



## CLIMBER ABILITY AND FITNESS FOR ALPINE TRIPS

### Climber skills

While the difficulty of climbing required on every trip is different, some basic skills are required on any climbing trip. Every climber needs to be able to put on their equipment correctly, as well as have a basic understanding of climbing jargon adequate to follow your guide's directions. Each climber needs to be able to tie a figure-eight rethread knot as well as a clove hitch, and have basic belay and rappel experience.

If we are on a glacier during the trip, you should have previous experience using crampons and ice axe, as well as training on self-arrest. Crevasse Rescue training, while not required on every trip is a good skill every climber should have in their toolbox.

This stuff can all be learned in a day or two out with an ITCOG guide or one of our colleagues. Get in touch and set up a training class today.

### Climber Ability

Each climb has a technical grade ranging from class 1 (hiking) to class 5 (technical rock climbing). Most of our Alpine offerings start at Class 3, which is described as scrambling on rock with the use of both feet and hands. Being comfortable moving in this terrain while being short roped or coached by a guide is our baseline.

Many of our Alpine climbs require 5th class climbing, described as technical rock climbing, or terrain where you would not want to fall without a rope. The class is then divided by grades: 5.0 to 5.10 for example. You will need to climb proficiently at the grade of the objective for which you are signing up for. For example, the Matterhorn is rated 5.4, you will need to move at a good steady pace for 8-12 hours, up and down in 5.4 terrain. (please check out our climbing grades comparison chart at the end of this document.)

### Climber Fitness

Most Summit days are big! On our alpine climbs you can expect to be moving at a steady pace for 8 to 14 hours. That's a substantial time difference, I know! But that ultimately depends on you! A good guide won't waste time, he/she sets good pacing and has accurate route-finding sure! but your fitness and skill level will be the biggest determinate between a big and a huge day. Ultimately speed is safety. The longer you are out the more tired you become. Standard times on mountains are always a consideration and are generally adhered to.

When assessing a climbers fitness, I always ask people what their average week of exercise looks like, and what is their biggest day of exercise in the past year. I look for a regular exercise program of 2-3 days a week and many weekends. Having a big activity like; a big hike or a long run, or experience Alpine climbing and mountaineering are good indicators for adequate fitness.

### How We Can Help

We have lots of experience helping people get fit for trips. The last thing in the world you want is for your fitness to stop you from doing your trip of a lifetime. We are happy to work with you to establish a training program that fits your goals and lifestyle. If you can make it to Salt Lake City, we would love to take you out and give you an idea of where you are at with your climbing ability and skills, as well as your overall fitness. Don't forget if you have different abilities or a different agenda, we are always happy to do a private trip for you and your group.