



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

ICC Squamish Outing

Overview:

This outing is intended to use previously skills of “moving over rock”, gear placement, gear management and climbing team communication, with an emphasis on becoming more efficient. Climbing will be diverse and include single pitch, longer multi-pitch, sport, and trad routes. Students will be given the opportunity to lead climbs that are within their ability.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this weekend, you should be able to:

1. Improve climbing techniques for various route types.
2. Efficiently climb multi-pitch routes as part of a rope team (following and leading).
3. Understand your physical and mental response to being high up on steep rock (exposure).
4. Better evaluate your ability to follow or lead a climb based on guidebook info and experience.

Suggested Reading

- ✓ Any book with information about rock climbing techniques.
- ✓ “The Climbers Guide to Squamish”

What to Bring:

- ✓ Technical climbing gear (shoes, harness, helmet, rope, cleaning tool, rack (if applicable), etc)
- ✓ Food for climbing (optional group breakfast will be at the White Spot Restaurant in Squamish).
- ✓ Guidebook (if you have one)
- ✓ Food for potluck (or purchase there)

Agenda:

It is a long drive (6 to 7 hours) and a great destination, so many will turn it into a 3-day weekend and head down Thursday night, otherwise plan on leaving Seattle Friday night.

Breakfast will be on your own in Squamish (The White Spot is pretty generic, but there are other places).





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Assignments will be made prior to the weekend, so coordinate with your instructor where to meet.

Dinner at Howe Sound Brewery (get your own table; smaller groups tend to work better at this place – we won't make reservations).

Saturday -

8:00 am Start first climb (unless otherwise discussed with instructor)

5:00 pm Start last climb of the day

6:00 pm Meet up in Smoke Bluffs parking lot for debrief

Sunday -

8:00 am Start first climb (unless otherwise discussed with instructor)

3:00 pm Start last climb of the day

4:00 pm Meet up in Smoke Bluffs parking lot for debrief and carpool home.

DIRECTIONS

Squamish, Vancouver BC, Canada

Travel time is typically around 5 hours.

Note: Hwy 1 Port Mann bridge is now a toll bridge with automated tolling by license plate scanning(\$3/crossing with pass or \$5.20/crossing without).

[This bypass route is toll free \(Google Maps\)](#)

- North on I-5 to the truck border crossing at Blaine on route 15
- Continue North on Canadian 15 through Cloverdale to 1 (14 miles from the border) be careful not to take 10 or 1A which you will pass on the way. Note you'll need the left lane as the right lane slots you neatly on to the east bound carriage way!
- Head west on 1 through New Westminster towards Vancouver
- Stay on 1 through Vancouver and keep heading towards Whistler
- Take the 99 North (Sea to Sky highway) towards Whistler
- After about 20Km you pass through a small town (Britannia)
- Take a right about 3 miles after Murrin Park, and 800m after the Klahanie campsite/restaurant and Shannon falls, there is a pull out on the right called [Stawamus Chief Provincial Park](#) just over the brow of the hill, complete with huge Squamish billboard.
- Head through a gap in the back if the gate is open, otherwise park outside and walk in (past the restrooms).
- Turn right and go about 200m until the track enters the forest.
- Camping is on "gravel pads only".



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NOTE: You may want to park outside the gate if you want to be sure of being able to get out early for breakfast.





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Route Beta:

Squamish is a baby version of Yosemite with similar granite scenery, except it's got a honking great fjord in the bottom and is normally a lot cooler eh! There's lots of crack climbing and huge slabs (with Yosemite-like run outs in places) The routes described here are but a limited selection of those available, and tend to concentrate on the easier grades on the apron and some of the smaller local crags. There has been a lot of recent development in the area so grab a guide book if you fancy these.

Multi-pitch Routes

The Apron

This is the big slab under the walls of the Chief. Drive 200m down the hill towards Squamish. Pull off on the right by the bridge and road blocking gates. The climbs are mainly low angle friction with some cracks. Allow plenty of time if you're unused to multipitch routes. As a general rule of thumb the routes get steeper and harder towards the left. The descents are via a ledge/trail which goes from top left to bottom right. The only tricky descent is for Snake where you have to go up and left to a monument prior to descending back to the right.

Finding the start of some of these routes can be tricky too - for the routes on the right (e.g. Banana peel and Diedre) turn off right as soon as you've crossed the log with steps and head steeply up the trail through the forest to a long ledge where the rock proper starts. The other listed routes you can go straight on for a while after the log.

Take a photocopy of the topo with you!





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Multi-pitch Routes

5.8	Banana Peel	Multipitch slab route with 7 pitches. Mostly easier friction climbing, with one or two 5.8 moves thrown in.
5.8	Diedre	Not really 5.8 at all until you get to the last move (although the 2 steep pitches might feel quite intimidating if it's your first outing into this sort of terrain!). Simple route finding once you get to the huge Diedre, but be careful to traverse left on the second pitch rather than take on the unprotected and rather harder direct route. Either get there early or be in a party mood -it's a popular route.
5.8	Calculus Crack	Good quality 5.8 multipitch. The start is in the forest off to the left of most of the Apron routes. Ask someone who knows.
5.9	St Vita's Dance	Another good quality multipitch route that shares the same two-pitch start as Calculus Crack. There is a good 5.10a alternative to the second pitch.
5.9	The snake	A meandering route up the slabs, mainly a lot easier than 5.9 but beware of the top pitch under the overhang. It can get really wet and scary!





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Single-pitch Routes

The Smoke Bluffs

These are the crags just to the NE of the town. To get there, follow directions for the alternative camping above, but once on Loggers Lane there is a car park after about 200 yds on the right. Walk in is up the trail past Crag X.

There are a lot of excellent single pitch climbs here, particularly jamming cracks in the 5.7 to 5.8 range.



5.4/5.5	Sundry	Slab crag	If you follow the trail towards Octopus's garden from the cul-de-sac, about half way there (after the logs with steps cut in them) there is a newish crag with 4 easy angled cracks all around 5.4/5.5 (although the left most one might be harder).
5.6	Corn Flakes	Neat and Cool	Huge jug pulling exercise, protectable with just about anything including big slings.
5.6	Corner b	Elephants Arse	A new route in the Elephants Arse area. Easy route with loads gear and rests. It's the clean white corner right of the bolted slab.
5.7	Corner a	Elephants Arse	Another corner, in Elephants Arse area just to the left to the bolted slab (and right of the Wobbler?).
5.7	Cat crack	Neat and Cool	A fine jamming crack. You could place your entire rack in the first 6ft if you wanted to, but resist, there is more gear



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			to be had higher! Barely 5.7.
5.7	Corner crack	Neat and Cool	Good corner climbing with loads gear, but for a longer healthier life try transferring to the crack in the corner to the left on the ledge below the top rather than taking the continuation "chimney" to the tree stump.
5.7	Alexis cracks	Alexis cracks	A couple of good leading cracks with other top roping climbs nearby. But get there early these are popular and often "gang roped".
5.8	Penny Lane	Penny Lane	Good route with an "off the ground" 5.9 option.
5.8	The Quarryman	Penny Lane	Good varied climbing with some nice jamming at the top.
5.8	Octopus' garden	Octopus' garden	An easy hand jamming crack. Easily protectable without friends until the top 10ft. There are also a number of other 5.8 jamming cracks here which are fun. Give them a go too.
5.8	Pipe dream	Octopus' garden	A desperate off width! (Aren't they all?). Technically only just 5.8 but it might feel harder without some large friends.
5.8	First Class		A cruise for 5.8, good gear (mainly small rocks).



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5.9	Smoke Bluff connection	Z crag	An excellent outing! 4 high quality pitches. Good pro on all pitches but remember to place gear for your second on the 4th pitch (a nice traverse - give your second your camera). Also beware of the 3rd pitch which has a boulder problem start (i.e. its b...y hard). Beware of long lines.
5.9	Clandestine affair	Penny Lane	Rumored to be good but I've not done it. Looks like the start may be tricky to protect - a good place to try out the double ropes?
5.10	Neat and cool	Neat and cool	Another fine route - steep but with buckets. A couple of largish friends will steady the nerves at the crux. (5.10a)
5.10	Flying circus	Neat and cool	Really nice delicate climbing on a face (5.10a). Worth a top rope if there isn't a line to lead it and you don't feel up to it. If you're leading, the gear is mainly small to medium rocks.
5.11	Crime of the century	Penny Lane	A desperate struggle for survival if you try to lead it. I'd recommend setting a top rope on it after you've done Penny Lane. (fun)



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Murrin Park

This is the state park to the south of Squamish. Good parking and a short walk to the crags. There are bunches more interesting climbs here - some quite easy one too.

5.4 to 5.8	Sugar Loaf	This low-angle crag is a short 5-minute walk from the parking lot and has 6 routes ranging from 5.4 to 5.8. Some belays are off the transmission tower at the top!
5.8	Out of the Bog	An awesome walk in, park in the right place and you could belay to the steering wheel. My sort of route! But get there early or stand in line.
5.8	The Worlds toughest milkman	Do it! And have a photographer on the descent to the right of the pitch to catch the bulging veins in the arms (or was that bulging eyes in the head?)





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Advanced Rock Climbing Techniques

Preparation

- ✓ Be in shape for chosen route—know your fitness level
 - Safety, for you and others on team
 - More enjoyable
 - Ability to deal when things go wrong—reserve energy
- ✓ Get early starts: after getting going, you'll never be sorry
- ✓ Know as much as possible—research the route!
- ✓ Be prepared to encounter the unknown
- ✓ Plan for stronger partner to lead harder pitches—stagger leads accordingly.

Racking

- ✓ Work hard to keep gear organized
- ✓ Rack heavy gear toward back
- ✓ On hard pitches, trim rack if possible because weight is your adversary
- ✓ Lightweight biners help a lot: a small alpine rack may have 30+ biners
 - (shave one ounce per biner = 2 pounds!)
- ✓ Balance range of cams against weight of stoppers
- ✓ Gear slings:
 - Easy to transfer gear (if climbers are not vastly different size)
 - Easier to get to in chimneys, overhangs
 - Can block view of feet or even trip you up
 - Can swing out of reach
 - Can easily swing gear into reach.
- ✓ Gear loops on harness
 - Slightly harder to transfer gear
 - Very difficult to reach gear in chimneys, or one handed hangs
 - Doesn't block view of feet
 - Gear won't trip you, especially on slabs (hanging below knees)
 - Tends to make harness crowded, more challenging to find correct piece.

Belaying

- ✓ Stack rope to avoid tangles and snags
 - Manage rope to prevent rock-fall and keep out of rope-eating cracks
 - Butterfly through a sling—to avoid tangling, make each successive loop shorter than the last
 - Some use a rope bag on hanging belays
 - On some rock, usually granite, it is possible to trail the rope down the face, but look out for cracks and flakes!





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- For leading in blocks (not swapping leads each pitch) you can swap knots at belay or try to “flip” the rope stack—for a tough lead, it’s best to reflake
- ✓ Anchoring in
 - Tie in close to avoid being pulled around by a fall, but if position is bombproof, don’t waste time:
 - Not in danger of being pulled out of position
 - If pitch ahead is low angle (easy ground)
 - Set up for upward and downward force
 - Consider both the follower and the next lead
 - Not always necessary, or possible, to get three solid anchor points.
 - With ultra-bomber anchors, such as a large tree or boulder, you might only use it but backup the sling
 - For rock gear, consider two pieces absolute minimum
 - Not always necessary to have an anchor!
 - For running belay on easy ground, or follower coming up last pitch, can look for natural features to place your body behind
 - Don’t tie into rap rings
- ✓ Rope management
 - Top Rope – keep reasonably tight
 - Leading – keep a small amount of slack for leader:
 - Can haul in fast during fall
 - If unanchored, belayer can run or jump
 - Keep more slack in system at overhangs or when just clipped in (so a fall will not pull leader right into rock)
 - Be aware when leader places gear high: bring in slack as leader approaches gear, like they’re on toprope
- ✓ Rope signals: know the usual order of events.
 - Rope stops for extended time when leader puts in belay
 - Then, the rope moves steadily while leader brings in slack
 - After rope comes tight, leader puts second on belay
 - Leader signals follower they’re on belay: verbally and, if necessary, otherwise: i.e. tug three times (often with rope stretch and drag, belayer can’t feel)
 - After recognizing you’re on belay (through verbal or other signal, or about 30 secs after all slack has been taken up) the second cleans anchor and starts to climb.
 - Should note the very characteristic belay pattern of rope movement
- ✓ If leader asks for rope and doesn’t get it, they must set up an anchor and belay.
- ✓ A minimum amount of communication is best for clarity. After the leader starts out, try to limit to using “Take, Slack, Off Belay” for leader and “Half Rope, 20 Feet, Belay Off” for the belayer.





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- ✓ Highly recommend radios!
 - Makes communication easy and stress free.

Leading

- ✓ Gear
 - Place early and often to avoid fall factor
 - Can space pro farther toward the end of pitch—for clean falls only!
 - Look for natural gear—fast, easy, often multi-directional
 - Use fixed gear but inspect first, back up if needed. Let your follower know it's fixed gear if not totally obvious
 - Put gear in at rests if possible, look ahead and plan stances accordingly
 - For difficult moves you can climb up to scope, then down climb to rest, then up to place, then down to rest, then go!
 - When not close to the ground or another hazard such as a ledge, try to place gear below chest level so you don't take up your next finger and hand placements.
 - Don't over protect on hard spots or under protect on easy ground. Once leaving the easy ground you might have wished that you placed something.
- ✓ Eliminate rope drag—save time and energy
 - Make conscious route choices, extend slings, use doubles or even double ropes
- ✓ Use loose holds? Yes, sometimes, but use them right
- ✓ Call off belay as soon as possible
- ✓ Pull in slack before putting second on belay, but not before you will be ready to belay immediately following. (Finish anchor, put on jacket, get food and water ready, then pull up the slack.)
- ✓ Tie off partner with figure 8 on brake side of belay device – fast and simple for swapping leads
- ✓ When backing off, leave at least two pieces
 - Try to always be smooth and efficient.
 - Saving 10 minutes per pitch = 1 hour on a 6 pitch climb!

Following

- ✓ Be fast and smooth while climbing
- ✓ Don't outpace your belayer
- ✓ Use good stances to take out gear – may be above or below piece
- ✓ Organize as you go, if possible. This can also be used as time to rest.
- ✓ Ask for tension if necessary
- ✓ Abandon gear if time is really short
- ✓ Don't drop gear! Always have something clipped to rope
- ✓ Be fast on gear transfer





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- Only pass one “thing” at a time, i.e. all medium size nuts, or three single slings
- Acknowledge partner has the item before letting go, “got it”

Descents

- ✓ Down climbing easier terrain can be faster than rappelling, but the follower becomes the “leader”
- ✓ First person down carries rap anchor material and extra rope
- ✓ First person down also does pull test
- ✓ Rope throwing – use two coils
- ✓ When not to throw: lot of things to snag on below, high wind
- ✓ To tie end knots or not to tie? Always assume untied and look for end of rope while rappelling
- ✓ Rope pulling techniques
 - “Whip wave” right as rope comes through anchors
 - If caught work both sides, then try weighting and suddenly releasing the stretch
- ✓ Climbing back up to get the rope happens; be careful and plan out a safe way to retrieve

Putting it all together:

- ✓ Efficiency is key
 - Practice transitioning between climbing modes: static belay, to running belay, to French free to aid and back again.
- ✓ Climbing with the same partner for a while speeds things up more than anything. Know your partner.
- ✓ Always be one step ahead, prepare for what is going to happen next.
- ✓ Communicate the plan, well in advance and during the climb.
- ✓ Everybody needs a head lamp! Without light movement stops.
- ✓ Train, train, train!
- ✓ Be ambitious! Be safe! Have fun!

