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Mountain Climbing Do's and Don'ts

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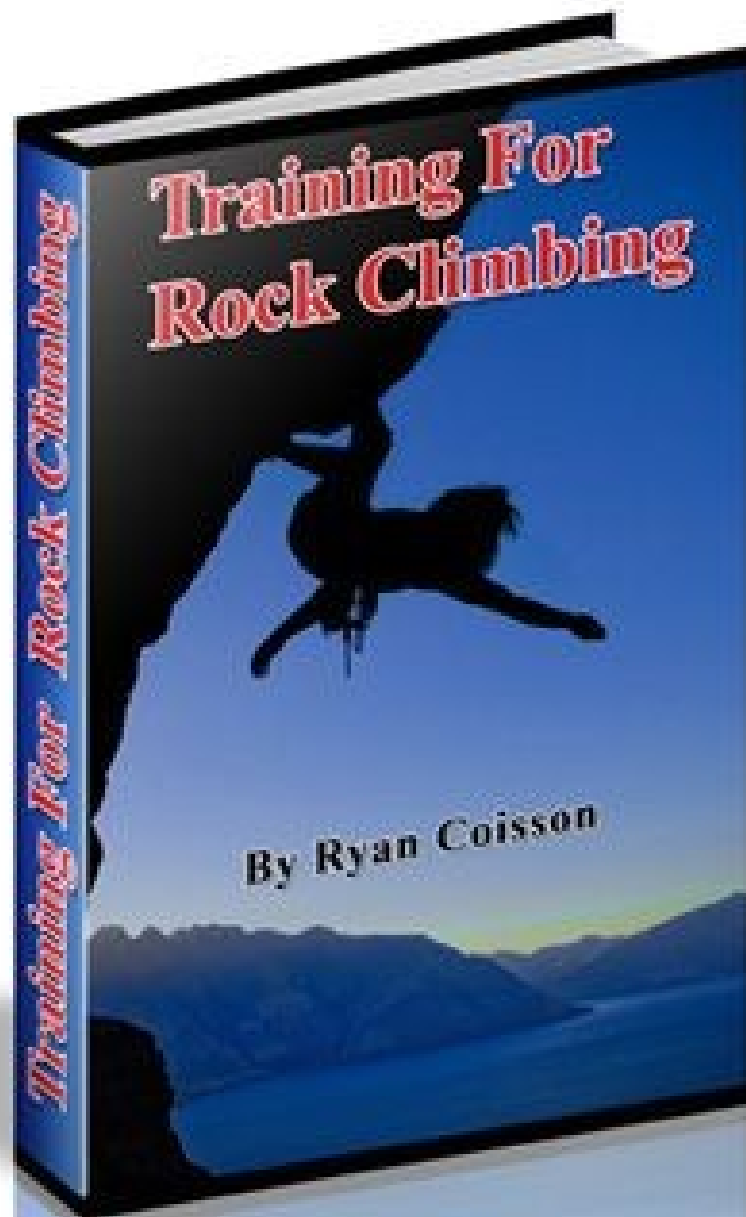
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Planning an Outing

Common Sense Tips for Planning a Mountain Outing

Know the area.

Even skilled mountain climbers try to familiarize themselves with their target area before heading off, so make sure you know important information about the mountain of your choice. Contact your local forest service or authorities to find out what you need to know. Get a map, read the guidebooks, ask people who've had experience in the area and scout a route.

Once you know what to expect from the area in and around the mountain, decide on your pacing – how fast or slow you will be traveling, what time you'll start, what kind of terrain will be involved and how far before you stop. Find out if you could use your own car to drive to the area and if there is parking available. If not, ask about shuttle services that may be provided.

Get some mountain outing skills

You don't have to be a certified mountain man to enjoy a mountain outing, but your group should at least have one or two people who know something about living and surviving in the wilderness. At least

have one person who has skills such as, how to navigate the mountains, start a fire or put up a tent.

Make sure your fitness level and mountain skills are sufficient for your outing. Don't attempt to go on a mountain outing hoping to get through with luck and a few basic skills. Make sure the technical skills of at least one group member exceed the difficulty level of the hike or outing.

Mind the weather

Consider the season when you're planning a mountain outing.

Knowing what to expect can help you organize a safer and more enjoyable trip and prevent unpleasant surprises that might occur.

Check with the weather bureau about weather conditions a day before your outing and on the day itself. Never, under any circumstance, try to go on a mountain outing when a storm is headed your way.

Contact the forest service

They are in charge of the campgrounds and in many areas in the US, people who go out for mountain hikes, picnics or outings are required to register before heading out. They can also alert you on the hazards and dangers that you'll need to watch out for during your outing.

Dress up for the occasion

It's a mountain outing, so dress in clothes that will be comfortable and still provide protection. Wear the appropriate shoes, hats and jackets and if you're going in winter, wear the right type of clothing that will provide sufficient insulation and protection, including gloves and snowshoes.

Food and water

Plan your meals during the mountain outing and bring enough food and water to last you during the trip. Have extra provisions just in case you run out.

Bring your med kit

Sure, it's an outing and you're out there to have fun, but remember you're in unfamiliar territory. Little accidents could occur, such as cuts, bumps, scratches and insect bites. Bring a first aid kit that includes bandages, antiseptic wipes, gauzes, adhesive bandages, and insect repellent, antibiotic ointment and blister pads.

You might also want to bring over-the-counter medicines such as pain relievers, anti-inflammatory and anti-pyretic over-the-counter drugs.

For insect bites and allergies, bring anti-itch lotions and ointments.

Gear up

Bring the necessary tools and equipment you will need during the outing. Tents and camping gears, flashlights, blankets, matches, fuel, forks, knives, can openers and other things necessary to make your trip comfortable and safe should be packed up and stored in your bags. Don't forget to bring your maps and guidebooks and make sure you can easily access them during the trip.

Fill 'er up

Make sure your car has a full tank of gas before heading out. On your way to the mountains, check out the gas stations along the way and take note of the nearest station from the parking area once you've reached your destination. It's also a good idea to have an extra gallon stashed in case of an emergency.

Leave something behind

Before leaving for your mountain outing, leave a copy of your itinerary with a family member or a friend. The itinerary should include where you're going, what time you're leaving, who the group members are and what time you expect to return.

Appoint a leader

It could be you or somebody else who has the essential navigation and climbing skills. Get at least two or more group leaders if you have a bigger group. This will help break down the number of people to a manageable level and will make it easy to track individuals to account for their presence or absence.

Before the hike, the group leader/s should count how many participants or group members he has. If the trip is long, he should do this periodically during the hike and do the counting again once they've reached the camp or picnic ground.

Plan for emergencies

Have a sound emergency route in case you need to bail out. Make sure the group knows about this and are familiar with the necessary steps to make. Above all, plan a mountain outing based on safety. You will enjoy it more if you know that you have nothing to worry about during the outing and that you can go home safe and sound when it's over

Mountain Hazards

Planning a Mountain Hike? Know What Hazards to Look Out For

Mountains are a perennial favorite for group hikes and picnics because nowhere else can you be treated with spectacular views and exciting adventures. But with all the stunning beauty and potential for fun and enjoyment, mountains also pose hazards and dangers, many of which are hidden from view. To remain safe and informed, here are some of them:

Mountain terrain

Unless you're a seasoned climber or are an experienced mountaineer, mountain terrain can be very confusing. For the untrained eye, it can be extremely difficult to find your way in or out especially if there is nothing out of the ordinary to use as a landmark. For somebody who's unfamiliar with mountain terrain, every tree, fallen branch, log, tree stump, patch of grass or shrub will look exactly the same, making it easy for you to lose your way.

By itself, mountain terrain can be very hazardous. Rocks, caves and shrubs can hide dangerous wildlife and crevices can pose a danger to both life and limb.

**Thank You For Reading The
Mountain Climbing Do's And Don'ts Preview**

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