test all of the student anchors to ensure they are constructed properly for our intended purpose.

We'll demonstrate a variety of snow and ice anchors useful for belaying, running protection and rescue scenarios. Once students are comfortable constructing a variety of different anchor types and styles, we put it all to test. If you have ever wondered if you can rappel off a Snickers Bar, then this is the day for you! We fully weight and test all of the student anchors to ensure they are constructed properly for our intended purpose.

Then we put the anchors to test. Climbers belay and rappel off of the anchors they construct. We teach a variety of belaying and rappelling techniques that are useful in mountaineering and vertical climbing. We introduce a variety of hauling systems, with emphasis on understanding the mechanical advantage each system employs.

DAY 3 - LEARN CREVASSE RESCUE

Day Overview

- Live crevasse rescue exam

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- Rope skills practical
 - Break down camp
 - Return to Seattle

With the skills developed on the previous days – knots, prussiks, rope handling, anchor construction, belaying and mechanical advantage systems – students should now have the necessary skills and comfort to execute crevasse rescue. Crevasse rescue is an essential skill and considerable time and emphasis will be placed on practicing it in this course. First, guides usually have everyone do a “dry” run on the surface but then it is expected that each person demonstrate proficiency in holding a real-life fall into a crevasse and perform an actual rescue. Our standard instruction is a 3:1 Z-Pulley rescue system on a three-person rope team. We also demonstrate (if not practice) the 2:1 Drop-C on a two-person rope team.

At this time, students also have the opportunity to practice ascending out of a crevasse on their own with the use of their prussiks. This gives a much more realistic feel of what self-rescue is all about.

Crevasse can be a hazardous environment, and care must be taken to mitigate the risks properly. Guides emphasize climber safety and well-being. Nevertheless, this is an extremely memorable and rewarding day.

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 - SUMMIT ATTEMPT

Depending on weather conditions we will attempt a summit attempt of Mt. Baker on one of the four days of the course. It may not necessarily be day 4.

On our last day, we will break down camp in accordance with our Leave No Trace principles, and hike back down to the trailhead and return to Seattle in the evening.

It is often customary to have a group meal back in the first town we come to and celebrate three great days spent in the mountains!

Topics such as navigation (GPS, map, compass, altimeter and white navigation), route-finding, and glaciology will be incorporated into the curriculum throughout the entire course and are often not designated for a particular time. Furthermore, throughout the course, emphasis will continually be placed on checking and maintaining good self-awareness and well-being, in addition to ensuring that our camps are always clean and secure.

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.