



DESERT ROCK EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

This list was designed for the “worst case scenario,” a trip with significant inclement weather. In serious conditions it’s not uncommon for a climber to need every piece of clothing and equipment on this list. However, if a program does not encounter significant weather, there may be items here that are not used. As you prepare for your trip, it’s important to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

At the start of the day, your guide will ensure that everyone is adequately prepared for the day. They will also be able to refine your day pack to make sure that you bring exactly what’s needed given the forecast. It is acceptable to bring too much clothing or equipment to your initial meeting. And it is acceptable to bring things that you have questions about. Extra equipment can always be left behind in the van.

Red Rock, NV: The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is located in the high desert about 20 miles west of Las Vegas. In the spring (March and April) and the Fall (October and November), when climbing conditions are at their best, daytime highs often climb to 80°F with nighttime lows near 40°F to 50°F. The winters are normally cool and snow often covers the ground deep in the shaded canyon floors. Rain or snow occasionally falls, but the vast majority of days are sunny and fair. The weather can be breezy, especially high on rock routes.

Joshua Tree, CA: Joshua Tree National Park is located in the high desert of Southern California. The winters are generally cool with highs in the 60’s and lows at night in the 30’s. Rain, or even snow, occasionally falls, but most days are sunny and pleasant. Routes in the shade are often too cold in the middle of the winter, but those in the sun seem just right. The weather can be breezy, and it is a good idea to bring a lightweight wind jacket.

Rentals: Equipment that is available for rent through the AAI is designated with a “Rent” check box. These items must be requested for rent and paid for prior to your trip start, this can be done either via email (sw-coordinator@alpineinstitute.com) or phone (360-671-1505).

Call or Email the Equipment Shop for Advice on Gear: Please feel free to contact the shop to help you get ready for your trip. Your comfort and safety depend on being well equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we’re here to help you prepare.

Call: (360) 671-1570 - Email: shop@AlpineInstitute.com - Website: <https://shop.alpineinstitute.com/>

Please be sure to check the forecast several days prior to your course to ensure that you are properly prepared.

[NOAA Red Rock Canyon Weather](#)

[NOAA Joshua Tree National Park Weather](#)

CLOTHING

Sun Hat

Ideally fits under a helmet. Ball caps with a button on top are NOT recommended. Visors or athletic hats are more comfortable, vent better, and are easier to clean and dry out.

Buy
 Own

Buff/Neck Gaiter (Optional)

Look for one that is UPF-rated. Lighter colors are better for warm conditions and darker for colder conditions.

Buy
 Own

Sun Glasses

Preferably with UVA/UVB protection

Buy
 Own

Headlamp

Bring extra batteries or charger for rechargeable battery style. Ideal range is 200-350 lumens.

Examples: Petzl Swift RL, Petzl Actik

Buy
 Own

Sports Bra

Wool or synthetic. Comfort is key. Avoid bras with adjusters and clasps, as they could get compressed by your pack straps. Racerbacks are a popular option.

Buy
 Own

Sun Hoody

A lightweight, wool or synthetic sun hoody is ideal. Look for one with UPF 30+ sun protection. UPF Clothing protects better from the sun than sunscreen.

Examples: Patagonia Capilene Cool Daily Hoody, Outdoor Research Echo, Rab Pulse

Buy
 Own

Active Insulation Layer

Lightweight "gridded fleece" or lightweight synthetic insulated jacket. Hood preferred. Active insulation weight - 40g/m². Heavier insulation weight - 60-80g/m²

Examples: Patagonia R1, Patagonia Nano Air, Arc'Teryx Proton LT

Buy
 Own

Soft Shell Jacket or Windproof Jacket

A soft shell jacket is considered an "action layer." Its materials are designed to stretch and breathe while also maintaining wind and water resistance. This allows the user to leave this jacket on for a wide range of temps and conditions throughout the day without the hassle of constantly changing layers.

Windproof jackets are lightweight and packable, but lack the breathability and stretchy nature of the soft shell. Windproof jackets are ideal for blocking wind and light precipitation during low output activities.

Example Softshells: Black Diamond Alpine Start Hoody, Rab Borealis, Mountain Equipment Squall, Patagonia Houdini Air

Example Windproof: Patagonia Houdini, Arc'Teryx Squamish Hoody

Buy
 Own

Insulation Jacket

AKA the "puffy". Down or synthetic. This piece is worn in cold conditions or when not moving. Hood preferred. If choosing down, water-resistant down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the jacket gets wet.

Examples: Arc'Teryx Nuclei FL, Patagonia DAS Light, Patagonia Down Sweater, Arc'Teryx Cerium, Rab Alpine Series

Buy
 Own

CLOTHING CONTINUED

Hardshell Jacket (Waterproof Rain Jacket) (Optional)

Non-insulated jacket with a waterproof and breathable membrane. Three-layer construction is recommended. It must have a hood, ideally helmet-compatible. When sizing, make sure it can fit over other layers.

Examples: Patagonia Torrentshell, Arc'Teryx Alpha AR, Mountain Equipment Lhotse

- Buy
 Own

Undergarments

Wool or synthetic.

- Buy
 Own

Soft Shell Pants

Thin, weather-resistant, breathable, and stretchy. You will wear these a majority of the time.

Examples: Patagonia Altvia, Mountain Equipment Ibex, Arc'Teryx Gamma FL

- Buy
 Own

Hard Shell Pants (Waterproof Rain Pants) (Optional)

Non-insulated, waterproof, and breathable membrane. Full side zips are recommended. Ideally has at least 1/4 length zipper from the bottom of the pant cuff in order to get pants on and off while wearing mountain boots. When sizing make sure it is able to fit over a base layer and soft shell pants. Insulated ski pants are strongly discouraged due to lack of waterproofness and heavy insulation.

Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield

Examples: Patagonia Torrentshell, Arc'Teryx Beta Pant

- Buy
 Own

Socks

Wool or synthetic socks that are at least mid-calf height.

Examples: Darn Tough Coolmax Lightweight

- Buy
 Own

Approach Shoes

Made with sticky climbing rubber, used for approaches to and from the rock climbing areas as well as for climbing some of the easier routes.

Example Approach: La Sportiva TX4, TX2, Scarpa Rapid

- Buy
 Own

Harness

Make sure the harness has a belay loop and gear loops. When sizing, it should fit over your clothes when you have multiple layers on. A more robust harness is ideal for this course.

Example Padded Harness: Petzl Adjama, Arc'Teryx AR-395a

- Buy
 Own
 Rent

Helmet

Must be UIAA-rated for climbing. Be aware that foam, break-away style helmets like the ones listed below are susceptible to damage if being loaded in a checked bag.

Examples: Petzl Meteor, Black Diamond Vision

- Buy
 Own
 Rent

Rock Shoes

Focus on comfort, so they can be worn all day. Avoid technical or aggressive rock shoes with a downturn. Avoid curled toes when sizing.

Example : La Sportiva Tarantulace, La Sportiva TC Pro

- Buy
 Own
 Rent

CLIMBING

Slings (Optional - but HIGHLY recommended)

Bring one 48in (120cm) and one 24in (60cm) pre-sewn sling. Slings must be UIAA-rated for climbing.

Examples: Mammut Contact, Black Diamond Nylon Runner

Buy
 Own

Belay Device

Bring an auto-blocking device that accepts 2 ropes.

Examples: Black Diamond ATC Guide, Petzl Reverso

Buy
 Own

Cordelette (Optional - but HIGHLY recommended)

A 180cm-240cm length sling or 18-24 feet of 6mm accessory cord can be used as a cordelette.

Example : Mammut Contact, Bluewater Titan Cord

Buy
 Own

Carabiners

Must be UIAA-rated for climbing. Suggested:

- 4 large pear-shaped munter-style locking carabiners
- 5 non-locking wire gate carabiners

Examples: Petzl Attache, Camp Photon Wire

Buy
 Own

Assisted Braking Device

Strongly recommended but not required. For belaying.

Example: Petzl GriGri, Edelrid Megajul, Black Diamond ATC Pilot

Buy
 Own

Belay Gloves

Lightweight and breathable gloves with a durable leather palm are ideal.

Buy
 Own

Multi-Pitch / Day Pack

18L to 25L is an ideal size.

Example : Patagonia Linked 18 Black Diamond Blitz 28

Buy
 Own

Rappel Backup (Optional - but HIGHLY recommended)

The Sterling hollow Block or Beal Jammy are recommended for their heat resistant properties. A 4ft length of 6mm nylon accessory cord will also suffice.

Examples: Beal Jammy 35mm, Sterling HollowBlock 2 13.5

Buy
 Own

Nut Tool (Optional)

For cleaning traditional protection.

Buy
 Own

Rock Climbing Rack (Optional)

If you have it then bring it. Make sure and mark your gear so it doesn't get mixed up. Nail polish is the best way to permanently mark your gear, tape is strongly discouraged as it tends to fall off and become trash.

Buy
 Own

Chalk Bag and Chalk (Optional)

Nice for hot days and sweaty hands.

Buy
 Own

Crack Gloves (Optional)

Can also use climbers tape.

Buy
 Own

CAMPING

OPTIONAL - ONLY NEEDED IF CAMPING

Tent

3 season tents are appropriate for this course's camp locations.

Example 3-season: Big Agnes Copper Spur, REI Half Dome

Buy
 Own

Sleeping Bag

Synthetic or Down. 20°F to 30°F (-6°C to -1°C) is an appropriate temperature rating for this course's camp location.

Buy
 Own

Sleeping Pad

One inflatable or closed cell foam pad.

Buy
 Own

Stove and Fuel

Liquid fuel or canister stove. Fuel is available at the AAI Equipment Shop.

Example : Soto Windmaster, MSR Windburner

Buy
 Own

Pots

Bring 1 0.5L to 2L pot depending on what you are planning to cook.

NOTE: If you have a complete stove system like the Jetboil or MSR Reactor and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you do not need to bring another pot.

Buy
 Own

Utensils

Don't forget the official "most forgotten item" - The spoon or spork. Long-handled spoons make stirring hot liquids safer and metal ones tend not to break as easily in cold temps.

Buy
 Own

Bowl

Bring one.

Buy
 Own

Lighters

Bring two.

Buy
 Own

Hydration

3L capacity is recommended, though some people need more.

A common approach is to bring a 2-3 liter bladder and a 1 liter hard sided bottle. The bottle is an important backup to the bladder if it gets punctured. A hard-sided bottle may also double as a mug for hot water, though not every bottle is designed to hold boiling water.

Examples: Nalgene 32 oz bottle, Hydrapak Seeker 2-3L, MSR Dromedary 4-8L

Buy
 Own

Food

You are responsible to bring your own food for the duration of the course. Please consult our meal planning page.

Buy
 Own

OTHER ESSENTIALS

Toothbrush and Toothpaste

Travel size recommended

Buy
 Own

Hand Sanitizer and/or Wet Wipes

Required. Used after going to the bathroom and before eating. Wet wipes can be used for the “mountain shower.”

Buy
 Own

Toilet Paper

The provided solid waste bags have a small amount of toilet paper with them, but most people do not find this to be adequate. Estimate how much you’ll need for a program of this length and place that in a plastic zip-lock bag. An extra zip lock bag can be helpful for pack-out of used paper. If you plan to use wet wipes, be wary of scented or exfoliating types as these can be an irritant for some people.

Buy
 Own

Pee Cloth (Optional)

A reusable, antimicrobial pee cloth, used in the place of toilet paper or wet wipes.

Example: Kula Cloth

Buy
 Own

Urination Device (Optional)

Pee funnels such as the GoGirl or Freshette. Rigid pee funnels hold their shape better. Used in conjunction with a pee bottle or while on a rope team. These can help mitigate the need to squat. *Example: Freshette*

Buy
 Own

Menstrual Cup (Optional)

There are many things to consider about backcountry menstruation, click on the [link](#) for more information.

Examples: Diva cup, Saalt, Lunette

Buy
 Own

Sunscreen

At least an SPF of 30+, zinc-based is preferred. Small travel-size tubes are recommended so you can put them in a close-by pocket for easy access.

Examples: ZBlok 45, 2oz containers are a nice size.

Buy
 Own

Lip Balm

Make sure it is SPF Rated.

Example: Blistex Gold Five Star Protection SPF 30

Buy
 Own

Personal First Aid Kit

- Band aids
- Blister Treatment
- Prescription Drugs, Ibuprofen, etc
- If you wear contacts, make sure you have spares if you can’t see without them

Buy
 Own

Repair Kit

- Duct tape
- Zip ties
- 6-10ft of 3mm accessory cord
- 2 trash bags

Buy
 Own

OTHER OPTIONAL ITEMS

These items are not required, although many are nice "luxury" items that can make your trip more enjoyable.

Entertainment

Books, games, cards, music player, kindle, etc. For evenings or other down time.

- Buy
 Own

Portable Charging Device

Phone charger, battery pack, or solar panel. You are responsible for your alarm clock each morning. If you are going to use your phone, be sure you have enough power to accommodate this.

NOTE: Solar panels should only be used to charge battery packs. Battery packs should be used to charge devices. Inappropriate use of a solar charger could lead to the depletion of a device's power.

- Buy
 Own

Insect Repellent

Biting insects such as mosquitoes and blackflies can be prevalent during different times of the season depending on conditions and location. This is a nice item to have just in case.

Sometimes even a headnet is a nice item to have. Optional smartphone app. Please have the Mt. Baker (all aspects) maps downloaded prior to the start of your course.

- Buy
 Own

Camera

Phone cameras or small point-and-shoot cameras are preferred. SLR cameras are not recommended due to their size and bulk.

- Buy
 Own

Comfortable Clothing and Footwear

Breathable footwear - like flip flops - as well as some comfortable cotton clothing can be nice to change into after you get back to the van.

- Buy
 Own

Car Charger

Consider bringing an extra battery pack as well, having a lot of people using car charger cables is difficult.

- Buy
 Own