

**#1**  
2018/19  
en/de

# ROUTE SETTER

a magazine for route setters  
and climbing gyms

**GYM MANAGEMENT**  
the five essentials

**ROUTE SETTING**  
past - present - future

**TRAINING**  
tools and know-how

**PRODUCT CATALOGUE**  
fresh gear for your gym



## ROUTE SETTER MAGAZINE

#1 - 2018/19

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The Route Setter Magazine is published once a year (November) by Vertical-Life s.r.l., available in print and in a digital edition worldwide. The magazine is devoted to gym climbing and its connected businesses.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

◆ Climbing is no longer the niche fringe sport comprised of non-traditional free spirits, as it was when many of us dedicated ourselves to it some time ago. Climbing has become a mass phenomenon, a fitness sport, and a welcome opportunity for millions of exercise enthusiasts worldwide to switch off from daily life.

Volunteer climbing walls have become professional sports facilities with sometimes more than a thousand visitors every day. Thoroughbred climbers have become gym managers and entrepreneurs, climbing day labourers have become sought-after route setters, and competition climbers will soon become Olympic champions.

Climbing is getting big.

As the industry becomes more professional, processes are defined and continually optimized. New companies, professions, and networks emerge.

Vertical-Life offers a platform for networking, enabling an exchange between developers, gym managers, route setters, event managers, coaches, athletes, and recreational athletes - created by climbers for climbers.

With the release of Route Setter Magazine, we want to open this network and share knowledge. It should reflect the zeitgeist of our industry and provide information and suggestions.

For this first edition, we tried to find an interesting mix of articles, interviews, and product presentations in cooperation with Christian Popien. We will also share the initial results of a large market study, for which more than 6,000 climbers were interviewed.

I look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

◆ Klettern ist nicht mehr die kleine Trendsportart für Querdenker und Freiheitsliebende, der sich viele von uns vor langer Zeit verschrieben haben. Klettern ist mittlerweile ein Massenphänomen, ein Fitnesssport und eine willkommene Chance der Entschleunigung für Millionen Sportliebende weltweit.

Aus ehrenamtlich betriebenen Kletterwänden sind professionelle Sportanlagen mit teilweise mehr als Tausend Besuchern täglich geworden. Vollblutkletterer wurden zu Hallenmanagern und Unternehmern, kletternde Gelegenheitsarbeiter zu begehrten Routenbauprofis und Wettkampfkletterer werden schon bald zu olympischen Champions.

Klettern wird groß.

Die Branche professionalisiert sich, Prozesse werden definiert und immer weiter optimiert. Es entstehen neue Unternehmen, Berufe und Netzwerke.

Mit Vertical-Life bieten wir eine Plattform zur Vernetzung. Sie ermöglicht den Austausch zwischen Erschließern, Hallenmanagern, Routenbauern, Eventmanagern, Trainern, Athleten und Freizeitsportlern – von Kletterern für Kletterer.

Mit dem Route Setter Magazin möchten wir dieses Netzwerk öffnen und Wissen teilen. Es soll den Zeitgeist unserer Branche widerspiegeln, informieren und Anregungen bieten.

Für die erste Auflage haben wir in Zusammenarbeit mit Christian Popien versucht, einen interessanten Mix aus Artikeln, Interviews und Produktvorstellungen zu finden. Zudem teilen wir die ersten Ergebnisse einer großen Marktstudie, für die über 6000 Kletterer befragt wurden.

Ich freue mich auf euer Feedback und auf Anregungen.

**Matthias Polig**  
CEO and Co-Founder Vertical-Life

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# THE FIVE PILLARS OF CLIMBING GYM MANAGEMENT

## DIE 5 SÄULEN DES KLETTERHALLENMANAGEMENTS

TEXT: CHRISTIAN POPIEN



Bouldering gym and cafe in an old industrial building at Bahnhof Blo - Bouldercafé Wuppertal  
Boulderhalle und Café in einem alten Industriegebäude - Bahnhof Blo - Bouldercafé Wuppertal

Photo: Christopher Pattberg

◆ *I am often asked what I do for a living. I run a climbing gym, and the enquirers who are met with that answer often give me a surprised look and reply with, "well, you've turned your hobby into your profession". I've thought about their response often in recent years. How much do my work and profession still have to do with my hobby and the sport of climbing?*

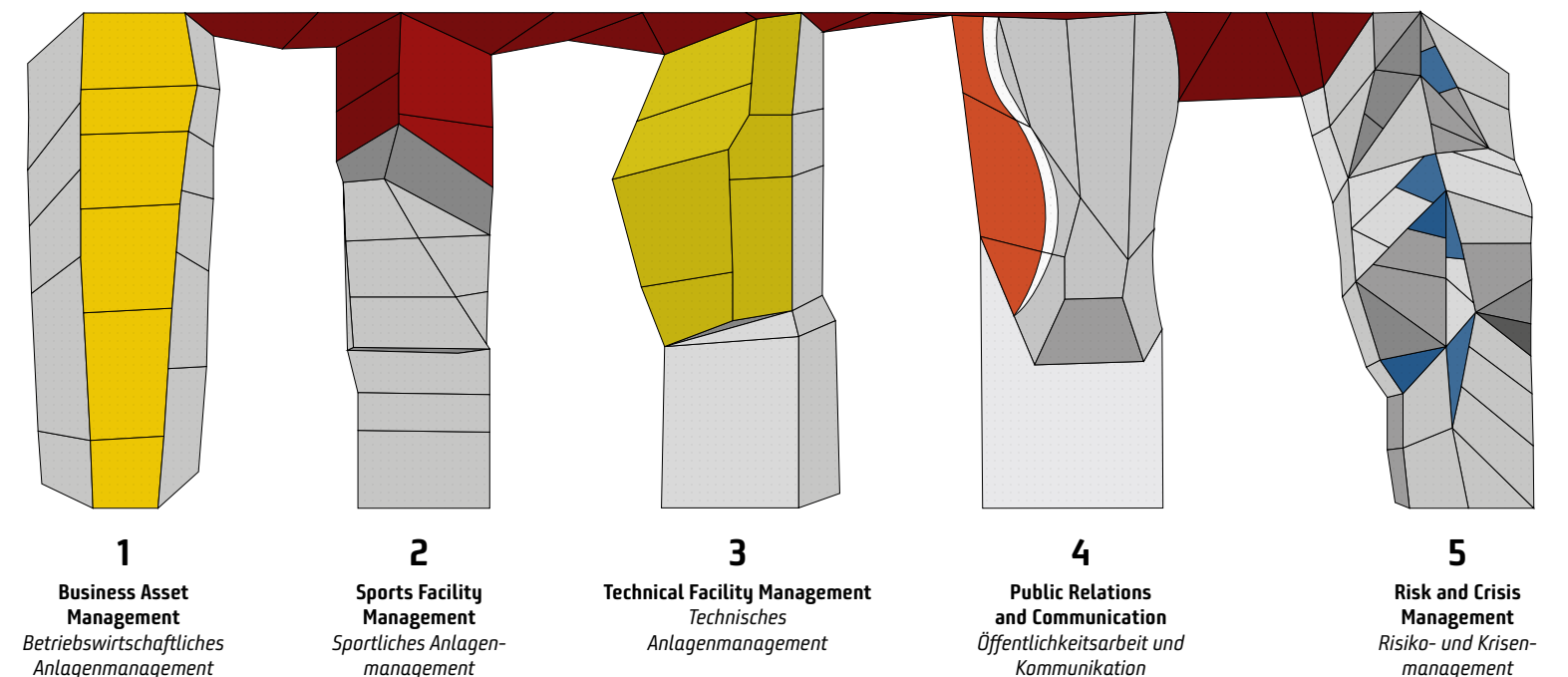
The climbing and bouldering landscape has changed rapidly in the last 15 years. Expectations and requirements for modern and contemporary climbing facilities have become more extensive and complex. Legal requirements and standards for operating a climbing gym continue to expand. Having passion for the sport, serving good coffee, and telling guests exciting stories about rock climbing are no longer enough to successfully run a climbing gym.

As operators of climbing facilities, we act as customer service providers. We are employers with a range of employees, and we are entrepreneurs with the standard labor, tax, and financial obligations in an increasingly competitive market. The field of activity extends from the sports and fitness arena over to retail trade, and on to gastronomy, as well as the handy work of route setting. The range of work and action is so varied, that many industry-wide institutions, as well as the usual tax offices, Employer's Liability Insurance Associations, and other association and trade unions, find it difficult to assign climbing gyms to the right category.

◆ *Was ich beruflich mache, werde ich oft gefragt. Ich betreibe eine Kletter- und Boulderhalle, antworte ich dann und ernte neben vielen fragenden Blicken auch oft die Antwort: „Ach schön, dann haben Sie ja Ihr Hobby zum Beruf gemacht!“ Eine Antwort, über die ich in den letzten Jahren viel nachgedacht habe. Wie viel haben meine Arbeit, mein berufliches Tun und Handeln noch mit meinem Hobby und dem Sport Klettern zu tun?*

Die Kletter- und Boulderhallenlandschaft hat sich in den letzten 15 Jahren gravierend verändert. Die Erwartungen und Anforderungen an ein modernes und zeitgemäßes Anlagenmanagement sind vielseitiger und umfangreicher geworden. Gesetzliche Auflagen und Vorgaben haben auch vor Kletterhallen nicht halt gemacht. Leidenschaft für den Sport, guten Kaffee zuzubereiten und seinen Gästen spannende Geschichten vom Klettern am Fels zu erzählen, reichen heute nicht mehr aus, um eine Kletter- und Boulderhalle erfolgreich zu betreiben.

Wir Betreiber von Kletteranlagen agieren als kunden- und serviceorientierte Dienstleister, als Arbeitgeber mit unterschiedlich angestellten Mitarbeitern und als Unternehmer mit den üblichen arbeits-, steuer- und finanzrechtlichen Verpflichtungen in einem zunehmenden Wettbewerb. Das Tätigkeitsfeld erstreckt sich vom Sport- und Fitnessbereich über den Einzelhandel bis hin zum Gastronomie- und Handwerksbetrieb. Das Arbeits- und Handlungsspektrum ist dabei so vielseitig, dass wir von vielen Institutionen der Industrie, aber auch z.B. Finanzämtern, Berufsgenossenschaften, Verbänden oder Gewerkschaften nur schwer ein- bzw. einer bestimmten Kategorie zugeordnet werden können.



Climbing has now established itself as a popular sport in mainstream society. The climbing gym is now a place where one goes for their after-work fitness just like they would the swimming pool or the regular gym. The customers in climbing gyms have long ceased to be just the rock-climbing freaks that were typically encountered a few years back. Children's birthday parties and company events are just as much a part of the business portfolio, as are personal training and courses for beginner and advanced climbers.

Customers expect a minimum standard of service; they want to book courses online, find clear and detailed information on websites, and

Klettern hat sich längst als Breitensport in der Mitte der Gesellschaft etabliert. Man geht zum abendlichen Sport treiben und Fitnessworkout in die Kletterhalle wie ins Schwimmbad oder ins Fitness-Studio. Längst sind die Kunden in Kletterhallen nicht mehr die am Fels kletternden Freaks, wie sie noch vor einigen Jahren anzutreffen waren. Kindergeburtstage und Firmenevents gehören ebenso zum Portfolio wie individuelles Training und Kurse für Anfänger und Fortgeschrittene.

Die Kunden erwarten einen Mindeststandard an Service, möchten Kurse online buchen, übersichtliche und informative Informationen auf Websites finden und regelmäßige Berichterstattung auf Social Media

see regular posts on social media channels. In order to get a returning customer, the red tape that a new customer has go through to gain entry shouldn't be made worse by complicated pricing structures and cumbersome, time-consuming introductory courses. Achieving this while maintaining the highest possible standard of safety is where the real challenge lies. The versatile tasks and fields of work around modern gym management can be divided into five concrete areas, and thus form the five pillars of climbing gym asset management. However, these five pillars are not mutually exclusive. They are intertwined and dependent upon each other.

### Business Asset Management

Business asset management involves the creation of structures that enable me to monitor the economic efficiency of my entrepreneurial activities in my climbing facilities. Having these structures makes it possible to compare income and expenses simply and sensibly, while allowing for necessary transparency. Establishing transparency is not only important for my own evaluation, but also for tax and financial purposes. This particular topic is so complex and extensive that only small aspects can be mentioned in this article.

In order to accurately analyze my income and expenses and ensure proper bookkeeping, I use modern accounting software. Simple cash registers are no longer sufficient, and ever stricter regulations have been enacted as the fight against under-the-table wages continues.

Within the framework of business asset management, accounts must be created for posting incoming and outgoing payments. This enables sound business evaluation and meets required obligations to the tax authorities as well as potential creditors such as banks.

Personnel administration and payroll accounting are another major component in this pillar. In addition to ensuring that employees receive their earned salary, working hours must also be documented in accordance with legal requirements, such as the minimum wage law in Germany. Contributions have to be paid to social security and wage tax has to be paid. Employees must be registered with and unregistered from the health and accident insurances on the basis of compulsory insurance, and regular reports on earnings and working hours must be submitted.

As climbing gym operators, we act as employers and are faced with considerable legal obligations. These obligations are reflected in the business management of our facilities and have an impact on our actions in almost all other areas, e.g. occupational health and safety. Business asset management, with all its legal requirements and obligations, can thus be described as so complex that an early and sound cooperation with a tax consultant is inevitable. However, this complex pillar can never be completely handed over to a tax consultant. A climbing gym operator must actively participate in the business process in order to develop stable and meaningful structure, and to better understand and ensure economic success of the business.

Kanälen. Die Einstiegshürde durch komplizierte Preisgestaltung oder umständliche und zeitintensive Kurse darf nicht zu hoch sein und das alles bei dem weiterhin höchstmöglichen Standard an Sicherheit.

Die vielseitigen Aufgaben und Arbeitsfelder um ein modernes Anlagenmanagement lassen sich fünf konkreten Bereichen zuordnen und bilden damit die fünf Säulen des Anlagenmanagements. Dabei sind diese fünf Säulen niemals vollständig isoliert voneinander zu betrachten. Sie greifen ineinander und stehen in Abhängigkeit zueinander.

### Betriebswirtschaftliches Anlagenmanagement

Das betriebswirtschaftliche Anlagenmanagement beinhaltet den Aufbau von Strukturen, die es mir ermöglichen, das unternehmerische Handeln und Agieren in der Kletter- oder Boulderhalle auf Wirtschaftlichkeit zu überprüfen. Strukturen, die es möglich machen, Ein- und Ausgaben einfach und sinnvoll gegenüberzustellen, um darüber die nötige Transparenz herzustellen. Eine Transparenz, die nicht nur für die eigene Bewertung von Bedeutung, sondern aus steuer- und finanzrechtlichen Gründen notwendig und erforderlich ist. Das Thema ist so komplex und umfangreich, dass hier nur kleine Bereiche und Ausschnitte genannt werden können.

Als Basis und zentrales Werkzeug für eine Gegenüberstellung von Ein- und Ausgaben ist es zunächst notwendig, die Einnahmen mit Hilfe einer modernen Kassensoftware und dem Führen eines ordnungsgemäßen Kassenbuchs zu dokumentieren. Längst reichen einfache Handkassen nicht mehr aus und im Zuge der Schwarzgeld-Bekämpfung sind immer strengere Vorgaben durch den Gesetzgeber erlassen worden.

Im Rahmen des betriebswirtschaftlichen Anlagenmanagements sind Kontierungen und Konten zum Buchen der Ein- und Ausgaben anzulegen, die es ermöglichen, betriebswirtschaftliche Auswertungen vorzunehmen oder meinen Verpflichtungen gegenüber den Finanzämtern aber auch möglichen Gläubigern, wie Banken, nachzukommen.

Die Personalverwaltung und Personalabrechnung kann als weiterer großer Baustein in dieser Säule genannt werden. Dabei geht es nicht nur darum sicherzustellen, dass Mitarbeiter ihr verdientes Gehalt bekommen. Es sind Arbeitszeiten gemäß gesetzlicher Vorgaben, wie in Deutschland dem Mindestlohngesetz, zu dokumentieren, Beiträge an die Sozialversicherungen abzuführen und Lohnsteuer zu zahlen. Mitarbeiter sind auf Grundlage der Versicherungspflicht bei den Kranken- und Unfallversicherungen an- und abzumelden und regelmäßige Meldungen über die Verdienste und Arbeitsstunden zu übermitteln.

Als Kletter- und Boulderhallenbetreiber agieren wir plötzlich als Arbeitgeber und sehen uns erheblichen gesetzlichen Verpflichtungen gegenübergestellt. Verpflichtungen, die sich nicht nur im betriebswirtschaftlichen Anlagenmanagement niederschlagen, sondern – was z.B. den Bereich Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitssicherheit angeht – in fast allen weiteren Säulen Auswirkungen auf unser Handeln haben.

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### Sports Facility Management

Sports facility management is certainly the pillar in which most gym operators and players on the market have the best understanding and awareness. After all, it is mainly athletes and climbers who are active in the industry and operate climbing gyms.

Sports facility management includes all tasks that are necessary to manage a climbing gym. The main motivation for people to go into a climbing gym is to exercise and climb. Irrespective of whether it is a bouldering or rope climbing gym, the focus of all action within this pillar needs to be on making the sport as varied and interesting as possible. The aim is to keep the entry hurdle to the sport as low as possible through well thought-out offerings while still offering maximum safety. The most essential instrument in a climbing gym is the route setting, as it controls the climbing movement in a given facility. Beyond providing experienced and ambitious climbers with a training opportunity during bad weather, climbing must be made more accessible to a broad target group in urban areas who have discovered climbing as a new fitness activity. Climbing has become an incredibly popular sport and has demanded a rethink in the way it is presented through route construction by the players in the industry.

The setting of boulder problems and routes has a considerable influence on the style of movement, and also partly controls the safety of climbing gym patrons.

The extent of changes over the last 15 years and the developments that have taken place in route setting are discussed in the interviews with **Tom Brenzinger and Nate MacMullan on page 19** and in the article by **Peter Zeidelhack on page 30**.

Sports facility management also includes the development of functional climbing and course offerings for a wide variety of target groups.



Bouldering gym in an old industrial building at Bahnhof Blo - Bouldercafé Wuppertal  
Boulderhalle in altem Industriedenkmal Bahnhof Blo - Bouldercafé Wuppertal  
Photo: Thomas Eibenberger

Das betriebswirtschaftliche Anlagenmanagement mit all seinen gesetzlichen Vorgaben und Verpflichtungen kann also als so komplex bezeichnet werden, dass eine frühzeitige und fundierte Zusammenarbeit mit einem Steuerberater unumgänglich ist. Jedoch wird man diese komplexe Säule niemals vollständig an einen Steuerberater abgeben können. Nur, wenn man sich selber mit seinen eigenen betrieblichen Abläufen beschäftigt, ist man in der Lage stabile und sinnvolle Strukturen für diesen gesamten Bereich aufzubauen. Nur durch aktives Mitwirken in betriebswirtschaftlichen Abläufen erhöhe ich das Verständnis für die Zusammenhänge und bin in der Lage den Betrieb "Kletterhalle" wirtschaftlich zu steuern.

### Sportliches Anlagenmanagement

Das sportliche Anlagenmanagement ist sicherlich die Säule, zu der die meisten Hallenbetreiber und Akteure auf dem Markt den besten Zugang haben. Sind es doch überwiegend Sportler und Kletterer, die in der Branche aktiv sind und Kletter- und Boulderhallen betreiben.

Das sportliche Anlagenmanagement umfasst alle Aufgaben, die notwendig sind, den Sportbetrieb in einer Kletterhalle zu organisieren. Die Hauptmotivation von Menschen in eine Kletterhalle zu gehen, ist Sport auszuüben und zu klettern. Unabhängig davon ob Boulder- oder Kletterhalle kann der Fokus des gesamten Handelns innerhalb dieser Säule nur darauf liegen, den Sport so abwechslungsreich und interessant wie möglich zu gestalten. Dabei gilt es, durch inhaltlich gut durchdachte Angebote die Einstiegshürde in den Sport so gering wie möglich zu halten und trotzdem ein Höchstmaß an Sicherheit zu bieten.

Zentrales und wesentliches Instrument den Sportbetrieb einer Kletterhalle zu organisieren, ist der Routenbau. Jenes Instrument, welches das Klettern und die Ausgestaltung der Kletterbewegungen an künstlichen Kletteranlagen steuert. Längst geht es nicht mehr darum, erfahrenen und ambitionierten Kletterern eine Trainingsmöglichkeit für schlechtes Wetter zu schaffen, sondern über den Routenbau den Klettersport zugänglicher zu machen für eine breite Zielgruppe im urbanen Raum, welche Klettern als neues Fitnessangebot für sich entdeckt hat. Klettern ist Breitensport geworden und erfordert in der Ausgestaltung des Sports durch den Routenbau schon seit längerem ein Umdenken von den Akteuren in der Branche.

Dabei hat das Schrauben der Boulder und Kletterrouten nicht nur erheblichen Einfluss auf die Art und Form der Bewegung, sondern steuert in Teilen auch die Sicherheit für Sportler und Besucher.

Wie umfangreich diese Veränderungen in den letzten 15 Jahren waren und welche zentralen Entwicklungen es gegeben hat, verdeutlichen das Interviews mit **Tom Brenzinger und Nate McMullan auf Seite 19** und der Artikel von **Peter Zeidelhack auf Seite 30**.

Das sportliche Anlagenmanagement umfasst aber auch die Ausarbeitung von funktionierenden Kletter- und Kursangeboten für unterschiedlichste Zielgruppen. Die Angebotsvielfalt reicht von Einsteiger- und Fortgeschrittenenkursen über Kindergeburtstage bis hin zu Gruppenangeboten für Schulen und Unternehmen. Die sportlichen Angebote müssen inhaltlich ausgearbeitet, in der Preisgestaltung wirtschaftlich kalkuliert und das ausführende Personal umfangreich geschult werden. Die Angebote müssen die Zielgruppe erreichen, unkompliziert zu buchen und im Hintergrund einfach zu verwalten sein. Zunehmend geht es hierbei nicht nur um Kommunikation und Marketing, sondern auch um die Ausarbeitung und Nutzung von digitalen Lösungen für die Personal- und Kursverwaltung und Kursbuchung.



Stylish gastronomy concept combines sport and culture at Bahnhof Blo - Bouldercafé Wuppertal  
 Stilvolles Gastronomiekonzept vereint Sport und Kultur im Bahnhof Blo - Bouldercafé Wuppertal  
 Photo: Christopher Pattberg

The variety of offerings ranges from beginner and advanced courses to children's birthday parties and school and company groups. The content of the offerings must be worked out, the pricing must be economically calculated, and the appointed personnel must be extensively trained. The offerings must reach the right target group, be easy to book, and easy to manage on the backend. Increasingly, this involves communication and marketing, and the development and use of digital solutions for personnel, course management, and course booking.

The organisation of competitions, the expansion of training concepts, the creation of regular climbing offerings, training opportunities for children and young people, and the promotion of young talent have become standard within modern and contemporary climbing gym management. There are no limits to creativity here, and in recent years, the variety of options shows that modern climbing gyms can no longer rely solely on pure climbing. The usable surfaces of a gym need to be multifunctional to include things in addition to climbing and yoga, like Crossfit and Parkour.

### Technical Facility Management

The focus of technical facility management is not limited to tasks such as the inspection of climbing walls. It includes the inspection, maintenance, and care of all technical aspects and equipment in and around the building. Technical solutions and installations, such as electrical systems, heating, ventilation, and fire alarm systems are becoming increasingly more complex, as are the legal requirements governing the regular inspection and testing of these systems.

The challenge is in keeping track of all technical systems that require scheduled testing. Various legal regulations define inspection and maintenance obligations, as well as the qualifications that inspectors

Die Organisation von Wettkämpfen, die Ausarbeitung von Trainingskonzepten, die Nachwuchsförderung und insbesondere die Schaffung von regelmäßigen Kletterangeboten und Trainingsmöglichkeiten für Kinder und Jugendliche gehören mittlerweile zum Standard innerhalb eines modernen und zeitgemäßen sportlichen Kletterhallenmanagements. Der Kreativität sind hier keine Grenzen gesetzt und in den letzten Jahren zeigt die Vielfalt von Angeboten, dass moderne Kletter- und Boulderhallen nicht mehr auf das reine Klettern reduziert werden können. Längst geht die Angebotspalette von Yoga über Crossfit zu Parkour. Die zur Verfügung stehenden Flächen in Kletter- und Boulderhallen werden multifunktional genutzt.

### Technisches Anlagenmanagement

Das technische Anlagenmanagement umfasst die Kontrolle, Wartung und Pflege sämtlicher technischer Einrichtungen und Ausstattungen in und um das Gebäude. Dabei liegt der Fokus nicht nur auf den Inspektionen der Kletter- und Boulderwände. Technische Lösungen und Einbauten, wie zum Beispiel elektrotechnische Anlagen, Heizungs-, Lüftungs- und Brandmeldeanlagen, werden immer komplexer. Ebenso komplex sind auch die gesetzlichen Vorgaben, welche die regelmäßige Prüfung und Inspektion dieser Anlagen regeln.

Die Herausforderung besteht insbesondere darin, alle prüfrelevanten technischen Anlagen zu kennen, zu erfassen und die vorgesehenen Prüfungen zu dokumentieren. Dabei regeln unterschiedlichste gesetzliche Bestimmungen die genauen Prüf- und Wartungspflichten und definieren, welche Befähigung und Qualifikation die Prüfer für die Durchführung haben müssen. Gerade der Bereich der technischen Prüfungen ist eng mit dem Thema Gefährdungsanalyse und Gefährdungsbeurteilung aus dem Bereich des Arbeitsschutzes verknüpft, auf den ich im Risikomanagement noch genauer eingehen werde.

must have for administering tests. The area of technical inspections in particular is closely linked to the subject of hazard analysis and risk assessment and falls under occupational health and safety, which I will discuss in greater detail in Risk and Crisis Management.

Technical facility management ranges from fire protection and hygiene testing to the maintenance and development of IT and software solutions in compliance with the European Data Protection Directive. The focus should be on technical devices and installations and on the people who use, operate, and work with them. Gym employees must often be repeatedly trained and instructed in the handling of technical solutions. Just like the technical tests, the employee training courses must be documented.

A considerable amount of administration is required for facility management. It's no longer a matter of simple janitorial work. If a specialist company has to be commissioned for each individual inspection, it becomes difficult to operate a gym economically. Ensuring that employees have additional technical training and education allows a facility to carry out many maintenance and inspection tasks independently. It is necessary to set up structures that make the maintenance, care, and servicing of a building's technical aspects as simple as possible.

The field of technical facility management is certainly the field of work within a climbing facility most frequently checked and controlled by external authorities and institutions. In Germany, for example, climbing gyms are often inspected by building and regulatory authorities such as the fire brigade, accident insurance funds, and trade associations. Gym operators should be prepared, structured, and well-organized in this field.

### Public Relations and Communication

The pillar of public relations and communication is an important marketing instrument that spreads awareness of the facility and generates customers. Well-thought-out communication and creative, varied marketing can considerably influence the economic success of a climbing gym.

Due to the expansion of climbing in urban areas, the sport has become increasingly more accepted by the public. The growing number of climbing gyms in cities today is changing the perception of the sport. In the past, climbing was only taking place outside of cities, on rock and in the mountains. The faster dissemination of news and information via social networks, and the addition of climbing as an Olympic discipline in 2020, is strengthening media presence and increasing public interest in the sport.

This development shows the necessity to control and influence reporting and media around climbing facilities. It's not only a matter of reaching the public, customers, or potential customers in order to make the sport and your facility known. Today, it's also common to build up a

Das technische Gebäudemanagement reicht vom Brandschutz über die Hygieneprüfung bis hin zur Wartung und Entwicklung von EDV- und Softwarelösungen unter Berücksichtigung der europäischen Datenschutzgrundverordnung. Der Fokus liegt dabei nicht nur auf den technischen Geräten und Einbauten, sondern auch auf den Personen, die diese nutzen, bedienen und damit arbeiten. Das Personal ist oftmals im Umgang mit technischen Lösungen wiederholt zu schulen und zu unterweisen. Ebenso wie die technischen Prüfungen sind auch die Mitarbeiterschulungen zu dokumentieren.

All diese Anforderungen bedeuten, dass im Rahmen des technischen Gebäudemanagement ein erheblicher Verwaltungsaufwand entsteht. Es gilt daher Strukturen aufzubauen, die Wartung, Pflege und Instandhaltung der Gebäudetechnik so einfach wie möglich machen. Längst handelt es sich nicht mehr um einfache Hausmeistertätigkeiten. Wenn für jede einzelne Prüfung ein Fachunternehmen beauftragt werden muss, wird es zunehmend schwierig die gesamte Anlage wirtschaftlich zu betreiben. Mitarbeiter mit entsprechenden fachlichen Zusatzqualifikationen erleichtern den gesamten Prozess und durch gezielte Fort- und Weiterbildungen können viele Wartungen und Prüfungen auch eigenständig durchgeführt werden.

Der Bereich des technischen Gebäudemanagement ist sicherlich das Arbeitsfeld im gesamten Anlagenmanagement, welches am häufigsten durch externe Behörden und Institutionen überprüft und kontrolliert wird. So werden in Deutschland zunehmend Kletter- und Boulderhallen von Bau- und Ordnungsämtern, der Feuerwehr, aber auch den Unfallkassen und Berufsgenossenschaften überprüft. Für den Hallenbetreiber bedeutet dies, dass er in diesem Feld vorbereitet, strukturiert und gut organisiert sein sollte.

### Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Kommunikation

Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Kommunikation stellen eine eigene Säule im Betrieb einer Kletterhalle dar, weil sie sie bedeutsame Marketinginstrumente sind, um die Angebote der Anlage zu verbreiten und Kunden zu generieren. Eine vielschichtige und ansprechende Kommunikation, sowie ein kreatives und abwechslungsreiches Marketing können einen erheblichen Beitrag für den wirtschaftlichen Erfolg einer Kletter- oder Boulderhalle leisten und diesen maßgeblich beeinflussen.

Durch die steigende Präsenz des Kletterns im urbanen Raum wird der Sport zunehmend von der Öffentlichkeit wahrgenommen. Die heute steigende Zahl an Kletter- und Boulderhallen in den Städten führt zwangsläufig zu einer anderen Wahrnehmung des Klettersports, als noch zu Zeiten als sich der Sport außerhalb der Städte in Felsklettergebieten im ländlichen Raum oder in den Bergen abspielte. Die schnellere Verbreitung von Meldungen und Informationen über soziale Netzwerke, aber auch die Entscheidung, dass Klettern im Jahre 2020 zur olympischen Disziplin wird, verstärkt die Medienpräsenz und steigert das öffentliche Interesse an dem Sport.

Diese Entwicklung zeigt die Notwendigkeit auf, die Berichterstattung rund um die Kletteranlagen zu steuern und Einfluss zu nehmen. Zu-

**“DUE TO THE EXPANSION OF CLIMBING IN URBAN AREAS, THE SPORT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY MORE ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC.”**

**„DURCH DIE STEIGENDE PRÄSENZ DES KLETTERNS IM URBANEN RAUM WIRD DER SPORT ZUNEHMEND VON DER ÖFFENTLICHKEIT WAHrgENOMMEN.“**

brand for the gym that has high recognition value, reaches the target group, and achieves widespread brand awareness.

Public relations and communication must be particularly well-organized in order to address each media channel. For many operators, the focus is currently on social media. Through short text modules, photos, or short video contributions, great reach can be generated very quickly. That said, classic tools such as press releases are still vital to reaching the public press and other media channels around a respective location.

Good communication is also necessary when climbing facilities become the focus of public/media attention due to unforeseen events. Accidents or economic crises are often triggers for media coverage. In principle, it's advisable to prepare for the possibility of such events. In this case, communication becomes an important means of crisis management.

Reporting needs to be followed up, moderated, and guided, especially on social media channels. Open, honest, and transparent communication with customers, employees, the public, and the media quickly forms the basis for successful work. We should move away from assuming that the media and press automatically come to us. Instead, we should take the initiative by sending out press releases and producing and publishing content on a regular basis.

Each individual climbing gym requires its own handle and channel. Content has to be developed regularly and the appropriate resources must be allocated.

Networking within the greater climbing community through key social and influencers is essential in building public relations and communication. It's also important to get a feel for, and have good dialogue with, those who are key influencers within the climbing gym itself, as this can often create a more broad reach than just relying on pure reporting through public channels.

Employees at climbing gyms are excellent examples of influencers/network multipliers. They convey messages and content to customers and to the outside world. Employees who identify strongly with their own gym and are regularly informed by the gym management are important ambassadors.

Public relations, communication, and press release work are ongoing processes in marketing. These require thoughtful management in order to effectively generate new customers and inform existing ones, disseminate offerings, and achieve a high profile in the relevant social media arena.

nehmend geht es aber nicht nur darum, die Öffentlichkeit, Kunden bzw. mögliche Kunden zu erreichen um den Sport bekannter zu machen und die Angebote zu verbreiten. Vielmehr ist es heute auch üblich, rund um die Kletter- oder Boulderhalle eine Marke aufzubauen. Eine Marke, die einen hohen Wiedererkennungswert hat, mit der sich Zielgruppe und Szene identifizieren und die dadurch eine weite Verbreitung erzielt.

Eine gute Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit muss besonders vielschichtig sein, um auf verschiedenen Kanälen die Adressaten anzusprechen. Im Mittelpunkt stehen für viele Betreiber derzeit die Social Media Kanäle. Hier können mit einfachen Mitteln, kurzen Textbausteinen, Fotos oder kurzen Videobeiträgen sehr schnell hohe Verbreitungszahlen und Reichweiten generiert werden. Eine professionelle Öffentlichkeitsarbeit macht es aber auch notwendig, auf klassische Instrumente, wie z.B. eine Pressemitteilung, zurückzugreifen, um öffentliche Presse und andere Medienvertreter rund um den jeweiligen Standort zu erreichen.

Eine Kommunikation wird vor allem notwendig, wenn der Sport oder Kletteranlagen aufgrund unvorhergesehener Ereignisse in den Fokus der Öffentlichkeit und der Medien geraten. Oftmals sind Unfälle oder wirtschaftliche Krisen die Auslöser für eine mediale Berichterstattung. Grundsätzlich ist es daher empfehlenswert, auf mögliche Ereignisse und die daraus notwendige Kommunikation vorbereitet zu sein. Kommunikation wird in diesem Fall zu einem bedeutsamen Mittel des Krisenmanagement.

Auf Social Media-Kanälen gilt es die Berichterstattung weiterzuerfolgen, zu moderieren und zu lenken. Eine offene, ehrliche und transparente Kommunikation mit Kunden, Mitarbeitern, Öffentlichkeit und Medienvertretern bildet schnell

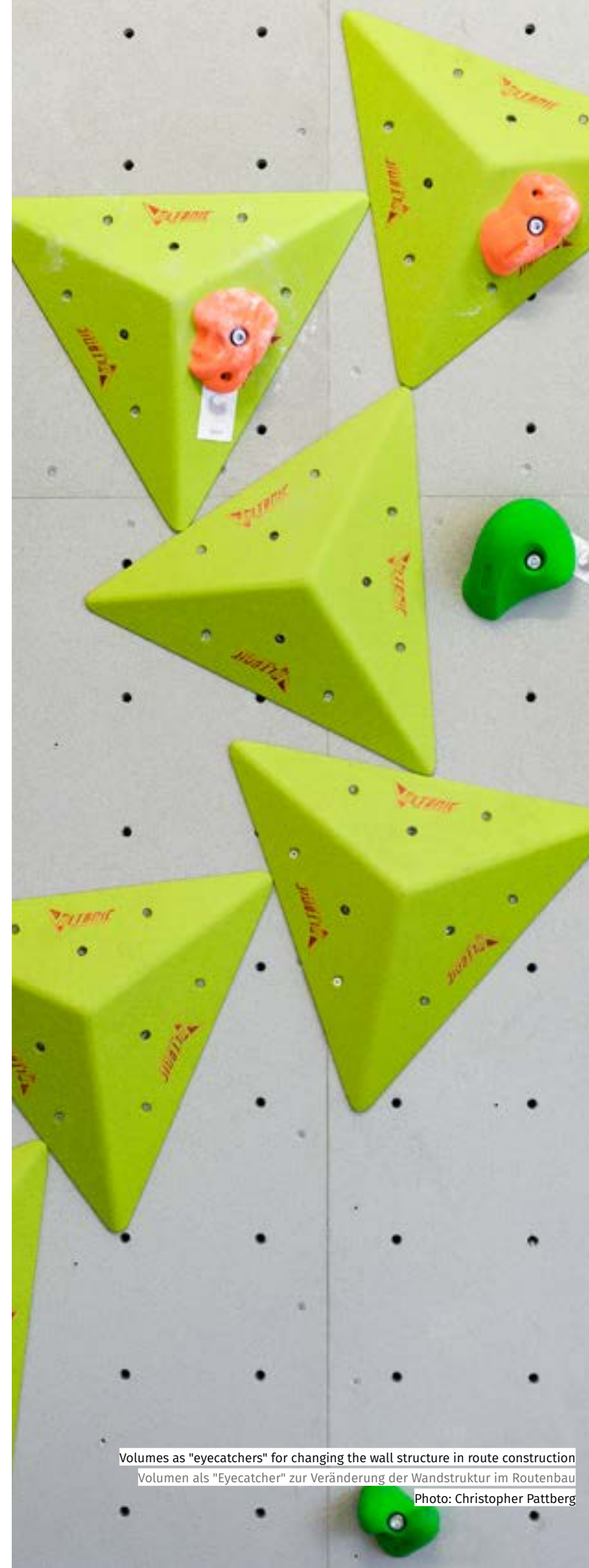
ein Fundament für ein erfolgreiches Arbeiten. Wir sollten uns von der Selbstverständlichkeit lösen, dass unsere Adressaten und insbesondere Medien- und Pressevertreter auf uns zukommen. Primär gilt es vielmehr, eigeninitiativ tätig zu werden, Pressemeldungen zu verschicken und fortlaufend Content zu produzieren und zu veröffentlichen.

Für die eigene Kletter- und Boulderhalle ist individuell zu definieren, welche Kanäle grundsätzlich, regelmäßig und fortlaufend bedient werden sollen. Für die entsprechenden Kanäle ist regelmäßig Content zu erarbeiten und es sind personelle Ressourcen bereitzustellen.

Die Netzwerkarbeit in die Szene und der Kontakt zu wichtigen Multiplikatoren im gesellschaftlichen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Umfeld ist ergänzend ein wichtiger Baustein einer guten Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit. Dabei gilt es ein Gefühl dafür zu entwickeln, wer

**"RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT IS OFTEN REDUCED TO THE TOPIC OF CLIMBING ACCIDENTS AND SPORTS INJURIES, HOWEVER IT HAS THE EXTENSIVE TASK OF MINIMISING ECONOMIC, SPORTING, AND TECHNICAL RISKS IN A CLIMBING GYM AND PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE CRISES."**

**„OFTMALS WIRD DAS RISIKO- UND KRISENMANAGEMENT AUF DAS THEMA KLETTERUNFÄLLE UND SPORTVERLETZUNGEN REDUZIERT. DABEI IST ES WESENTLICH UMFANGREICHER UND HAT DIE AUFGABE, WIRTSCHAFTLICHE, SPORTLICHE UND TECHNISCHE RISIKEN IN EINER KLETTERHALLE ZU MINIMIEREN UND AUF MÖGLICHE KRISEN VORZUBEREITEN.“**



Volumes as "eyecatchers" for changing the wall structure in route construction

Volumen als "Eyecatcher" zur Veränderung der Wandstruktur im Routenbau

Photo: Christopher Pattberg

wichtige Schlüsselmultiplikatoren im Umfeld der Kletter- und Boulderhalle sind. Meinungsmacher zu kennen und mit ihnen im Dialog zu sein, kann oftmals erfolgreicher sein als die reine Berichterstattung auf den öffentlichen Kanälen.

Gerade die Mitarbeiter in den Hallen stellen solche Multiplikatoren dar. Sie transportieren Botschaften und Inhalte an Kunden und nach außen. Mitarbeiter, die sich stark mit der eigenen Halle identifizieren und regelmäßig von der Hallenleitung informiert werden, stellen wichtige Botschafter dar.

Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, Kommunikation, Pressearbeit sind ein fortlaufender Prozess in einem Gesamtmarketing, um Neukunden zu generieren, bestehende Kunden zu informieren, Angebote zu verbreiten und eine hohe Bekanntheit im wirtschaftlich relevanten Einzugsgebiet zu erreichen.

### Risiko- und Krisenmanagement

Das Risiko- und Krisenmanagement einer Kletterhalle hat sowohl mit dem sportlichen, dem technischen als auch dem betriebswirtschaftlichen Anlagenmanagement zu tun. Es hat darüber hinaus erheblichen Einfluss auf das Thema Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit.

Oftmals wird das Risiko- und Krisenmanagement auf das Thema Kletterunfälle und Sportverletzungen reduziert. Dabei ist es wesentlich umfangreicher und hat die Aufgabe, wirtschaftliche, sportliche und technische Risiken in einer Kletter- und Boulderhalle bzw. im Unternehmen zu minimieren und auf mögliche Krisen vorzubereiten.

Da Kletter- und Boulderhallenbetreiber als Arbeitgeber fungieren, ist es notwendig, sich mit den Themen Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitssicherheit sowie den entsprechenden komplexen gesetzlichen Vorschriften zu beschäftigen. Hier helfen Gefährdungsbeurteilungen und Gefährdungsanalysen, mit denen mögliche Risiken frühzeitig erkannt werden. In einem Maßnahmenplan werden anschließend alle Möglichkeiten erfasst, wie diese Risiken zu minimieren oder gar zu verhindern sind. Diese Vorgehensweise lässt sich sehr gut auf viele weitere Bereiche des Kletterhallenmanagement anwenden. Bereits im Jahr 2015 hat der Deutsche Alpenverein eine Grundlagenauswahl an funktionierenden Gefährdungsbeurteilungen für Kletterhallen vorgestellt, die als Zielgruppe Mitarbeiter, Kletterer und Besucher gleichermaßen einbezieht.

Um eine Kletterhalle wirtschaftlich zu führen und verantwortlich zu handeln, muss eine regelmäßige und solide Finanz- und Liquiditätsplanungen erstellt werden. Im wesentlichen gilt es, einen guten Überblick über die laufenden und regelmäßigen Kosten zu haben. Nur, wenn ich mich fortlaufend mit den Zahlen und den betriebswirtschaftlichen Auswertungen beschäftige, kann ich finanzielle Risiken minimieren und Krisen vermeiden oder bewältigen.

Auch im Rahmen des sportlichen Management sind potenzielle Risiken für die aktiven Sportler laufend zu bedenken. Dabei geht es nicht nur darum, durch technische Lösungen für einen hohen Maß an Sicherheit zu sorgen. Sowohl Mitarbeiter als auch Besucher sollten sich der Risiken in der Kletterhalle bewusst sein, was durch regelmäßige Schulungen und eine offene und ansprechende Kommunikation erreicht werden kann. In dem 2018 vom Deutschen Alpenverein publizierten Handbuch mit dem Titel „Risikokultur in künstlichen Kletteranlagen“ wird das Leitziel ausgesprochen „...in künstlichen Kletteranlagen eine positive Risikokultur zu entwickeln und dadurch Unfälle zu vermeiden“



DAV Climbing Centre Wupperwände, Wuppertal, Germany  
 DAV Kletterzentrum Wupperwände, Wuppertal, Deutschland  
 Photo: Christopher Pattberg

## Risk and Crisis Management

The risk and crisis management of a climbing gym has everything to do with athletic, technical, and economic facility management. It also has a considerable influence on public relations and communication.

This category is often reduced to the topic of climbing accidents and sports injuries, however it has the extensive task of minimising economic, sporting, and technical risks in a climbing gym and preparing for possible crises.

Since climbing gyms act as employers, it is necessary to deal with the issues of occupational safety and security as well as the corresponding applicable legal regulations. Hazard assessments and risk analyses help to identify potential risks at an early stage. All steps for minimizing or even preventing these risks are recorded in an action plan. This approach can be applied to many other areas of climbing gym management as well. As early as 2015, the German Alpine Association presented a basic selection of functional hazard assessments for climbing gyms which, as a target group, includes employees, climbers, and visitors in equal measure.

In order to manage a climbing gym economically and responsibly, regular financial and liquidity planning must be prepared. Essentially, it is important to have a good overview of current and regular costs. I can only minimise financial risks and avoid or overcome a crisis if I continuously analyze my business.

Potential risks for climbers must also be taken into account on an ongoing basis within the framework of sports management. Ensuring a high level of safety through technical means is only half of the solution. Both employees and visitors should be aware of the risks in the climbing gym, which can be achieved through regular training and open and progressive dialogue. In the manual published by the German Alpine Association in 2018 entitled "Risk Culture in Climbing Gyms", the key objective is "to develop a culture with strong risk awareness in climbing gyms and thereby avoid accidents" (cf. Risk culture in climbing gyms - Handbook for Climbing Gym Employees, Deutscher Alpenverein e.V. 2018).

If an event should occur that involves a crisis in spite of comprehensive risk management and awareness of dangers and risks, then clear procedures, structures, and well-prepared communication are required. Emergency plans and trained personnel form the basis for mastering and overcoming crises, and all persons and institutions involved must be considered equally.

In the event of climbing accidents, crisis management entails the initial care of the accident victim as well as climbing partners, customers, and employees directly and indirectly affected.

Crises, in particular, often make climbing facilities the focus of public attention. It's important to be prepared for such crises, to be as open and transparent as possible, and to have a professional level of public relations.

(vgl. Risikokultur in künstlichen Kletteranlagen – Handbuch für Hallenmitarbeiterinnen und Hallenmitarbeiter, Deutscher Alpenverein e.V. 2018).

Sollte es trotz umfangreichen Risikomanagements, einem ausgeprägten Gefahren- und Risikobewusstsein und intensiver Krisenprävention doch zu einem Ereignis kommen, das eine Krise mit sich zieht, braucht es klare Ablaufpläne, Strukturen und eine gut vorbereitete Kommunikation. Notfallpläne und geschultes Personal bilden das Grundgerüst dafür, Krisen zu meistern und zu bewältigen. Das Krisenmanagement muss dabei alle beteiligten Personen und Institutionen gleichermaßen betrachten.

Bei Kletterunfällen beinhaltet das Krisenmanagement nicht nur die Erstversorgung des Verunfallten, sondern muss Kletterpartner, mittel- und unmittelbar betroffene Kunden und Mitarbeiter mit berücksichtigen.

Insbesondere durch Krisen geraten Kletteranlagen auch gerne in den Fokus der Öffentlichkeit. Darauf gilt es vorbereitet zu sein und durch eine offene und transparente, aber auch professionelle Öffentlichkeitsarbeit die Berichterstattung über die Krise zu steuern und zu begleiten.

## Kletterhallen – nur noch Unternehmen im Strudel der Bürokratie?

Das Leiten und Führen eines Unternehmens „Kletterhalle“ ist anspruchsvoller geworden in den vergangenen 15 Jahren. Die Ausführungen zu den 5 Säulen können die Komplexität der Aufgabenfelder nur umreißen und stellen bei weitem keine vollständige Auflistung aller Arbeitsfelder dar. Hinzu kommen in vielen Anlagen auch noch weitere Herausforderungen und Verpflichtungen, zum Beispiel wenn auch ein Gastronomiebetrieb oder ein Einzelhandelsgeschäft zur Kletter- oder Boulderhalle gehört.

Die größte Herausforderung als Betriebsleiter, Geschäftsführer oder Inhaber einer Kletter- und Boulderhalle besteht darin, seine Mitarbeiter für all diese Themen zu begeistern, zu motivieren und abzuholen. Nur motiviertes Personal, welches sich mit den Zielen des Unternehmens und der Kletterhalle identifiziert, wird bereit sein, die vielseitigen Aufgaben im Hallenmanagement mitzutragen. Notwendig ist ein Team, welches neben der großen Leidenschaft für den Sport auch die Bereitschaft hat, den Fokus auf die weniger sportbezogenen Themen zu richten.

In kaum einem anderen Unternehmen begegnen sich oftmals so viele unterschiedliche Charaktere, Querdenker, Kreative, Freaks, Freigeister und Menschen mit großer Leidenschaft für den Sport, wie in einer Kletter- oder Boulderhalle. Die Personalführung darf sicherlich als die schwierigste und zugleich wichtigste Aufgabe im gesamten Anlagenmanagement bezeichnet werden.

Wenn wir uns all diese Aufgaben und Herausforderungen anschau-

**“PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT CAN CERTAINLY BE DESCRIBED AS BOTH THE MOST DIFFICULT AND MOST IMPORTANT TASK WHEN IT COMES TO GYM MANAGEMENT.”**

**„DIE PERSONALFÜHRUNG DARF SICHERLICH ALS DIE SCHWIERIGSTE UND ZUGLEICH WICHTIGSTE AUFGABE IM GESAMTEN ANLAGENMANAGEMENT BEZEICHNET WERDEN.“**

## Climbing gyms - just another business in the whirlwind of bureaucracy?

Managing and running a company known as a "climbing gym" has become more demanding in the past 15 years. The explanations in the five pillars can only outline the complexity of the task fields and do not by any means represent a complete list of all fields of work. Several additional challenges and obligations, such as catering businesses and retail shops, exist in many climbing facilities.

The biggest challenge as a gym manager, managing director, or owner of a climbing gym is in inspiring, motivating, and supporting their employees in all of these roles and duties. Only motivated personnel who identify with the goals of the company and the climbing gym will be willing to support the versatile tasks required in managing a climbing gym. A team is needed that, in addition to its great passion for the sport of climbing, is also willing to focus on topics unrelated to climbing.

In very few other industries do so many different characters, lateral thinkers, creative people, fanatics, free spirits, and people with a great passion for sport come together. Personnel management can certainly be described as both the most difficult and most important task when it comes to gym management.

If we look at all these tasks and challenges, we will see that the management of a climbing gym differs only slightly from the management of other classic companies. For those accustomed to managing gyms, the tasks and duties listed above may seem frightening and excessive, creating a tendency to shy away from or ignore these duties. It's difficult for those responsible to see the big picture and put climbing aside when it comes to overall gym management. Many of these tasks, which are perceived as very bureaucratic, can be solved by simple means.

I still have a connection and passion for the sport of climbing that ultimately makes all the difference. That enthusiasm makes it possible to create an ideal work environment together with great people and to say, "Yes, I truly have turned my hobby into my profession".

en, werden wir feststellen, dass sich das Management einer Kletterhalle nur noch in kleinen Details vom Management anderer, klassischer Unternehmen unterscheidet. Viele der oben aufgeführten Aufgaben und Pflichten erscheinen dem einen oder anderen Hallenbetreiber und Verantwortlichen doch sehr befremdlich. Scheu, Ablehnung und Ignorieren dieser Pflichten sind häufige Reaktionen. Dabei sind viele dieser als sehr bürokratisch wahrgenommenen Aufgaben mit einfachen Mitteln zu lösen. Die Schere zwischen dem Ist- und dem Sollzustand in Kletterhallen klafft häufig noch weit auseinander. Einige vergleichbare Unternehmen und Branchen sind in ihren Standards schon weiter. Den Blick auf alle komplexen Aufgaben im gesamten Hallenmanagement zu werfen und dabei das Klettern auch mal in den Hintergrund zu stellen, fällt vielen Verantwortlichen schwer. Zu groß erscheint die Sorge, nur noch ein klassisches Unternehmen im Strudel der Bürokratie zu führen.

Und doch bleiben die entscheidende Verbindung und die Leidenschaft zu einem Sport bestehen, die am Ende den Unterschied ausmachen. Eine Verbindung und eine Begeisterung, die es möglich machen, das Arbeitsumfeld zusammen mit tollen Menschen kreativ zu gestalten, um immer noch sagen zu können: „Ja, ich habe mein Hobby zum Beruf gemacht!“

### BIO

**Name:** Christian Popien

**Born:** 1978

**Lives in:** Gummersbach, Germany

**Profession:** CEO Climb-Inn Klettersport GmbH & CO. KG

**Education:** certified social pedagogue / social worker

*Christian Popien started climbing at the young age of 11. Since then, he has been involved in the sport on both a personal and professional level. He is the co-founder and managing director of Climb-Inn Klettersport GmbH & Co. KG, he has operated the DAV Kletterzentrum Wupperwände since 2006, and has been the co-owner of the Bahnhof Blo Bouldercafé Wuppertal since 2016. As one of five creative minds, Christian developed the HardMoves Boulder League from 2007 to 2016 into one of the largest bouldering events in Europe. Today he works closely together with the German Alpine Association developing and publishing concepts and standards, and since 2013 he has increasingly specialised in consulting and renovation of climbing gyms. Christian lives together with his wife and 3 sons in Gummersbach.*

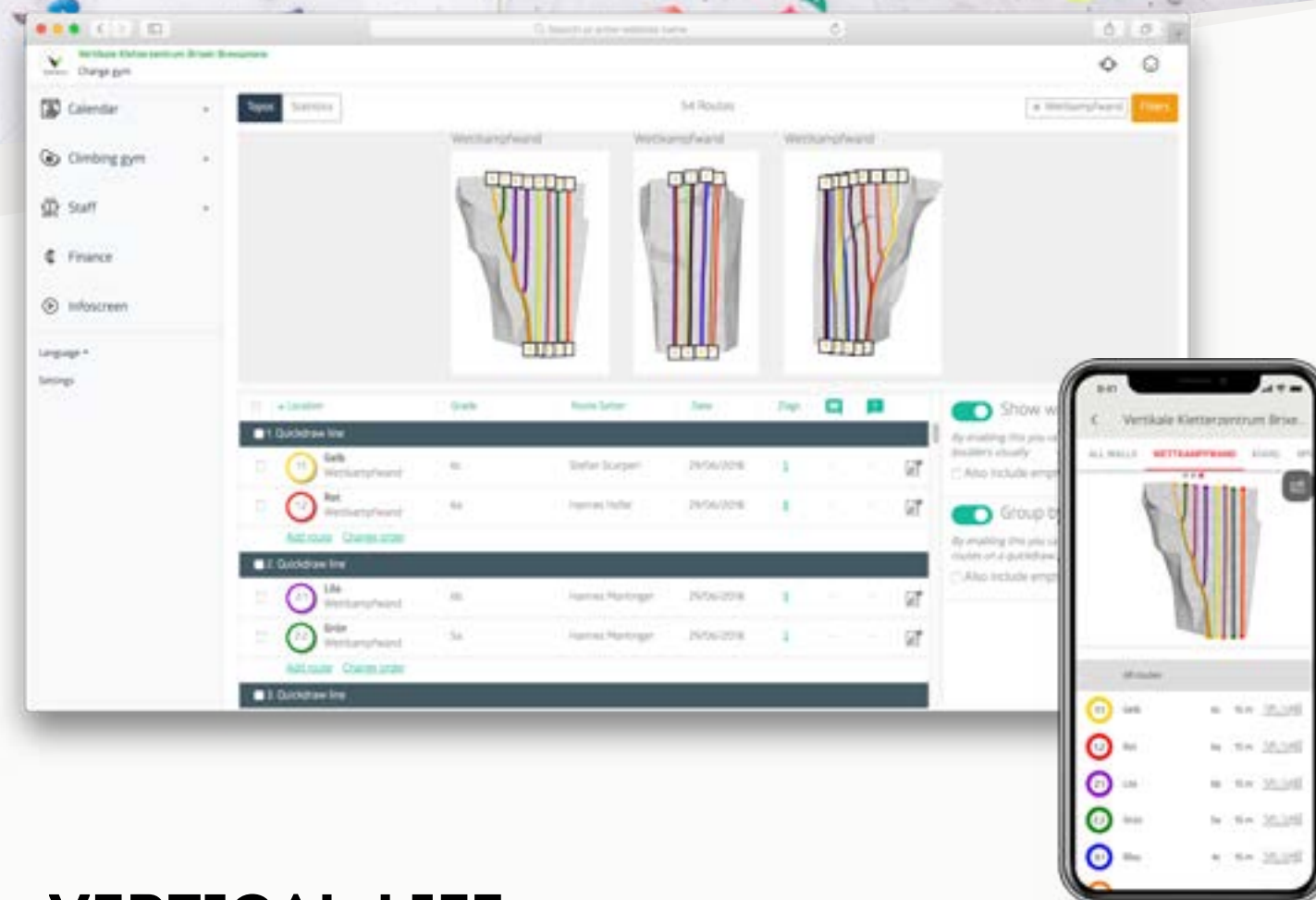
*Christian Popien begann im jungen Alter von 11 Jahren mit dem Klettern, seitdem begleitet ihn der Sport nicht nur auf privater sondern vor allem auf beruflicher Ebene. Er ist Mitbegründer und Geschäftsführer der Firma Climb-Inn Klettersport GmbH & Co. KG., betreibt seit 2006 das DAV Kletterzentrum Wupperwände und ist seit 2016 der Mitinhaber des Bahnhof Blo-Bouldercafés Wuppertal. Als einer von fünf kreativen Köpfen hat Christian von 2007 bis 2016 die HardMoves-Boulderleague zu einem der größten Boulder-Events Europas ausgebaut. Heute arbeitet er eng mit dem Deutschen Alpenverein zusammen, entwickelt und publiziert Konzepte und Standards und spezialisiert sich seit 2013 zunehmend auf die Beratung und Sanierungsberatung von Kletterhallen in allen Fragen rund um das Hallenmanagement. Christian lebt zusammen mit seiner Frau und seinen drei Söhnen in Gummersbach.*



Photo: Christopher Pattberg



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***ROUTE SETTING  
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GESTERN, HEUTE UND MORGEN***

TEXT & INTERVIEW: CHRISTIAN POPIEN

◆ **Sport climbing has developed at a phenomenal rate over the past 15 years and has now long been a popular, well-established recreational activity. Indoor climbing gyms are springing up like mushrooms and the sport is set to be represented at the Olympics for the first time in Tokyo in 2020.**

The way in which a climber ascends and moves on a wall is heavily influenced by the build and design of the wall, the shape of the climbing holds and volumes, and above all by the string of moves created by the route setter. Route setting is therefore a central element in shaping the way in which climbing and bouldering gyms are operated.

New ideas are constantly needed to keep the sport varied and appealing. Route setters are repeatedly required to design attractive sequences of moves on the wall and to set exciting challenges for customers. Over the years, there have been increasing changes in the group of people using indoor climbing facilities. What's more, for a long time now, there has been an ever greater disparity between indoor and outdoor climbing techniques, and it is no longer possible to adapt the movements required during rock climbing to an indoor environment. These days, in a more and more competitive market, a good route setter's repertoire needs to be much more extensive in order to meet the expectations and interests of both customers and gym operators. Working methods and safety requirements are also evolving rapidly due to legal provisions as well as standards and guidelines set by the industry itself.

To gain a better understanding of this, we spoke to two highly experienced route setters from Germany and the UK about the topic and asked them the same questions. **Tom Brenzinger from Germany** and **Nate McMullan from the UK** have been involved in the development of indoor climbing and route setting from the early days.

◆ **Der Klettersport hat sich in den vergangenen 15 Jahren rasant entwickelt. Klettern ist längst in der Breite unserer Gesellschaft angekommen und etabliert. Indoorkletteranlagen wachsen wie Pilze aus dem Boden und der Sport steuert zielstrebig auf die Olympischen Spiele 2020 in Tokio zu.**

Die Ausgestaltung des Kletterns und der Bewegungen an der Wand sind dabei maßgeblich davon abhängig, wie die Kletterwände gebaut und designt sind, die Klettergriffe und Volumens geformt, aber vor allem auch davon, wie die Materialien, montiert durch den Routenbauer, zu einer Aneinanderreihung von Kletterbewegungen führen. Der Routenbau gilt daher als zentrales Instrument um den Sportbetrieb in einer Kletter- oder Boulderhalle zu gestalten.

Dabei sind immer wieder neue Ideen zu entwickeln um den Sport abwechslungsreich und interessant zu präsentieren. Attraktive Bewegungselemente an der Wand zu gestalten und spannende Herausforderungen für die Kunden zu schaffen fordern die Routenbauer immer wieder neu. Über die Jahre hat sich nicht nur die Zielgruppe in den Kletteranlagen zunehmend verändert, auch Art und Form der Kletterbewegungen sind längst nicht mehr vom Felsklettern auf die Halle zu adaptieren und unterscheiden sich zunehmend. Das Repertoire eines guten Routenbauers muss heute wesentlich umfangreicher sein um den Erwartungshaltungen und Interessen der Kunden, aber auch der Hallenbetreiber in einem zunehmend konkurrierenden Markt zu entsprechen. Arbeitsweisen und Sicherheitsstandards entwickeln sich unter Einflussnahme gesetzlicher Vorschriften und aus der Industrie selbst gesetzter Normen und Vorgaben rasant weiter.

Wir haben daher zwei sehr erfahrene Routenbauer aus Deutschland und Großbritannien zu dem Thema gesprochen und beiden identische Fragen gestellt. **Tom Brenzinger aus Deutschland** und **Nate McMullan aus Großbritannien** begleiten die Entwicklung des Indoorkletterns und des Routenbaus schon seit den Anfängen.



Gear for setting from ropes  
Material zum Arbeiten aus dem Seil  
Photo: Nate McMullan



**BIO**  
Name: Tom Brenzinger  
Born: 1979  
Lives in: Betzenstein, Franconian Switzerland, Germany  
Profession: Founder & CEO of Boulders Kletterhallenservice  
Qualifications: National route setter  
Sponsors: Lapis, Squadra, Voltomic, Captain CRUX

Changing wall structure with the use of volumes at DAV climbing centre, Freimann, Munich  
Veränderung der Wandstruktur durch Volumen im DAV Kletter- und Boulderzentrum Freimann, München  
Photo: Tom Lindinger / Orgasport

## INTERVIEW WITH TOM BRENZINGER INTERVIEW MIT TOM BRENZINGER

**Tom Brenzinger lives with his wife and daughter in Betzenstein in Franconian Switzerland, Germany. He's been climbing since the early 1990s, and from 1995 until 2004, he was an active competition climber. Since 1996, he has been a route setter, setting commercially for climbing gyms since 2001, and for national competitions from 2002 until 2010. Tom has been following alongside the development of indoor sport climbing since the beginning. In 2005, he founded his company, Boulders Kletterhallenservice, handling initial equipping of new gyms, and distribution and development of the brands Bleaustone, Lapis, Voltomic, Squadra and others. Tom was a founding member of the DAV national teaching team and the training for "Routenbau im Breitensport" ("Route setting for popular sports") in 2011/12.**

**Tom Brenzinger lebt mit seiner Frau und seiner Tochter in Betzenstein in der Fränkischen Schweiz, Deutschland. Er klettert seit den frühen 90er Jahren und nahm von 1995 bis 2004 aktiv an Wettkämpfen teil. Seit 1996 ist er außerdem Routensetzer, seit 2001 baut er kommerziell für Kletterhallen. Zwischen 2002 und 2010 war er als nationaler Routenbauer auch bei Wettkämpfen tätig. Tom begleitete die Entwicklung des Indoorkletterns bereits seit den Anfängen. Im Jahr 2005 gründete er Boulders Kletterhallenservice und spezialisierte sich auf die Erstaussstattung von Hallen sowie auf den Vertrieb und die Entwicklung der Marken Bleaustone, Lapis, Voltomic, Squadra und weitere. Tom ist Gründungsmitglied des DAV Bundeslehrteams Routenbau und der Ausbildung „Routenbau im Breitensport“ 2011/12.**



**CP: Indoor climbing has experienced rapid growth over the past 15 years. Route setting has always been a key element in presenting the sport in climbing and bouldering gyms. What groundbreaking changes have you witnessed here in recent years?**

**TOM:** The biggest change occurred around ten years ago when a number of route setters began setting very easy routes and boulders. This made climbing and bouldering more accessible to the general public, including complete novices. Since then, route setters have continued to perfect their techniques in this field, and today, there are a wide range of "easy" routes and boulders.

**CP: Das Indoorklettern hat in den letzten 15 Jahren eine rasante Entwicklung genommen. Zentrales Instrument bei der Organisation des Sportbetriebs in Kletter- und Boulderhallen war und ist der Routenbau. Welche richtungsweisenden Veränderungen hast du hier in den letzten Jahren wahrgenommen?**

**TOM:** Die größte Veränderung hat vor circa zehn Jahren stattgefunden. Zu dieser Zeit haben einige Routenbauer damit begonnen, wirklich leichte Routen und Boulder zu bauen. Somit war der Weg offen für eine breite Masse, mit dem Kletter- und Bouldersport zu beginnen. Bis heute wird das natürlich immer weiter perfektioniert und es gibt mittlerweile viele Varianten von „leichten“ Routen und Bouldern.

**CP:** *The types of people using indoor climbing facilities has changed considerably. In the past, many customers were experienced climbers who also climbed outdoors. Today, however, we often see customers who never or only rarely pursue the sport on real rock. What impact is this change in target group having on route setting?*

**TOM:** Before 2005, there were only two different forms of route setting: traditional climbing routes for climbers looking to train in the gym in order to improve their outdoor climbing skills, and competitive routes suitable for people training to take part in competitions. A route setter's task was therefore to keep thinking of new problems for climbers to solve. These types of route setting still exist today, of course, but there is a lot more variation.

However, the main change we have witnessed is the introduction of a completely new type of route setting that requires route setters to think about what "non-climbers" can and cannot do. To overstate it slightly, it almost starts with thinking about whether they can do something basic like climbing the stairs without using the handrail. The tricky bit for the setter is to increase the difficulty of the route extremely gradually from very easy (french grade 3) to the intermediate and advanced grades (french 7a). It is crucial to avoid sudden jumps from one grade to the next. Achieving this is no simple feat and requires a lot of practice and experience. Most importantly, routes and boulders should be interesting and enjoyable to climb on, while staying within a certain level of difficulty. Route setters must always keep their target audience in mind and not simply set routes that they themselves would wish to climb.

**"THESE DAYS, AROUND 90 PERCENT OF GYM USERS RELY ON COMMERCIAL ROUTE SETTING."**

**„HEUTZUTAGE IST KOMMERZIELLER ROUTENBAU FÜR CIRCA 90 PROZENT DER HALLENBENUTZER NÖTIG.“**

**CP:** *Experts often talk about "commercial route setting". What do you understand by this term and what does it mean for you as well as for climbing and bouldering gyms in general?*

**TOM:** Commercial route setting is exactly what I described in my previous answer. It's all about creating targeted routes for climbers looking to move nicely and effectively in the gym. These days, around 90 percent of gym users rely on commercial route setting. To many people, the term immediately conjures up images of easy routes and boulders that are straightforward to climb and contain lots of jugs and large footholds. However, commercial route setting involves a whole lot more than this. For example, setters must consider a wide range of needs and strive to create challenging yet positive experiences. Commercial route setting is also possible at higher difficulty ratings, such as grades 7a or 7c. To make all this easier to achieve, some hold manufacturers are constantly working on new solutions to assist route setters with their work. I have a positive opinion of the term and I have undoubtedly helped shape it and make its use more widespread.

**CP:** *In the past, you have supported countless climbing and bouldering gyms in getting off the ground, planned their initial set-up, and often set the first routes. What do you feel are the biggest mistakes made by budding climbing gym operators when starting out? What mistakes do you see time and time again?*

**TOM:** I rarely see any actual mistakes. However, new gym operators are often fiercely determined to do everything differently from exist-

**CP:** *Das Publikum und die Kunden in Indoorkletteranlagen haben sich stark verändert. Kamen früher oftmals noch erfahrene Kletterer, die auch am Fels unterwegs waren, sind es heute oft Kunden, die gar nicht bis selten am Fels klettern. Welche Auswirkung hat diese Zielgruppenveränderung auf den Routenbau?*

**TOM:** Früher – vor 2005 – hat man eigentlich nur zwei Varianten von Routenbau gekannt. Zum Einen die klassischen Kletterrouten für das Training in der Halle, um dann am Fels besser klettern zu können, und andererseits Wettkampfrouten, die eben zum Training für Wettkämpfe geeignet waren. Der Routenbauer hat sich also immer neue Probleme überlegt, die der Kletterer dann lösen sollte. Heute gibt es diese Arten des Routenbaus natürlich immer noch, mit wesentlich mehr Variationen. Die Hauptveränderung im Routenbau war aber, dass eine völlig neue Variante dazu gekommen ist. Dabei macht sich der Routenbauer Gedanken darüber, was ein „Nichtkletterer“ kann und was er nicht kann.

Um es überspitzt zu sagen, geht das mehr oder weniger los beim Treppensteigen ohne Geländer. Die große Kunst ist, eine sehr leicht ansteigende Linie zu schaffen von super leicht (fr. 3. Grad) bis hin zu den mittleren und oberen Graden (fr. 7a). Von einem Grad zum nächsten darf es keine großen Sprünge geben. Das ist natürlich nicht so einfach und erfordert viel Übung und Erfahrung des Routenbauers.

Und das Wichtigste ist, dass die Routen und Boulder immer schön und interessant sind, aber eben immer dem jeweiligen Grad entsprechen. Hier gilt das Motto: „Der Köder muss dem Fisch schmecken und nicht dem Angler.“

**CP:** *In Fachkreisen wird oft von „kommerziellem Routenbau“ gesprochen. Wie stehst du zu diesem Begriff und was bedeutet er für dich, aber auch für die Kletter- und Boulderhallenlandschaft?*

**TOM:** Genau das, was ich gerade beschrieben habe, ist quasi der kommerzielle Routenbau. Zielorientierter Routenbau für Kletterer, die sich in der Halle schön und effektiv bewegen wollen. Heutzutage ist kommerzieller Routenbau für circa 90 Prozent der Hallenbenutzer nötig. Viele denken bei dem Begriff sofort an leichte Routen und Boulder, die einfach gebaut sind und jede Menge Jugs und große Tritte haben. Aber zum kommerziellen Routenbau gehört viel, viel mehr – wie zum Beispiel die Überlegung, auf verschiedenste Bedürfnisse einzugehen und sowohl Herausforderungen als auch positive Erfahrungen zu ermöglichen. Auch in höheren Schwierigkeitsgraden wie 7a oder 7c ist kommerzieller Routenbau möglich. Um das alles gut umsetzen zu können, arbeiten einige Griffhersteller immer an neuen Lösungen, die die Arbeit des Routenbauers vereinfachen. Ich stehe dem Begriff positiv gegenüber und habe ihn auch sicherlich mit geprägt und verbreitet.

**CP:** *Du hast in den vergangenen Jahren unzählige große Eröffnungen von Kletter- und Boulderhallen begleitet, die Erstausrüstung geplant und oftmals die Erstbeschaubung durchgeführt. Welches sind in deinen Augen die größten Fehler, die hier von angehenden Kletterhallenbetreibern begangen werden? Welche Fehler wiederholen sich regelmäßig?*

**TOM:** Richtige Fehler gibt es selten. Es kommt aber immer wieder vor, dass neue Hallenbetreiber auf Biegen und Brechen alles anders ma-

ing gyms. While there are, of course, lots of things that can vary from place to place, some aspects have to stay the same no matter what. A common "mistake" is opening a gym with routes or boulders that are mostly too difficult. This is particularly an issue at grades 5a to 6b. Another problem I've noticed is that gyms want to start with too many different hold brands. It is generally better to begin with a good basic stock of equipment before gradually introducing new brands and ranges.

**CP:** *Location and investment costs are often regarded as fundamental for the economic success of a climbing gym. What role does route setting play in this?*

**TOM:** Besides some basic features that all gyms should have, route setting is the most crucial factor. Good gyms have to get everything right, from the changing rooms to the café and the staff. Ultimately, however, everything revolves around the routes, so they are decisive for a gym's economic prosperity. Of all the successful gyms worldwide, there probably is not a single one that has not adapted its route setting to its clientele. The best thing about all this is that it is possible to adapt your route setting time and time again, provided that you keep your eyes open and your ears to the ground to pick up on what your customers want. This is not always easy, though, especially since inexperienced gym operators or route setters often don't know exactly what to look out for or who to listen to. Never forget that when there is a will there is a way. In the past, there have been gyms that have managed to turn it around after years of poor route setting and are now very profitable.

**CP:** *The difficulty ratings and grades given to routes are the subject of much debate in climbing gyms. What do you believe is the right approach here and what would you recommend?*

**TOM:** I welcome these discussions, as difficulty ratings are one of the factors that make indoor climbing so exciting and the debate is part and parcel of this. I would advise route setters not to be egotistical when assessing their routes. It is important that the difficulty of the routes available in a gym increases gradually. Nice and steady in a linear fashion. If I start right at the bottom and give the easiest route a difficulty rating of 3, all the other grades should fall into place by themselves. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as this in practice because route setters tend to start somewhere in the middle. This makes it tricky to determine whether a route is 6a, 6a+, or even 6b. This is why route setters should always take all the routes in a gym into account when working out difficulty ratings.

**CP:** *As we've already determined, the indoor climbing market has grown dramatically in recent years. Climbing gyms are operated by associations, private individuals, passionate climbers, or even investors from outside the industry. What impact do you feel this is having on route setting? Are there enough sufficiently experienced and qualified route setters on the market, and what trends have you noticed here?*

**TOM:** The high density of gyms in some regions and the huge number as a whole are putting route setters under pressure to keep improving. Gyms are often quickly punished for route setting or grading mistakes or for buying the wrong holds. There is definitely a lack of experienced and qualified setters. Although there are plenty of route setters who are proficient at setting a particular type of route or one with a specific difficulty rating, there are very few who master the craft across all

chen wollen als bestehende Hallen. Es gibt natürlich vieles, das man so oder so machen kann, aber einige Dinge sind einfach fix. Ein häufiger „Fehler“ ist, dass die Routen und Boulder zur Eröffnung meist zu schwer sind. Das ist vor allem in den Graden 5a bis 6b zu beobachten. Des Weiteren ist mir aufgefallen, dass Hallen mit zu vielen unterschiedlichen Griffmarken starten wollen. Hier ist es meist besser, mit einer guten Grundbestückung zu beginnen und dann nach und nach neue und andere Marken und Ranges mit reinzunehmen.

**CP:** *Als grundlegend für den wirtschaftlichen Erfolg einer Kletterhalle werden oftmals die Faktoren Standort und natürlich Investitionskosten genannt. Welche Rolle spielt der Routenbau dabei?*

**TOM:** Neben den fixen Faktoren ist das der elementare Faktor. In einer guten Halle sollte alles passen, von den Umkleiden über das Café bis hin zum Personal. Die Routen aber sind das Element, um das sich in einer Kletterhalle alles dreht und deshalb sind sie auch der entscheidende Faktor für den wirtschaftlichen Erfolg. Es gibt wahrscheinlich weltweit keine Halle, die gut läuft, ohne dass der Routenbau an die Kundschaft angepasst ist. Das Schöne dabei ist, dass man den Faktor Routenbau immer wieder anpassen kann, man muss nur offene Augen und Ohren dafür haben, was gewünscht ist. Das herauszufinden ist nicht immer einfach, vor allem, weil unerfahrene Hallenbetreiber oder Routenbauer oft nicht wissen, auf was sie genau schauen oder auf wen sie hören sollen. Letztlich gibt es aber für alles eine Lösung. In der Vergangenheit hat es auch schon Hallen gegeben, die nach Jahren mit schlechtem Routenbau die Kehrtwende geschafft haben und heute sehr profitabel laufen.

**CP:** *Viel diskutierte Themen in Kletterhallen sind immer wieder die Bewertungen und die Schwierigkeitsgrade der Routen. Welchen Ansatz hältst du für richtig, was würdest du aktuell empfehlen?*

**TOM:** Ich finde es gut, dass es diese Diskussionen gibt, schließlich ist es ein Thema, das den Hallenklettersport spannend hält. Die Debatte über Schwierigkeitsgrade gehört einfach dazu. Jedem Routenbauer kann ich den Tipp geben, bezüglich der Bewertungen auf das eigene Ego zu verzichten. Und es ist wichtig für jede Halle, dass die Linie stimmt, von ganz leicht bis schwer. Schön leicht ansteigend, linear. Wenn ich dann ganz unten anfangen und die leichteste Route mit 3 bewerte, ergeben sich eigentlich alle weiteren Grade von selbst. In der Praxis ist das oft nicht so einfach, weil man nicht unten anfängt, sondern irgendwo dazwischen einsteigt. Ob das dann eine 6a, eine 6a+ oder doch eine 6b ist, ist schwer zu beurteilen. Deshalb sollte man sich immer die komplette Bewertung in einer Halle anschauen.

**CP:** *Der Indoorklettermarkt hat sich, wie bereits oben schon erwähnt und festgestellt, in den letzten Jahren sehr rasant entwickelt. Als Betreiber von Anlagen agieren Vereine, Privatpersonen, leidenschaftliche Kletterer aber auch branchenfremde Investoren. Was für Auswirkungen hat das in deinen Augen auf den Routenbau? Gibt es genug ausreichend erfahrene und qualifizierte Schrauber auf dem Markt und welche Entwicklung kannst du hier erkennen?*

**TOM:** Aufgrund der Menge an Hallen und der Hallendichte in manchen Regionen muss der Routenbau immer besser werden. Fehler beim Routenbau, beim Einkauf von Griffen oder bei der Bewertung werden da oft sehr schnell bestraft. Genug erfahrene und qualifizierte Schrauber gibt es definitiv nicht. Es gibt zwar jede Menge Routenbauer, die eine bestimmte Art oder einen bestimmten Schwierigkeitsgrad gut

grades from the very easy to the most challenging and who are also experts in all climbing techniques and safety-related aspects. There are also very few who are equally skilled in route and boulder setting. In any event, a lot more training opportunities are required in this area and there is a growing demand for route setting courses like those offered by the German Alpine Club.

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**CP:** *A few years ago, you were involved in designing the route setting training offered by the German Alpine Club (DAV). What types of training do you believe are still needed on the European market?*

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**TOM:** The training offered by the DAV has become an important benchmark and is still the only training of its kind available worldwide. A number of excellent trainers in fields such as route setting for competitions and specific moves are active across Europe. However, in some countries, there is an urgent need for route setters to be trained on how to set routes for climbing as a recreational sport. Commercial bouldering gyms started appearing around ten years ago and, in Germany at least, only became more widespread approximately six years ago. In other European countries, they are only now becoming more common. Consequently, there is still a low demand for training in some countries. It's a development process that is only just getting underway.

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**CP:** *Let's also talk about hardware and materials. You work closely with hold manufacturers and wall construction companies. Today, there is a huge number of manufacturers on the market and they produce countless shapes and styles. Despite this, do you think there is still potential for new products and innovation over the next few years?*

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**TOM:** Yes, definitely. The ideas being put forward by the manufacturers I work with alone are huge. Other brands are also continuously developing innovative holds and styles with enormous potential. Unfortunately, there are still brands in our industry that often just copy or "reinvent" products that other brands brought to the market a few years previously. That didn't work then, nor is it working now.

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**CP:** *In order to offer diverse and up-to-date facilities, gyms must re-invest in climbing holds and route setting. Although I know that as a seller of climbing holds, you have an interest in boosting hold and volume sales, I'd still like to ask you the following question: What percentage of their annual turnover should gym operators invest in new holds, volumes, and route setting in general? Can you give a one-size-fits-all answer to this question or do other factors play a role here?*

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**TOM:** This definitely varies from case to case. There are numerous factors at play, including the age of the gym, the amount of competition in the local area, the proficiency of the route setters, the quality of the initial equipment, and whether the center is a climbing or bouldering gym. As a general rule, however, I'd say that depending on their size, gyms should set aside an annual budget of 1,000 to 20,000 euros.

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**CP:** *These days, the material used to make climbing holds is very durable. Many gyms undoubtedly have holds that are more than ten years old. When, in your opinion, should holds be disposed of or replaced?*

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bauen können, aber jene, die komplett von sehr leicht bis sehr schwer schrauben können und dann auch noch alle Arten von Klettertechniken und sicherheitsrelevanten Aspekten beherrschen, sind wenige. Es gibt auch wenige Schrauber, die im Kletterroutenbau genauso gut sind wie im Boulderschrauben oder anders rum. Auf jeden Fall muss noch viel mehr geschult werden und auch eine Routenbauausbildung, wie sie zum Beispiel vom DAV angeboten wird, wird immer wichtiger.

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**CP:** *Du hast vor einigen Jahren bei der Konzeption zur Routenbauausbildung des DAV in Deutschland mitgewirkt. Welchen Aus- und Fortbildungsbedarf siehst du aktuell noch auf dem europäischen Markt?*

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**TOM:** Die Ausbildung vom DAV ist ein sehr guter Standard geworden. Diese Ausbildung ist bis dato weltweit einzigartig. Europaweit gibt es einige hervorragende Ausbilder was Wettkampf, Bewegung und so weiter angeht. Eine Ausbildung für den Routenbau im Breitensport wäre in einigen Ländern dringend nötig. Die ersten kommerziellen Boulderhallen sind vor circa 10 Jahren entstanden. Eine große Masse an kommerziellen Boulderhallen gibt es erst seit circa 6 Jahren, zumindest in Deutschland. In anderen europäischen Ländern kommt es erst jetzt zu einem Anstieg der Menge an Boulderhallen. Somit ist auch der Aus- und Fortbildungsbedarf in manchen Ländern noch gar nicht da, es beginnt hier gerade ein Entwicklungsprozess.

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**CP:** *Lass uns auch noch auf Hardware und Material zu sprechen kommen. Du arbeitest eng mit den Griffherstellern und Wandbauern zusammen. Mittlerweile gibt es sehr viele Hersteller, unzählige Formen und Styles. Siehst du trotzdem noch Potential für Erneuerungen und Innovationen in den nächsten Jahren?*

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**TOM:** Ja, auf jeden Fall. Allein die Ideen der Hersteller, mit denen ich zusammenarbeite, sind riesig. Auch bei anderen Marken sehe ich immer wieder Neuerungen bei Griffen und Formen, die großes Potenzial haben. Leider gibt es auch in unserer Branche nach wie vor Marken, die fast nur kopieren oder Dinge „neu“ erfinden, die andere Marken schon vor einigen Jahren auf dem Markt hatten und die damals wie heute nicht gut sind beziehungsweise waren.

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**CP:** *Wenn Hallen ein abwechslungsreiches und zeitgemäßes Kletterangebot bieten möchten, kommen sie nicht drumherum im Bereich Klettergriffe und Routenbau zu reinvestieren. Auch wenn ich weiß, dass du als Vertreter von Klettergriffen daran interessiert bist, Griffe und Volumen zu verkaufen, folgende Frage: Wieviel Prozent vom jährlichen Umsatz sollten Hallenbetreiber in neue Griffe, Volumen und den Routenbau insgesamt investieren? Lässt sich das überhaupt pauschal beantworten oder gibt es andere Faktoren, die hier eine Rolle spielen?*

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**TOM:** Das lässt sich sicher nicht pauschal beantworten. Faktoren wie Alter der Halle, Konkurrenz in der Umgebung, Qualität der Routenbauer, Qualität der Erstbestückung, Kletter- oder Boulderhalle haben Einfluss darauf. Grundsätzlich würde ich aber sagen, dass je nach Hallengröße ein Budget von 1.000 bis 20.000 Euro pro Jahr sicher nötig ist.

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**CP:** *Das Material der Klettergriffe ist mittlerweile sehr langlebig. Viele Hallen haben durchaus Griffe im Sortiment, die älter als 10 Jahre sind. Wann sollten deiner Meinung nach Griffe aussortiert beziehungsweise ausgetauscht werden?*

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**TOM:** Again, there are a number of factors to consider when sorting through old holds. It is undeniably important that gym operators adopt economical working practices. Having said this, in order to remain profitable, gyms should always offer their customers something new, and replacing old holds is part of this. In many cases, this alone is reason enough to dispose of old holds. Safety is a crucial factor as well. Once holds are ten or more years old, you can never be quite sure what's going to happen with them next. Therefore, an argument can be made for replacing holds after ten years. You don't necessarily have to dispose of holds and volumes immediately; they can still serve a range of purposes, including as doorstops, paperweights, or doorknobs.

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**CP:** *At a conference a few years ago, we discussed whether bouldering is just a short-lived craze or whether it will have a long-lasting presence on the market. Bouldering gyms are still being opened at quite a pace in Europe. What is your assessment of this trend? Do you think that the market will soon be saturated?*

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**TOM:** There's no doubt in my mind that bouldering gyms will have a permanent presence on the market. Climbing is a natural form of movement. While children love to climb on anything from chairs to trees, most adults no longer do this. After all, what purpose would it serve? However, if you give people easy access to climbing in a way that is enjoyable to them, they will take you up on it. Climbing is probably the only "natural" sport that offers the opportunity to move the entire body, build muscle, challenge your mind, and socialize with a lot of people. I'm convinced that indoor climbing and bouldering are not short-lived crazes and are here to stay as recreational sports.

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**CP:** *To conclude, we'd like to discuss one of the industry's hot topics. Climbing will become an Olympic discipline for the first time in Tokyo in 2020. How do you feel about this and how will it affect the market and, more specifically, route setting?*

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**TOM:** The fact that climbing is becoming an Olympic sport is part of its natural progression. Most indoor climbers are pleased about this news and are looking forward to it. Some competitors are unhappy with the format, but you have to start somewhere. And I expect some improvements might be made after 2020 if this proves necessary. There are already some initial indications that the development will have a positive effect on the climbing gym market. The Olympics will not have a direct impact on commercial route setting and I expect it to continue developing "normally". Instead, there will be changes in the field of competitive and high-end route setting, which in turn will have a slight influence on route setting for the commercial sector.

**"DIFFICULTY RATINGS ARE ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT MAKE INDOOR CLIMBING SO EXCITING AND THE DEBATE IS PART AND PARCEL OF THIS. I WOULD ADVISE ROUTE SETTERS NOT TO BE EGOTISTICAL WHEN ASSESSING THEIR ROUTES."**

**„DIE DEBATTE ÜBER SCHWIERIGKEITSGRADE GEHÖRT EINFACH DAZU. JEDEM ROUTENBAUER KANN ICH DEN TIPP GEBEN, BEZÜGLICH DER BEWERTUNGEN AUF DAS EIGENE EGO ZU VERZICHTEN.“**

**TOM:** Bei der Aussortierung gibt es auch wieder einige Faktoren zu bedenken. Jeder Hallenbetreiber sollte natürlich bis zu einem gewissen Punkt wirtschaftlich arbeiten. Dazu gehört aber auch, dass dem Kunden immer etwas Neues geboten wird, dass also alte Griffe weggegeben und dafür neue dazugenommen werden. Viele Griffe sollten schon allein aus diesem Grund aussortiert werden. Darüber hinaus ist der Faktor Sicherheit immer großzuschreiben. Wenn Griffe einmal 10 Jahre alt oder älter sind, gibt es keine Garantie mehr, dass nicht plötzlich alles Mögliche damit passiert. Man kann also schon sagen, dass nach 10 Jahren das Sortiment erneuert werden sollte. Griffe und Volumen müssen dabei nicht gleich weggeworfen werden. Es gibt verschiedenste Nutzungsmöglichkeiten, wie etwa als Türstopper, Briefbeschwerer, Türknauf und vieles mehr.

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**CP:** *Vor einigen Jahren haben wir im Rahmen einer Fachtagung die Frage diskutiert, ob Bouldern nur ein Boom ist, oder eine nachhaltige Präsenz auf dem Markt haben wird. Weiterhin eröffnen viele Boulderhallen in Europa. Was ist deine Meinung dazu? Wie siehst du die Entwicklung und glaubst du, dass hier bald eine Sättigung des Marktes eintreten wird?*

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**TOM:** Definitiv nachhaltige Präsenz. Klettern ist eine natürliche Bewegungsart des Menschen. Jedes Kind klettert auf Stühle, Bäume, und so weiter. Erwachsene Menschen machen das nicht mehr, wieso sollten sie auch? Wenn man aber Menschen die Möglichkeit bietet auf einfache und angenehme Art und Weise klettern zu gehen, machen sie es. Bewegung für den ganzen Körper, Muskelaufbau, geistige Herausforderung und jede Menge Kommunikation mit anderen Menschen – es gibt nicht viele Sportarten, die das bieten und bei „natürlichen“ Sportarten wahrscheinlich keine zweite. Ich bin mir sicher, dass Hallenklettern und -bouldern kein kurzlebiger Boom ist, sondern zum Breitensport gehört.

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**CP:** *Zum Abschluss noch ein viele diskutiertes Thema. Klettern wird 2020 in Tokio olympische Disziplin. Wie findest du diese Entwicklung und welche Auswirkungen wird dies auf den Markt und ganz konkret auf den Routenbau haben?*

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**TOM:** Dass Klettern olympisch wird, ist auch ein Teil der natürlichen Entwicklung. Die meisten Hallenkletterer finden es gut und freuen sich darauf. Einige Wettkämpfer sind mit dem Format nicht glücklich, aber irgendwo muss man halt anfangen. Und wahrscheinlich wird nach 2020 daran nachgebessert werden, wenn es nötig ist. Die Auswirkung auf den Kletterhallenmarkt wird hoffentlich gut sein, die ersten Anzeichen sind jetzt schon zu spüren. Der kommerzielle Routenbau wird sich durch Olympia nicht direkt verändern. Er wird sich „normal“ weiterentwickeln. Der Wettkampf- und High-end-Routenbau wird sich verändern und das hat dann wieder leichte Einflüsse auf den kommerziellen Routenbau.

## BIO

**Name:** Nate McMullan

**Born:** 1977

**Lives in:** Sheffield, UK

**Profession:** Managing Director of Climbing Wall Services

**Qualifications:** MIA, IRATA L3

**Sponsors:** DMM STAL Climbing Anchors / Filth Climbing Holds

Bouldersetting

Photo: Nate McMullan



## INTERVIEW WITH NATE MCMULLAN

**Nate McMullan** is Managing Director of Climbing Wall Services and Founder of the Route Setting Association. He began climbing over 20 years ago and has been overseeing his companies' commercial Route Setting programme for over 10 years. Nate has been involved with route setter training in the UK and abroad for the past 8 years, delivering courses and coordinating the content and development for all RSA training programmes. He holds the Moun-

taineering Instructor Award (highest level of rock-climbing qualification in the UK) and an IRATA Level 3 certification. He has specialised in the technical and maintenance aspects of artificial climbing structures, invented anchor systems (DMM STAL Anchors) and is owner of Filth Climbing Holds. He lives in Sheffield, UK with his family and rather high-strung dog named Badger.

**CP:** Indoor climbing has experienced rapid growth over the past 15 years. Route setting has always been a key element in developing the sport in climbing and bouldering gyms. What groundbreaking changes have you witnessed here in recent years?

**NATE:** Well, this is an interesting one. First, I would identify that you separated climbing and bouldering gyms, and I think that is a modern way of looking at it. I think traditionally the thought was that you didn't have bouldering only gyms, or at least not many.

To me personally – and this is very boring – what comes to my mind when thinking of groundbreaking changes: the impact driver. From a route setter's perspective, impact and impulse drivers have revolutionized the ability to transfer what you visualize onto the wall fluently. Even the use of a drill creates more of a barrier. Additionally, for efficiency and speed in commercial route setting (and that is the theme that you've touch on quite a bit), an impact driver is important.

Next we have volumes. I'm not referring to the introduction of volumes, because volumes or macros have been around for a long time, but the amount of volumes in use and how they are used in day to day commercial setting as well as comp setting.

Lastly, we come to hold selection. Obviously, there were good holds 15 years ago, but there is a greater selection now and the overall quality of holds has vastly improved, including the texture of the new polyurethane, which allows you to set things without worrying about it changing much (friction, polish, etc.).

That is a lot more of the nuts and bolts. I guess one of the major changes in route setting is awareness, most significantly, international accessibility to route setting. Surprisingly, the key forum for that is probably Facebook, e.g. Routesetters Anonymous. So, for better or worse – and I'm not saying that the quality of what is posted there is always high – it does spread awareness, and that is something that

hasn't happened before. Pretty special that some setter working in isolation at a little wall in the middle of nowhere can get a response from Louie Anderson or Lloyd Betsworth, or have access to a group like Routesetting Safety and hear what guys like Peter Zeidelhack from the DAV (Deutscher Alpenverein) have to say.

**CP:** The types of people using indoor climbing facilities has changed considerably. In the past, many customers were experienced climbers who also climbed outdoors. Today, however, we often see customers who rarely or never pursue the sport on real rock. What impact is this change in target group having on route setting?

**NATE:** I think that it is standard for the vertical fitness user base, or that perceived demographic, to be in the majority for most walls. I was just looking at a report and it said that 71 percent of indoor climbers climb exclusively indoors in the UK, and that is massive. This percentage has grown significantly over the past 5 years, and as setters we must respond to the needs of our client base.

Concerning how that has changed route setting, ergonomics is the first thing I would touch on. This regards the physical shape created from our setting and the hold selection. The modern demographic, the non-outdoor climbers, aren't willing to put up with the things that outdoor climbers are used to. So, sharp limestone pockets and other features that are ergonomically uncomfortable will significantly deter a new user. They won't like it and will not even understand why. From an advanced creative perspective, you need to address this and be aware of it when you're setting. For the actual setting process, you are thinking of accessibility. What is the point of what you are setting? If it's not for training or for outdoor climbers, it's for getting people to come back and have a good time.

**CP:** Experts often talk about "commercial route setting". What is your take on this term and what does it mean for you as well as for climbing and bouldering gyms in general?

**NATE:** My last point of the previous question leads right into this topic. Commercial setting, in my mind, is engagement with all your user base in a range of aspects. If 71 percent of your users are never going to climb outside, you are going to set very differently than if you are setting for 71 percent of your users that mostly climb outside and use gyms for training. It also requires setting efficiently, safely, and operating like a professional.

**CP:** In the past, you have supported countless climbing and bouldering gyms in getting off the ground, planned their initial set-up, and often set the first routes. What do you feel are the biggest mistakes made by budding climbing gym operators when starting out? What mistakes do you see time and time again?

**NATE:** I have worked with a number of facilities in the consultation stage, from design and feasibility studies to building and setting their first routes. Part of my company's role, commercially, is technical advising and consulting for development. The first mistake that we see is the location of a climbing center. The right location is critical to the center's financial success, which some gym owners fail to appreciate. Lack of adequate start-up and operating capital is another major oversight. Building quality modern walls is not cheap, and cannot be done on a low budget.

Many gyms suffer from poor design of their climbing center in a couple of ways. When you come into a center, it should be designed to create an inviting environment that makes them want to come back. It should not feel claustrophobic, dark, or unpleasant. This is often overlooked by leisure center owners that either want to construct a climbing wall in front of a glass area that will be hot and uncomfortable for working or climbing, or lifestyle owners that build too much climbing surface in a very small space due to lack of funds. All of these can be good things, but ideally the environment has to be taken into great consideration. The second design flaw is the angle of the climbing surface. This changes from country to country. From what I have seen, the U.S. gyms tend to have steeper angles. In the UK, the climbing is more technical with vertical / off- vertical slab, and a bit of steep. However, you need to have a little of everything for modern competition setting so that you can set a wide variety of movements. What I see is people going too steep for their user base, particularly if they are developing a new climber client base in the area.

**CP:** The difficulty ratings and grades given to routes are the subject of much debate in climbing gyms. What do you believe is the right approach here and what would you recommend?

**NATE:** In my mind, indoor climbing and outdoor climbing are two different sports, so the first thing is that the indoor grades don't really relate to outdoor climbing. However, I think you do have a responsibility to give people a rough idea of where they are on the scale. If your grading is so soft that it becomes dangerous for climbers when they go outside, then that is no good. However, if you sandbag everyone, then that's no good, either. There are a lot of factors in grading, with no definitive answer on system, but I think that it's about a blend of

**"IN MY MIND, INDOOR CLIMBING AND OUTDOOR CLIMBING ARE TWO DIFFERENT SPORTS, SO THE FIRST THING IS THAT THE INDOOR GRADES DON'T REALLY RELATE TO OUTDOOR CLIMBING."**

customer service and a bit of safety. What I would suggest is that the separation of grades is important for beginning climbers, so if you create a circuit that has too wide of a range, say from 6a to 7a, the climbers are not able to track progression and are therefore less likely to come back. People like to see their growth, and you need to have a way for them to see it.

**CP:** As we've already determined, the indoor climbing market has grown dramatically in recent years. Climbing gyms are operated by associations, private individuals, passionate climbers, or even investors from outside the industry. What impact do you feel this is having on route setting? Are there enough sufficiently experienced and qualified route setters on the market? What trends have you noticed here?

**NATE:** I think there are not enough sufficiently experienced and qualified route setters on the market. There has been a massive growth in the walls and gyms all over the world, and expansion is particularly massive in the U.S. market. The UK isn't quite like that, but I think there is about a 12 to 16 percent growth of the number of walls in the UK, specifically more in bouldering-only centers. For learning and develop-

ing as route setters, the only formal pathway is what we are doing with the RSA, and this is still in development. Even though we offer qualifications, workshops and events, I still think we need to develop further, offer higher level qualifications, and keep pushing to evolve the industry. But this is really just a start, and many countries have nothing close to what we are doing. What I would like to see is more cooperation on an international scale to develop clear pathways, which would give transparency to everyone from folks who are just starting out, to head setters, managers, and accredited trainers, all ideally linked somehow with the IFSC.

**CP:** You are a founding member of the Route Setting Association (RSA), and a few years ago, you were involved in designing route setting training. What types of training do you believe are still needed on the European market?

**NATE:** Basically, the Route Setting Association has broken things down into safety and creative associated training / events, forming two pathways to competency. As I said in response to the last question, this is just a start, and the real goal is a clear pathway for professional development on an international level, from new setters to comp setting. But you must start somewhere, and at the very least, we can help give some basic guidelines to help gyms and setters develop and work without total isolation.

Areas which especially need addressing right now are working at height / setter safety and the safety of climbers, both during and after setting. There is nothing very comprehensive, aside from what the RSA and DAV are doing, though the CWA (Climbing Wall Association) is doing a lot on WAH (Working at Height) safety. I would like to see everyone start to work together and get something done before a serious accident or death occurs.

**CP:** Let's also talk about hardware and materials. You work closely with hold manufacturers and wall construction companies. Today, there is a huge number of manufacturers on the market and they produce countless shapes and styles. Despite this, do you think there is still potential for new products and innovation over the next few years?

**NATE:** I do. I think there is an evolution and it cycles somewhat. Starting 30 years ago, it has gone from real rock and bricks to resin features, and on to clean plywood and back around to natural things like wooden holds. Nothing is ever completely new, but what is happening now is the purposeful engagement and cooperation by the manufacturers (of walls, holds and other products) with the route setters and the gym operators. They are refining their product and making it the best it can be, which has never really happened before. Meetings like the WICS, Halls and Walls, Petzl's Symposium and Beta Setting's event are all indicative that things are starting to move very fast.

**CP:** In order to offer diverse and up-to-date facilities, gyms must re-invest in climbing holds and route setting. What percentage of their annual turnover should gym operators invest in new holds, volumes, and route setting in general? Can you give a one-size-fits-all answer to this question, or do other factors play a role here?

**NATE:** I can't give you a percentage, as our primary business is not selling holds. I think all gym customers, from vertical fitness to the elite, are extremely aware of the quality of holds and new products available. Your hold selection must be very strong at all levels, but in saying that, I think it's important to do it strategically. If you are spending your working capital on holds and you don't have enough to route set, promote, or keep your center clean, then you've got a bad business plan. So, it's a balance, and it really depends on a lot of factors.

**CP:** These days, the material used to make climbing holds is very durable. Many gyms undoubtedly have holds that are more than ten years old. When, in your opinion, should holds be disposed of or replaced?

I've never heard of a specific lifespan on polyester or polyurethane, and I don't think that a time limit exists. It really depends on how they have been used and cared for. If you have a poor washing method or storage area, if the holds get chipped, if they are exposed to UV rays, or if you have a featured wall that creates specific stresses, then they will have a shorter lifespan. The really big issue that is not being addressed is the environmental aspect of manufacturing climbing holds. PU is far more detrimental to the environment, and also polishes faster than PE. Additionally, if the holds are recycled, the PE could be used again as filler or in other non-climbing products.

**CP:** At a conference a few years ago, we discussed whether bouldering is just a short-lived craze or whether it will have a long-lasting presence in the market. Bouldering gyms are still being opened at quite a pace in Europe. What is your assessment of this trend and do you think that the market will soon be saturated?

**NATE:** I think the proliferation of the bouldering walls is, in part, driven by the lower costs of building them. But with the rise of the Olympics, I think there will be a strong resurgence of roped climbing. As the public becomes aware of the sport, they will equally weigh speed, lead and bouldering, so they will have interest in all three aspects. I'm not sure if, in the future, one combined facility or different facilities will satisfy this demand.

**CP:** To conclude, we'd like to discuss one of the industry's hot topics. Climbing will become an Olympic discipline for the first time in Tokyo in 2020. How do you feel about this and how will it affect the market and, more specifically, route setting?

**NATE:** The main effect it will have is increased awareness of the sport to the public. It's going to make indoor climbing mainstream, and with that comes both a lot of positives and negatives. Inherently, higher numbers of climbers have a massive effect on route setting; more climbers, more walls, more setting. I really think that the route setting, specifically regarding safety, is going to be the one area that needs to be developed quickly and carefully in two specific ways. First, we need to consider safety at work during the setting process, for both the setter and the facility user. This regards anything from working at height regulations to noise and dropped objects. Second, you have to keep in mind that routes and boulders have to be safe for climbing with respect to ergonomics, movement, hold selection and attachment. As more people engage with indoor climbing and it becomes higher profile, there are going to be more injuries and more risk of litigation.



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# SAFER ROUTE SETTING MEHR SICHERHEIT BEIM ROUTENBAU

TEXT: PETER ZEIDELHACK / PHOTOS: TOM LINDINGER / ORGASPORT

◆ Climbing will make its Olympic debut at the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo. Although this may at first sound like the fulfilment of a dream long held by the climbing community, it actually marks the next step in the general professionalization of sport climbing.

How will this development affect the future of the sport? Climbing will gain more visibility, which will more likely than not result in the further construction of artificial climbing structures, the number of which is already growing. It is fair to say that climbing is already a popular recreational sport. It is even a firm fixture on some schools' curriculums and is growing in popularity, predominantly due to the numerous new bouldering facilities being opened.

◆ Klettern wird im Jahr 2020 in Tokio erstmals Teil des Programms der Olympischen Sommerspiele sein. Was sich auf den ersten Blick anhören mag wie die Erfüllung eines lange gehegten Traumes der Klettergemeinschaft, markiert in der Gesamtentwicklung doch viel mehr einen weiteren Schritt in der allgemeinen Professionalisierung des Klettersports.

Was das perspektivisch bedeutet? Klettern rückt noch mehr in den Fokus der allgemeinen Wahrnehmung und der anhaltende, positive Trend bei der Entwicklung künstlicher Kletteranlagen wird dadurch wohl eher weiter- als abnehmen. Man kann durchaus behaupten, dass der Sport bereits heute als Breitensport etabliert ist. So ist das Klettern teilweise sogar im Lehrplan des Schulsports verankert und gewinnt vor allem durch die große Anzahl neu entstehender Boulderanlagen an Popularität.



Route setting has a direct influence on gym safety  
Der Routenbau hat direkten Einfluss auf die Sicherheit in der Halle

◆ This growing number of climbing gyms inevitably requires that more routes and boulder problems are set to continuously attract visitors. After all, there's nothing more important than regularly creating new challenges to keep the climbing and bouldering community on its toes. Safety is the most important factor to consider in this context because, at the end of the day, any facility that fails to put the necessary groundwork in will have far more serious matters to worry about than choosing which coffee or beer to serve in the bistro. This is supported by the results of a recent survey (\*) of more than 6,000 climbers, in which the vast majority rated the topic of safety as extremely important. However, explaining how to create a safer environment in a climbing gym is no simple feat.

#### Safety as a legal requirement

Is there a set of guidelines to help improve safety in your climbing gym? The resounding answer to this question is "yes". In Europe, artificial climbing structures (ACS) would be expected to comply with the EN 12572. This standard, which was updated in 2017, is divided into three parts and covers artificial climbing structures with protection points, bouldering walls, and climbing holds. In particular, the standard outlines safety requirements and test methods for climbing and bouldering walls, climbing holds, and volumes.

The actual operation of artificial climbing structures is, however, only referenced indirectly by this standard. Besides following the test methods and safety requirements, the walls must be regularly inspected and maintained. The bouldering mats must, for example, have certain dimensions and a specific shock absorbance capacity. Besides following the test methods and requirements, it is extremely difficult to apply this standard to the holds due to the sheer variety of them. Here, it is the human factor that plays a particularly important role.

(\*)Further details and results of the survey: page 82

◆ Eine steigende Menge an Kletter- und Boulderhallen bedeutet zwangsläufig auch, dass mehr Routen und Boulder geschraubt werden müssen, um das Angebot nachhaltig attraktiv zu gestalten. Denn nichts ist wichtiger, als der Kletter- und Bouldercommunity regelmäßig neue Herausforderungen anzubieten. In diesem Kontext steht der Aspekt „Sicherheit“ über allen anderen, denn wer seine Hausaufgaben in Sachen Sicherheit nicht macht, braucht sich auch über die Auswahl der richtigen Kaffee- oder Biersorte im Bistro keine Gedanken machen. Dies bestätigt das Ergebnis einer kürzlich durchgeführten Studie (\*), bei welcher die große Mehrheit von über 6.000 befragten Kletterern den Aspekt „Sicherheit“ in höchstem Maße als wichtig werteten. Was eine sichere Kletterhalle im Detail definiert, ist jedoch nicht ganz einfach zu beantworten.

#### Sicherheit aus gesetzlicher Perspektive

Ob es ein Regelwerk für die Sicherheit in Kletterhallen gibt? Die Antwort lautet „Ja“. In Europa sollten künstliche Kletteranlagen der Norm EN 12572 entsprechen. Diese Norm, in der aktuellen Version von 2017, behandelt in drei Teilen künstliche Kletteranlagen mit Sicherungspunkten, Boulderanlagen und Klettergriffe. Bestandteile der Norm sind dabei vor allem sicherheitstechnische Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren für Kletter- und Boulderwände sowie für Klettergriffe und Volumen.

Der eigentliche Betrieb von künstlichen Kletteranlagen wird dadurch natürlich nur indirekt reguliert. Die Wände sind über die Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren hinaus regelmäßig zu inspizieren und zu warten. Die Boulderdecken müssen unter anderem eine gewisse Dimensionierung und Stoßaufnahmefähigkeit aufweisen. Nur bei den Griffen ist die Normierung abseits der Prüfverfahren und Anforderungen aufgrund ihrer Vielfältigkeit überaus schwierig. Hier kommt vor allem der Faktor Mensch mit ins Spiel.

(\*)Weitere Details und Ergebnisse der Studie: Seite 82

So what does any of this have to do with climbing? The fantastic sequences? The vertical challenges? The awesome routes? The test pieces? The funky moves? Initially, nothing at all. Yet a route must first be safe before it can be used to create moves.

#### Safe routes and safe working conditions

Now that we have established that safety is the most important aspect when it comes to managing or using artificial climbing structures, the next step is to be aware that, in the truest sense of the phrase, this safety is primarily in the hands of route setters. By attaching volumes and holds, they have a direct influence on a gym's safety. Is the work being performed "properly"? Have any defective holds or volumes been attached? Are the clipping stances sufficiently stable for the difficulty rating? Is there any danger of fingers becoming trapped? These are just some of the many questions that route setters could, and indeed must, ask themselves as they go about their extremely complex work.

However, it is not only the safety of the route or boulder that is of vital importance, but also the safety of the route setters themselves. Occupational safety is the buzzword here. If the route setting is being performed while the climbing or bouldering gym is open to the public, the safety of any climbers or boulderers using the facilities must, of course, also be given top priority. At least the same level of care must also be exercised to ensure that the end product, i.e. the route or boulder, is safe. Ultimately, it is the person who is bolting the holds into the wall who plays the key part in this. Route setters have to assume various roles. Besides being proficient climbers, they need to be skilled craftspeople, have a head for heights and be good teachers, listeners, counselors, safety officers, and sometimes a whole lot more in between.

#### Route setter training – the status quo

How do route setters pick up this complex craft? Generally speaking, climbers enter this trade simply by showing an interest in "giving it a go" in their climbing gym – and if they're lucky they'll be offered the chance to prove themselves. What happens next? Are there proper training courses for route setters that teach the fundamental safety principles?

In Germany, the German Alpine Club (DAV), has been running a training course for seven years that enables participants to qualify as licensed route setters for climbing as a recreational sport. The course focuses on roped route setting and on safety in general. In England, the Route Setting Association runs an even more in-depth course. Meanwhile, in North America, the Work at Height course offered by the Climbing Wall Association provides training to climbing gym staff but does not focus on actual route setting.

In contrast, route setters working in the field of competitive climbing have had access to national and international training courses for a longer period of time. However, participants are required to have prior knowledge of safety-related aspects and of how to properly handle materials and tools. This is because the training largely focuses on how different routes can be used to best identify the strongest competitors.

Was das alles mit Klettern zu tun hat? Den tollen Bewegungen? Den vertikalen Herausforderungen? Den geilen Routen? Den Testpieces? Den „funky moves“? Erstmal gar nichts. Denn die Grundlage der Kreation von Bewegung ist und bleibt die Sicherheit!

#### Sichere Routen, sicheres Arbeiten

Wenn man nun den Faktor „Sicherheit“ als höchstes Gut im Umfeld „künstliche Kletteranlagen“ erachtet, so haben zuallererst die Routenbauer/innen diese Sicherheit im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes in der Hand. Sie haben durch ihre Arbeit – die Montage von Volumen und Griffen – direkten Einfluss darauf, wie sicher eine Halle ist. Erfolgt die Montage „sachgerecht“? Werden defekte Griffen oder Volumen montiert? Sind die Clip-Positionen dem Schwierigkeitsgrad entsprechend stabil? Besteht zum Beispiel Einklemmgefahr für die Finger? Viele Fragen, die im überaus komplexen Tätigkeitsfeld des Routen- und Boulderbaus gestellt werden können, ja sogar müssen.

Nicht nur die Sicherheit der Route oder des Boulders ist dabei von großer Bedeutung, sondern auch die Sicherheit des Routenbauers während der Arbeit. Als Stichwort sei hier der Arbeitsschutz genannt. Sollte der Routenbau während der Öffnungszeiten der Kletter- oder Boulderhalle stattfinden, so ist selbstverständlich auch die Sicherheit der eventuell anwesenden Kletterer und Boulderer an oberster Stelle zu werten. Der Sicherheit des Produktes, also der Route oder des Boulders, ist darüber hinaus natürlich mindestens die gleiche Sorgfalt zu widmen. Zentrales Element des Prozesses bleibt aber die beziehungsweise derjenige, der letztendlich die Griffen an die Wand schraubt. Ein Routenbauer hat mitunter verschiedenste Rollen auszufüllen: Er soll ein guter Kletterer, Handwerker, Höhenarbeiter, Lehrer, Zuhörer, Seelsorger, Sicherheitsbeauftragter und manchmal noch vieles mehr sein.

#### Die Ausbildung zum Routenbauer – Status Quo

Wie erlernt man das komplexe Routenbau-Handwerk? In der Regel läuft es so, dass man in seiner Kletter- oder Boulderhalle sein Interesse daran bekundet „das auch mal ausprobieren zu wollen“ und im Glücksfall bekommt man dann die Chance, sich zu beweisen. Wie geht es dann weiter? Gibt es eine fundierte Ausbildung für Routenbauer, im Rahmen derer sicherheitstechnische Grundlagen vermittelt werden?

In Deutschland bietet der DAV seit sieben Jahren eine Ausbildung zum lizenzierten „Routenbauer Breitensport“ an. Der Fokus dieser Ausbildung liegt auf dem Routenbau aus dem Seil und auf der Sicherheit im Allgemeinen. In England bietet die Routesetting Association eine noch fundiertere Ausbildung an. In Nordamerika gibt es die „Work at Height“-Ausbildung der Climbing Wall Association vor einem Kletterhallen-Hintergrund, der eigentliche Routenbau ist dort jedoch nicht im Fokus.

Für Wettkampfroutenbauer gibt es schon seit längerer Zeit eine Ausbildung auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene. Sicherheitstechnisches Verständnis und der sachgerechte Umgang mit Material und Werkzeug werden hier allerdings bereits vorausgesetzt. In der Ausbildung geht es vielmehr darum zu erlernen, wie über die verschiedenen Routen eine bestmögliche Selektion der Wettkampfteilnehmer stattfinden kann.

## Professionalization requires a change in mindset

It is high time for the climbing community to develop a common understanding of what route setting involves and to create a universal language. Achieving this will require us to develop uniform training standards, ideally on an international scale.

Progress in this direction will necessitate a general change in mindset. For example, as climbers, we have a relatively relaxed attitude toward height and find it difficult to perceive the danger that it presents. This leads to a widely-held belief that route setting is the same as climbing. We hang on the rope and, instead of climbing, bolt a few holds onto a wall. This may seem to make sense on the surface of things, but thinking like this is quite simply the wrong approach.

Route setting and all that it entails is always carried out as part of an employment relationship and must be regarded as a profession. While bolting holds and volumes onto a wall, route setters should not be seen as climbers but as workers. We can only take the next step towards professionalizing the creation of artificial climbing structures once we have internalized this principle.

But first, we must gain an overview of the various areas in which route setters work as well as their shared fundamentals and differences.

## Safe conditions for route setters

Route setters need to be at least 18 years of age and have good physical fitness as well as knowledge of how to attach holds and volumes. If their work requires them to use an impact driver, they should always wear safety glasses and ear protection. Our eyes and ears are some of our most precious body parts, and protecting them should come as second nature. Removing a metal splinter from the cornea is certainly one of the more unpleasant parts of life as a route setter. Handling new holds can be harsh on the skin and fingers, which is why many of our colleagues wear gloves to protect their skin for when it is time to test routes and climb. Route setters also need to pay attention to possible delayed effects, such as back pain caused by working in a harness or lifting heavy crates or other risk factors. As a rule, route setters should always keep their long-term general health in mind.

## Using tools

Using the right tool for the job is of fundamental importance when it comes to working safely. For example, using an impact driver for wood screws is not recommended. When attaching volumes, it is important to use all the fastening options provided by the manufacturer, unless, for example, doing so renders T-nuts unusable. Set screws preventing holds from spinning should not be added to all climbing holds as a blanket rule (set screw policy), but instead, route setters should use their common sense to ascertain whether this is necessary. For competitions, this may be handled differently, of course. Metric bolts should be long enough to prevent a hold from slipping from the wall in case it does happen to rotate. The tools themselves must be secured when

## Professionalisierung erfordert Umdenken

Die Zeit ist mehr als reif für ein einheitliches Verständnis und eine einheitliche Sprache im Routen- und Boulderbau. Auf dieser Basis müssen auch einheitliche Ausbildungsstandards – am besten auf internationaler Ebene – erarbeitet werden.

Um in dieser Richtung voranzukommen, ist ein generelles Umdenken erforderlich. Ein Beispiel: Wir als Kletterer haben ein relativ entspanntes Verhältnis zur Höhe und zur Wahrnehmung der Gefahr, die von ihr ausgeht. Insofern ist eine immer noch weit verbreitete Meinung vom Routenschrauben, dass es das gleiche sei wie das Klettern an sich. Wir hängen im Seil und anstatt zu klettern, schrauben wir ein paar Griffe in die Wand. Das mag auf den ersten Blick sinnvoll und richtig erscheinen, es ist aber schlichtweg der falsche Ansatz.

Routenbau und alle Prozesse, die damit verbunden sind, geschehen in jedweder Form im Rahmen eines Arbeitsverhältnisses und müssen

auch als Arbeit betrachtet werden. Als Routenbauer sind wir während des Schraubens vom Verständnis her keine Kletterer, sondern wir arbeiten. Erst wenn wir diesen Grundsatz verinnerlicht haben, können wir den nächsten Schritt in Richtung Professionalisierung der künstlichen Kletteranlagen gehen.

Dafür bedarf es zunächst einer Übersicht der verschiedenen Arbeitsbereiche im Routenbau, der gemeinsamen Grundlagen sowie der Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Bereichen.

## Sicherheit für den Routenbauer

Für die Tätigkeit des Routenbauers sind die Volljährigkeit und eine gute körperliche Verfassung essentielle Voraussetzungen, genauso wie das Wissen über die Montage von Griffen und Volumen. Das Tragen einer Schutzbrille sollte ebenso selbstverständlich sein wie die Verwendung eines Gehörschutzes, sofern mit Schlagschraubern gearbeitet wird. Augen und Ohren gehören zu den wichtigsten Körperteilen des Menschen und sollten daher entsprechend geschützt werden. Die Entfernung eines Metallsplitters aus der Hornhaut gehört sicher nicht zu den angenehmsten Erfahrungen im Leben eines Routenbauers. Viele Kollegen verwenden Handschuhe, um die Haut fürs Testen und Klettern zu schonen, denn vor allem der Umgang mit neuen Griffen kann recht aggressiv für Haut und Finger sein. Auch mögliche Spätfolgen sind zu bedenken, dazu gehören zum Beispiel Rückenschmerzen durch die Arbeit im Gurt oder das Heben von schweren Kisten und weitere Gefahren. Die allgemeine Gesundheit des Routenbauers sollte also langfristig im Fokus stehen.

## Die Werkzeugverwendung

Die Verwendung des richtigen Werkzeuges für den richtigen Zweck ist in Sachen Sicherheit von grundlegender Bedeutung: Es empfiehlt sich beispielsweise nicht, einen Schlagschrauber für Holzschrauben einzusetzen. Bei der Montage von Volumen sollten hingegen alle vom Hersteller vorgesehenen Befestigungsmöglichkeiten verwendet wer-

Following working methods from working at heights  
Anlehnung an Arbeitsweisen aus der Höhenarbeit



**“WHILE BOLTING HOLDS AND VOLUMES ONTO A WALL, ROUTE SETTERS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS CLIMBERS BUT AS WORKERS.”**

**„ALS ROUTENBAUER SIND WIR WÄHREND DES SCHRAUBENS VOM VERSTÄNDNIS HER KEINE KLETTERER, SONDERN WIR ARBEITEN.“**

## BIO

**Name:** Peter Zeidelhack

**Born:** 1977

**Lives in:** Munich, Germany

**Profession:** Management (Route setting and Marketing)

**Education:** Diploma in sports science, focusing on media and communication

working at height to prevent them from falling to the ground. As is the case with many areas of route setting, the proper handling of materials and tools is a highly broad and complex matter, and describing it in full would go beyond the scope of this article. It is therefore important to note that route setters must be open to continuous development and learning, as this is crucial to all aspects of their work.

### **The workplace environment when setting boulders**

When setting boulders, it is crucial that all ladders are positioned securely and are being used in line with the applicable ladder regulations. The top two rungs on a free-standing ladder should, in fact, not be stepped on at all. Leaning ladders, meanwhile, must be placed at the correct angle. Wheels or padding at the top of the ladder are tried-and-tested ways of protecting the wall from damage or staining when the loaded ladder sinks into the mat. It is always worth covering the working area with a protective non-slip floor mat, especially when working on mats with a PVC coating. Route setters must never test sequences of moves or entire boulders over crates, holds, or tools placed on the ground, as the risk of injury is extremely high.

### **Ropes vs. mobile elevated work platforms**

When it comes to route setting, a basic distinction must be made between roped route setting and route setting using a mobile elevated work platform. Whichever method is chosen, it is important to block off a sufficiently large area in which to work. Since falling objects pose a clear danger (holds, bolts and screws, tools), overhanging routes on neighboring areas of the wall must also be designated as off-limits. It is still open to debate whether it is sufficient to block off the area using warning tape or whether safety fences should be used. Depending on the condition of the wall and floor, a dropped hold may pick up speed or bounce unpredictably after rebounding off one of these surfaces. Here, too, it could be worth covering the floor with a protective mat, especially when working over special flooring that provides cushioning from falls.

den, außer es wird dadurch zum Beispiel eine Einschlagmutter unbrauchbar. Der Verdrehenschutz (abspaxen) bei Klettergriffen sollte je nachdem (Spaxpolitik) nicht pauschal erfolgen sondern mit Sinn und Verstand. Im Wettkampfkontext ist das sicher anders zu werten. Die Länge der metrischen Schrauben sollte ausreichend groß sein um zu verhindern, dass ein Griff von der Wand fällt, falls er sich doch einmal drehen sollte. Auch das Werkzeug an sich muss bei der Arbeit in der Höhe gesichert werden, um nicht herabfallen zu können. Der richtige Umgang mit Material und Werkzeug ist – wie viele Bereiche des Routenbauwissens – überaus umfangreich und komplex, deshalb würde eine vollständige Beschreibung den Inhalt dieses Artikels sprengen. Aus diesem Grund ist es wichtig zu beachten, dass das Berufsbild des Routenbauers in allen Aspekten von ständiger Weiterentwicklung und von Lernprozessen geprägt ist, die Offenheit dafür vorausgesetzt.

### **Das Arbeitsumfeld beim Boulderbau**

Beim Boulderbau ist allgemein darauf zu achten, dass die zum Einsatz kommenden Leitern sicher stehen und entsprechend der jeweiligen Leiterverordnung verwendet werden. Die obersten beiden Stufen einer freistehenden Leiter sind de facto keine Stufen. Bei angelehnten Leitern ist auf den richtigen Winkel zu achten. Um die Wand vor Beschädigung oder Verschmutzung zu bewahren, wenn eine Leiter unter Last in die Matte einsinkt, haben sich Rollen oder eine Abpolsterung am oberen Ende der Leitern bewährt. Der Arbeitsbereich sollte mit einem schützenden Teppich ausgelegt werden, was vor allem bei Fallschutzmatten mit PVC-Folienüberzug, aber auch allgemein von Vorteil ist. Keinesfalls sollte man über Kisten, Griffen oder Werkzeug Züge respektive ganze Boulder testen – die Verletzungsgefahr ist sehr hoch!

### **Seil vs. Hebebühne beim Routenbau**

Beim Routenbau muss grundsätzlich zwischen dem Routenbau aus dem Seil und dem Routenbau aus der Hebebühne unterschieden

At first glance, using a mobile elevated work platform seems like the easier way to attach holds and transport materials, especially when working on steep walls. Before using such platforms, route setters must ensure that the floor is strong enough to support the load and that the platform will provide adequate access and can reach a sufficient height. For safety reasons, the use of mobile elevated work platforms is subject to clear regulations in most countries and national rules must be followed. In Germany, for example, if there are times when the platform is not positioned directly above its supporting surface, it is mandatory to follow the rules governing the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) against falls from height. Mobile elevated work platforms and other aerial devices are becoming increasingly popular among route setters. However, operating these platforms is not a task to be taken lightly, as users have to grapple with numerous rules, requirements, guidelines and dangers, not to mention high costs. Route setting from an aerial device also requires a great deal of experience. Route setters cannot work quite as closely to the climbing wall, which means that they are unable to immediately test every new hold and foothold combination.

Although roped route setting is the most common technique used worldwide, there are far fewer clear regulations for this method than there are for working with mobile elevated work platforms. However, in terms of safety, it is here that the situation is currently progressing most quickly. As part of these developments, route setters are moving towards following the procedures used when working at height (rope access and positioning techniques). This is certainly the right approach, especially given the growing professionalization of route setting work and the resulting increase in requirements. The use of a second safety rope in addition to the working rope involves very little additional effort on the part of route setters, yet creates far safer working conditions. Due to the risks involved, route setters are generally not permitted to work alone. It is also imperative to devise an emergency rescue plan that can be put into action in the event of an accident.

Compared to using a mobile elevated work platform, transporting holds and bolts is obviously much more difficult and time-consuming when route setting with a rope. Having said that, it is totally manageable provided that the right systems are in place. The materials should be transported using a separate rope system. For example, a pulley system makes the job a whole lot easier. One of the main advantages of working with a rope is that the route setter is able to position themselves directly on the wall, making it easier for them to visualize their planned sequences and to actually try them out once they have attached the holds. What's more, this method is much cheaper than using a mobile elevated work platform. While these platforms are relatively expensive to hire or procure, service, and maintain, the cost of working with a rope, in contrast, is limited to that of buying and inspecting the necessary PPE.

werden. Bei beiden Arten des Routenbaus ist darauf zu achten, den Arbeitsbereich entsprechend weitläufig abzusperren. Dazu gehört auch, dass überhängende Routen in benachbarten Wandbereichen gesperrt werden. Die Gefahr geht hier ganz klar von herabfallenden Gegenständen (Griffe, Schrauben, Werkzeug) aus. Ob als Absperrung ein Flatterband ausreichend ist oder ob es sich empfiehlt, einen Fangschutzzäun zu verwenden, bedarf einer weiterführenden Diskussion. Je nach Wand- und Bodenbeschaffenheit kann ein heruntergefallener Griff schon eine gewisse Dynamik nach dem Abprall an der Wand oder vom Boden entwickeln. Auch hier kann es hilfreich sein, Teppichstreifen zum Schutz des Bodens zu verwenden, vor allem, wenn auf einem Fallschutzboden gearbeitet wird.

Der Routenbau aus der Bühne ist auf den ersten Blick die vermeintlich einfachere Art um Griffe zu befestigen und Material zu transportieren – das gilt vor allem in steilem Gelände. Voraussetzungen für den Einsatz einer Hebebühne sind ein tragfähiger Boden, der entsprechenden Zugang an den Einsatzort und die ausreichende Arbeitshöhe der Bühne. Aus sicherheitstechnischer Sicht ist die Arbeit aus Hebebühnen in den meisten Ländern klar reguliert und die nationalen Regelwerke sind anzuwenden. In Deutschland kommt beispielsweise die Vorschrift zur Benutzung von persönlicher Schutzausrüstung (PSA) gegen Absturz zur Anwendung, sofern sich die Arbeitsplattform zeitweise nicht mehr über der Abstützfläche der Bühne befindet. Hebebühnen oder Hubsteiger erfreuen sich im Rahmen des Routenbaus zunehmender Beliebtheit. Der Betrieb dieser Maschinen ist jedoch alles andere als auf die leichte Schulter zu nehmen und zusätzlich mit zahlreichen Regeln, Anforderungen, Richtlinien, Gefahren und natürlich auch entsprechenden Kosten verbunden. Der Routenbau aus dem Hubsteiger erfordert darüber hinaus ein hohes Maß an Erfahrung. Der Routenbauer befindet sich etwas weiter weg von der Kletterwand und nicht jede geschraubte Griff- und Trittkombination kann direkt getestet werden.

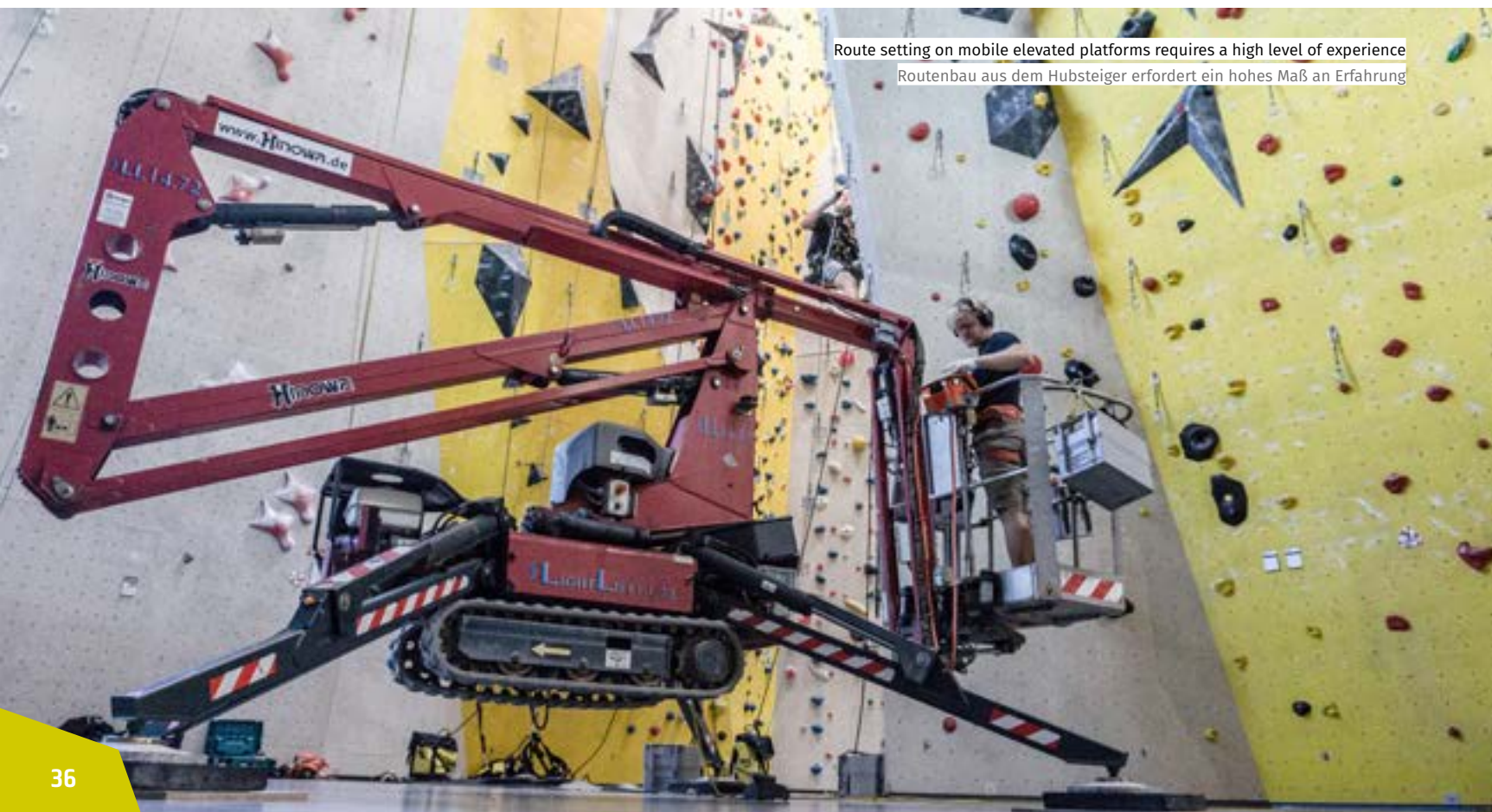
Der Routenbau aus dem Seil ist weltweit die am weitesten verbreitete Methode. Im Gegensatz zur Arbeit mit Hebebühnen gibt es dafür jedoch nur vereinzelt klare Regelwerke. Im Kontext der Sicherheit beim Routenbau allgemein ist der Routenbau aus dem Seil eindeutig der Bereich, der sich derzeit am schnellsten weiterentwickelt. Im Rahmen dieser Entwicklung kristallisiert sich aktuell die Ablehnung an Arbeitsweisen aus der Höhenarbeit (Seilzugangs- und Positionierungsverfahren) heraus. Vor allem vor dem Hintergrund der zunehmenden Professionalisierung und den damit steigenden Anforderungen kann dieser Weg der einzig richtige sein. Der Einsatz eines zweiten Sicherungsseils zusätzlich zum Arbeitsseil bedeutet keinen allzu großen Mehraufwand, führt aber zu einer immensen Steigerung der objektiven Sicherheit des Routenbauers während des Schraubens. Alleinarbeit im Routenbau ist aufgrund der allgemeinen Gefährdung generell nicht zulässig. In diesem Kontext ist es zusätzlich zwingend erforderlich, für den Ernstfall eines Unfalls eine Rettungslösung zur Hand zu haben.

**“IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ROUTE SETTERS MUST BE OPEN TO CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING, AS THIS IS CRUCIAL TO ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR WORK.”**

**„ES IST WICHTIG ZU BEACHTEN, DASS DAS BERUFSBILD DES ROUTENBAUERS IN ALLEN ASPEKTEN VON STÄNDIGER WEITERENTWICKLUNG UND VON LERNPROZESSEN GEPRÄGT IST, DIE OFFENHEIT DAFÜR VORAUSGESETZT.“**

derungen kann dieser Weg der einzig richtige sein. Der Einsatz eines zweiten Sicherungsseils zusätzlich zum Arbeitsseil bedeutet keinen allzu großen Mehraufwand, führt aber zu einer immensen Steigerung der objektiven Sicherheit des Routenbauers während des Schraubens. Alleinarbeit im Routenbau ist aufgrund der allgemeinen Gefährdung generell nicht zulässig. In diesem Kontext ist es zusätzlich zwingend erforderlich, für den Ernstfall eines Unfalls eine Rettungslösung zur Hand zu haben.

Der Transport der Griffe und Schrauben ist beim Routenbau aus dem Seil im Vergleich zum Routenbau aus der Hebebühne natürlich schwieriger.



Route setting on mobile elevated platforms requires a high level of experience  
Routenbau aus dem Hubsteiger erfordert ein hohes Maß an Erfahrung



Redundant rear safety device as a basis for work on the rope  
Redundante Hintersicherung als Grundlage für Arbeit am Seil

## Outlook

Route setters already carry out a lot of highly commendable work around the world. Our aim should be to ensure that this high level of performance is achieved across the board in the future – at a minimum, this should at least be our guiding principle.

Expert committees should now be put in place to work out which steps need to be taken to develop universal safety standards for all the areas of route setting described in this article. This will by no means be an easy path to follow because it is unlikely that national interests and those of specialist associations will converge. Nonetheless, the work involved will pay off in the medium to long term, as we will be rewarded with safer route setting when working on artificial climbing structures and, in turn, will continue to professionalize the sport.

With climbing also expected to feature in the Summer Olympics program in Paris in 2024 and in Los Angeles in 2028, this couldn't come at a better time.

riger und aufwändiger, mit entsprechenden Systemen aber überaus gut durchführbar. Das Material sollte dabei an einem separaten Seilsystem transportiert werden, Flaschenzugsysteme können die Arbeit deutlich erleichtern. Ein großer Vorteil des Routenbaus aus dem Seil liegt vor allem darin, dass man direkt an der Wand ist und sich geplante oder geschraubte Sequenzen besser vorstellen bzw. ausprobieren kann. Darüber hinaus ist der Kostenfaktor bei dieser Art des Routenbaus signifikant niedriger als bei der Arbeit mit Hebebühne. Relativ hohe Anschaffungs-, Wartungs-, Unterhalts- oder Mietkosten für eine Arbeitsbühne stehen lediglich den Anschaffungs- und Überprüfungs-kosten für PSA gegenüber.

## Ausblick in die Zukunft

In den verschiedenen Bereichen des Routen- und Boulderbaus wird vielerorts schon sehr gute Arbeit geleistet. Der Anspruch sollte aber der sein, dass in Zukunft überall dieses Maß guter Arbeit geleistet wird – zumindest als Maxime des Arbeitens.

Die nächsten Schritte bei der Entwicklung einheitlicher Sicherheitsstandards für alle beschriebenen Arbeitsbereiche des Routenbaus sollten durch Fachgremien erarbeitet werden. Dies wird sicher kein einfacher Weg werden, da nationale Interessen oder solche von Fachverbänden nicht unbedingt in die gleiche Richtung gehen dürften. Der Aufwand wird sich mittel- bis langfristig jedoch durch ein höheres Maß an Sicherheit in künstlichen Kletteranlagen bezahlt machen und so zu einer weiteren Professionalisierung des Sports beitragen.

**“OUR AIM SHOULD BE TO ENSURE THAT A HIGH LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE IS ACHIEVED ACROSS THE BOARD IN THE FUTURE.”**

**„DER ANSPRUCH SOLLTE DER SEIN, DASS IN ZUKUNFT ÜBERALL DASSELBE MASS GUTER ARBEIT GELEISTET WIRD.“**

Schließlich soll Klettern ja auch 2024 in Paris und 2028 in Los Angeles Teil des Programms der Olympischen Sommerspiele sein.



**Peter Zeidelhack** is a sports science graduate who majored in media and communications. He took up climbing in 1992 and has been the operations manager of the Munich-South DAV Climbing and Bouldering Center and the Southern Upper Bavaria DAV Climbing Center in Bad Tölz for 14 years. He is responsible for route setting in the Munich network of climbing gyms ([verbundklettern.de](http://verbundklettern.de)), which comprises centers with a total climbing and bouldering surface of over 172,000 square feet (16,000 square meters). For six years, he has coordinated the German national team of route setter trainers on behalf of the DAV, pursuing the vision to “Make setting safe!” on an international level. The 41-year-old is happily married and the proud father of 3 daughters.

**Peter Zeidelhack** ist diplomierte Sportwissenschaftler mit Schwerpunkt Medien und Kommunikation. Er selbst hat 1992 mit dem Klettern angefangen und ist seit 14 Jahren Betriebsleiter des DAV Kletter- und Boulderzentrums München Süd sowie des DAV Kletterzentrums Oberbayern Süd in Bad Tölz. Er ist verantwortlich für den Routenbau im Münchner Kletterhallenverbund ([verbundklettern.de](http://verbundklettern.de)) mit 16.000 qm Kletter- und Boulderfläche. Seit 6 Jahren wirkt er als Koordinator des Bundeslehrteams Routenbau des DAV und verfolgt die Vision „Make setting safe!“ auf internationaler Ebene. Der 41 Jahre alte glückliche Ehemann ist stolzer Vater von 3 Töchtern.

# JACOPO LARCHER

ROUTE SETTING – A PASSION AND PROFESSION

ROUTENBAU – BERUF UND LEIDENSCHAFT

TEXT & INTERVIEW: MARIA HILBER



Photo: Arno Dejaco / Vertical-Life

## INTERVIEW

◆ **Route setting designs and dictates the climbing that takes place in gyms. The setter must be able to reproduce abstract movements on the wall with the aid of holds. What exactly is route setting? Is it just a passionate hobby, or can it be considered a legitimate profession?**

Jacopo Larcher is certainly one of the most well-rounded climbers of recent years. He started climbing at the young age of 10, and has since excelled in almost all facets and disciplines of the sport. Jacopo actively climbed in competitions, was a member of the Italian national team, and was Italian bouldering champion in 2010. On rock, he climbs routes up to 9a+, and just recently, together with his girlfriend Barbara Zangerl, he managed the second free ascent of Magic Mushroom (28 pitches, 8b+) on El Capitan. Whether indoor climbing, sport climbing, alpine multi-pitch climbing or ice climbing, Jacopo can hold his own. His experience in climbing and his enormous repertoire of movement make him a much sought-after route setter in his native South Tyrol and beyond. We talked with him about his passion for setting and his profession as a route setter.

**MH: You began route setting at an early age. How did you get started and what motivates you to keep working in this field?**

**Jacopo:** I was still at school and wanted to earn some money. On the one hand, route setting was simply a job that I used to fund my climbing trips. On the other, I relished the opportunity to be creative and to design new challenges for other climbers. Route setting has since become one of my greatest passions alongside climbing. Besides being a job, it constantly stretches you. Each new route must not only be awesome to climb, but also needs to be suitable for indoor climbing and for the specific target group. I always think about who will be using it – children, adults, or competitive climbers. The fact that there is so much to consider and adapt is what motivates me.

**MH: In your opinion, what signs are there that route setting is becoming increasingly professional?**

**Jacopo:** The general boom in climbing is being accompanied by the growing professionalization of gyms as a whole and route setting as a result. Gyms themselves are becoming more and more appealing. We've moved on from the days of climbing in dreary, unattractive "holes" often found in basements. Far more standards and inspections are in place now as well.

◆ **Der Routenbau gestaltet und steuert den Sport in Kletterhallen. Wer Routen schraubt, muss in der Lage sein abstrakte Bewegungen mit Hilfe von Klettergriffen in der Wand abzubilden. Was macht diese Tätigkeit genau aus und ist der Routenbau nur ein leidenschaftliches Hobby oder ein professioneller Beruf?**

Jacopo Larcher ist sicherlich einer der vielseitigsten Kletterer der letzten Jahre. Im jungen Alter von 10 Jahren hat er mit dem Klettern begonnen und seitdem fast alle Facetten und Spielformen des Sports intensiv und auf hohem Niveau erlebt. Jacopo ist aktiv Wettkämpfe geklettert, war Mitglied des italienischen Nationalteams und italienischer Bouldermeister 2010. Am Fels klettert er Touren bis 9a+ und erst kürzlich gelang ihm zusammen mit seiner Freundin Barbara Zangerl die erste Wiederholung von der freien Begehung der 12 Seillängen von Magic Mushroom (28 SL, 8b+) am El Capitan. Ob in der Halle, beim Sportklettern, in alpinen Mehrseillängen oder im Eis – Jacopo ist in allen Bereichen unterwegs. Seine Erfahrung im Klettern und seine enormes Bewegungsrepertoire machen ihn zu einem gefragten Routenschrauber in seiner Heimat Südtirol und darüber hinaus. Wir haben mit ihm über die Leidenschaft für das Schrauben und den Beruf des Routenbauers gesprochen.

**MH: Du hast früh mit dem Routenbauen angefangen. Wie bist du dazu gekommen und was motiviert dich heute noch für diese Tätigkeit?**

**Jacopo:** Ich bin noch zur Schule gegangen und wollte Geld verdienen. Das Routenbauen war für mich einerseits einfach ein Job, um mir meine Klettertrips zu finanzieren. Andererseits fand ich es auch sehr lässig, kreativ zu werden und für andere Kletterer neue Herausforderungen zu schaffen. Mittlerweile ist das Routensetzen zu einer meiner größten Leidenschaften neben dem Klettern geworden. Es ist nicht nur ein Job, sondern eine konstante Herausforderung. Jede neue Route sollte nicht nur lässig sein, sie muss auch für das Hallenklettern und für die jeweilige Zielgruppe geeignet sein. Ich überlege mir immer, wer sie klettern wird – Kinder, Erwachsene oder Wettkampfkletterer. Da gibt es viel zu bedenken und anzupassen, das motiviert mich.

**MH: Woran erkennt man deiner Meinung nach, dass der Routenbau immer professioneller wird?**

**Jacopo:** Weil das Klettern insgesamt boomt, wird das ganze Hallenwesen immer professioneller, und damit auch der Routenbau. Die Hallen selbst werden immer schöner. Früher waren es richtige „Löcher“, oft in Kellern untergebracht und nicht besonders attraktiv. Heutzutage gibt es auch viel mehr Regeln und Kontrollen.

**“ROUTE SETTING HAS SINCE BECOME ONE OF MY GREATEST PASSIONS ALONGSIDE CLIMBING. BESIDES BEING A JOB, IT CONSTANTLY STRETCHES YOU.”**

**„MITTLERWEILE IST DAS ROUTENSETZEN ZU EINER MEINER GRÖSSTEN LEIDENSCHAFTEN NEBEN DEM KLETTERN GEWORDEN. ES IST NICHT NUR EIN JOB, SONDERN EINE KONSTANTE HERAUSFORDERUNG.“**

## BIO

**Name:** Jacopo Larcher

**Born:** 1989

**Lives in:** My van, Bludenz, Austria

**Profession:** Professional climber, route setter

**Education:** Scientific high school

**Sponsors:** The North Face, Black Diamond, La Sportiva, Vertical-Life, Frictionlabs, Katadyn Group

Jacopo Larcher sets routes and boulder problems for commercial climbing gyms, training camps and competitions  
Jacopo Larcher baut Routen und Boulder kommerziell für Kletterhallen, für Trainingslager und für Wettkämpfe  
Photo: Arno Dejaco

**MH: Nowadays, skilled route setters can make a living from their craft. How do you build a good reputation for yourself as a route setter?**

**Jacopo:** I think it is important to truly understand what the job is all about. This involves taking various aspects into account. Route setters should be able to adapt their own style to the requirements and, more importantly, to correctly determine the standard of the climbers who will be climbing the route. I know lots of route setters who set fantastic routes but could never work for a gym because they don't consider the needs of climbers with different levels of proficiency. However, in addition to being the right grade, a route needs to look good.

I think it's important to really understand the job. You have to consider all of the different aspects. Route setters should be able to adapt their styles to meet needs and, above all, be able to correctly assess the level of the climbers. In general, it's easy to set cool problems and routes, but one of the main difficulties is in adapting them to the correct audience. Not only does the difficulty have to fit, the route should also look appealing.

The method followed is also important, as route setters should be able to work quickly and efficiently, while paying attention to safety. I anticipate that occupational safety will become an even more key topic over the next few years.

**MH: Do you have a preferred route style or do you always adapt your style to the requirements?**

**Jacopo:** You always have to adapt your style. It goes without saying that I set routes differently for competitions or training camps than I do for standard gym purposes.

**MH: Wer gute Arbeit leistet, kann inzwischen als professioneller Schrauber von seinem Beruf leben. Wie baut man sich als Routensetzer einen guten Ruf auf?**

**Jacopo:** Ich glaube, es ist wichtig, die Aufgabe wirklich zu verstehen. Dabei muss man verschiedenste Aspekte beachten. Ein Routensetzer sollte den eigenen Stil den Anforderungen anpassen, und vor allem das Niveau der Kletterer richtig einschätzen können. Ich kenne viele, die zwar richtig lässige Routen bauen, die aber niemals für eine Halle schrauben könnten, weil sie die Anforderungen verschiedener Leistungsstufen nicht beachten. Aber nicht nur der Grad muss passen, die Route sollte auch gut ausschauen.

Ich glaube, es ist wichtig, die Aufgabe wirklich zu verstehen. Dabei muss man verschiedenste Aspekte beachten. Ein Routenschrauber sollte den eigenen Stil den Anforderungen anpassen, und vor allem das Niveau der Kletterer richtig einschätzen können. Generell ist es einfach coole Boulder und Routen zu schrauben, aber diese ans Publikum optimal anzupassen bildet eine der Hauptschwierigkeiten. Nicht nur der Grad muss passen, die Route sollte auch gut ausschauen.

Auch die Arbeitsweise ist wichtig. Ein Routenbauer sollte schnell und effizient arbeiten und zugleich auf die Sicherheit achten. Ich glaube, dass die Arbeitssicherheit in den nächsten Jahren zu einem noch viel zentraleren Thema wird.

**MH: Hast du einen bevorzugten Routenstil, oder passt du deinen Stil immer den Anforderungen an?**

**Jacopo:** Man muss seinen Stil immer anpassen. Für Wettkämpfe oder Trainingscamps baue ich natürlich anders als für den normalen Hallenbetrieb.

My overriding aim as a route setter is to "force" climbers to climb by challenging them. They should be able to discern the sequences of moves required, apply footwork, and ultimately use my routes to improve their skills. Even when I'm designing easy routes, I like to create routes that demand fluid moves and combinations. I want climbers to truly engage their brains instead of just ascending the wall like it's a ladder. Climbing shouldn't be about fitness.

On the whole, I also think it's important that my routes are aesthetically pleasing so that climbers feel inspired to try them out straightaway. I enjoy playing around with the design. For example, I might use a certain combination of structures or holds – holds of the same type or from the same set. Color also comes into play. A white route on a white wall is nowhere near as attractive as a neon green one. Whenever I have the choice, I always look for the coolest color.

**MH: You've already mentioned that a route has to be of the right difficulty rating. This issue is known to be a bone of contention in the climbing world. How difficult is it to adapt your work to the grades found in different gyms?**

**Jacopo:** It is incredibly difficult. In most cases, we are told in advance which grade our route should be. It's hard enough to hit the nail on the head and set the desired grade – a perfect 7a, for example. But, on top of that, we have to contend with the fact that a 7a in Innsbruck is different from a 7a in Bolzano, for instance. As a result, routes are often criticized for their difficulty, even if they are good routes per se.

This is why I think gyms should grade routes themselves. Route setters should be given a range to aim for, e.g. between 6c and 7a, and the gym should determine the actual grade once the route has been set. Otherwise, in order to gain a complete understanding of the grades found in a particular gym, I would have to climb all the routes on offer there first.

I came across a good idea in the climbing gym in the Austrian town of Telfs. Here, a table of all the new routes is displayed so that climbers can enter grade suggestions. The gym then uses this feedback to grade their routes accordingly.

**MH: When it comes to bouldering, there are even greater discrepancies between individual gyms. Is increased comparability required here?**

**Jacopo:** Not necessarily comparability. I'm a huge fan of circuits. Here, the level of difficulty is identified by the color of the holds. This is becoming more and more commonplace. For example, all easy boulders have blue holds. This approach requires more careful planning because there needs to be a clever system in place for ordering the holds. However, this method is ideal for training and you don't need to pay such close attention to the difficulty rating when route setting. For instance, all blue boulders are graded between 4a and 6a, while boulders at the next level up are between 5b and 6c. Instead of clear grades, there are overlapping levels. This makes it easier for climbers to find boulders that are of the right standard for them.

Insgesamt ist es mein Ziel als Routenbauer, dass ich die Kletterer zum Klettern „zwinge“, sie herausfordere. Sie sollen die Züge lesen, Fußtechnik einsetzen und sich letztendlich dadurch verbessern. Auch bei leichten Routen ist mir wichtig, dass die Züge und Kombinationen flüssig sind, dass man nicht wie an einer Leiter hochsteigt, sondern wirklich denken muss. Klettern soll keine Fitness-Sache sein.

Generell lege ich auch Wert darauf, dass meine Routen optisch gut aussehen, damit die Kletterer sofort motiviert sind, sie zu probieren. Ich spiele sehr gerne mit dem Design. Das kann zum Beispiel eine bestimmte Kombination der Strukturen oder Griffe sein – Griffe der gleichen Art oder aus dem gleichen Set. Auch die Farbe spielt eine Rolle. Eine weiße Route an einer weißen Wand ist bestimmt nicht so attraktiv wie eine neongrüne. Wenn ich die Wahl habe, dann suche ich mir sicher immer die coolste Farbe aus.

**MH: Du hast vorhin gesagt, dass der Schwierigkeitsgrad einer Route passen muss – ein Punkt, der bekanntlich für viele Diskussionen sorgt. Wie schwierig ist es, sich an die Bewertungsniveaus verschiedener Hallen anzupassen?**

**Jacopo:** Das ist richtig schwierig. Meistens bekommen wir Routenbauer vorgegeben, welchen Grad wir bauen sollen. Es ist schon schwer genug, überhaupt einen Grad, zum Beispiel 7a, zu treffen. Dann ist es auch noch so, dass das Niveau einer 7a in Innsbruck anders ist als das einer 7a in Bozen. So passiert

es leider ständig, dass Routen aufgrund ihrer Schwierigkeit kritisiert werden, auch wenn sie noch so schön sind.

Deshalb finde ich, dass die Hallen die Routen selber bewerten sollten. Den Routenbauern sollte ein Schwierigkeitsbereich vorgegeben werden, zum Beispiel zwischen 6c und 7a. Den Grad bestimmt die Halle dann selber. Idealerweise müsste ich sonst alle Routen der Halle klettern um zu wissen, wie das Niveau dort ist.

Eine gute Idee hatte die Kletterhalle Telfs: Dort wird für neue Routen eine Tabelle ausgehängt, in der die Kletterer Gradvorschläge eintragen können, die die Halle dann entsprechend übernimmt.

**MH: Wie sieht es beim Bouldern aus, dort sind die Bewertungen in einzelnen Hallen noch unterschiedlicher. Braucht es hier mehr Vergleichbarkeit?**

**Jacopo:** Vergleichbarkeit nicht unbedingt. Ich bin ein großer Fan von Parkours, das heißt, wenn das Schwierigkeitsniveau anhand der Griff-farbe zu erkennen ist. Das sieht man immer häufiger. Beispiel: Alle leichten Boulder haben blaue Griffe. Die Planung ist zwar schwieriger, weil man die Griffe entsprechend smart bestellen muss. Aber für das Training ist diese Methode ideal und beim Schrauben muss man nicht ganz so präzise auf den Schwierigkeitsgrad achten. Beispielsweise haben alle blauen Boulder eine Schwierigkeit zwischen 4a und 6a, die der nächsten Stufe liegen zwischen 5b und 6c. Es gibt also keine klaren Grade sondern Niveaus, die ineinander übergehen. Für die Kletterer ist es somit leichter, die Boulder zu finden, die für sie wahrscheinlich machbar sind.

**"RECEIVING FEEDBACK FROM GYMS IS CRUCIAL TO US ROUTE SETTERS."**

**„RÜCKMELDUNGEN VON DER HALLE ZU BEKOMMEN IST FÜR UNS ROUTENBAUER ABER AM WICHTIGSTEN.“**

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**MH: What is a typical working day in the life of a route setter?**

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**Jacopo:** Commercial route setting follows a similar process in most gyms. The main exception to this is when there is no mobile elevated work platform available, as this makes the job more challenging and time-consuming. Most route setters start early, ideally when the climbing gym is still closed to the public. The first job is to pick out the holds and then the real work begins. I usually set routes from 7:00 in the morning until 7:00 at night. The number of routes I manage to complete in this time varies significantly and is determined not only by the height of the wall, but also by the difficulty of the route I've been asked to set. For instance, it's much quicker to set a 6a than an 8c. Although easier ascents require complex moves as well, they are never as complicated as the most advanced routes. The amount of time I need also varies depending on the holds and whether I'm working with large volumes.

I find it very important to test my own routes, but I only allow myself to do this when there is somebody else in the gym with me. While route setters don't always do this, to me it is virtually the most important thing. Even the most experienced route setters have to make adjustments after trying out their routes. My routes should be seamless to climb and shouldn't contain any overly difficult boulder problems. You can't rush the testing process. Overall, I spend around an hour on an easy route and two to two and a half hours on a difficult one.

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**MH: How significant is the difference between route setting for lead climbing and route setting for bouldering?**

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**Jacopo:** Bouldering has undergone some fairly significant changes in recent years, with the style becoming more dynamic and large structures being used much more often. Despite this, the challenges faced by route setters have remained the same in principle. Instead of making it all about fitness, you have to ensure that your routes are exciting and the boulders are suitable for all the climbers who are going to attempt them. Easy boulders should also be accessible to children,

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**MH: Wie sieht ein typischer Arbeitstag beim Routenbau aus?**

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**Jacopo:** Der kommerzielle Routenbau läuft in den meisten Hallen ähnlich ab. Außer es ist keine Hebebühne vorhanden, dann ist es etwas anstrengender und braucht mehr Zeit. Generell fängt man ziemlich früh an, idealerweise wenn die Kletterhalle noch geschlossen ist. Zuerst werden die Griffe ausgesucht, dann geht's los. Meistens baue ich von 7:00 Uhr am Morgen bis um 19:00 Uhr am Abend. Wie viele Routen ich in dieser Zeit schaffe, kann sehr unterschiedlich sein. Das hängt natürlich von der Wandhöhe ab, aber auch vom Niveau, das zu bauen ist. Eine 6a ist einfach viel schneller geschraubt als eine 8c. Obwohl die Züge einer leichten Route auch komplex sein müssen, sind sie nie so kompliziert wie die einer richtig schweren. Der Zeitaufwand hängt auch davon ab, welche Griffe verwendet werden und ob mit großen Volumen gearbeitet wird.

Ich lege anschließend sehr viel Wert darauf, die Routen nach dem Schrauben zu testen, wenn ich nicht gerade allein in der Halle bin. Das macht zwar nicht jeder, aber für mich ist es fast das Wichtigste. Auch wenn man noch so viel Erfahrung hat, es gibt immer etwas anzupassen. Meine Routen sollen flüssig zu klettern sein und keine allzu schwierigen Boulderstellen haben. Das Testen braucht natürlich auch seine Zeit. Insgesamt brauche ich vielleicht eine Stunde für eine leichte und zwei oder zweieinhalb für eine schwere Route.

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**MH: Wie groß ist der Unterschied zwischen dem Routenbau für den Vorstieg und dem fürs Bouldern?**

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**Jacopo:** Das Bouldern hat sich in letzter Zeit ziemlich stark verändert, der Stil ist dynamischer geworden und es wird viel mehr mit großen Strukturen gespielt. Aber die Herausforderung an den Routenbauer ist im Prinzip immer die gleiche. Man muss darauf achten, dass es nicht nur um die Fitness geht, sondern dass man lässige Züge baut und dass die Boulder für alle Kletterer passen, die sie versuchen werden. Leichte Boulder sollten auch für Kinder geeignet sein, deshalb ist zum Beispiel

which might require you to adjust the height of the top hold. A lot of experimentation is still going on in the field of bouldering, but by and large the route setting process is similar to that followed for lead climbing.

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**MH: What should climbing gyms do from an organizational point of view if they want to invite in external route setters?**

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**Jacopo:** It is important that route setters have everything explained to them at the outset. Where the storeroom is, how to operate the mobile elevated work platform, how volumes and holds are handled in the gym in question. In some gyms, climbers are permitted to use volumes for holding and for stepping on, while in others they should only use them if they are of the right color or are marked. Route setters need to be informed about climbing rules like these.

In the best-case scenario, a gym would have a mobile elevated work platform. Also, it is preferable for the gym to be closed or, at the very least, for the area in which the route setter is working to be blocked off. It is also very helpful if the holds have already been sorted into some kind of order. Sifting through all the boxes and organizing the holds takes up a lot of time. Ideally, all the bolts, set screws, and other materials should be prepared. When carrying boxes and testing routes, it is much nicer to work in pairs as a minimum or, if this isn't possible, for there to be somebody else in the gym who is available to help.

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**MH: So, in an ideal world, route setters should only really be responsible for setting new routes. This is, after all, what they are being paid for. What payment models are there and which one is the best?**

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**Jacopo:** They vary widely. I can be paid by the hour, by the day, or by the route. Personally, I think it would be best to have one standard solution. My preferred method is to be paid a daily rate. Being paid per route makes you feel as if you have to set a lot and this generally has a detrimental effect on quality. If, alternatively, you have a whole day, you can take the time to ensure that each route is as good as can be. Unfortunately, it is often the case that gyms expect route setters to complete a lot of routes in a short period of time. Ultimately, quality suffers as a result.

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**MH: How far in advance are you booked in to set a route?**

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**Jacopo:** I'm usually booked a long time in advance, which is great. This is standard practice for commercial route setting and obviously even more so for competitive route setting. Generally, I receive inquiries at least two to four weeks in advance. I only tend to reset routes on the spur of the moment in gyms where I frequently climb.

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**MH: In your opinion, how often should routes and boulders be reset? Overall, does this take place too infrequently or frequently enough?**

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**Jacopo:** Routes are reset more frequently than in the past. Broadly speaking, I think it is very important for gyms to constantly refresh their routes, purely because this makes them a lot more attractive. Since gyms do not have the same number of visitors all year round, there are no rules governing how frequently routes should be reset. For the most part, resetting probably needs to take place less often in summer when lots of people prefer to climb outdoors. However, these

die Höhe vom Top anzupassen. Beim Bouldern wird noch mehr getestet, aber im Prinzip ist der Routenbau ähnlich wie beim Vorstieg.

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**MH: Was sollte eine Kletterhalle aus organisatorischer Sicht beachten, wenn sie Routenbauer von außerhalb einlädt?**

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**Jacopo:** Wichtig ist, dass man gleich am Anfang alles erklärt bekommt. Wo das Lager ist, wie die Hebebühne funktioniert, wie mit Volumen und Griffen umgegangen wird. In einigen Hallen dürfen die Kletterer ein Volumen zum Halten und Steigen verwenden, in anderen nur, wenn es die richtige Farbe hat oder markiert ist. Über solche Kletterregeln müssen die Routensetzer informiert werden.

Ideal ist, wenn eine Hebebühne vorhanden ist, wenn die Halle geschlossen ist oder zumindest der Bereich, in dem man arbeitet, abgesperrt ist. Zudem ist es sehr hilfreich, wenn die Griffe schon sortiert sind. Alle Kisten zu durchsuchen und Griffe zu ordnen nimmt sehr viel Zeit in Anspruch. Schrauben, Spax, alles Material sollte im besten Fall schon hergerichtet sein. Für das Kisten-Tragen und Testen ist es am angenehmsten, wenn man nicht alleine baut, wenn man mindestens zu zweit ist oder sonst jemand in der Halle zur Verfügung steht.

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**MH: Ein Routenbauer sollte also im besten Fall wirklich nur für das Schrauben neuer Routen zuständig sein, wofür er ja auch bezahlt wird. Welche Bezahlmodelle gibt es und welches ist das beste?**

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**Jacopo:** Das ist sehr unterschiedlich. Manchmal werde ich pro Stunde bezahlt, manchmal pro Tag oder auch pro Route. Mir wäre es lieber, wenn es dafür eine allgemein gültige Lösung gäbe. Eine Bezahlung pro Tag finde ich am besten. Wenn pro Route bezahlt wird, hat man das Gefühl, dass man sehr viel bauen muss, was aber meistens auf Kosten der Qualität geht. Wenn man einen ganzen Tag zur Verfügung hat, achtet man hingegen darauf, dass die Routen wirklich gut werden. Leider passiert es zu oft, dass die Hallen von den Routenbauern erwarten, viel und schnell zu bauen. Darunter leidet aber letztendlich die Qualität.

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**MH: Wie lang im Voraus wirst du fürs Routenbauen angefragt?**

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**Jacopo:** Die Termine werden eher langfristig geplant, was ich super finde. Das ist beim kommerziellen Routenbau so und bei Wettkämpfen sowieso. Meistens werde ich ungefähr zwei bis vier Wochen vorher angefragt, manchmal auch früher schon. Nur in Hallen, in denen ich selber oft klettere, baue ich auch spontan mal was um.

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**MH: Wie oft sollten deiner Meinung nach Routen und Boulder umgebaut werden? Passiert das insgesamt zu selten oder häufig genug?**

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**Jacopo:** Im Vergleich zu früher wird heutzutage immer öfter umgebaut. Insgesamt finde ich es sehr wichtig, ständig umzubauen, weil das die Halle einfach um ein Vielfaches attraktiver macht. Für die Umbauhäufigkeit gibt es keine Regeln, denn natürlich ist es so, dass nicht in jeder Halle gleich viel los ist. Generell muss wahrscheinlich im Sommer weniger häufig umgebaut werden, wenn viele Kletterer lieber nach draußen gehen. Aber auch das ist in vielen Städten kein Thema mehr, weil die Hallen auch im Sommer voll sind.

Für mich als Kletterer ist es viel interessanter, wenn es jedes Mal zwei, drei neue Boulder gibt, anstatt dass die Halle einmal im Monat einen



Jacopo Larcher on La Ramla (9a+, Siurana)  
Photo: François Lebeau

days, this is no longer an issue in many towns and cities, where many gyms are also full in the warmer months.

For me as a climber, it is much more exciting when a gym has two or three new boulders on offer each time I visit as opposed to one entirely reset area each month. In practice, however, this is easier said than done, for example, if the gym has to hire a mobile elevated work platform for its route setters. Nevertheless, this approach is beneficial at least for bouldering and it avoids a situation where all climbers suddenly crowd around the wall with the new routes or boulders, leaving the rest of the gym virtually empty.

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**MH: Do you receive feedback from gyms or climbers on the routes you have set?**

**Jacopo:** Rarely. If I want feedback, I have to ask for it myself. However, receiving feedback from gyms is crucial to us route setters. By this, I don't necessarily mean being told that a route is fun to climb. Instead, it's more useful to be given constructive criticism so that I can do better the next time around. For example, it would be great if a gym could send us feedback after a few weeks. In gyms where I often climb myself, climbers who have seen my name written at the start of a route sometimes approach me directly.

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**MH: Do you like it when your work is attributed to you?**

**Jacopo:** I've thought about this a lot and I'm still on the fence. It is often the case that climbers have a negative experience of a route and from then on do not like any routes set by the route setter in question.

If I am happy with my work and have been given enough time to spend on the route, I'm in favor of having my name appear alongside it. If I haven't been able to test it enough, then I'd rather my name not be mentioned. Overall, of course, you have to be open to criticism if you are to improve.

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**MH: In general, do you have the impression that a route setter's work is respected and appreciated?**

**Jacopo:** I think that route setters receive a lot more respect today than in the past. On the competitive scene, it is a shame that you often don't receive any feedback if everything runs smoothly. The quality of the routes is rarely cited as the main reason for the thrill a competition provides. However, as soon as something goes wrong, the route setters are to blame. Unfortunately, the amount of time we have to work on competitive routes is too little, given our level of responsibility. Luckily, this aspect is at least better during commercial route setting.

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**MH: What changes do you wish gyms could implement to improve your working environment in general?**

**Jacopo:** I would appreciate it if gyms could place much more emphasis on quality than on quantity. I would also like it if we were given a difficulty range to aim for instead of a single grade. As I've already mentioned, it would be great if all the holds and working materials could be ready and waiting and if the working area could be blocked off. Plus, a flat-rate travel allowance wouldn't go amiss either.

ganzen Bereich umbaut. In der Praxis ist das natürlich nicht immer so leicht möglich, zum Beispiel, wenn für den Routenbau eine Hebebühne angemietet werden muss. Aber zumindest beim Bouldern ist es von Vorteil und es wird gleichzeitig vermieden, dass alle Kletterer plötzlich nur noch an die Wand mit neuen Routen oder Bouldern wollen und im Rest der Halle kaum geklettert wird.

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**MH: Bekommst du von den Hallen oder von den Kletterern Feedback zu Routen, die du gebaut hast?**

**Jacopo:** Selten. Wenn ich Feedback möchte, muss ich selber nachfragen. Rückmeldungen von der Halle zu bekommen ist für uns Routenbauer am Wichtigsten. Ich möchte dabei nicht unbedingt hören, dass eine Route lässig ist, sondern was nicht passt, damit ich es das nächste Mal besser machen kann. Es wäre zum Beispiel ideal für uns Routenbauer, wenn die Halle uns nach einigen Wochen Feedback schicken würde. In den Hallen, in denen ich selber oft klettere, kommt es manchmal vor, dass mich die Kletterer direkt ansprechen, wenn mein Name am Einstieg angeschrieben ist.

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**MH: Findest du es gut, wenn der Name angeschrieben ist?**

**Jacopo:** Ich habe viel darüber nachgedacht. Irgendwie nicht und irgendwie schon. Oft ist es so, dass die Kletterer einmal eine schlechte Erfahrung machen und dann von vorne herein alle Routen eines bestimmten Routenbauers nicht mögen.

Wenn ich mit meiner Arbeit zufrieden bin und genügend Zeit für eine Route hatte, dann bin ich dafür, dass mein Name angeschrieben steht. Wenn ich nicht ausreichend testen konnte, dann nicht. Insgesamt muss man aber natürlich offen für Kritik sein, um sich beim nächsten Mal verbessern zu können.

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**MH: Hast du allgemein das Gefühl, dass das Handwerk der Routenbauer beachtet und geschätzt wird?**

**Jacopo:** Ich finde, im Vergleich zu früher wird das Routensetzen heute viel mehr respektiert. Bei Wettkämpfen ist es etwas schade, dass man meistens nichts hört, wenn alles gepasst hat. Selten heißt es, dass der Wettkampf so spannend war, weil die Routen so gut gebaut waren. Aber sobald etwas nicht passt, sind die Routenbauer schuld. Die Verantwortung beim Routenbau für Wettkämpfe ist sehr hoch, der Zeitdruck leider ebenfalls. Beim kommerziellen Routenbau ist zumindest dieser Aspekt anders.

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**MH: Was würdest du dir insgesamt von den Hallen bezüglich Routenbau wünschen?**

**Jacopo:** Ich würde mir zum Beispiel wünschen, dass viel mehr auf Qualität als auf Quantität geachtet wird. Dass man eher Schwierigkeitsbereiche als einzelne Grade vorgegeben bekommt. Und wie vorhin gesagt: Griffe und Arbeitsmaterialien sollten idealerweise bereit stehen, der Arbeitsbereich gehört abgesperrt. Eine Fahrtpauschale wäre auch schön.



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## TRAINING OPTIONS FOR MODERN BOULDERING GYMS

TEXT & PHOTOS: PATRICK MATROS

# TRAININGSMÖGLICHKEITEN IN MODERNEN BOULDERHALLEN

◆ *Sport climbing has experienced a tremendous spike in popularity over the past 15 years. While there are many reasons for this, the continuous boom in indoor climbing gyms, including bouldering gyms in particular, is undoubtedly a key factor.*

*As sport climbing has developed into a recreational pursuit, the number of reasons for taking it up has increased and, in some cases, there is a stronger appetite to begin training to improve performance.*

Not long ago, the majority of climbers (excluding those on the competitive scene) probably saw training indoors or visiting a climbing or bouldering gym predominantly as a “means to an end” – a way to build their fitness in preparation for the outdoor season or to put in the training needed to complete a specific project on the rock. This picture has since changed, as modern climbing and above all bouldering gyms have become a meeting place for health and fitness enthusiasts who are no longer primarily driven by a desire to climb outdoors.

The indoor competitive scene is also witnessing continuous growth now that there are a wide range of events to choose from beyond the championships organized by the umbrella associations. This trend is being further boosted by communication platforms offering apps on which climbers can size up their performance.

The fact that climbing will be represented at the Olympics for the first time in Tokyo in 2020 will definitely boost its popularity even further and will lead to an increase in indoor boulderers who train on a regular basis. As part of these developments, training areas in bouldering gyms are constantly evolving. In this climate, traditional training methods are either holding their ground or gradually being superseded. Trends, meanwhile, are either taking off and becoming mainstream or are disappearing again within a few seasons.

This article discusses the state-of-the-art training opportunities available in modern indoor bouldering gyms, examines how traditional training methods have progressed to date, and attempts to predict what the future will hold.

For clarity purposes, it is important to define what I actually mean when I refer to modern bouldering gyms as spaces for training:

Bouldering gyms as spaces for training comprise the following subsections:

- **Main bouldering area:** regularly reset bouldering area with suitably set boulders (walls with a moderate number of holds and color-coded, single-colored boulder problems with appropriate difficulty ratings)

- **Other training areas:** all manner of system walls (see below), campus boards, hangboards, pull-up bars, ninja training zones, training areas with small-scale equipment, etc.

I will not talk about other areas such as relaxation zones (yoga rooms) or children's areas because they are only indirectly related to the topic.

◆ *Der Klettersport hat in den letzten 15 Jahren eine enorme Popularitätssteigerung erfahren. Die Gründe dafür sind zahlreich, der anhaltende Boom von Indoor-Kletterhallen, insbesondere Boulderhallen, ist jedoch mit Sicherheit ein entscheidender Faktor.*

*Im Zuge dieser Entwicklung des Klettersports hin zu einem Breitensport haben sich auch die Motive vervielfältigt, den Sport auszuüben und gegebenenfalls ein Training zur Leistungsverbesserung zu beginnen.*

Vor nicht allzu langer Zeit stand wohl bei den meisten Kletterern (die Wettkampfszene einmal ausgenommen) das Ziel im Vordergrund, ein Hallentraining bzw. den Besuch einer Kletter- oder Boulderhalle lediglich als „Mittel zum Zweck“ zu betreiben, um sich für die Freiluftsaison fit zu machen oder durch entsprechendes Training den Durchstieg einer Projekt-Route am Fels zu schaffen. Mittlerweile hat sich das Bild gewandelt: Die moderne Kletter- und vor allem die moderne Boulderhalle ist zum Treffpunkt für eine fitnessbegeisterte und gesundheitsorientierte Klientel geworden, die das Outdoor-Klettern nicht mehr als primäres Ziel ansieht.

Auch die Indoor-Wettkampfszene wächst stetig, nachdem es mittlerweile ein großes Angebot an Events abseits der von den Dachverbänden organisierten Meisterschaften gibt. Verstärkt wird diese Entwicklung durch Kommunikationsplattformen, die den gegenseitigen Vergleich via App ermöglichen.

Die Tatsache, dass Klettern bei den Olympischen Spielen 2020 in Tokio als Sportart vertreten sein wird, wird mit Sicherheit eine weitere Popularitätssteigerung mit sich bringen und dazu führen, dass mehr und mehr Indoor-Boulderer regelmäßig trainieren. Im Zuge dessen entwickelt sich der „Trainingsraum“ Boulderhalle immer weiter. Klassische Trainingsmöglichkeiten behaupten sich oder verlieren zunehmend an Bedeutung. Trends setzen sich als Mainstream durch oder verschwinden nach ein paar Saisons wieder aus dem Fokus.

Dieser Artikel setzt sich mit dem „state of the art“ an Trainingsmöglichkeiten einer modernen Indoor-Boulderhalle auseinander, dabei beleuchtet er die bisherige Entwicklung „klassischer“ Trainingsmöglichkeiten und versucht Prognosen für neue Entwicklungen anzustellen. Um begriffliche Klarheit zu schaffen, ist es wichtig zu definieren, was ich mit der Beschreibung des modernen „Trainingsraums Boulderhalle“ überhaupt meine:

Der „Trainingsraum Boulderhalle“ umfasst folgende Teilbereiche:

- **Haupt-Boulderbereich:** regelmäßig umgeschraubter Boulderbereich mit entsprechendem Setting von Bouldern (Wände mit moderater Griffanzahl und farblich codierten, einfarbigen Boulderproblemen mit entsprechenden Schwierigkeitsbewertungen)

- **Sonstige Trainingsbereiche:** Systemwände in sämtlichen Varianten (siehe unten), Campusboard, Fingerboard, Klimmzugstange, Hangelzonen, Trainingszonen mit Kleingeräten, etc.

Auf weitere Bereiche, wie z.B. Spannungsbereiche (Yoga-Raum) oder Kinderbereiche, werde ich hier nicht eingehen, da sie nur indirekt mit der Thematik in Verbindung stehen.

## The main bouldering area

Nowadays, this area consists of complex 3D walls that are mostly constructed using CAD-controlled milling technology. The different combinations offered by this technique create an enormous and unprecedented number of ways in which overhanging, slabby, and multi-faceted wall units can be arranged. Bouldering walls with an elaborate 3D design have become a mark of quality in climbing gyms.



Complex multi-faceted bouldering wall design in the Kletterzentrum Bruneck climbing center, South Tyrol, Italy.

Aufwändig verschnittener Boulderwandbereich im Kletterzentrum Bruneck, Südtirol.

Although no direct link has yet been found between a complex wall design and an increased training effect, 3D walls are without a doubt partly responsible for the development and diversity of modern bouldering.

Another important criterion is the provision of a well-balanced and diverse range of handholds and footholds. While choosing between hold manufacturers was still fairly manageable ten years ago, the options available today are so varied that gyms should call in an expert in order to make the right selection. This applies to both the choice of brand and the holds themselves. On the competitive scene, there is currently a discernible trend towards large-volume holds and this is clearly reflected in their price. For example, some boulders with large-volume competition holds are fitted with holds worth up to 2,000 euros. At the other end of the spectrum, screw-on handholds and footholds are becoming increasingly popular. These are attached using wood screws and can be significantly smaller and more delicate than plastic handholds and footholds fitted with a screw thread. All climbing gyms should offer a wide selection of holds, as they are particularly useful for practicing footwork.

Volumes are another way of making bouldering walls more attractive. These are made from sanded wood or synthetic resin and vary in size from a few square inches to several square feet. Climbing holds can often be attached to the volumes in turn.

The requirements placed on boulder problems for competitions are always changing but the trend is moving increasingly towards extremely dynamic sequences of movements using large-volume holds. This is presenting a growing challenge, not least for gym operators. These days, competitive bouldering demands a huge range of mostly dynamic patterns of movement and specific techniques on large-volume handhold and foothold structures.



Competitive bouldering area with lots of volumes at the Kletterzentrum Innsbruck climbing center, Austria. Wettkampfboulderbereich im Kletterzentrum Innsbruck mit vielen verbauten Volumes.

## Der Haupt-Boulderbereich

Dieser Bereich besteht heutzutage aus anspruchsvoll konstruierten 3D-Wänden, die meistens mittels CAD-gesteuerter Frästechnik konstruiert werden. Die Kombinationsmöglichkeiten, die sich auf diese Weise ergeben, sorgen für eine enorme und noch nie dagewesene Vielfalt an Zusammensetzung von überhängenden, plattigen und gegeneinander verschnittenen Wandelementen. Mittlerweile ist eine aufwändige 3D-Gestaltung von Boulderwänden zu einem Qualitätsmerkmal der Hallen geworden.



Sections of wall suspended from the ceiling with starting holds onto which climbers can jump create a complex yet appealing climbing structure. Rock Inn bouldering gym in Würzburg, Germany.

Von der Decke hängende Wandelemente mit Startgriffen, die angesprungen werden, stellen eine aufwändige, aber interessante Konstruktion dar. Boulderhalle RockInn, Würzburg.

Ein weiteres wichtiges Kriterium stellt eine ausgewogene und vielfältige Auswahl von Griff- und Trittelementen dar. War die Auswahl von Griffherstellern vor 10 Jahren noch einigermaßen übersichtlich, ist das Angebot an Klettergriffen mittlerweile so groß, dass man einen Experten zu Rate ziehen muss, um eine gute Auswahl zu treffen. Dies gilt sowohl für Marken als auch für die Griffe selbst. Der Trend im Wettkampf geht momentan klar zu großvolumigen Formen, was sich jedoch deutlich im Preis der Griffe niederschlägt. So sind in so manchem Boulder mit großvolumigen Wettkampfgreifen für sich genommen bis zu 2.000,- Euro Griffwert verbaut. Auf der anderen Seite werden Spaxgriffe und -tritte immer beliebter. Diese werden mit Holzschrauben befestigt und erlauben wesentlich kleinere und filigranere Griff- und Trittformen als Kunstgriffe, die mit einem Schraubgewinde ausgestattet sind. Eine solide Auswahl sollte in keiner Kletterhalle fehlen, denn sie sind vor allem für das Training der Fußtechnik sehr effektiv.

Eine weitere Möglichkeit, Boulderwände interessanter zu gestalten, bieten sogenannte „Volumes“. Es handelt sich dabei um Formen, die aus besandetem Holz oder Kunstharz bestehen und die in Flächengrößen von wenigen Quadratdezimetern bis hin zu mehreren Quadratmetern angeboten werden. Oft können hier wiederum Klettergriffe aufgeschraubt werden.

Die Anforderungen an Boulderprobleme für Wettkämpfe ändern sich stetig, der Trend geht immer mehr hin zu extrem dynamischen Zugmustern an großvolumigen Griffen. Das stellt nicht zuletzt die Hallenbetreiber vor wachsende Herausforderungen. Wettkampfbouldern erfordert heutzutage eine enorme Bandbreite an meist dynamischen Bewegungsmustern und spezifische Bewegungstechniken an großvolumigen Griff- und Trittstrukturen. Soll eine Kletterhalle für Wettkampfboulderer attraktiv bleiben, ist es notwendig, diese neuen Ele-

Auch wenn bisher kein direkter Zusammenhang zwischen aufwändiger Wandkonstruktion und gesteigertem Trainingseffekt nachgewiesen wurde, sind 3D-Wände zweifellos für die Weiterentwicklung und den Variantenreichtum des modernen Boulderns mitverantwortlich.

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Der Trend im Wettkampf geht momentan klar zu großvolumigen Formen, was sich jedoch deutlich im Preis der Griffe niederschlägt. So sind in so manchem Boulder mit großvolumigen Wettkampfgreifen für sich genommen bis zu 2.000,- Euro Griffwert verbaut. Auf der anderen Seite werden Spaxgriffe und -tritte immer beliebter. Diese werden mit Holzschrauben befestigt und erlauben wesentlich kleinere und filigranere Griff- und Trittformen als Kunstgriffe, die mit einem Schraubgewinde ausgestattet sind. Eine solide Auswahl sollte in keiner Kletterhalle fehlen, denn sie sind vor allem für das Training der Fußtechnik sehr effektiv.

In order to keep attracting competitive boulderers, climbing gyms must integrate these new elements without incurring too much cost and without running the safety risks associated with the very dynamic climbing style often required when competing. Many bouldering gyms overcome this challenge by creating “competition zones” featuring boulders with a smaller number of bolt-ons and more large-volume holds. In most cases, these specially constructed areas can also be used for general operation purposes. However, they can be blocked off to create a separate place for competitors to train or for gym competitions to be held. Apart from the moves required when climbing on walls of this kind being attractive to competitive boulderers, this type of infrastructure also demands a completely new style of climbing in which a much clearer emphasis is placed on technique than on sheer strength alone. This can be highly motivational for boulderers of all levels, including those with no ambition to participate in competitions.



Competitive area in the Studio Bloc bouldering gym in Pfungstadt, Germany. A unique feature is the bright-colored sand texture of the walls.

Wettkampfbereich Boulderhalle Studio Bloc, Pfungstadt. Ein besonderes Feature ist hier die helle Besandung der Wände.

## The training area

The original indoor bouldering centers from 20 to 30 years ago were equipped with all the features a training area should typically have. Until recently, however, most training areas in modern bouldering gyms were literally hidden away in the shadows. Often, the only training equipment available was a narrow campus board or a pull-up bar suspended from the ceiling in a tucked-away corner of the gym. You could hardly call it inspiring.

The situation began to change dramatically a few years ago. For example, gyms have now rediscovered the classic system board and are also dedicating more and more space to separate training areas.

## System boards

Traditional system boards first came to the fore in the 1980s and marked the start of indoor bouldering as we know it today. They comprise a two-dimensional sheet jam-packed with as many climbing holds as possible and are generally moderately to steeply overhanging. Boulderers can use them to keep creating new bouldering problems independently. System boards are reset much less frequently than main bouldering areas (generally once or twice a year).

They are fitted with synthetic resin or wooden holds and are ideal for training finger strength, body tension, and high-intensity strength endurance, all three of which can only be improved to a limited extent on a main bouldering wall. The popularity of wooden holds has been

mente in die Halle zu integrieren, ohne dass dabei zu hohe Kosten und Sicherheitsrisiken entstehen, die durch den oft erforderlichen, sehr dynamischen Kletterstil drohen. Viele Boulderhallen lösen dieses Problem, indem sie „Wettkampfbereiche“ ausweisen, in welchen weniger geschraubte Boulder und mehr großvolumige Griffelemente zu finden sind. Diese eigens eingerichteten Zonen sind die meiste Zeit auch für den allgemeinen Betrieb nutzbar, erlauben jedoch auch eine separate Sperrung und können so für das Wettkampfttraining oder für Hallenwettkämpfe genutzt werden. Abgesehen davon, dass die an dieser Art von Wand provozierten Bewegungstechniken für Wettkampfboulderer attraktiv sind, stellen sie auch einen völlig neuen Stil des Kletterns dar, bei dem die Technik gegenüber dem rohen Kräfteinsatz deutlich betont wird. Das kann für Boulderer jeder Leistungsstufe auch abseits von Wettkampfbereichen sehr motivierend sein.

## Der Trainingsbereich

Obwohl das ursprüngliche Indoor-Bouldern vor 20 bis 30 Jahren mit genau den Möglichkeiten betrieben wurde, die typische Trainingsbereiche zu bieten haben, führten diese in modernen Boulderhallen bis vor Kurzem eher ein sprichwörtliches Schattendasein. Oft waren es ein schmales Leistenbrett oder die an der Decke angebrachte Klimmzugstange in einer Ecke der Halle, die als Trainingsmöglichkeit gedacht waren, aber nicht wirklich motivieren konnten.

Dies ändert sich seit einigen Jahren deutlich. Zum einen wird die klassische Systemwand wiederentdeckt, zum anderen werden dem Trainingsbereich immer großzügigere Nutzungsflächen zugestanden.

## Die Systemwand

Die klassische Systemwand markiert den Beginn des Indoor-Boulderns wie es bereits seit den 1980er Jahren betrieben wurde: Eine 2-dimensionale Fläche, vollgepackt mit möglichst vielen Klettergriffen, meist gemäßigt bis stark überhängend, an der man selbstständig mehr und mehr Boulder definiert. Umschraubaktionen finden im Vergleich zu einem modernen Haupt-Boulderbereich eher selten statt (meist ein- oder zweimal pro Jahr).

Die Systemwand kann mit Griffen aus Kunstharz oder Holz bestückt werden und eignet sich vor allem zum Training der Fingerkraft, der Körperspannung und der hochintensiven Kraftausdauer. Gerade diese Trainingsbelastungen lassen sich an einer Haupt-Boulderwand nur bedingt realisieren. Holzgriffe werden in letzter Zeit immer populärer, da sie hautfreundlicher sind und aufgrund ihrer geringeren Reibung die Fingerkraft effektiver trainieren. Kunstharzgriffe wiederum erlauben eine größere Formenvielfalt. Die Auswahl der Griffe sollte wohlüberlegt und auf die spätere Zielgruppe möglichst genau abgestimmt werden. Ein oft geäußertes Problem, das viele Kletterer von einem Training an einer Systemwand abhält, ist das wenig konsumfreundliche Setting. Die Boulder müssen selbst definiert werden, was Zeit kostet und nicht jedem liegt. Deshalb werden seit einigen Jahren diverse Systemwände kommerziell angeboten (mit Ausnahme einiger Eigenentwicklungen von Boulderhallen), die vordefinierte Boulder mittels Leuchtdioden anzeigen. Diese können häufig über digitale Onlineplattformen abgerufen werden, welche mittlerweile Tausende verschiedener Boulderprobleme beinhalten und somit eine konsumfreundliche Nutzung dieser Art von Trainingswand ermöglichen. Eine weitere Steigerung im Hinblick auf ein systematisches Training bietet ein gespiegeltes Griffsetting, das mittlerweile auch im Handel erhältlich ist.



System board with wooden holds and software-based diode system (produced in-house). E4 bouldering gym in Nuremberg, Germany.

Systemwand mit Holzgriffen und Software-gestütztem Diodensystem (Eigenbau). Boulderhalle E4, Nürnberg.



Symmetrical system board with wooden holds and software-based diode system (produced in-house). Oakwood Climbing Centre in London, UK.

Gespiegelte Systemwand mit Holzgriffen und Software-gestütztem Diodensystem (Eigenbau). Oakwood Climbing Center, London.



Hybrid system board comprising synthetic resin holds with a software-based diode system on the left-hand side (commercially available) and a section without any pre-defined boulders on the right-hand side. Boulderwelt Ost bouldering gym in Munich, Germany.

Hybrid-Systemwand aus Kunstharzgriffen mit Software-gestütztem Diodensystem links (im Handel erhältliches System) und ohne vordefinierte Boulder rechts. Boulderwelt Ost, München.

increasing of late because they are kinder on the skin and the reduced level of friction enables finger strength to be trained more effectively. Synthetic resin, on the other hand, can be used to produce a wider variety of hold shapes. The choice of holds should be considered carefully and should be tailored to the subsequent target group as closely as possible.

Many climbers often claim that the lack of user-friendly setting deters them from training on a system board. They have to define the boulders themselves, which takes time and is not everyone's cup of tea. This is why, in addition to boards developed in-house by bouldering gyms, various system boards with pre-defined boulders marked out using LEDs have been commercially available for several years. In many cases, pre-defined boulders can be conveniently accessed from online platforms containing thousands of boulder problems. An even more enhanced systematic training option now available on the market are boards with symmetrically positioned holds.



System board without any pre-defined boulders and designed with competitions in mind. Kletterzentrum Innsbruck climbing center, Austria.

Wettkampforientiert geschraubte Systemwand ohne vordefinierte Boulder. Kletterzentrum Innsbruck.



Generously laid-out system board with two training areas co-designed by the author of this article (wooden and plastic holds). Café Kraft bouldering gym in Nuremberg, Germany.

Vom Autor mitgestaltete, großzügig angelegte Systemwand mit zwei Trainingszonen (Holz- und Kunststoffgriffe). Boulderhalle Café Kraft, Nürnberg.

### Campus and pegboards

Campus boards have been used to improve finger and lock-off strength since the early 1990s. The campus board was invented by none other than climbing legend Wolfgang Güllich as he was training in a gym known as The Campus Centre in preparation for ascending a new route called Action Directe. Pegboards have been around for even longer. Campus boards consist of differently shaped rungs that are generally made from wood, although plastic rungs made from polyurethane (PU) are also available these days. Specialists are able to produce customized rungs, which is important because the width of the rungs and the radius of the edges should be adapted to the target group. Special designs, e.g. with two- or three-finger pockets, are only necessary in exceptional cases. The addition of hemispherical or hemicylindrical shapes is very useful, as these are more gentle on the fingers when climbing hand over hand than rungs and improve finger and lock-off strength on obtuse holds.

### Campus- und Steckbrett

Das Campusbrett wird als Trainingsgerät zur Steigerung der Finger- und Blockierkraft seit Anfang der 1990er Jahre verwendet. Kein geringerer als Kletterlegende Wolfgang Güllich bereitete sich seinerzeit im Fitness-Center „CAMPUS“ zielorientiert auf die Begehung seiner Route „Action Directe“ vor. Steckbretter oder Pegboards gab es schon früher. Das Campusbrett besteht aus verschiedenartig geschapten Leisten, die meist aus Holz sind, aber mittlerweile auch aus PU-Kunststoff angeboten werden. Man kann die Holzleisten von einem Fachmann nach eigenen Vorgaben anfertigen lassen. Die Maße müssen je nach Zielgruppe angepasst werden. Wichtig sind hierbei Leistenbreite und Kantenradius. Spezielle Anfertigungen, wie z.B. 2- oder 3-Finger-Löcher, sind nur in Ausnahmefällen notwendig. Eine sehr sinnvolle Ergänzung stellen Halbkugel- oder Halbzylinder-Formen dar. Sie bieten fingerchonenderes Hangeln als an Leisten und verbessern die Finger- und Blockierkraft auf stumpfen Griffen.

Pegboards are another piece of equipment that can be used to train lock-off strength. They comprise wooden, metal, or plastic sticks that are inserted into a board with holes positioned to form a grid. Sticks with ball-shaped holds on the end are sometimes inserted into the board as well. The original idea behind the pegboard was to move upwards or horizontally by inserting and removing the sticks. However, I am of the firm belief that the results achieved using this training method are much more limited than the sometimes laborious process of creating the boards would suggest. In fact, the objective of inserting and removing the sticks is not typical of climbing at all and does not mirror the dynamic, efficient lock-off movement actually required in practice. Why, then, is the pegboard still so popular? The simple fact is that using so much effort to propel yourself upwards on the sticks makes you feel incredibly strong. However, contracting so many muscles and moving so slowly often leads to an ineffective climbing style and this tends to reflect negatively on the climber's performance. What's more, there is a particularly high risk of injury for beginners with under-developed shoulder girdles and less of a sense for how their bodies move. This is because novices often try to climb up the board without first contracting their stabilizing shoulder muscles, resulting in them straining the passive structures in their shoulder joint. Even though the classic pegboard is still a staple at many gyms, I believe that it is outdated and that you can safely do without it. The Kraftboard, which I developed, is an alternative to the classic pegboard. It combines the advantages of climbing-specific lock-off strength training with the variations available on a pegboard.

Eine weitere Vorrichtung zum Training der Blockierkraft ist das Steckbrett oder Pegboard. Es besteht aus Holz-, Metall- oder Kunststoff-Sticks, die in eine Wand mit rasterartig angebrachten Löchern gesteckt werden. Manchmal werden auch Steckkugeln dafür verwendet. Die ursprüngliche Idee bestand darin, mit Ein- und Ausstecken der Sticks nach oben oder zur Seite zu hangeln.

Meine klare Meinung zu dieser Art des Trainings ist, dass der Effekt in keinerlei Bezug zu der teils aufwändig konstruierten Vorrichtung steht. Im Gegenteil: Die beim Klettern eigentlich dynamisch-effektiv auszuführende Blockierbewegung wird durch den unfunktionellen Vorgang des Ein- und Aussteckens der Sticks stark verfälscht. Woher kommt dann die ungebrochene Beliebtheit? Ganz einfach: Man fühlt sich irgendwie stark, wenn man sich an den Sticks mit hohem Kraftaufwand nach oben arbeitet. Doch wenn man bei einer Bewegung möglichst viele Muskeln anspannt und sie langsam ausführt, führt das meistens zu einem uneffektiven Kletterstil und eher schwacher Kletterleistung. Ebenso ist das Verletzungsrisiko gerade für Anfänger mit wenig Bewegungsgefühl und Kraft im Schultergürtel besonders hoch, da sie oft ohne jegliche Vorspannung der stabilisierenden Schultermuskeln versuchen, nach oben zu kommen und so die passiven Strukturen im Schultergelenk überlasten. Meine Empfehlung: Auch wenn man es noch häufig sieht, das klassische Steckbrett ist ein Auslaufmodell und man kann getrost darauf verzichten.

Eine Alternative zum Steckbrett stellt das von mir entwickelte Kraftboard® dar, welches die Vorteile eines kletterspezifischen Blockierkrafttrainings mit den Variationsmöglichkeiten des Steckbretts vereint.



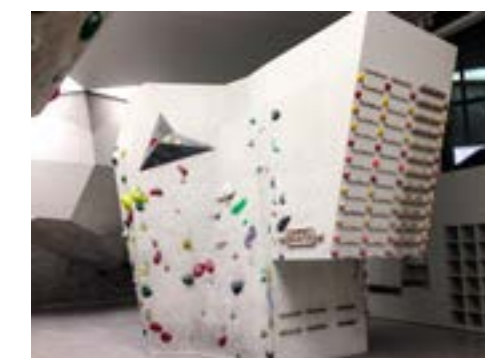
Campus board co-designed by the author of this article featuring a wide range of rungs and hemispherical holds. DAV Kletterzentrum Bayreuth climbing center, Germany.

Vom Autor mitgeplantes Campusbrett mit vielen verschiedenen Griffmöglichkeiten an Leisten und Halbkugeln. DAV Kletterzentrum Bayreuth.



Free-hanging campus board with plenty of legroom. E4 bouldering gym in Nuremberg, Germany.

Frei hängendes Campusbrett mit viel Beinfreiheit. Boulderhalle E4, Nürnberg.



A campus board integrated into a free-standing bouldering wall. Kletterzentrum Bruneck climbing center, South Tyrol, Italy.

In ein frei stehendes Boulderwand-Element integriertes Campusbrett. Kletterzentrum Bruneck, Südtirol.

### Hangboards

The practice of holding an edge to improve finger strength is as old as climbing training itself. Training on wooden door frames was commonplace when sport climbing was in its infancy. However, this soon evolved when the legendary John Gill began using home-made boards with wooden edges to improve his finger strength. Today, hangboards are made from plastic or wood and there are countless manufacturers to choose from. When deciding which hangboard to invest in, try not to be swayed by equipment offering a whole array of different hold shapes. At the end of the day, all you need are two or three different edge sizes for practicing half-crimps and a way to practice hanging on your fingers. Depending on your personal taste, you could choose boards with two-finger pockets, slopers, or pinches. I recommend using hangboards made from wood or polyurethane (PU) plastic because their surfaces are gentler on the skin.

### Fingerboard

Das Training der Fingerkraft an Leisten ist so alt wie das Training für das Klettern selbst. Waren es zu Beginn des Klettersports die Holzleisten an Türstürzen, wurden schon von Altmeister John Gill selbst angefertigte Bretter mit Holzleisten benutzt, um die Kraft der Finger zu trainieren. Heutzutage werden Fingerboards aus Kunststoff oder Holz angeboten und die Auswahl an Herstellern ist enorm. Man sollte sich dabei nicht von der Vielfalt an möglichen Griffformen beeindruckt lassen. Im Endeffekt braucht es zwei bis drei verschiedene Leistengrößen für halbgestellte Fingerpositionen und eine Möglichkeit für das Training an hängenden Fingern. Zwei-Fingerlöcher, Sloper oder Zangengriffe stellen Features je nach persönlichem Geschmack dar. Ich empfehle Fingerboards aus Holz oder PU-Kunststoff wegen der hautfreundlicheren Oberfläche.



Getting stronger with perfect training facilities  
 Stärker werden durch perfekte Trainingsmöglichkeiten  
 Photo: H. Huch

## BIO

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When mounting a hangboard, it is important to ensure that there is sufficient space under the board so that equipment can be attached to reduce resistance and to guarantee there is sufficient legroom when training. I am eagerly awaiting the next generation of "smart" hangboards, which will feature sensor-controlled measuring technology in order to precisely tailor the finger strength training to user.



Free space used creatively – a "jump station" created by the author of this article with frames that enable climbers to practice combinations of jumps from awkward climbing positions. Café Kraft bouldering gym in Nuremberg, Germany

Freiraum kreativ genutzt – eine vom Autor entwickelte „Jumpstation“ mit Gestänge, bei der Sprünge aus unkomfortablen Kletterpositionen mit der Klimmzugstange kombiniert werden können. Boulderhalle Café Kraft, Nürnberg

## Pull-up bars

Using a pull-up bar is one of the most traditional forms of climbing training. It improves static and dynamic lock-off strength, can be used to perform body tension exercises, and – if the bar is wide enough – to practice different techniques for moving hand over hand.

I believe that pull-up bars should be found in every gym. For beginners especially, they create a fantastic opportunity to learn about and practice stabilizing the shoulder joint, possibly with the support of power bands.

Pull-up bars should have a generous, wide design. Ideally, the bars should be positioned at different angles to one another or one on top of another so that climbers can practice double dynos. Sufficient space must also be provided above the bars to give users enough room to perform muscle-ups or even bar pullovers.

## Small-scale equipment

The remarkable success of functional training, bodyweight training and of the like has not evaded bouldering gyms and I recommend making some small-scale equipment available to complement standard bouldering training.

Wichtig beim Aufhängen eines Griffboards ist es, auf ausreichend Platz unter dem Board zu achten, damit Entlastungsvorrichtungen angebracht werden können und ein Training mit entsprechender Beinfreiheit möglich ist. Ich warte schon gespannt auf die nächste Generation der „smarten“ Fingerboards, die mit sensorgesteuerter Messtechnik ein fein abgestimmtes Training der Fingerkraft ermöglichen werden.

## Klimmzugstange

Trainingsformen an der Klimmzugstange sind der Klassiker beim Klettertraining. Man trainiert seine Blockierkraft in statischer oder dynamischer Form, seine Körperspannung und kann bei entsprechender Breite verschiedene Hangeltechniken üben.

Ich bin der Meinung, dass eine Klimmzugstange in jede Kletterhalle gehört. Gerade für Anfänger bietet sie eine hervorragende Gelegenheit, die Stabilisation des Schultergelenks zu lernen und zu trainieren, gegebenenfalls mit Unterstützung durch Powerbänder.

Die Klimmzugstange sollte großzügig ausgelegt sein, das heißt, sie sollte eine entsprechende Breite aufweisen, idealerweise winkelig oder doppelt angebracht sein, um Doppeldynamos zu ermöglichen. Es ist ebenso darauf zu achten, dass genügend Raum nach oben bleibt, um zumindest das Aufstützen oder sogar Felgaufzüge zu ermöglichen.

## Kleingeräte

Der Siegeszug von Functional Training, Body Weight Training und Co. macht auch vor Boulderhallen nicht halt und ich kann nur empfeh-

den, einige dieser Kleingeräte als Ergänzung zum regulären Bouldertraining zur Verfügung zu stellen. Sie ergänzen das Trainingsspektrum und erweitern möglicherweise die Zielgruppe. Wichtig dabei ist, entsprechenden Freiraum zur Verfügung zu stellen, damit diese Art von Training entsprechend störungsfrei ausgeübt werden kann. Als grobe Schätzung würde ich hierfür mindestens 20 Quadratmeter veranschlagen.

Der Trainingsbereich selbst kann mit weiteren Hangelvorrichtungen, Turnringen, Slingtrainern oder Minibarren ausgestattet werden. Auch die Anschaffung von Kleingeräten wie Kettlebells, Plyoboxen, Gymnastikbällen etc. sollte in Erwägung gezogen werden.

Weniger überzeugt bin ich von den klassischen Hantelbänken. Sie sind im modernen Klettertraining eigentlich überflüssig, nehmen unnötig viel Platz ein, und qualitativ hochwertige Exemplare sind teuer.

## New ideas

A new and interesting idea is that of integrating a parkour area into a bouldering gym. New bouldering forms and techniques in particular have more and more in common with parkour and the group of people passionate about this sport is on the rise. Including a parkour area could therefore enable a climbing center to attract both "modern" boulderers as well as new target groups. However, the decision ultimately comes down to space. A parkour zone requires a lot more room than 215 square feet (20 square meters) and would take up space that could otherwise be devoted to an additional bouldering area.

Overall, the bouldering trend towards more dynamic moves and larger elements is continuing but will reach its limit in the foreseeable future. Otherwise, there is a risk that bouldering will turn into a "ninja warrior" sport, which – although attractive – does not really tie in with the core idea behind climbing. Traditional training equipment has either proven its worth or has turned out to be unnecessary. I believe that the revival of system boards is justified and that they should feature in all good gyms. It also makes sense to offer a good selection of functional training equipment and to provide sufficient space in which it can be used.

## Essentials

- The culture of route setting in a gym reveals a lot about the climbing center's character. Instead of resetting boulders as frequently as possible, it is much more important to have a well-balanced team of route setters who set a diverse range of boulder problems. To achieve this, gym operators need to ask themselves the following questions: What is the ratio between "traditional" and "new-school" problems? Are these separated into different areas (highly dynamic boulders need a lot of space)? What is the ratio between 2D areas (2D walls without volumes) and 3D areas (3D walls or 2D walls with volumes)? What are our visitors' objectives (determined by a customer survey, e.g.)?

len, einige dieser Kleingeräte als Ergänzung zum regulären Bouldertraining zur Verfügung zu stellen. Sie ergänzen das Trainingsspektrum und erweitern möglicherweise die Zielgruppe. Wichtig dabei ist, entsprechenden Freiraum zur Verfügung zu stellen, damit diese Art von Training entsprechend störungsfrei ausgeübt werden kann. Als grobe Schätzung würde ich hierfür mindestens 20 Quadratmeter veranschlagen.

Der Trainingsbereich selbst kann mit weiteren Hangelvorrichtungen, Turnringen, Slingtrainern oder Minibarren ausgestattet werden. Auch die Anschaffung von Kleingeräten wie Kettlebells, Plyoboxen, Gymnastikbällen etc. sollte in Erwägung gezogen werden.

Weniger überzeugt bin ich von den klassischen Hantelbänken. Sie sind im modernen Klettertraining eigentlich überflüssig, nehmen unnötig viel Platz ein, und qualitativ hochwertige Exemplare sind teuer.

## Neue Ideen

Eine neue und interessante Idee ist die Integration eines Parkour-Bereichs in die Boulderhalle. Gerade die neuen Boulderformen und -techniken weisen immer mehr Verwandtschaft zu dieser Sportart auf und die Zielgruppe, welche sich dafür begeistern lässt, wächst stetig.



Parkour area featuring climbing frames and bars as well as plyo boxes integrated into a bouldering gym. Rock Inn bouldering gym in Würzburg, Germany.

In die Boulderhalle integrierter Parkourbereich mit Kletter- und Hangelgerüst sowie Sprungboxen. Boulderhalle RockInn, Würzburg.

Man spricht also sowohl den „modernen“ Boulderer als auch neue Zielgruppen an. Natürlich stellt sich dabei immer die Frage des zur Verfügung stehenden Raumes, da eine Parkour-Zone definitiv mehr als 20 Quadratmeter Platz benötigt und damit in Konkurrenz zu einer weiteren Boulderfläche steht.

Insgesamt lässt sich sagen, dass sich der Trend beim Bouldern hin zu schwingvolleren Formen und großflächigen Elementen fortsetzt, jedoch in absehbarer Zeit an seine Grenzen stößt. Ansonsten wird aus dem Bouldersport eine „Ninja-Warrior“-Veranstaltung werden, die für sich genommen attraktiv ist, der Kernidee des Kletterns aber nur noch marginal entspricht.

Traditionelle Trainingsgeräte haben sich teilweise bewährt oder als überflüssig herausgestellt. Das Revival der Systemwand ist aus meiner Sicht gerechtfertigt. Sie sollte in keiner guten Boulderhalle fehlen. Sinn macht es in jedem Fall, die Boulderhalle mit einer guten Auswahl an Kleingeräten aus dem Functional Training aufzuwerten und dafür entsprechend Raum zur Verfügung zu stellen.

## Essentials

- Die Kultur des Routenbaus sagt viel über eine Halle aus: Es geht nicht darum, in möglichst kurzen Abständen Boulder umzuschrauben. Viel wichtiger ist es, mit einem ausgewogenen Schrauberteam abwechslungsreiche Boulder zu setzen. Davor müssen folgende Fragen beantwortet werden: Wie ist das Verhältnis von „klassischen“ zu „new-school“-Problemen? Werden diese in verschiedene Bereiche getrennt (hoch dynamische Boulder benötigen viel Platz)? Wie ist das

- Invest in a well-rounded collection of holds (at least 10 different manufacturers, preferably 15-20) – do not scrimp in this area!

- Be generous with space – training areas should not be cramped into a corner or cubbyhole. Confined training areas are unattractive and unpopular. Instead, devote at least 325 square feet (30 square meters) to the space and ideally more.

- Plan your training area carefully. A system board, pull-up bar, hangboard, campus board, and small-scale equipment are all essential.

- Your system board should be generous in size. If you are planning to make your own, it should, at a bare minimum, be 13 feet (4 meters) wide. In the best-case scenario, it should be positioned at an angle of 30° to 45°, although an adjustable system board is the most fitting option. As a compromise, you could offer two different angles (30° and 50°, e.g.). The system board should be fitted with a good mix of PE/PU holds, wooden holds, and footholds of different sizes (screw-ons, small and medium-sized bolt-ons).

- Design your training area so that it motivates your customers, and don't forget the little details. Ensure there is sufficient light, hang up a few cool posters, fit mobile phone holders to the hangboards, and provide storage options to stow the small-scale equipment. If the storage space is there, climbers will gratefully and diligently make use of it.

Verhältnis von 2D-Bereichen (2D-Wände ohne Volumes) zu 3D-Bereichen (3D-Wände oder 2D-Wände mit Volumes)? Welche Ziele hat mein Besucherspektrum (evtl. Umfrage machen)?

- Sorge für ein ausgewogenes Griffsortiment (mindestens 10 verschiedene Hersteller, besser 15 bis 20) und spare nicht an dieser Stelle!

- Spare nicht an Raum: Ein Trainingsbereich sollte nicht in eine Ecke oder Nische gezwängt werden. Damit verliert er an Attraktivität und wird kaum genutzt. Als Mindestgröße sollten 30qm eingeplant werden, gerne mehr.

- Plane deinen Trainingsbereich sorgfältig: Systemwand, Klimmzugstange, Fingerboard, Campusbrett und Kleingeräte dürfen dabei nicht fehlen.

- Deine Systemwand sollte großzügig geplant werden: Planst du einen Eigenbau, sollte dieser mindestens 4 Meter breit (besser breiter) sein. Die Neigung beträgt idealerweise zwischen 30° und 45°, noch besser ist eine verstellbare Systemwand. Als Kompromiss bieten sich zwei unterschiedliche Neigungen an, z.B. 30° und 50°. An der Systemwand sollte eine gute Mischung aus PE(PU)-Griffen, Holzgriffen und verschiedenen Trittgrößen (Spax, kleine und mittlere Schraubtritte) angebracht werden.

- Gestalte deinen Trainingsbereich so, dass er motiviert und denke an die Details: Sorge für ausreichend Licht, hänge ein paar coole Poster auf, bringe Halterungen für das Handy beim Fingerboard an und stelle Staumöglichkeiten zum Aufräumen der Kleingeräte zur Verfügung. Die Kletterer werden es dir mit gewisserhafter Nutzung danken.

bestseller. Together with Dicki Korb, he runs climbing workshops and training sessions across Europe under the name "Kraftfactory" and supports athletes on the Adidas Terrex Climbing Team. He teaches sport climbing for the Bavarian State Office for School Sports and is a trainer and instructor for the German Alpine Club. He also provides climbing and bouldering gyms with advice on types of training they should offer. Patrick is married with two children.

**Patrick Matros** (Diplom-Sportwissenschaftler, Lehrer für Sport und Deutsch) arbeitet als Fachdozent für Sportwissenschaft und Pädagogik/Psychologie. Er wurde 1973 geboren, klettert seit 20 Jahren und kletterte bis heute knapp 200 Routen von 8a bis 8c. 2011 konnte er sich mit der Erstbegehung von Archon (8b), der schwersten Clean-Route seines Hausklettergebiets, dem Frankenjura, einen Traum verwirklichen.

Patrick ist Mitglied in der International Rock Climbing Research Association (IRCRA) und Autor mehrerer Sportfachbücher. Das Trainingsbuch GimmeKraft! ist ein weltweiter Bestseller. Zusammen mit Dicki Korb gibt er europaweit unter dem Label „Kraftfactory“ Workshops und Fortbildungen zum Thema Klettertraining und betreut Athleten des adidas-terrex-Kletterteams. Es ist im Lehrteam Sportklettern der Bayerischen Landesstelle für den Schulsport und für den Deutschen Alpenverein als Trainer und Ausbilder aktiv. Darüber hinaus berät er Kletter- und Boulderhallen bei der Gestaltung ihrer Trainingsmöglichkeiten. Patrick ist verheiratet und hat zwei Kinder.

Contact: [coaches@kraftfactory.de](mailto:coaches@kraftfactory.de)



**Patrick Matros** (sports science graduate, certified sports and German teacher) is a university lecturer in sports science and education/psychology. Born in 1973, he has been climbing for 20 years and, to date, has completed close to 200 routes graded 8a to 8c. In 2011, he fulfilled a personal dream when he made the first ascent of Archon (8b), the most difficult clean route in his local climbing area of Frankenjura.

Patrick is a member of the International Rock Climbing Research Association (IRCRA) and has written several sports reference books, including the GimmeKraft! training book, which has become a global



Photo: Arno Dejaco

# restless.



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# INGO FILZWIESER

## CLIMBING TRAINING IN THE GYM KLETTERTRAINING IN DER HALLE

TEXT & INTERVIEW: MARIA HILBER



Photo: Arno Dejaco / Vertical-Life

## INTERVIEW

**Ingo Filzwieser is a sports scientist, passionate coach and avid rock climber. By designing varied and goal-oriented exercises, he aims to both challenge and motivate climbers. Thanks to his many years of experience as an Austrian national team trainer and route setter, Ingo is familiar with the performance needs of climbers at every level.**

**Ingo Filzwieser ist studierter Sportwissenschaftler, passionierter Coach und Kletterer mit Leib und Seele. Er hat die Gabe, gleichermaßen zu fordern und zu motivieren, indem er komplexe Trainingsabläufe entwirft und auf verständliche Weise erklärt. Dank seiner langjährigen Erfahrung als Kursleiter und österreichischer Nationalteamtrainer kennt Ingo die Bedürfnisse verschiedenster Leistungsstufen.**

**MH: From the 2020 Summer Olympics and young talents to a continuous string of broken records and climbing's growing popularity, developments in sport climbing are also leading to new training methods. What are the main changes you have witnessed in your career to date?**

**MH: Olympia 2020, junge Talente, immer neue Rekorde und wachsende Popularität – die Entwicklung des Sportkletterns führt auch zur Weiterentwicklung der Trainingsmethoden. Welche großen Veränderungen hast du im Laufe deiner Karriere beobachtet?**

**Ingo:** The speed of development in recent years has caused sport climbing to almost outdone itself. Static climbing and conventional holds have made way for complex, coordinated dynamic climbing on boulders and routes consisting exclusively of volumes. Thanks to the development of new types of holds (e.g. dual texture) and volumes, the possibilities for setting creative and diverse boulders and routes are virtually endless. Climbing itself has become increasingly focused on high-speed and maximum strength. The demand placed on climbers' coordination skills has also grown enormously and will continue to do so. The routes for lead climbing feature more and more boulders to make it easier to distinguish between the very strong competitors at the top.

At the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, climbing will be represented by three competitive disciplines: lead, bouldering, and speed. This decision has had a huge impact on training, training plans, and training schedules. In comparison to "specialists" who have previously focused on a single discipline, "combined" competitors must include bouldering, speed, and lead climbing in their training schedules.

**Ingo:** Der Klettersport hat sich in den letzten Jahren in seiner Entwicklung fast selbst überholt. Von statischer Kletterei und herkömmlichen Griffen hin zu komplex-koordinativ-dynamischem Klettern mit reinen Volumenbouldern und -routen. Dank neuer Griffarten (z.B. Dual Texture) und Volumen gibt es praktisch endlos viele Möglichkeiten, kreative und abwechslungsreiche Boulder und Routen zu bauen. Das Klettern selbst wurde extrem schnell- und maximal kräftig. Ebenso sind die Anforderungen an die koordinativen Fähigkeiten enorm gestiegen und werden weiterhin steigen. Der Routenbau im Lead wird mehr und mehr von boulderlastig, um die sehr starken Wettkampfkletterer an der Spitze voneinander trennen zu können.

Bei den Olympischen Spielen in Tokio 2020 wird das Klettern in Form einer Kombination der drei Wettkampfdisziplinen Lead, Bouldern und Speed dabei sein. Diese Entscheidung hat das Training, die Trainingsplanung und den Trainingsablauf stark beeinflusst. Die „Kombinierer“ müssen Speed, Bouldern und Lead im Training unterbringen, im Unterschied zu den „Spezialisten“, die sich bisher auf eine einzige Disziplin konzentriert haben.

**MH: To prepare for international competitions, teams and athletes often like to visit a range of climbing gyms. How do competitors choose where to train, and what does a gym have to offer to attract training teams and to be an ideal place to set up a training camp?**

**MH: Um sich auf internationale Wettkämpfe vorzubereiten, besuchen viele Teams und Athleten verschiedene Kletterhallen. Welche Aspekte sind dabei wichtig und was muss eine Halle bieten, um attraktiv für ein Trainingsteam und für Trainingscamps zu sein?**

**Ingo:** Competitions take place in various gyms, therefore it is very important that competitors train on a variety of walls. They need to inject a certain level of diversity into their training. When choosing gyms for training camps, the different gradients on offer and the structure of the walls play an important role. The quality of the route setting is just as pivotal. Routes should not only be as varied as possible, but should also be reset regularly. Ideally, there should always be enough boulders and routes with higher difficulty ratings. Since route setters each have their own unique style, in the best-case scenario, gyms should frequently invite new route setters to work with them to keep their walls fresh and exciting. A wide selection of the latest high-quality holds and volumes is essential for setting diverse problems. In modern gyms, a complete range of bouldering, lead, and speed climbing areas plus a well-equipped strength training area are now provided as standard.

**Ingo:** Da die Wettkämpfe in verschiedenen Hallen stattfinden, ist es sehr wichtig, nicht immer an derselben Wand zu trainieren. Es wird eine gewisse Vielseitigkeit verlangt. Die unterschiedlichen Neigungen und Beschaffenheiten der Wände spielen eine große Rolle bei der Auswahl einer Halle fürs Trainingscamp. Der Routenbau ist natürlich genauso ausschlaggebend. Es sollte so abwechslungsreich wie möglich geschraubt werden und auch die Regelmäßigkeit des Umbaus ist von Bedeutung. Es ist wünschenswert, jederzeit genügend Boulder und Routen in den höheren Schwierigkeitsgraden zu haben. Optimal wäre es, immer wieder neue Routensetzer einzuladen – jeder hat seinen eigenen Style und dadurch bleibt die Kletterei immer spannend. Um überhaupt abwechslungsreiche „Probleme“ schrauben zu können, ist eine Auswahl an modernen und hochwertigen Griffen und Volumen extrem wichtig. In modernen Kletterhallen ist die Komplettausstattung mit Bouldern, Lead und Speed sowie einem gut ausgestatteten Kraftraum mittlerweile Standard.

**MH:** You have watched different teams train around the world. How do training locations and gyms differ from country to country? Have you noticed any particularly advantageous aspects?

**Ingo:** Training systems often vary widely from one country to the next. In America, for example, routes and boulders demand a lot of strength and holds tend to be positioned farther apart. In comparison, routes in Europe are much more technical and more challenging in terms of coordination. In Japan, there are more than 200 bouldering gyms with 12 different difficulty ratings in Tokyo alone. So, as you can see, different climbing styles are adopted in different countries. It is difficult to say which approach works best, since the World Cup results show that lots of countries have one or two top athletes.

What struck me in Tokyo is that gyms feature the latest holds from all of today's leading manufacturers from around the world. No other nation can keep up in this respect. Indeed, international competition results show that Japanese athletes are in a class of their own when it comes to bouldering. Having said that, Japan is not quite as predominant in lead climbing due to a shortage of training opportunities, but it is making progress in this field.

At present, the Kletterzentrum Innsbruck is the most state-of-the-art and diverse climbing gym in the world. It provides a combination of facilities for both professional and recreational climbers, offering everything a trainer could desire.

**"SINCE ROUTE SETTERS EACH HAVE THEIR OWN UNIQUE STYLE, IN THE BEST-CASE SCENARIO, GYMS SHOULD FREQUENTLY INVITE NEW ROUTE SETTERS TO WORK WITH THEM TO KEEP THEIR WALLS FRESH AND EXCITING."**

**„OPTIMAL WÄRE ES, IMMER WIEDER NEUE ROUTENSETZER EINZULADEN – JEDER HAT SEINEN EIGENEN STYLE UND DADURCH BLEIBT DIE KLETTEREI IMMER SPANNEND.“**

**MH:** What creates a good training atmosphere in a gym?

**Ingo:** Several factors are needed to create a good atmosphere. One important aspect is lighting, as a gym should be light enough without being dazzling or too unnatural. Keeping the gym clean is another important factor. This requires more effort than most people think, as chalk finds its way into every nook and cranny.

As far as mat systems for bouldering areas are concerned, there is a wide range of products on the market. Mat covers made from carpet create a very pleasant "living room effect" and are also much better at dampening noise than smooth surfaces. Music also contributes to a good atmosphere. There should be something for everyone and it shouldn't be too loud so as to ensure people can still hold a conversation.

The color of the walls has a huge influence on climbers, with anything possible from dark brown to white. I personally have a clear preference for walls where you can see the wood. Creating this effect requires the use of a transparent coating, which is just as good as an opaque finish.

**MH:** As a sports science graduate and national team trainer, you know exactly what it takes to train athletes at a professional level. Which principles cross over into the amateur field?

**Ingo:** As I've already mentioned, the quality of the routes and boulders is one of the most important prerequisites for successful training sessions. A variety of routes and holds is crucial in this respect. This also

**MH:** Du hast das Training verschiedener Teams in unterschiedlichen Ländern beobachtet. Welche länderspezifischen Unterschiede konntest du bezüglich der Trainingslocations und Hallen feststellen? Gibt es Aspekte, die dir als besonders vorteilhaft aufgefallen sind?

**Ingo:** Die Trainingssysteme sind in vielen Ländern sehr unterschiedlich. In Amerika zum Beispiel sind die Routen und Boulder sehr, sehr kräftig und mit weiten Zügen gebaut. Im Vergleich dazu wird in Europa viel technischer und koordinativ anspruchsvoller geschraubt. In Japan gibt es allein in Tokio über 200 Boulderhallen mit 12 verschiedenen Schwierigkeitsgraden. Unterschiedliche Länder, unterschiedliche Stile – das wird allein hier wird schon ersichtlich. Was besser ist, ist schwer zu sagen – schaut man sich die Ergebnisse der Weltcups an, so gibt es aus vielen Ländern ein oder zwei Topathleten.

In Tokio fällt zudem auf, dass in den Hallen die neuesten Griffe aller moderner Hersteller vorhanden sind, egal woher aus der Welt. In dieser Hinsicht kann sonst keine Nation mithalten, und wie die internationalen Wettkampfergebnisse zeigen, sind die japanischen Athleten im Bouldern auch eine Macht für sich. Im Vorstieg ist Japan nicht so tonangebend, weil dafür die Trainingsmöglichkeiten fehlen. Aber das kommt noch. Die derzeit modernste und vielseitigste Halle ist das Kletterzentrum in Innsbruck. Es stellt eine Kombination aus Spitzensport und Breitensport dar und bietet für das Training alles, was auf der Wunschliste eines Trainers steht.

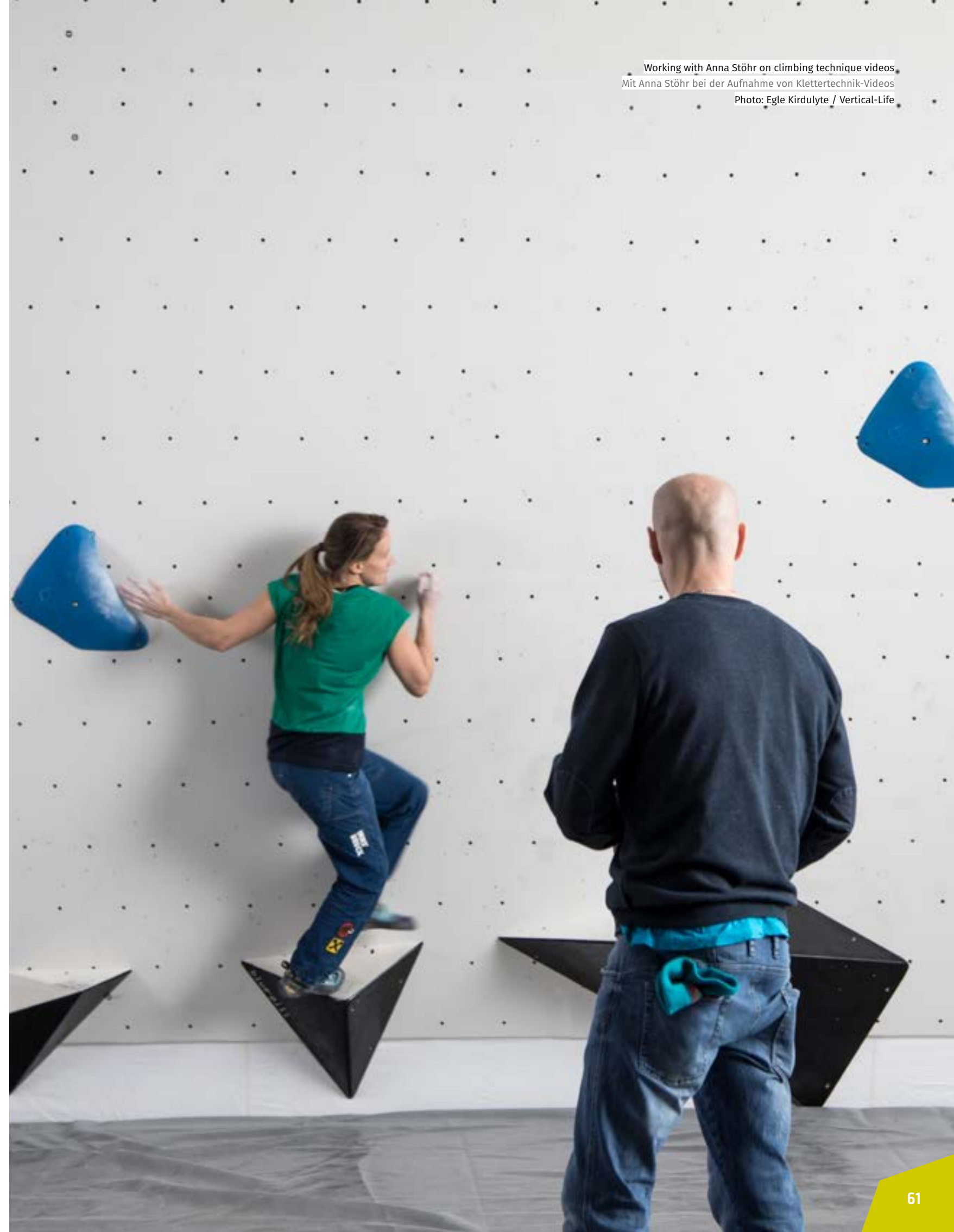
**MH:** Was macht eine gute Trainingsatmosphäre in der Halle aus?

**Ingo:** Für eine gute Atmosphäre ist ein Zusammenspiel mehrerer Faktoren wichtig. Ein Punkt zum Beispiel ist das Licht, es sollte nicht grell oder sehr unnatürlich sein, aber trotzdem genug Helligkeit spenden. Generell ist die Sauberkeit in der Halle ein nicht zu unterschätzender Aufwand. Das Chalk findet seinen Weg in jede noch so kleine Ritze. Bei den Mattensystemen im Boulderbereich gibt es die unterschiedlichsten Varianten. Für einen sehr angenehmen „Wohnzimmer-Effekt“ sorgen Mattenüberzüge aus Teppich. Diese dämpfen auch den Lärm sehr angenehm im Vergleich zu glatten Abdeckungen. Die Musik und der Stil der Musik tragen ihren Teil zu einer guten Atmosphäre bei. Es sollte für jeden etwas dabei sein, die Lautstärke aber nicht zu hoch, sodass man sich noch gut miteinander unterhalten kann. Die Farbe der Wände hat entscheidenden Einfluss auf die Besucher der Halle. Von dunkelbraun bis weiß ist alles möglich. Mir persönlich gefallen Wände, an denen man das Holz sieht, mit Abstand am besten. Die Beschichtung ist dabei durchsichtig und im Vergleich zu einer deckenden Schicht kein bisschen schlechter.

**MH:** Als diplomierter Sportwissenschaftler und Nationalteamtrainer weißt du genau, was es fürs Training auf Profiniveau braucht. Welche Prinzipien sind dieselben im Amateurbereich?

**Ingo:** Wie oben schon erwähnt, ist die Qualität der Routen und Boulder eine der wichtigsten Voraussetzungen für ein gutes Training. Da spie-

Working with Anna Stöhr on climbing technique videos  
Mit Anna Stöhr bei der Aufnahme von Klettertechnik-Videos  
Photo: Egle Kirdulyte / Vertical-Life





**BIO**

**Name:** Ingo Filzwieser  
**Born:** 1983  
**Lives in:** Innsbruck, Austria  
**Profession:** Coach, route setter, workshop presenter for several national teams  
**Education:** Sports scientist  
**Sponsors:** Scarpa

Photo: Egle Kirdulyte / Vertical-Life

applies to beginners – the range of boulders and routes on offer at lower difficulty ratings should be equally as diverse and should require a variety of physical skills. Unfortunately, easier boulders and routes are often very monotonous and typically use more or less the same holds. Climbers should have the opportunity to solve problems regardless of the difficulty rating.

**MH: How can a gym ensure that it provides the best possible array of training options for climbers?**

**Ingo:** Many gyms now employ permanent route setters. Although this is a positive development, it creates a lack in route setting variety, so fewer customers are attracted to the gym. The more varied the route setting, the better. Gyms benefit from regularly calling on the services of external route setters. Besides colored boulders and routes, climbing gyms should always have a densely set technical training area. It is only possible to devise a good, methodical training plan on walls that are densely set. Gyms should also feature strength training areas with equipment such as campus boards, hangboards, pull-up bars, and weights.

len eben ein abwechslungsreicher Routenbau und die Variation der Griffe eine große Rolle. Dasselbe gilt auch für Anfänger – auch im unteren Schwierigkeitsgrad sollten die Boulder und Routen abwechslungsreich sein und dem Kletterer verschiedene konditionelle Fähigkeiten abverlangen. Leider sind leichte Boulder und Routen oft sehr eintönig und es werden mehr oder weniger immer dieselben Griffe verwendet. Dabei sollte es Bewegungsprobleme in allen Schwierigkeitsgraden geben.

**MH: Wie kann eine Halle die Trainingsmöglichkeiten für Kletterer optimal fördern?**

**Ingo:** In vielen Hallen gibt es mittlerweile festangestellte Routenbauer. Das ist einerseits gut, aber andererseits kommt keine Abwechslung in den Routenbau und die Kunden bleiben aus. Je abwechslungsreicher der Routenbau desto besser. Wenn regelmäßig externe Routenbauer geholt werden, ist das nur positiv für die Halle. Neben den Farbbouldern und Routen ist es sehr wichtig, einen vollgeschraubten Trainings-Technikbereich zu haben. Ein gutes, methodisch aufgebautes Techniktraining ist nur an einer vollgeschraubten Wand möglich.

Once a distant vision for the future, digital coaching is now a reality, and apps are available that turn your smartphone into a personal coach. An example of this is the Vertical-Life app, which enables users to “zlag” completed routes and boulders. The next step will be to provide climbers with the opportunity to put together their own customized training plans, which will make training incredibly easy.

**MH: You have written training plans for the Vertical-Life app. What did you find most challenging about this? What is the main benefit of digital training platforms like this?**

**Ingo:** I encountered several challenges. For starters, even finding a common language with the programmers was difficult. While the idea was to make the plans accessible to everyone, they also needed to be customizable to each individual's requirements. This meant I had to cover all bases and I started off by creating a wide assortment of plans. After entering the plans into the system, I had to adapt them whenever the programmers made any changes. The most difficult aspect was probably ensuring the right level of user-friendliness, as everything had to be as straightforward and easy to understand as possible. We ended up going back and forth for a year until the plans were finally ready!

The main benefit for users is the ability to create customized training plans easily on their smartphone in just a few simple steps. Climbers can follow these plans in their own climbing gym at any time, without the need for a trainer. Nothing quite like this has ever been offered to the climbing community before. It is a pioneering step and shows what the future will hold for coaching and training.

**“ONCE A DISTANT VISION FOR THE FUTURE, DIGITAL COACHING IS NOW A REALITY.”**

**„DER DIGITALE COACH IST KEINE FERNE ZUKUNFTSVISION MEHR, ER IST REALITÄT.“**

Die Krafttrainingsbereiche wie Campusboard, Hangboards, Klimmzügen und Kraftkammer sollten nicht fehlen. Der digitale Coach ist keine ferne Zukunftsvision mehr, er ist Realität. Es gibt Apps, die zum „persönlichen Coach“ am Handy werden. Vertical-Life ist ein Beispiel, dort lassen sich geschaffte Routen und Boulder zlaggen“. Der nächste Schritt ist der, dass sich jeder seinen individuellen Trainingsplan zusammenstellen kann. Das macht das Training extrem einfach!

**MH: Du hast Trainingspläne für die Vertical-Life App geschrieben. Was war die größte Herausforderung dabei? Was ist der große Nutzen für die User solcher digitaler Trainingsmöglichkeiten?**

**Ingo:** Die Herausforderung bestand aus mehreren Faktoren. Zunächst war es schon schwierig, mit den Programmierern eine gemeinsame Sprache zu finden. Die Trainingspläne sollten einerseits jedem zugänglich, andererseits für jeden individuell zugeschnitten sein. So musste an alle Möglichkeiten gedacht werden und ich habe verschiedenste Trainingspläne erstellt. Beim Eingeben waren dann wieder Adaptionen der Programmierer vorzunehmen. Der wahrscheinlich schwierigste Aspekt war die Benutzerfreundlichkeit: Für den User muss alles so einfach und verständlich wie möglich sein. So ging es ein Jahr lang hin und her, bis es schließlich soweit war!

Der große Nutzen für die User ist der, dass sie sich individuelle Trainingspläne erstellen können, ganz einfach am Smartphone, mit wenigen Klicks, in ihrer eigenen Kletterhalle, unabhängig von der Zeit und jedem Trainer. Diese Möglichkeit hat es in dieser Art und Weise noch nie gegeben. Sie ist ein zukunftsweisender Schritt im Coaching und Training.

Ingo designed a full set of digital, customizable training plans for the Vertical-Life App.  
 Ingo hat eine Serie an digitalen, individualisierbaren Trainingsplänen für die Vertical-Life App entwickelt.  
 Photo: Egle Kirdulyte / Vertical-Life



# AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION

TEXT: LIAM LONSDALE



Over the past four years, Liam Lonsdale has made something of a name for himself on the bouldering competition scene ... not as an athlete, but as a speaker, photographer, and pundit.

In this article, Liam shares his unique perspective on the world of 'indie' bouldering competitions, a selection of findings in case you're thinking of setting up your own, and what the future might look like in this fast developing world.

The first time I ever really became aware of climbing as a competitive sport was when I read the faded, screen-printed words, 'British Bouldering Championships' adorning the vest of a local veteran at my then regular climbing gym. My curious nature kicked in and I started to notice more and more of these 'comp vests', decorated with logos of local bouldering leagues from times gone by, one-off exhibition events that had come and gone, all with their legacy preserved in dated motifs and sleeveless cotton.

These days, bouldering competitions for me appear ubiquitous. They seemingly occur 'at a gym near you' in varying forms pretty much every week; there are summer leagues and winter leagues, there are fun competitions and opens, low-key local one day-ers, multi-day international events, all the way through to one-off invitational exhibitions and more.

In the good old days, the main purpose of a competition was to split the top climbers. A competition was a way of truly separating 'the strongest' in the gym, the area, or the land. Winning a competition meant bragging rights. These days competitions continue to offer the competitively-minded a chance to pit their wits against each other, whilst also serving many more complex and intricate purposes; indie competitions might be held to encourage local participation, to boost gym footfall in quieter periods, to drive social media traffic to a sponsor ... and for many other reasons. Similarly, a person is far more likely to be wearing a neatly designed 'comp vest' themselves, rather than spying a veteran competitor sporting his faded old rag, the way I did all those years ago. And they're far more likely to hear about the latest and greatest climbing competitions through an athlete's social media, rather than in an article on one of the many climbing-news websites or a magazine. That said, they might still encounter the odd humble brag overheard at the gym.

As a photographer, presenter, and climber, I have been deeply involved in the world of bouldering competitions for many years. I've lost count, but I have easily been to over a hundred, probably closer to 150 or more. I have covered almost all of the bases, from watching competitions in person in the audience and at home on a screen, to entering myself in local and national events, to shooting and hosting some of the biggest fixtures on the calendar, including arguably the most iconic invitationals and also the Boulder World Cup. In actual fact, the only box I haven't (yet) ticked is organising my own competition. Throughout my journey so far I have been able to see what it is about a competition that climbers value, what organisers need and what spectators appreciate.

Climbing competitions in general are not a new thing; they originally began on rock **\*\*shock horror\*\***, with routes following existing and sometime artificially 'crafted' [chipped] lines. The first ever indoor competitions date back to 1986, with the first Lead World Cup being held a few years later in Leeds, England in 1989, Jerry Moffatt taking the iconic win. There have been literally thousands of competitions since then, across multiple disciplines, and for this article we will focus on bouldering. Interestingly, bouldering was only officially introduced

into the IFSC calendar in 1998 with an international series called 'Top Rock Challenge'.

On my journey I have encountered countless exemplary successes and also epic failures. I want to share with you some of my key learnings that I have picked up along the way, bolstered with advice, commentary, and insight from voices embedded in a selection of the most successful competitions around.

### THE SUCCESS OF A CLIMBING COMPETITION ...

It's a subjective topic. And it's probably the one that is most difficult to define. Who can determine whether a competition is successful? Put simply, it depends on the goal, and for everyone that is reading this hoping to start a competition of their own, I'd say this: have a goal. Number of ticket sales? Number of eyes on the broadcast? Number of entries? Biggest names in climbing competing? Dare I say it, profitability?

The most successful competitions I have ever encountered are the ones that run the smoothest and have the best atmosphere. When those two elements are dialed, everything else appears to slot in, resulting in an overall great event. If a competition has a final, then a reliable stage manager to oversee proceedings is essential for smooth running. Someone to ensure the athletes are in the right place at the right time, that any lights or special effects are cued promptly, especially if there is a broadcasting element. In smaller competitions, a good MC that engages with the crowd and pays attention can take up this role. But honestly, a separate stage manager is preferable. Music plays a huge part in creating the right atmosphere, as it must fit the vibe of the competition. La Sportiva Legends Only has a DJ that literally live-produces music depending on the competitor and what they are doing in that moment. The Rab CWIF attributes its recipe for success to tea, techno and psych. Adidas Rockstars is an event that was literally invented with the idea of combining climbing and music.

If the competition is open-format without a final, the importance of having an abundance of well-informed staff that can answer questions and direct large groups of competitors should not be overlooked. This is especially true if there are children, though it's usually the parents that need the helping hand. The number of people in an event that are competing and also in attendance should directly correlate to the number of staff involved — even if it's just to make sure that the line for the coffee machine doesn't get out of control.

### COMPETITION FORMATS ...

Another crux that must be overcome and one that a competition should preside over extremely carefully is that of the competition format. My advice is to choose your format based on your target audience. If the competition is aimed at first-timers, keep the scoring format as basic as possible. Ask yourself, 'Are the rules clear and simple? Would I understand these if I had never competed before?'. If the competition is aimed at athletes, then they are likely using the event as training. Does the competition provide them with a similar format to a national event or world cup? A similar format would be helpful for them in this instance. Is the competition aimed at online viewers? If so, a shorter final is recommended. One with scores that are easy to follow and easy to display. Hard Moves, a team bouldering / deep water soloing Superfinal event that took place in Wuppertal in 2016 did this very well with a



Lena Hermann in the Superfinal of the HardMoves Boulderleague 2016  
Photo: Ulla Lohmann

simple points-per-hold scoring system, clearly signed on the structure. The team with the largest combined score won. An example of a challenging broadcast format is the current World Cup bouldering finals. They operate a split finals, where men and women climb separately, in 4-minute rotations. Die-hard viewers that want to see the whole thing would need to tune into approximately four hours of climbing ... which is a long time, even for the biggest fans. As the Olympics approaches, it might be the indie competitions that can provide inspiration for a more viewer-friendly format.

Björn Pohl, organiser of La Sportiva Legends Only opted for a different solution. In the Legends Only final, athletes are allowed three attempts only at each boulder, after a practice session two days prior. Each attempt is started when an athlete leaves the floor and ends when they fall or top; the athlete then rests through a full rotation, until everyone has topped, or until everyone has used all of their attempts. This format leads to a final that has continuous action throughout, and almost always avoids a situation where there are athletes resting for several minutes during an attempt.

### THE CHALLENGES OF A CLIMBING COMPETITION ...

"We have been fortunate not to come across any serious hurdles when organising CWIF so far. We tend to take things as they come. In all honesty, our biggest issue to date is being able to provide a sufficiently strong internet connection for our live broadcasts! Other than that, we simply strive to improve each year. We continue to stick to our ethos for the competition, which is to create a fun and social event for any and all climbers who are fast enough to get an entry!" **Sam Whittaker, Managing Director of Climbing Works, Sheffield UK, home of the Rab CWIF**

"The most difficulty we have had has been attracting female entrants. When we started The Flash Championship, we essentially copied the CWIF prize money (at that time) and gave prizes to all six finalists. We thought this would be enough to attract the UK's best, and while the males flocked to us from all over, the females really didn't. On the flip side of this, it has meant we have been able to attract the next generation of Team GB females, with a lot of teenagers making their first major semi and final, giving them valuable experience for their future

in competitions." **Mike Surtees, Climbing Director, Highball Climbing, Norwich UK, home of The Big Flash / The Flash Championship**

It is interesting to learn of the challenges of climbing competitions, and I am particularly interested in the comparison between the CWIF and The Big Flash, since they are such similar competitions, the latter being directly based on the former. Location is the biggest challenge for The Big Flash and, their experiences show that one cannot buy competitors with prize money, or certainly they can't if they are miles from anywhere — Highball Norwich is several hours from any other hub of climbers or gyms. The Rab CWIF, on the other hand, manages to attract hundreds of entrants from all over the world, selling out three qualifying rounds faster every year, and features the best of the current crop of competition climbers. Having been asked many times by prospective competition organisers, "how can we get the big names?", it's interesting to hear that the temptation of a generous prize pot is not always the answer. Meanwhile in Sheffield, they are battling with bandwidth to ensure a stable connection to the outside world in order to showcase their event.

These are just a couple of examples of practical challenges, and ones that can easily be overcome with the right amount of money to spend, which brings me on to my next talking point:

#### BUDGETS, SPONSORS, AND NAVIGATING THEM

One of the most important and least discussed topics, in my opinion, is sponsorship revenue and the successful financing of competitions. In reality, it's possible to put on a very basic competition with little investment, but let's dream big here. The general feeling in almost every conversation I have had in the industry is that there "isn't any budget", or that "big brands aren't interested in climbing competitions". I am far from convinced that this is the case, simply by virtue of the fact that brands like Coca-Cola and Red Bull are sponsoring athletes and events, not to mention Adidas, Go-Pro and BMW, to name a few more. There are rumours of some of the bigger competitions having a budget in excess of a million euros, factoring in high-level professional broadcast facilities, venue costs, athlete investment and more.

**On the topic of budgets and sponsorship, Björn Pohl of La Sportiva Legends Only (Stockholm, Sweden) said:** "The biggest expense for the Legends Only event is actually the time that our team puts into planning it; Klättercentret covers that cost. The other big expenses are covered by sponsors such as prize money and accommodation for the athletes. We also make up some of our costs through ticket sales, which sell at approximately 30 euros each, and sell out in less than a week. Our total budget for the event is in the region of 100K euros. Our experience in successfully hosting these events allows us to command sufficient budgets from our sponsors, which in turn allows us to own our creative vision whilst also delivering on the expectations they have around their investment. They trust us to do that."

**On the other end of the spectrum, Mike Surtees of The Big Flash, Norwich, commented:** "I approach our sponsors in a way that breaks down what they can expect for their money. For the last few years I have provided potential partners with a specific marketing pack that includes various options - e.g. title sponsor, primary sponsor, gold, silver, etc. - each tier with a list of deliverables. One strategy we adopted is offering brand exclusivity across certain categories. In other words, we only allow one equipment or shoe sponsor. It has to be said that this creates a double-edged sword in that it limits our options, and we do have a

couple of brands that are keen to get involved, but they conflict with our existing long term partners. Going forward, we are seeing two extra partners, or one large one (!), which will likely be outside the climbing industry."

Having been on the sponsor side of the fence for a number of years whilst working with Marmot in the UK, we supported the London-based competition series, Blokfest. Our goal was simple: Get our brand in front of as many eyes as possible in a climbing-specific environment. It piggy-backed off the opening of a London flagship store and meant that we were able to justify the expenditure as promotional for the store. Our target was the London climbing scene, which has an abundance of young talent and also plenty of new climbers, all looking to invest their hard earned money in new gear. We selected Blokfest because it met our criteria and was close to our retail location. For the time that I was at the company, we continuously supported the relationship, and Blokfest delivered.

#### ATHLETES, SETTERS ...

In my opinion, one of the most important elements in creating a great spectacle and atmosphere at a competition is the athletes. Anyone who has seen Chon JongWon climbing in a competition will not forget his emotive celebrations and trademark dance moves any time soon, adding a real sense of fun and entertainment to a final. The charisma and grace that Anna Stöhr tirelessly displayed on the mats during her career exuded a sense of professionalism and composure, adding class to any event she attended. Don't be fooled into thinking you need big names to add these qualities. Local heroes can offer the same emotions in smaller competitions, especially considering an audience should be able to connect with them in such a familiar way.

The importance of the athlete experience also needs emphasising. If the athletes are relaxed, comfortable and happy, they'll perform better, which means the audience will be happy, and sponsors too ... which means the competition is able to get better in the following years. It's a circle that self-perpetuates when fueled correctly.

And what makes the athletes happy?

Short answer: a number of things, obviously. One of my biggest takeaways from the competitions is that an athlete's happiness often comes down to the quality of the boulders they climbed. Even athletes that have missed out on a serious season goal have said to me, "I'm disappointed, but the blocs were so much fun to climb", and with feedback like that, I can guarantee you, they will be back next time. And they'll probably tell their friends, too. Do your boulders climb well? Do they inspire the athletes? If the answer is yes, then there is a high likelihood you're going to have happier climbers on your hands. After all, they are there with the aim of doing one thing ... climbing.

Next question: How does one ensure good blocs? Great setters.

Infamous for its creative route setting, the Rab CWIF utilises the skills of in-house setter Percy Bishton (Chief International Route Setter for the IFSC and one of the owners of the Climbing Works), Jamie Cassidy (IFSC International Route Setter), and many other distinguished and highly acclaimed names. **Of the setting, Sam Whittaker said,** "The qualifying blocs are designed to test the climbers on all levels and also incorporate a team element. The highest combined score wins a prize in addition to the winners of the finals. It encourages people to share

beta and generally have a good time. The semi and final boulders are set with World Cup style blocs in mind, and our setting team does a great job with that."

**Björn Pohl also highlights the importance of the route setters:** "We want Legends Only to feel different. We have the best climbers in the world competing and we want to give them the chance to work together in a cooperative format on boulders that are much harder than they would find in any other event. In doing this, we present our setters and their quality to the world. The setters are a fundamental part of the whole competition and they have creative license to decide on the setting style, the aesthetic, and the hold brand selection, even speaking to shapers about creating custom holds for the competition. The status that the athletes put on this competition is crucial to us upholding such a strong reputation, and that ultimately comes down to our boulders. Without the setters it simply wouldn't work."

Adidas Rockstars choose to place an incredibly strong emphasis on setters, employing one of the largest and most qualified setting teams of any event. The 2018 showcase had 8 setters in total, all of whom had several days to craft the boulders. This deep investment allows the route setters to spend more time perfecting their blocs, and also means there are more brains to put together when they are trying to solve setting issues as they go.

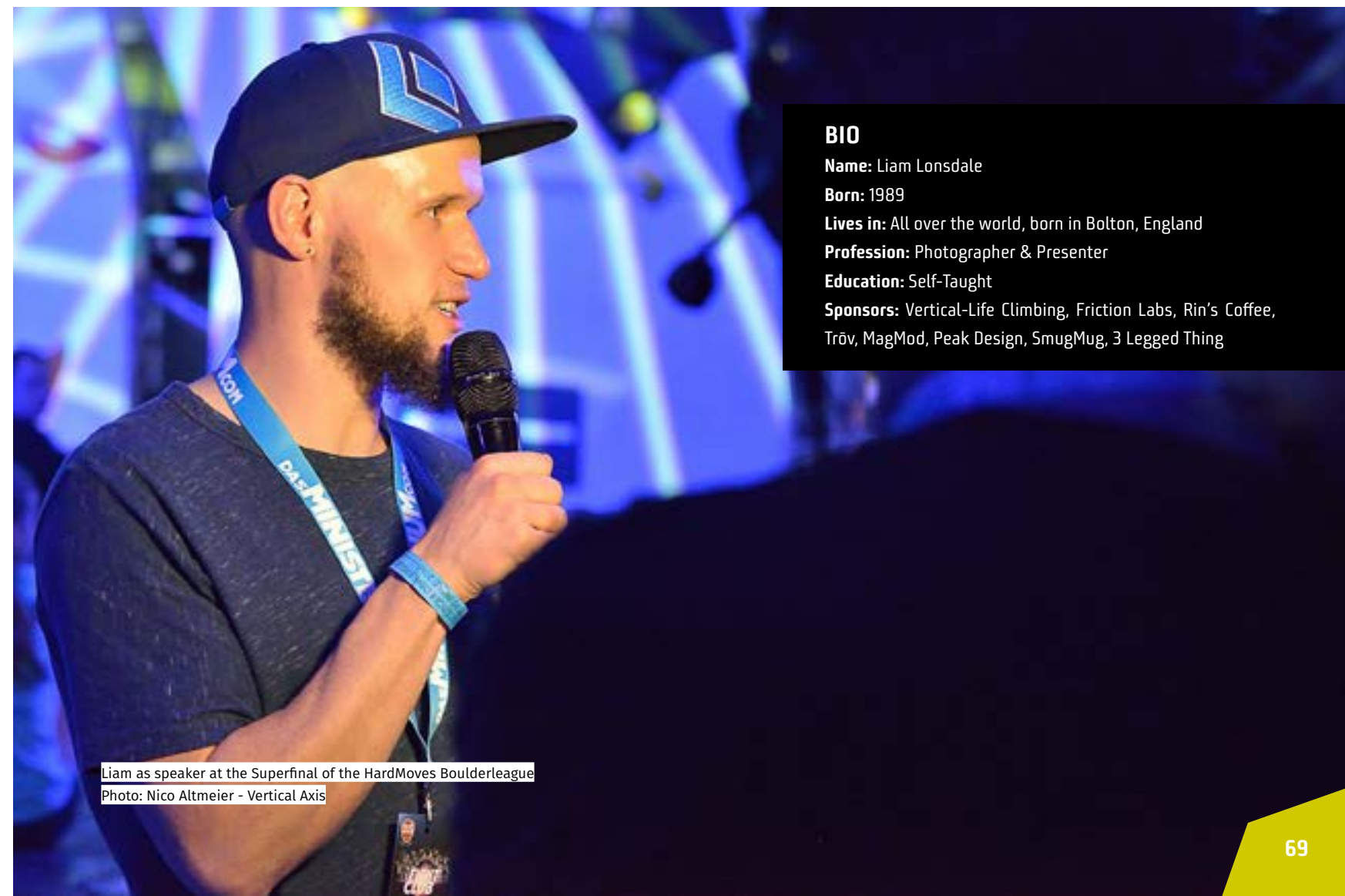
The key to great blocs is great setters, with the experience and know-how to create masterpieces for the climbers, and this is true for all levels of competition.

#### THE FUTURE ...

It is in our hands, literally. Slicker and more technologically-advanced broadcasts, more entertaining formats, bigger commercial sponsors - it's all there for development and there are plenty of competitions that are emerging that seem oh-so-close to taking the next step to becoming the 'biggest and best' out there. **Björn Pohl has an interesting thought on a future round of his Legends Only event:** "We have wanted to hold a Legends Only, mixing men and women. It's a very difficult prospect. Until we are sure we can do it fairly and properly, we will continue in the current format."

I for one am very excited about the future of competition climbing and what it holds for us all ... and as I said right at the beginning, I am yet to organise an event of my own. Watch this space!

*Liam Lonsdale is supported by Vertical-Life Climbing, Friction Labs, Rin's Coffee, Tröv, MagMod, Peak Design, SmugMug & 3 Legged Thing. You can follow Liam on all major social media channels by searching @liamlonsdale and also by visiting www.liamlonsdale.com*



#### BIO

**Name:** Liam Lonsdale

**Born:** 1989

**Lives in:** All over the world, born in Bolton, England

**Profession:** Photographer & Presenter

**Education:** Self-Taught

**Sponsors:** Vertical-Life Climbing, Friction Labs, Rin's Coffee, Tröv, MagMod, Peak Design, SmugMug, 3 Legged Thing

Liam as speaker at the Superfinal of the HardMoves Boulderleague  
Photo: Nico Altmeier - Vertical Axis

# **KLÄTTERCENTRET STOCKHOLM: A SUCCESS STORY**

TEXT BY BJÖRN POHL

*Chances are you've never heard of us. Perhaps the proverbial bell starts to ring, however, when I say La Sportiva Legends Only or The Black Diamond Project. Klättercentret Stockholm opened its first gym in late 2003. Today the company has a total of five climbing gyms in Stockholm, Malmö and Uppsala, and there are more in the pipeline.*

**It all began when friends Rickard and Nicke discovered indoor climbing in Stockholm. They instantly fell for it hook, line and sinker, and quickly came to realise two things:**

1. Climbing was highly enjoyable and great training, regardless of one's level.
2. This could be done so much better, and it didn't seem all that difficult.

Rickard began exploring the possibilities and slowly a plan was taking shape. Nicke, who was in between jobs, didn't hesitate for a second when Rickard called and said he was needed to make the project a reality .

Rickard's girlfriend, Veronica, who was... let's say, more structured and into numbers, checked the documents and the business plan and, much to her own surprise, found it perfectly sane and reasonable. Now they were three. None of them were of the traditional entrepreneurial kind, however, and it took some pondering before they were prepared to make the leap.

They managed to scrape together a couple of Entre-Prises bouldering blocks from the 2003 Chamonix World Championships, a bunch of panels from a Lead World Cup, added some rough and ready homemade walls, and were ready to go.

As they had nearly no climbing expertise, it was important to attract the right people, i.e. people with key competence in different fields, from courses, to safety, route setting, and events.

**"TO GIVE THESE PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES AND GROW HAS DEFINITELY BEEN A KEY SUCCESS FACTOR AND IT STILL IS. IN FACT, WE WANT THIS PHILOSOPHY TO CHARACTERISE THE WHOLE COMPANY, REGARDLESS OF LEVEL, AS THE EMPLOYEES ARE OUR GREATEST AND MOST VALUABLE ASSETS."**

*Veronica Sikström, founder*

The first few years weren't easy. There were many hours of hard work, involving everything from negotiating with and forking out money from the bank, to cleaning the toilets and everything in between. There was always light at the end of the tunnel, though, as the numbers of customers grew steadily and the feedback was positive.

Back when Klättercentret opened, there were no "Green cards". That is, in order to be allowed to belay someone, you didn't need to prove you actually had any idea about what you were doing. Now, I know this is, in one form or another, still the case in most countries, but to us that's like saying you don't need a license to drive a car.

As safety was fundamental right from the beginning, we issued our own belaying cards; a green one for top roping and a red one for lead climbing. Needless to say, not everyone approved wholeheartedly, to put it mildly. It is no longer an issue nowadays, however, and I guess history has proven us right.

The second gym, Klättercentret Telefonplan, was a project of a scale that hitherto hadn't been seen in Sweden or any of the Nordic countries. To say it was a great leap for mankind would be pushing it, but when the doors opened in January 2010, it was certainly an important step for Swedish climbing, as it opened up the possibility to start climbing indoors for a lot more people. Klättercentret has always wanted to be about more than just running gyms, wanting to be a force pushing the sport of climbing forward, and the mantra "what's good for climbing is good for us" has always been a guideline.

Other things that stand out are the international events like the Tierra Boulder Battle (TBB), The La Sportiva Legends Only (LSLO) and The Black Diamond Project (BD Project). At the start, the reason behind it all was a case of "because we can", but over the years it has proven important and helpful in many ways.

The TBB was the event that started it all. World class climbers were invited to set one boulder problem each and, after a work session, compete in them. For the first couple of years it was a mixed event, but the last two editions were female only.

The LSLO is the event where the best of the best are invited to compete on five super hard

problems. The format is redpoint and the athletes get to work together on the problems for three hours, two days before the competition. Since 2015 we have alternated between men and women every other year. We are looking into the possibilities of making this a mixed

event in the future, where men and women compete against each other.

The BD Project is, simply put, an incredibly hard project indoors. The idea is to have a sort of yardstick that measures the progress of what's possible. The route starts relatively easy and then gets gradually harder all the way, so it's something a lot of people can try in order to measure their own progress. Currently, the record is held by Alex Megos, who squeezed past Adam Ondra's highpoint with the smallest of margins.

For Klättercentret, the story has only just begun. Plans for gyms in central Stockholm, Västerås and Malmö are already in progress, and several other projects are being explored. We're also looking into what can be done to support Swedish competition climbing and climbers, and have just launched a route setter exchange program with other European gyms.

In short, there's more to come. Stay tuned!

**"FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT CLIMBING SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE."**

*Rickard Söderström, founder*



Brand new gym in Uppsala  
Photo: Sebastian Dahlgren

# THE PASSION, VISION AND RESPONSIBILITY INVOLVED IN RUNNING A CLIMBING GYM

INTERVIEW & PHOTOS: BJÖRN POHL



Veronica Sikström, co-founder and Operations Manager at Klättercentret Stockholm.

## VERONICA SIKSTRÖM

**BP:** You're the OM of Klättercentret. What does that mean?

**Veronica:** In short, it means the board has delegated the responsibility of running the business in Stockholm to me. I'm there to support our site managers and make sure they have everything they need to run their respective gyms, and that we're moving forward in the direction the board has decided.

**BP:** What was it that attracted you and made you choose to be part of the Klättercentret project?

**Veronica:** I was attracted to the fact that we were on the verge of challenging what indoor climbing was. We felt it should be possible to attract more people to the sport and to make it more accessible. Being the person that I am, I approached this in a structural way, looking at the plan and the numbers. I saw that it made sense and found it interesting and exciting. Over time, and the more we got involved in this project, it created momentum and a gravitation of its own, and being part of a community and a sport that we love is incredibly rewarding.



Pro climber Fanny Gibert competing in La Sportiva Legends Only at Klättercentret

**KLÄTTERCENTRET:**

**Associated gyms:**

Solna (2003), Telefonplan (2010), Akalla (2016), Malmö (2016), Uppsala (2018)

**Number of employees:**

75 full time employees (67 in Stockholm), 350 individuals (200-250 instructors, 100 admin, reception, route setters etc.)

**Total climbing surface:** 7260 m<sup>2</sup>

**Number of routes/boulders:** ~525/930



**BP: You hired people right from the start, didn't you?**

**Veronica:** Yes, we needed experts, people who knew about climbing. Sure, we knew something about business from what we had done before, but when it came to climbing we were noobs and nobodies. Sometimes, we could have an idea about something and the people we had hired would be like "this is not how it's done in climbing" or "climbers aren't like that". This was interesting, as we wanted to challenge the idea of what a climber was or could be.

**BP: Do you think you've succeeded?**

**Veronica:** Yes, absolutely! When we opened our first gym in Solna, the number of climbers in Stockholm increased, and even more so when we opened at Telefonplan, so, quite obviously more people could be climbers.

**BP: What is your relation to the sport of climbing today?**

**Veronica:** When it comes to my own climbing it's a bit of a paradox that, because I work with it I don't do it as much as I would like. Before we opened our first gym, I probably climbed 3-4 times per week. Since then it's probably less than two. Nowadays, I only practice bouldering. Previously I have climbed both sport and trad. Trad is simply too much risk for my taste, and to be totally honest, I'm not a big fan of heights.

**BP: Are you interested in what's going on around the climbing world?**

**Veronica:** What I am very interested in is what's happening to the sport, in which direction things are going. What are they doing with climbing in Germany, for example, or what impact will the Olympics have? These structural changes, or trends, will affect us as well. It could be that we need to change our way of setting, create new courses, or something else. When it comes to details, like who's leading the WC, I'll just ask an expert if I need to know.

**BP: On the topic of trends, what is climbing to you, extreme sport or fitness?**

**Veronica:** For me, it's not an extreme sport. I don't appreciate the risk taking aspect at all. To me, it's a way of training and I appreciate all the physical and mental exercise I receive from climbing. I realise this may sound a bit pretentious, but that's really how I feel about it. It simply has so many advantages. Say you've worked hard all day. The moment you step onto the mat you have to change your focus to be able to achieve anything. You simply can't think of work. You have to be in the moment and to me it's a form of meditation.

**BP: Are you worried that removing the risk-taking, dangerous part of climbing could also remove the spirit of climbing itself?**

**Veronica:** That's a very interesting question, and I don't think it does at all. I don't think climbing will become just like any other sport. It will always be special as it has everything. Strength, coordination, balance, endurance. There are so many aspects and challenges even if

we remove unnecessary risk-taking. Plus you have the social aspect and the fact that you can train together on the same wall, regardless of ability.

**BP: How has the business changed over the years?**

**Veronica:** The first thing I come to think of is safety. The way we approach it, for both our colleagues and customers, has changed. In just a few years, a lot has happened and we're very good at adopting the change. Not only us, but also Sweden as a country. Another aspect concerns our customers, particularly who we think can be or become a climber. The fact is that you don't have to be a hardcore climber surrounded by your friends to run a climbing gym. Nothing wrong with that, but you can also help make the sport accessible to more people and take the customers' point of view.

**BP: Are you saying it wasn't alright for anyone to start climbing before?**

**Veronica:** Well, you could, of course, but it was harder, more inaccessible. If you made an effort, you could become part of the community, but you weren't invited. I also felt there were so many things that you were just supposed to understand, but no one explained them.

**BP: Do you think this move away from the extreme is something that's unavoidable and goes with the territory as the sport grows and matures?**

**Veronica:** I would say that's the way it has to be, yes, and we have made this journey. The only thing that was different is that we weren't climbers and thus were a bit weird, but when it comes to the journey from being a group of enthusiasts with a dream that meet at work everyday, cleaning the toilets, vacuuming etc, and then opening the doors for the customers, to having to abide by new laws and standards, creating contracts, structuring the business... that's certainly a big change. For example, I can't control if you know how to belay or not, so we built a structure around the Green card which has been, for a long time now, mandatory if you want to belay at a gym in Sweden.

**BP: I know you received a lot of shit for doing this. Did it make it easier for you to do this because you came from outside the climbing community?**

**Veronica:** Yes, for sure. It made it easier for us to choose our own way based on what we wanted and thought was right. We weren't influenced by preconceptions or friends with strong opinions. It was easier for us as outsiders to break the rules and existing structures.

**BP: About structure. This was and still is a very male dominated sport, especially on the business side. What's your take on this?**

**Veronica:** First of all, I thinks that's quite easily explained. Traditionally, most climbers were men. As most people in the business are recruited from within the climbing community, most of the recruits were men. What's interesting about the future, however, is that we see that, as we

grow, we're influenced by the demographics and demands of society as a whole. Look at gender equality, for example. Right or wrong, looking at our locations, most of our receptionists are female. If we look at our route setters, most are male. Why? Sure, the recruitment base for receptionists is way larger, as you don't have to be a climber, but I think we need to raise our gaze and look beyond existing patterns to be able to make a change. Becoming aware of this is the first step. We need to reflect our customers' demands and to do that we need more female route setters.

**BP:** How do we make more potential route setters interested in the job?

**Veronica:** I think we need to show that it is accessible. This will be easier and clearer as the number of female setters begins to grow. Role models are needed. Also, I think we need to find ways to be more inviting. Sure, we could say our goal is to reach 50/50 and from now on only recruit women, but that's not a solution I believe in.

**BP:** You are not only an OM but also an owner and member of the board. Is it difficult to separate these roles?

**Veronica:** Yes, I guess it could be... it is. At least when it comes to certain issues, such as vision and the direction we're going. Sometimes I tend to look at the big picture too much. At least too much for an OM. On the other hand, I can't be efficient if I don't pay attention to that big picture and make sure we act in accordance to our strategy.

**BP:** Which role do you enjoy the most?

**Veronica:** I think they're mutually necessary and they're both very interesting. The challenge is that the strategic work never comes to you the way that an operational question does. You have to consciously make time and room for it, because otherwise it won't be done and you'll lose track.

**BP:** What will you do five years from now?

**Veronica:** I will do pretty much the same, but with four more site managers!



**BIO**  
**Name:** Veronica Sikström  
**Born:** 1973  
**Lives in:** Stockholm  
**Profession:** Co-Founder & OM of Klättercentret  
**Education:** University - Economi and IT  
**Sponsors:** My dear husband!



Photo: Sytse van Slooten

**Björn Pohl** was first introduced to climbing in January 1990 in Chamonix. In 1991, he learned to ice climb. Since then, his scale of climbing has slowly decreased. For the last ten years or so, he's only been bouldering, almost exclusively indoors.

Björn studied Financial Economy at University, though he never really worked in that field, and later moved into Communication instead. In 1997, he started KLAAN News, an email newsletter focusing on bouldering and sport climbing. From 2000 to 2008, he reported international news for the platform 8a.nu. He ran The LowDown blog from 2008 to 2010. Since 2010, he has been writing for UK Climbing and has launched The Ledge Podcast, interviewing legends like Adam Ondra, Chris Sharma, Jerry Moffatt, Alex Honnold, and Ben Moon, to name a few. Lately, he has been focusing more and more on photography.

At Klättercentret Stockholm, Björn works in marketing, events, and international partnerships. Among his most notable creations are the concepts for La Sportiva Legends Only and the Black Diamond Project.



## ILLUSION HOLDS AND VOLUMES

Illusion brand consists of polyester resin holds and polyester resin - fiberglass volumes. Most of the volumes are available in a dual texture version.



### CONE RANGE

1. The geometrically cone-shaped volume with a diameter of 116 cm and a height 18 cm is cut into pieces to create different combinations with an interesting dual texture distribution on the volumes.

2. A set consists of 9 cones with a diameter of 60 cm and a height of 15/20/30 cm and a differently positioned tip of the cone.

All cone range volumes are available in a textured or dual texture version.



### ILLUSION RANGE

The basic range consists of a set of 12 volumes for routesetting of medium and hard routes and is available only in a textured version.

Volumes dimensions:  
 Length: From 75 - 100 cm  
 Width: From 25 - 60 cm  
 Height: From 11 - 25 cm



### IZOHYPSE RANGE

This collection consists of both, holds and volumes: nine sets of PE resin holds from XS-XL size and six GRP volumes with dimensions of 90/65/30 cm of slopy, but mostly positively shaped volumes, all available in a dual texture or just textured version.

The Climbing Hangar - more than a climbing gym!  
„Culture is always changing and new things are appearing.“  
Photo: Dan Bentley



TEXT & INTERVIEW: MARIA HILBER

# GED MACDOMHNAILL

## THE SMART APPROACH TO MOTIVATION FOR CLIMBING

*“I’ve never been a techy or really even liked equipment, but when I used Strava to train for my first ultra-marathon, despite already loving running, I was blown away by how it transformed the running experience into even more fun and made me a much better runner. I was converted totally and knew climbing desperately needed something like this.”*

### BIO

**Name:** Ged MacDomhnaill

**Born:** 1981

**Lives in:** Liverpool

**Profession:** Founder & CEO, The Climbing Hangar

**Education:** BaHons Journalism, PGCE Secondary Education

**Sponsors:** My dog Bella fully endorses me...

Photo: Dan Bentley



*Ged MacDomhnaill Climbing Hangar founder and CEO, previously a teacher and a chef. Closed his business and left teaching in order to do more climbing.*

*“I’m not very good, but I totally love it and I love its people, their passion for life and the places climbing takes you. Yosemite is my favourite place to climb if I want to push it, or simul climbing in Tuolumne with my fiancé Steph if I want to have the most fun and an ‘oh my god, isn’t everything amazing’ type of day!”*

*My vision for The Climbing Hangar is to create a place where everybody feels welcomed and we use climbing to help people feel great. Where people take their climbing is up to them, our job is to make it possible and fun.”*

I reckon everyone is basically the same; they are looking to progress, enjoy the process, meet new people, feel part of something exciting, and all of this should help them feel good.

**MH: Making progress is very central to climbing. What is your concept of progress and failure, and what does that have to do with motivation?**

**Ged:** I think we are miserable at understanding progress/failure by reducing them to the crude binary of success/failure. I think our conception of success and failure as opposites instead of points on a spectrum reflects our society more broadly, one where unmeasured exploration is eclipsed by a need to validate our efforts with something quantitative.

**“ALL CLIMBERS CAN BENEFIT FROM TOOLS TO INTERPRET THEIR CLIMBING BETTER.”**

In doing so we lose both the language and the patience to appreciate the continuous forms of progress that do not show up as ascents. I rarely hear anyone talk about focusing on being smooth or graceful besides Shauna Coxsey, who visits the Climbing Hangar Liverpool regularly. In fact, one of Shauna’s old climbing mates, Tom Williams, has the most beautiful climbing style, and while being incredibly strong, he never fights a problem. “If it feels wrong, I just drop off and climb it better”, he tells me. For Tom, smoothness is more important than a quantifiable flash and I am convinced we need more measures like this in our climbing.

If there are more ways to understand progress, then motivation will be in better supply, as it feeds off progress.

Plateaus are a great example of this. Do plateaus signify that you are stagnating as a climber in every respect? Probably not. It doesn’t stand to reason that every aspect of your development hits the wall all at once, but this is what it feels like. Being able to focus on what is still progressing would be very useful in staying psyched.

We use a wide range of metrics to understand our business. Even in difficult trading circumstances, like this year’s mega summer, which saw less entries, there is lots of good news. Looking at different aspects shows us that there can still be progress even when we miss targets. Climbing should be the same.

**MH: You began experimenting with technology at an early point when almost no apps for climbing existed. How did your first ideas evolve?**

**Ged:** My first ideas evolved during coaching adults and becoming aware of how black and white their assessment of their performance was and how limiting this way of thinking can be. So I got very interested in considering ways to change behaviours to increase fun and in turn motivation and performance. It was around this time when I started using Strava to learn to run slower for an ultra-marathon I was planning to do.

Despite being a passionate runner already, I found Strava’s simple way of finding positive mini-performances in almost every run transforma-

tive. I started running more, playing games when I ran, doing segments, varying my pace across terrain, and loads more. Runs were no longer a simple long/short or fast/easy. I realised we needed this in climbing, but the challenge in measuring and standardising for comparison was much more complex. To explore this, I created a joint venture with a tech firm in Liverpool who had recently used The Climbing Hangar and Shauna Coxsey in a VR project for SXSW. We figured that the hardware element was going to be the main hurdle, as I had already started mapping out the UX in the centres and developing measurement metrics focused around the 1 or 2 times per week climber.

The first ideas were focused around simple graphics that illustrated different ways of measuring your session, average grade, climbs/hour, rest:climb ratio, and more, to capture the multiple layers that make a session, but with simple visuals. This started to evolve into a UX-driven app that we called ‘Vertick’, and a hardware platform

for wearable tech along with a RFID-enabled starting label to make the recording of climbing as frictionless as the app. Then Vertical-Life came along and I saw how good it was and thought, “I don’t want to compete with that”!

**MH: What kind of digital tools do you think are useful for you as a gym manager? What kind of tools do climbers benefit from?**

**Ged:** Gym managers need information on customers regarding what they do when they are not buying stuff. Football and what people are buying tell you little about what they enjoy in the centre.

What areas are most popular? Does customer behaviour match customer feedback? Can you do things in the centre that actually influence how they move around the centre to further your knowledge of gym design and layout?

Setters obviously need feedback that is immediate and honest. The feedback loop in setting is so poor and generally ignores the silent majority who don’t leave feedback – which is mad, really, as they are the largest group of users. I used to be a chef and am used to working both creatively and with full accountability for the success of my dishes. If an item on the menu doesn’t sell, it gets cancelled, and if this happens a lot to dishes you design, you get cancelled! Being creative doesn’t mean you are not accountable for your work.

All climbers can benefit from tools to interpret their climbing better. It is such a skill-based sport; skill often develops in non-linear and difficult-to-feel ways. People who climb a lot (more than 2 times per week) are typically paying a great deal of attention to training, but often put an excessive focus on arm and finger strength. This means they miss more subtle clues of improvement. People that climb regularly but less (1-2 times per week), on the other hand, need an easy-to-use scaffold to see progression, even when they are not necessarily looking for it. Positive feedback can always do some good. They need a way to discover their own progression that isn’t necessarily from a training plan, and without comparing themselves to peers.

**MH:** Climbers want to improve, but a lot of effort is required to achieve this. How can technology serve to support climbers in their training routine?

**Ged:** Technology is the big win in plugging the motivation gap here. On the hard days, all your effort should be for the session – not absorbed by planning. I think the problem is the same for both dedicated climbers who are training and those “regular” climbers who I think should be playing to make progress. For climbers and coaches, the technology can see the gains you might not see. This is powerful motivation when you know the gains are there and the program is working. Everyone benefits from knowing things are working!

Likewise, the ordinary climber needs to know they are getting better when they are not moving through the grade or they are “failing” on a problem they have been working. This kind of progress is, as above, often invisible or not the conventional indicator of progress (getting higher, completing a problem, etc.). My experience with Strava was fundamental to understanding how important feedback can be in creating new surges of motivation, whether you’re looking for feedback or not.

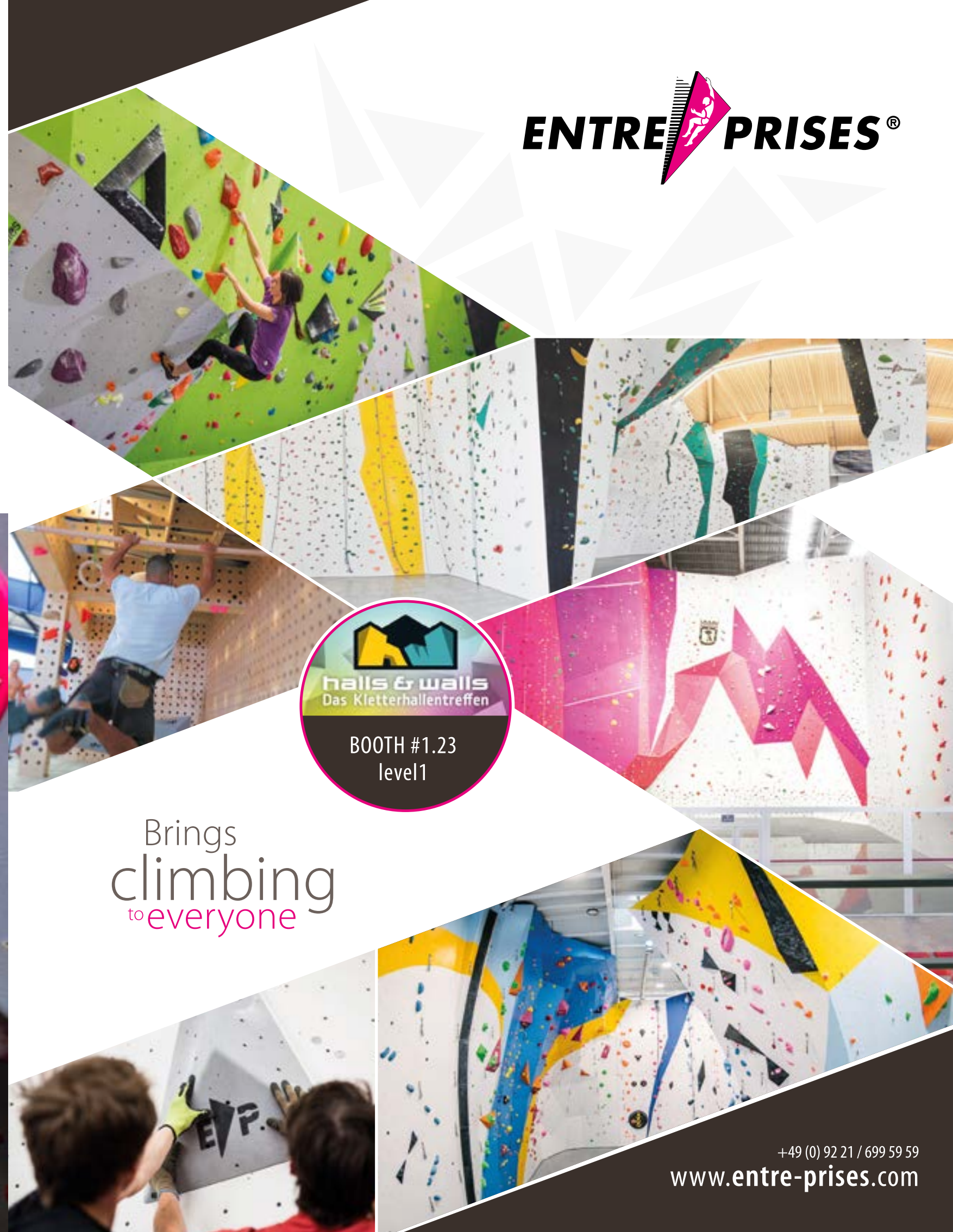
**MH:** You’ve adopted Vertical-Life as a management tool and for involving climbers even more with the gym. What benefits and opportunities do you expect from it?

**Ged:** Firstly, I want to give my facility teams – both general managers and route setters – more information about what is going on in their facility. I am pushing hard to get my teams to make data-driven decisions and reduce the amount of guesswork we do. I’m not trying to get rid of intuition. I think the intuition comes in interpreting and testing hypotheses that come out of analysing the data, and this improves the thinking of the team as a whole.


For climbers, I expect that Vertical-Life will help open up the facility to them in new ways. Getting the chance to provide feedback and participate in what’s going on in the setting, in score cards for comps, in training programs designed around their centre – Vertical-Life will add so many extra layers to how people see they can interact with their centre.

All of this will mean we can have our finger on the pulse of what people are – or are not – enjoying in our facilities, and this keeps us responsive to a program of continuous improvement. How can having more and better information fail to bring benefits to everyone?

Shauna Coxsey, The Climbing Hangar Plymouth  
Photo: Rick Guest



Brings  
climbing  
to everyone



◆ *As many articles have touched on in this magazine, there is still rapid growth and continuous development in the sport of climbing. The current breakneck speed of industry growth has not allowed climbing gear manufacturers and gym owners to formulate a clear image of who climbers are and what preferences they have. For this reason, we took the occasion to develop a climbing questionnaire in order to better understand the behaviour and characteristics of climbers.*

We tried to reach a diverse pool of climbers in order to obtain the most accurate results, and to best represent the different climbing tendencies across the world. Vertical-Life and 8a.nu users were all invited to take part in our survey. Our industry partners, such as climbing gyms, outdoor brands, tourist and climbing associations also asked their clients to fill out the survey.

The results of the survey are currently being evaluated further, and as such, we can only present the preliminary outcome of the following statistics. Though the findings already appear to reveal some significant insight, we don't want to make any concrete assessments or formulate definitive conclusions for the operation of climbing gyms. Rather, the data we've presented should be a stimulus to draw one's own conclusions, open discussions, and drive future developments.

## ***GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS: INSIGHTS, STATISTICS, AND MORE***

TEXT: MELISSA RUDICK, CODY ROTH, CHRISTIAN POPIEN

STATISTICS & DIAGRAMS: THOMAS NIEDERKOFER, GEORGE NADER, RICCARDO ZECCHINI

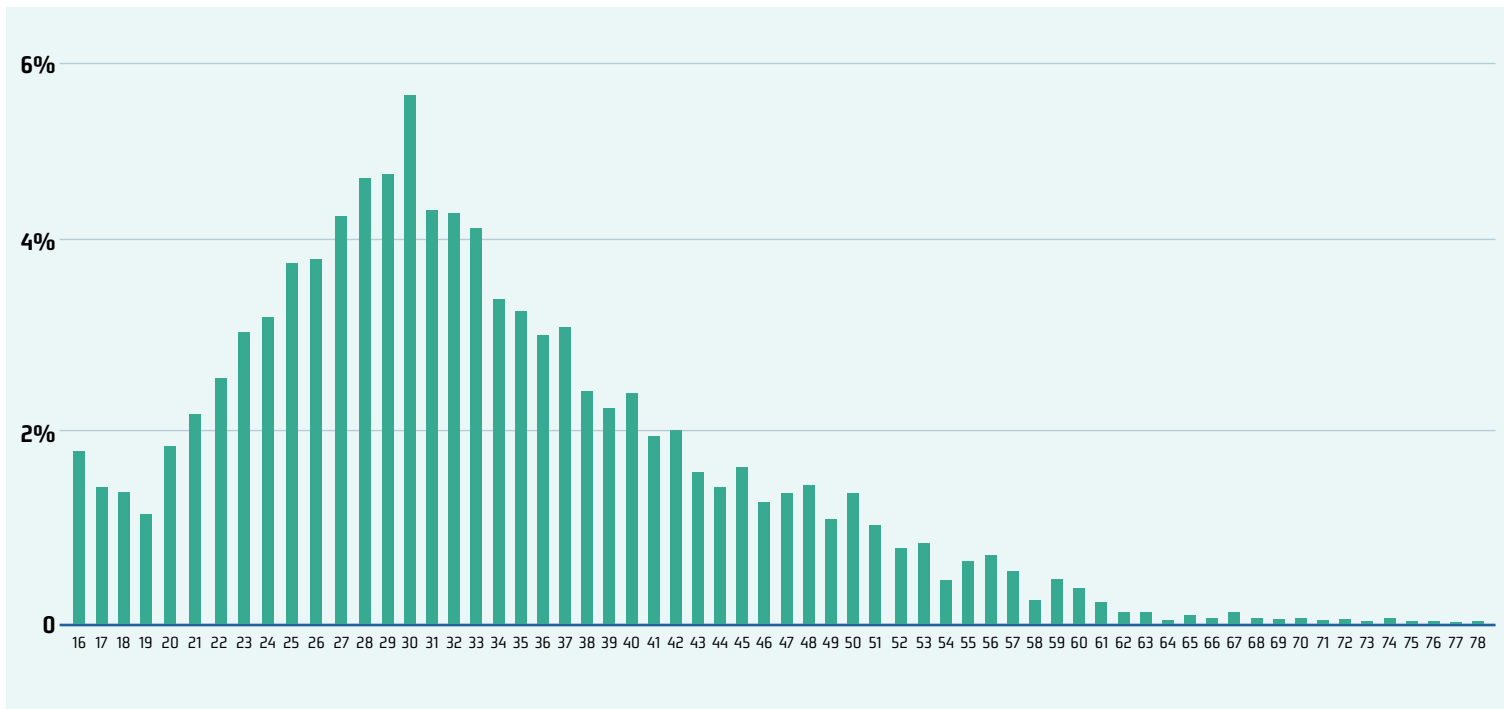
**Participants - an overview of climbing gym customers**

The questionnaire had 6,164 responses from 71 different countries (mostly based in Germany, Italy and the United States of America).

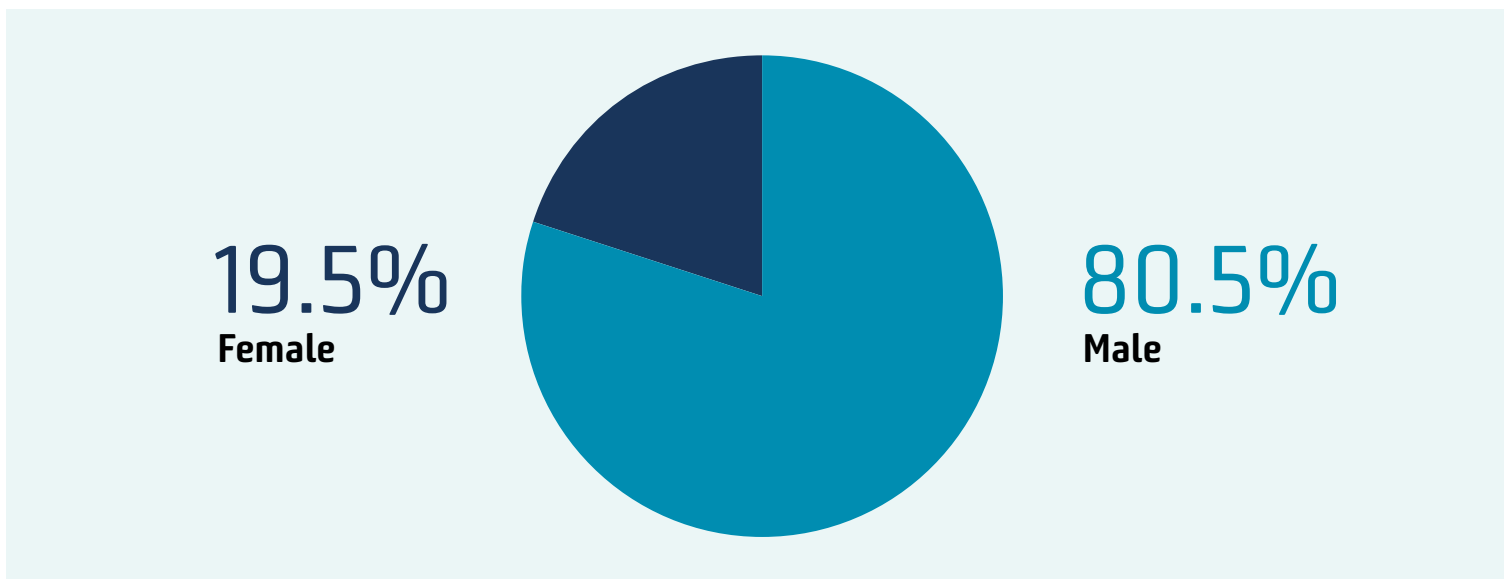
In order to better classify the results of the survey and to draw conclusions for climbing gym owners and operators, it was first necessary to know more about the demographics of the participants (also known as customers). We also looked into how customers gain access to the

sport, which entry passes they buy, and what their main motivation is for climbing. The objective was to present additional information about climbing gym visitors to determine target groups for future offerings with the initial results. For the most accurate survey results, we tried to distinguish between frequent and occasional climbers. Frequent climbers are those who climb at least once a week, whereas occasional climbers climb at most a couple of times each month.

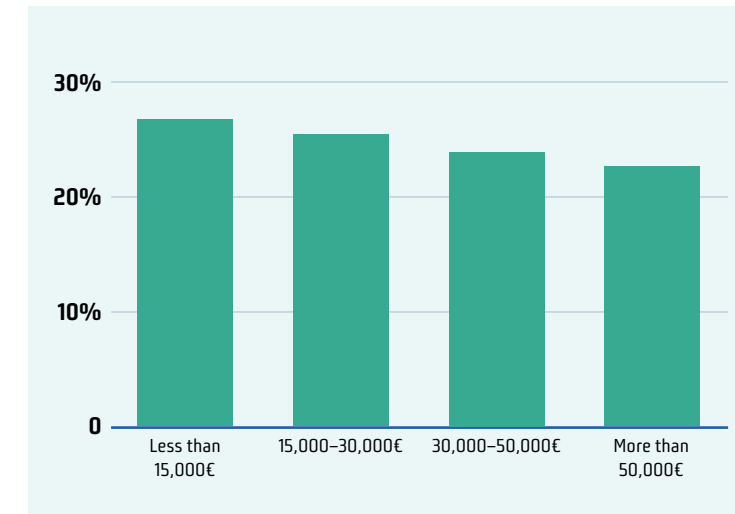
**WHAT IS YOUR AGE?**



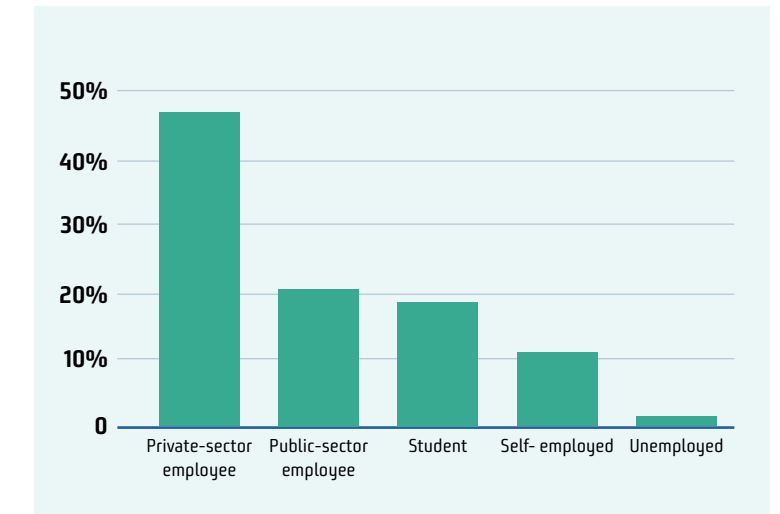
**WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?**



**WHAT IS YOUR AVERAGE YEARLY INCOME?**



**WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATIONAL STATUS?**

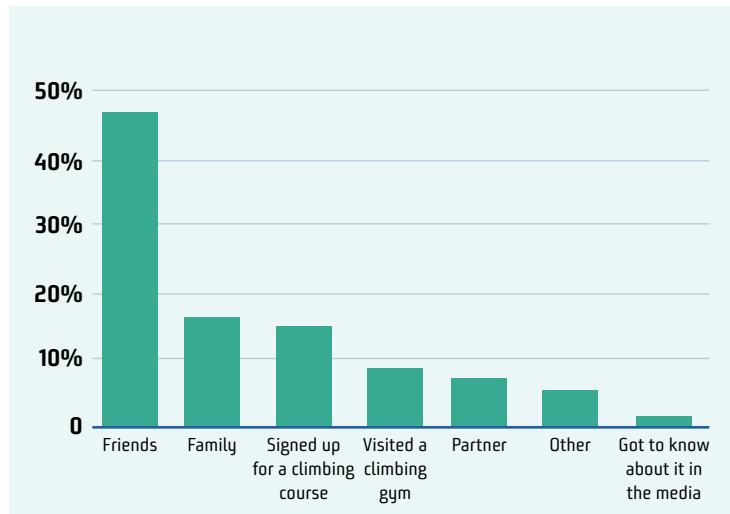


**PARTICIPANTS WERE AN AVERAGE OF 33 YEARS OLD, AROUND 80% WERE MALE AND 20% WERE FEMALE, AND HAD AN AVERAGE INCOME OF €15,000 TO €30,000.**



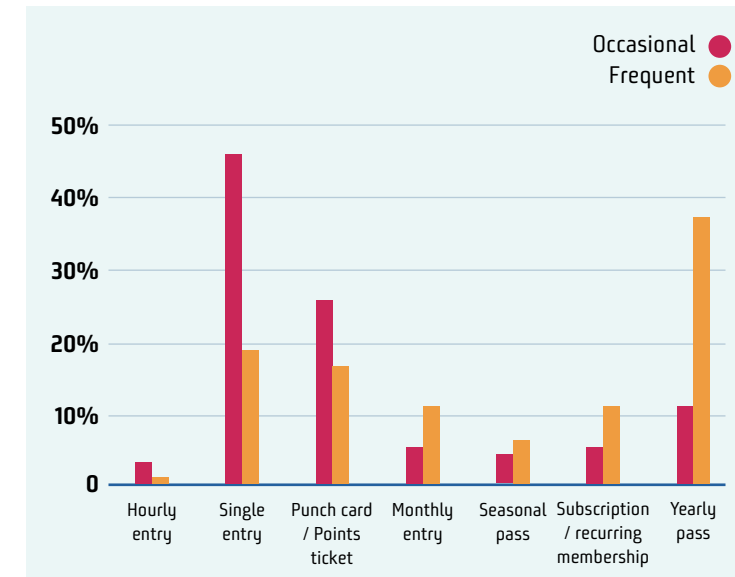
Photo: Arno Dejaco / Vertical-Life

### HOW DID YOU GET INTO CLIMBING?

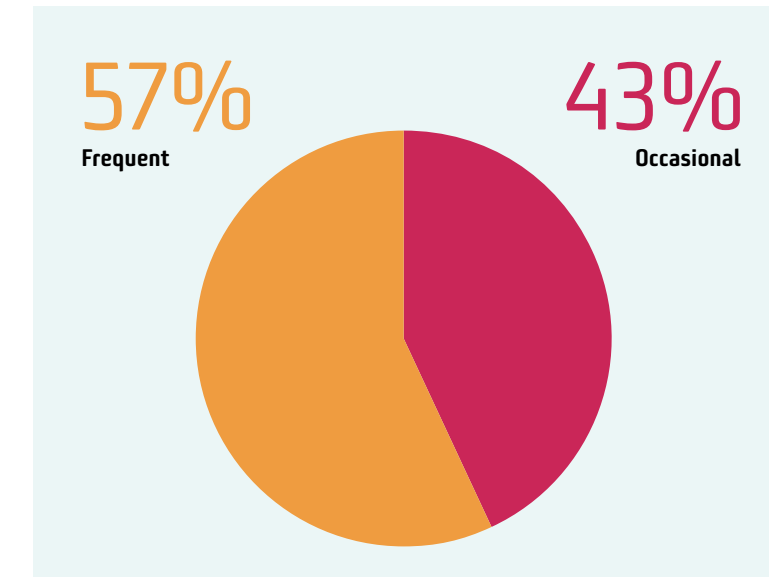


The revelation that 46% of climbing gym visitors have access to the sport via friends and their social network could have a considerable influence on the marketing and communication strategy of climbing gyms. Visitors and customers can be considered important influencers/multipliers in regards to marketing measures. A strong understanding of a climbing gym's customer base not only leads to customer loyalty, it invariably promotes customer growth.

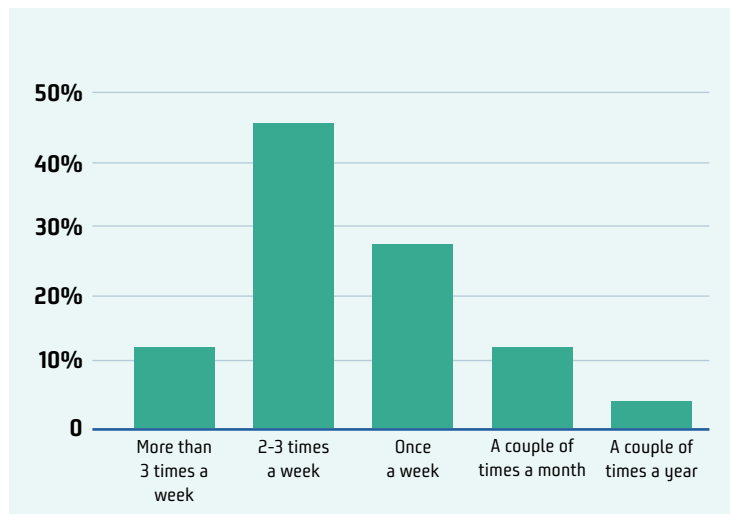
### WHAT TYPES OF PASSES DO CLIMBERS USE?



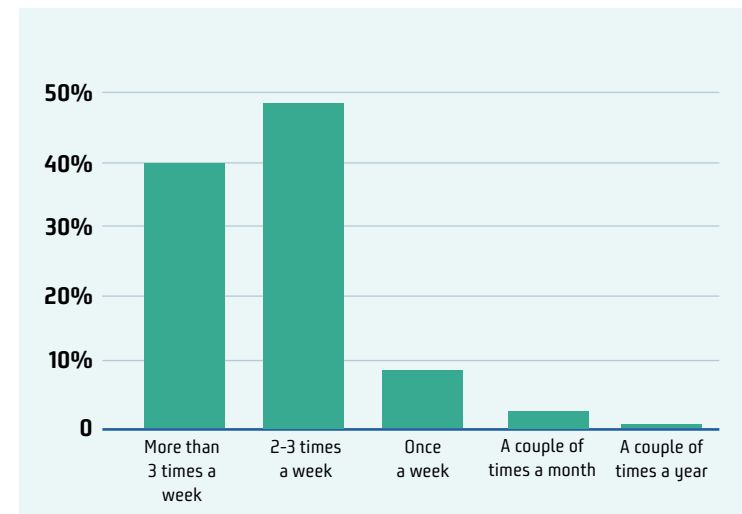
### DO YOU VISIT MORE THAN ONE CLIMBING GYM REGULARLY?



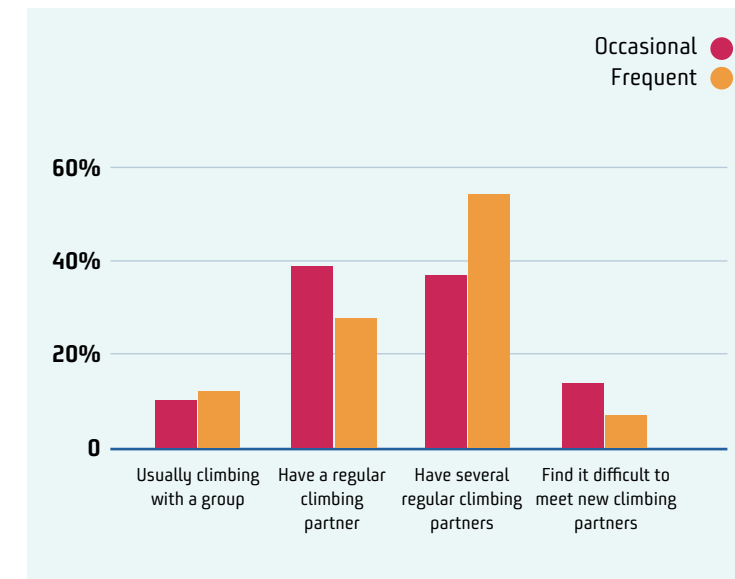
### HOW OFTEN DO CLIMBERS CLIMB?



### HOW OFTEN WOULD CLIMBERS LIKE TO CLIMB?



### CLIMBING PARTNER



In comparison to climbing gyms, bouldering gyms seem to have higher growth rates of new customers at the moment. One possible reason for this may be the fact that a climbing partner is typically required for rope climbing. This dependency on a partner can be seen as a reason why customers do not come climbing as often as they would like. Climbing gym operators should then consider which tools and offerings they'll need to implement in order to make climbing more accessible and less complicated for individual climbers. In the diagram just to the left, we have shown what information the participants shared about their climbing partners.

**97% OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO CLIMB ONCE A WEEK OR MORE.**

What measures can climbing gyms take to make it easier for customers to climb as much as they'd like? Can the entry hurdles be lowered by other purchase options and would customers come more often with short-term entry options that have not been offered previously?

In the top-right diagram, we give an overview of which entry passes visitors are currently buying. More than 55% of the frequent climbers stated that they visit more than one climbing gym regularly.

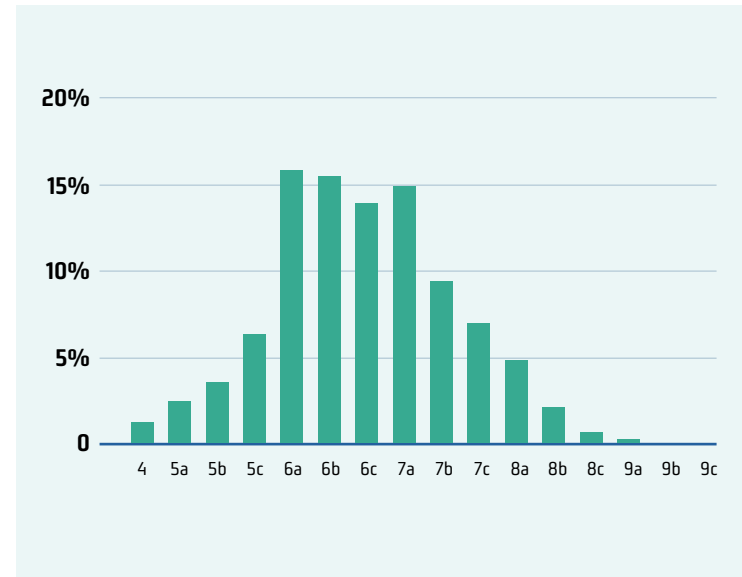


Photo: Arno Dejaco / Vertical-Life

## Climbing Behaviour & Preferences

Now that we have gained a better overview of climbing gym customers, we would like to present our initial findings below. These results have provided some insight into the behaviour and preferences of our customers, and can perhaps have an influence on how gyms present climbing and route setting moving forward.

### WHAT IS YOUR REDPOINT CLIMBING GRADE?

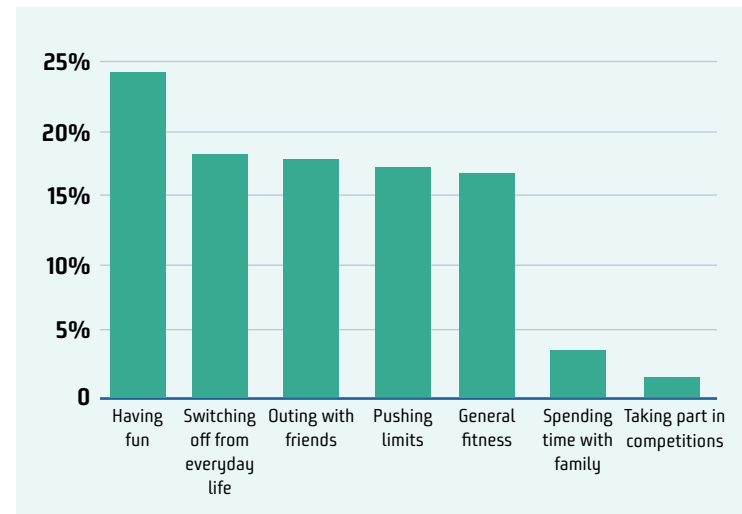


A closer look at the "redpoint grades" suggests that the distribution and number of routes in gyms should be equal or similar.



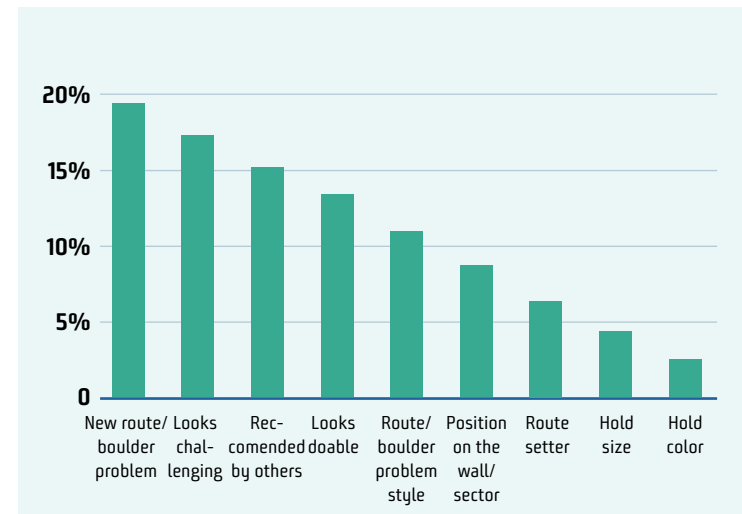
Photo: Arno Dejaco / Vertical-Life

### WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR GOING CLIMBING?



When we look at the two diagrams above, we can clearly see that, at least in this demographic, fun overrides all other factors in climbing motivation. Additionally, plenty of new routes and boulders on offer is key in keeping climbers interested. New routes should be easy for climbers to spot, which can be accomplished with appropriate signage and technical tools. The survey initially shows that participants don't

### CRITERIA THAT INFLUENCES A CLIMBER TO TRY A NEW ROUTE/BOULDER FOR THE FIRST TIME?



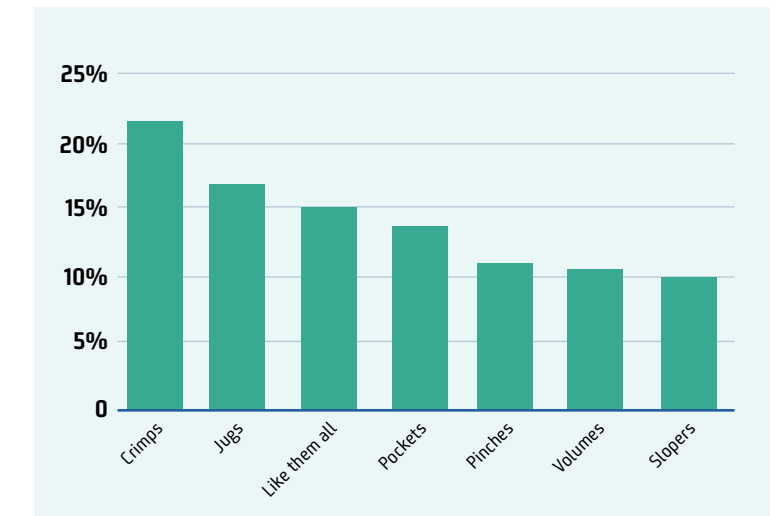
attach great importance to hold color or size. In slight contradiction to this result, they did express that they were drawn to challenging-looking routes and problems with aesthetically-pleasing holds and volumes, often referred to in the industry as "eye-catchers". These routes seem to have their intended effect of attracting climbers.

### WHAT ARE CLIMBERS' PREFERRED ROUTE OR BOULDER STYLE?



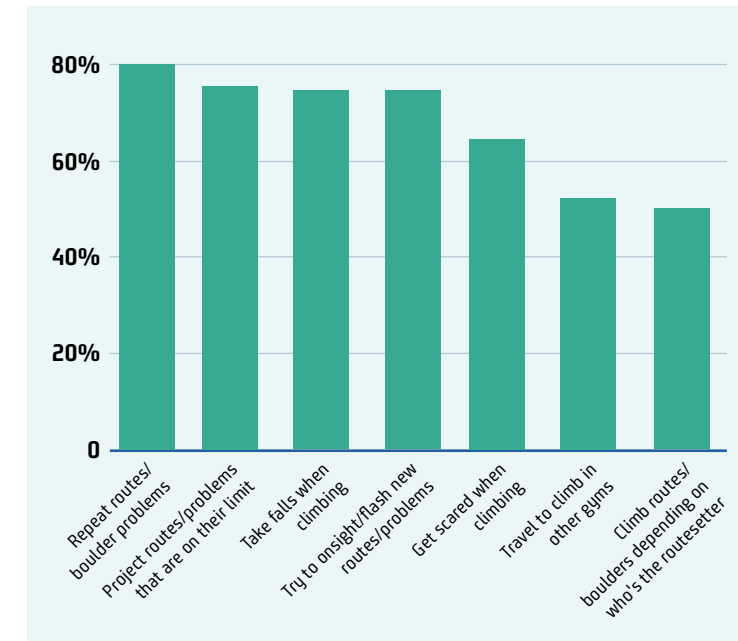
Upon reviewing the survey question results regarding climbing styles and holds, there are no stand-out preferences. However, it would appear that most participants prefer a more classic, outdoor-inspired

### WHAT ARE CLIMBERS' PREFERRED CLIMBING HOLDS?

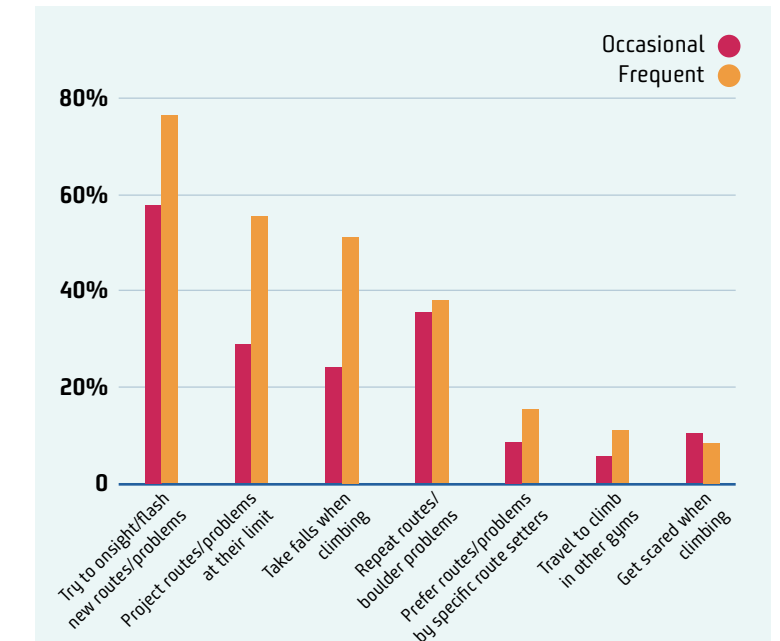


style of climbing, on vertical and gently-overhanging terrain with positive holds. Slab and dynamic climbing, and climbs with slopers tend to be less popular.

### CLIMBERS' BEHAVIOUR

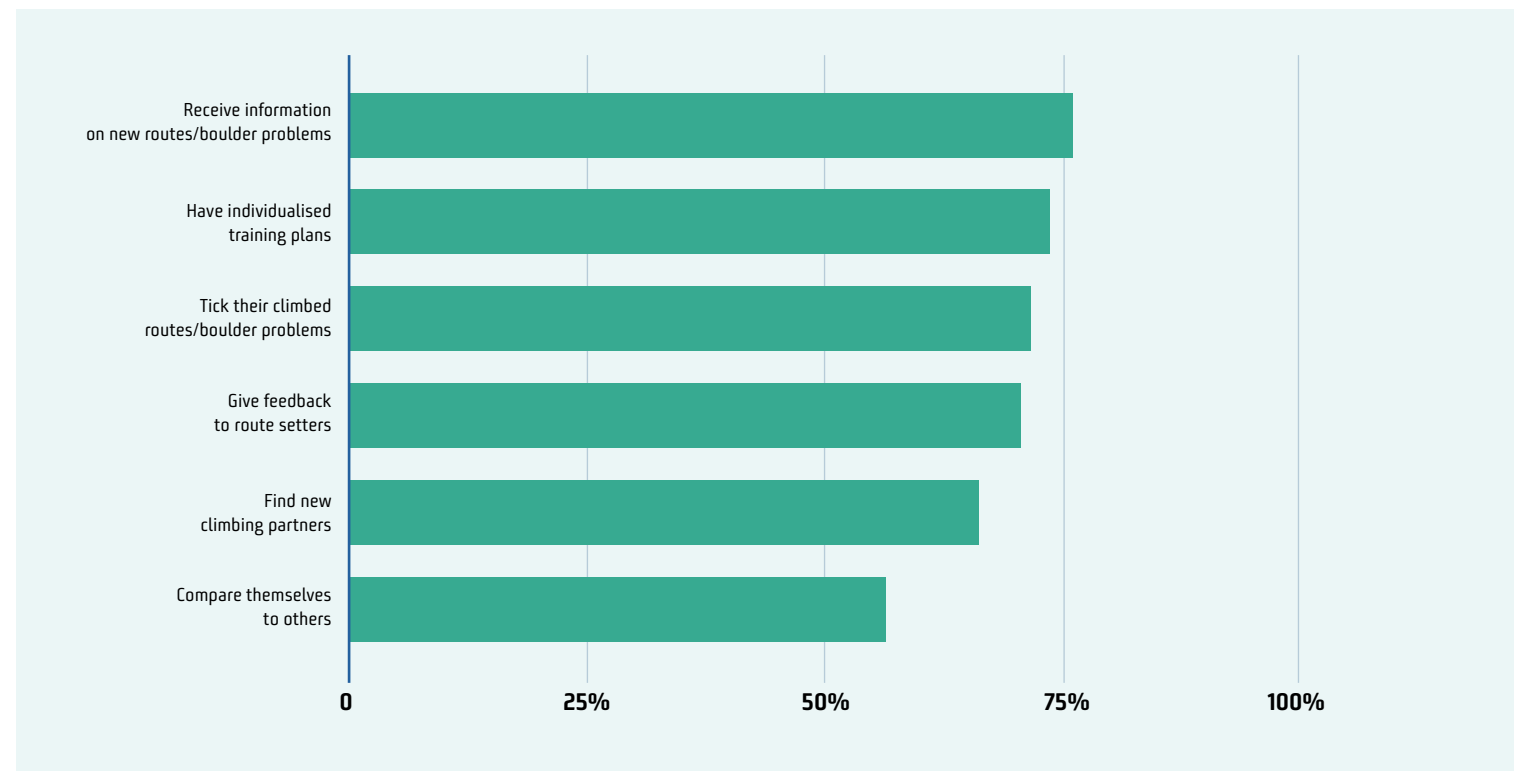


As with climbing style and hold preferences, no particular behaviour pattern stands out significantly, other than the nearly 80% of participants that stated they like to repeat routes. The topic of climbing behaviour becomes more interesting when we distinguish between "frequent and occasional climbers", as shown in the above diagram.



As one would expect, frequent climbers have the predicted behaviour of being more willing to plan their routes before climbing, and are more willing to fall and climb at their limit, in comparison to occasional climbers, which likely include a significant number of beginner climbers.

## LEVEL OF INTEREST IN USING DIGITAL TOOLS



As a vast number of digital solutions and tools find their way into the climbing industry, we wanted participants to let us know which tools they were most interested in using. The majority said they'd like to be notified about new routes in the gym, and there was high interest

in documenting performance and tracking climbed routes. Individual training plans also drew strong interest, along with the ability to give feedback to, and have a dialogue with the route setting team.

### Conclusion

Although we have only evaluated a small part of the survey so far, we can already summarize some findings based on the presented diagrams. The survey's gender ratio was 80% men to 20% women. The average climber is 33 years old and has an average annual income between 15,000 - 30,000€. Over 46% of participants said they were introduced to climbing through friends, which could have significant influence on climbing gyms' marketing strategy going forward.

As far as gym admission is concerned, the number of customers buying daily and annual passes seems to be about equal. Since more than 97% of those surveyed stated that they'd like to climb more often, this shows a need in the future for creating more attractive offers for customers. The main motivation of the average customer is to have fun, to find new challenges, and to try new routes. Visitors to climbing gyms generally have one or more regular climbing partners, and visit more than one gym on a regular basis. This is especially true for frequent climbers, and may be attributed to a climber's desire to continuously try new routes.

There were no outstanding findings regarding preferred climbing styles, climbing holds, and climbing behaviour. The results of the survey suggest that customers often want a climbing experience in the gym to be similar to that found on real rock. Occasional and beginner climbers are less likely to plan sequences and try routes repeatedly, and are less willing to fall.

Participants as a whole are interested in new technical solutions and tools that enable them to get information about new routes, give feedback to route setters, track their own performance, and create training plans.

Evaluation of the feedback from these 6,000+ participants will be further analysed in the near future to offer a more complete picture of climbing gym visitors and their interests. We would like to thank all participants of the survey, as well as the gyms, associations, and institutions that supported us along the way.

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WIR GRATULIEREN ZUM GEWINN  
DER DEUTSCHEN MEISTERSCHAFT  
BOULDERN 2018.



YANNICK FLOHÉ LOWA CLIMBING Team

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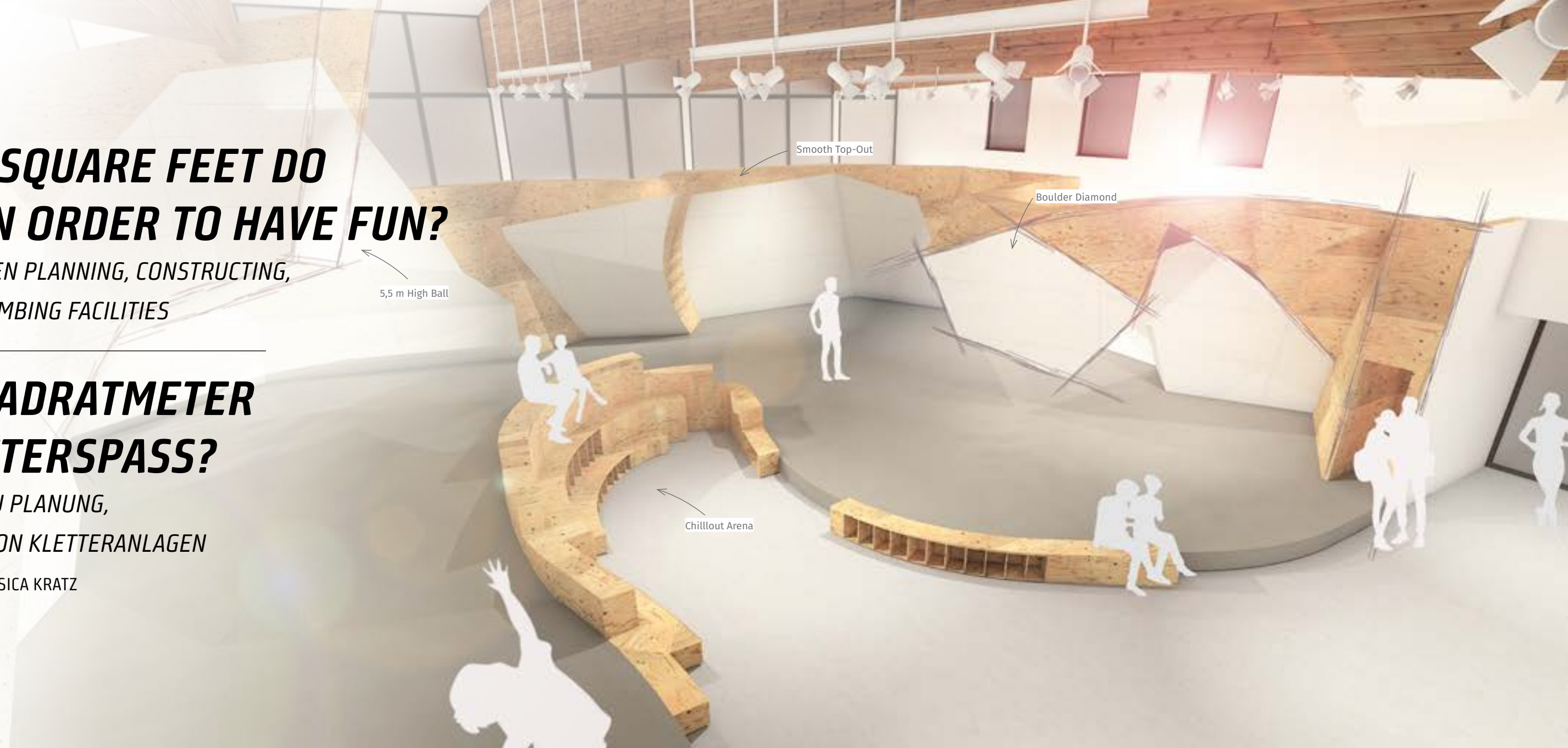
# HOW MANY SQUARE FEET DO YOU NEED IN ORDER TO HAVE FUN?

LATERAL THINKING WHEN PLANNING, CONSTRUCTING, AND REFURBISHING CLIMBING FACILITIES

# WIEVIEL QUADRATMETER WIEGT KLETTERSPASS?

SCHRÄGE GEDANKEN ZU PLANUNG, BAU UND SANIERUNG VON KLETTERANLAGEN

TEXT: THOMAS REICHHART & JESSICA KRATZ



◆ *Cars being sold by weight? That's a highly unlikely scenario! How about a climbing wall being sold by the square foot? That seems to make a lot more sense. Or does it? Do visitors to a climbing gym choose which route to climb based on its size? Do they mainly visit a gym to climb or simply to have fun with some friends?*

*Designing a climbing or bouldering gym requires a great deal of experience and it is important to ask the right questions. This article provides readers with some hints and tips from real-life examples.*

## When is it worth calling on a specialist planner?

“The best way to plan for an adventure is not to plan at all” – this may well be true for a spot of fun on the rock and in the mountains. However, for larger undertakings, it is clear that failing to plan is planning to fail. Climbing gyms are huge endeavors and – although they luckily don't harbor any death zones – they still come with significant risks. Like good mountain guides, specialist planners can help to make projects like this a success. As a rule of thumb, investing in a professional planning service for projects greater than 5,400 square feet (500 square meters) quickly pays off thanks to the synergies created with other trades and planners.

◆ *Werden Autos in „Kilogramm“ gekauft? Wohl nicht. Eine Kletterwand in „Euro pro Quadratmeter“ schon eher. Oder? Klettern die Besucher einer Kletteranlage die Routen wegen deren Fläche? Kommen sie hauptsächlich zum Klettern, oder wollen viele vielleicht einfach nur eine gute Zeit mit Freunden verbringen?*

*Die Konzeption von Kletter- und Boulderhallen bedarf viel Erfahrung. Dabei ist es wichtig die richtigen Fragen zu stellen. Der nachfolgende Artikel gibt hierzu Anregungen aus der Praxis.*

## Ab wann lohnt sich ein Fachplaner?

„Die beste Art ein Abenteuer zu planen ist, es nicht zu planen“ – für kleinere Abenteuer am Fels und Berg mag das stimmen. Für größere Unternehmungen ist jedem klar, dass keine oder schlechte Planung zum Scheitern führen wird. Kletterhallen sind Großprojekte, zum Glück ohne Todeszone, aber doch mit erheblichen Risiken. Fachplaner können wie gute Bergführer dabei helfen, Projekte erfolgreich zu realisieren. Als Faustregel kann gelten: Bei Projekten über 500 Quadratmeter rechnet sich die Investition in eine professionelle Planung rasch durch Synergien mit anderen Gewerken und Planern.

## How can synergies be harnessed?

Developing visions and ideas at the start of a project about how a new climbing wall will look is a fantastic feeling. However, this early development stage is also magical from a planning and financial perspective. The building, building services, climbing walls, operational concept, and route setting should all be designed together at the same time and not worked out one after the other. This enables all aspects of a gym to be perfectly coordinated and for interdisciplinary synergies to be created. What's more, this approach has been repeatedly proven to lower climbing wall costs by up to 20%!

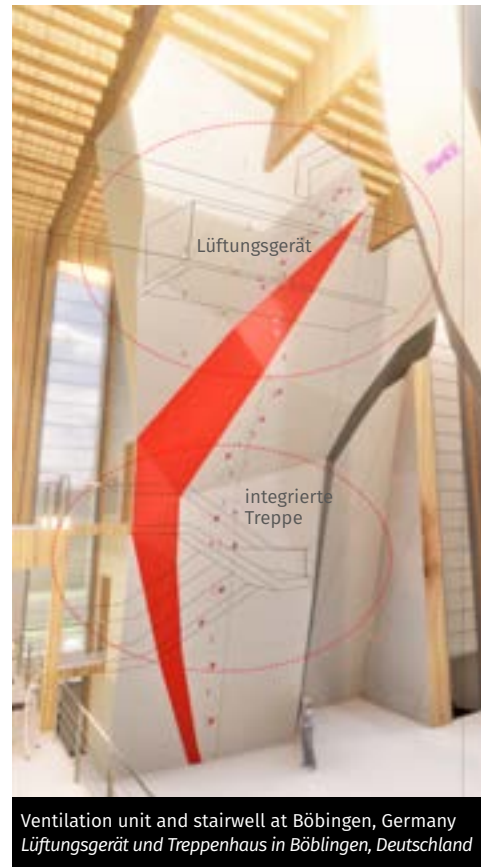
This can be better explained using a real-life example. A ventilation unit alone can take up over 200 square feet (20 square meters) and a stairwell 190 square feet (18 square meters). At the Böblingen climbing gym in Germany, clever planning resulted in both of these constructions being integrated into the free space behind a climbing wall, without the loss of any floor or building area. Had it been necessary to construct extra space or additional rooms in the gym in order to house the ventilation unit and stairwell, the gym would have cost an additional \$85,000-\$130,000 (€75,000-€115,000) to construct (based on an average building cost of \$230-\$350/sq. ft. (€2,000-€3,000/m<sup>2</sup>)).

## Wie können Synergien genutzt werden?

Es sind phantastische Momente, wenn zu Beginn eines Projektes Visionen und Ideen entstehen, wie die neue Kletterwand aussehen wird. Diese frühe Entwicklungsphase ist aber auch aus planerisch-finanzieller Perspektive magisch. Gebäude, Haustechnik, Kletterwände, Betriebskonzept und Routenbau sollten integrativ zeitgleich und nicht nacheinander erarbeitet werden. Dann können alle Bereiche optimal abgestimmt und interdisziplinäre Synergieeffekte genutzt werden. Dadurch lassen sich immer wieder bis zu 20 Prozent der Kosten der Kletterwand einsparen!

Dazu ein Beispiel: Ein Lüftungsgerät nimmt 20 Quadratmeter an Fläche ein, ein Treppenhaus 18 Quadratmeter. Durch geschickte Planung konnte in der Kletterhalle Böblingen beides in das freie Raumvolumen einer Kletterwand integriert werden, ohne dabei Boden- bzw. Gebäudefläche zu verlieren. Hätten für Lüftungsanlage und Treppenhaus extra Flächen oder Räume in der Halle gebaut werden müssen, wären bei einem durchschnittlichen Gebäudepreis von 2000 bis 3000 €/m<sup>2</sup> Kosten von 75.000 bis 115.000 € angefallen.

In another gym, the hold storeroom was built on a mezzanine floor approximately 3 feet (1 meter) above the gym. This, however, was amended in the final plan so that the route setters can work with a trolley, as is the norm, without having to laboriously carry the holds down a staircase. This saves time and makes the gym less expensive to run.



Ventilation unit and stairwell at Böblingen, Germany  
Lüftungsgerät und Treppenhaus in Böblingen, Deutschland

### What attracts climbers to a particular gym?

Possibly the most important guiding principle is to know your target group and what they actually want. Climbing and bouldering have become recreational sports and it is thanks to their enormous diversity in particular that they attract so many people, from children and occasional boulderers to extreme mountaineers and speed climbers. Sometimes, however, the needs of these target groups contradict each other dramatically. For instance, it would be impossible to host children's birthday parties and run effective performance training sessions in the same space.

Due to the differences between the various target groups, the number of specialist climbing facilities is expected to rise significantly. Training centers, family climbing gyms, or bouldering gyms with integrated parkour areas can stand out from the crowd by providing tailored equipment.

It is important to note that meeting a target group's needs entails much more than designing climbing walls and route setting. Climbers still spend the majority of their time with their feet on the ground and want to feel comfortable in the gym. Depending on the type of customers, a pleasant atmosphere, good air quality, carefully thought-out safe distances and access routes, sound-absorbing surfaces, direct access outside, courses, and childcare are essential for making a climbing gym more attractive. Despite this, planners and gym operators often believe that the quality of a gym is determined by the size of its climbing surfaces or the number of holds and volumes. But let's be honest, the size of a climbing gym is not exactly a measure of the amount of fun to be had there!

### What makes a gym successful?

Climbing is in vogue and many climbing and bouldering gyms are performing well due to the growing number of climbers. Having said that, there are several indications that the market will become much more competitive in the future. Climbers have higher and more specific expectations than before. Well-managed gyms with outstanding route setting, elegant walls, and a pleasant atmosphere will likely prevail, while others will probably find it more difficult to attract enough visitors.

Any gyms that manage to use good planning to gain and maintain customers within their target group will find that the initial investment pays off in the form of increased visitor numbers. This gives gym operators more money to play with, enabling them to reinvest in holds, route setting, and new climbing walls. As a result, the gym never stands

In einer anderen Halle wurde das Grifflager in ein Halbgeschoss einen Meter über dem Niveau der Halle eingeplant. In der Gesamtplanung wurde dies korrigiert: Die Routensetzer können nun, wie üblich, mit einem Rollwagen arbeiten und müssen die Griffe nicht mühsam über eine Treppe tragen. Dies spart Zeit und Kosten im Betrieb der Halle.

### Warum kommen Kletterer in eine Halle?

Der vielleicht wichtigste Grundsatz lautet: „Kenne deine Zielgruppe und deren wahre Wünsche“. Klettern und Bouldern ist im Breitensport angekommen und begeistert gerade wegen seiner enormen Vielfalt unzählige Menschen, angefangen bei Kindern über Gelegenheitsboulderer bis hin zu extremen Alpinisten und Speedkletterern. Teilweise widersprechen sich deren Bedürfnisse aber drastisch. Will man Kindergeburtstage anbieten, wird in den gleichen Räumen kein sinnvolles Leistungstraining möglich sein.

Aufgrund der Verschiedenheit dieser Zielgruppen ist eine deutliche Zunahme an spezialisierten Kletteranlagen zu erwarten. Leistungszentren, Familienhallen, Parcours-Boulderhallen werden sich mit zielgruppengerechten Angeboten von anderen Hallen abheben.

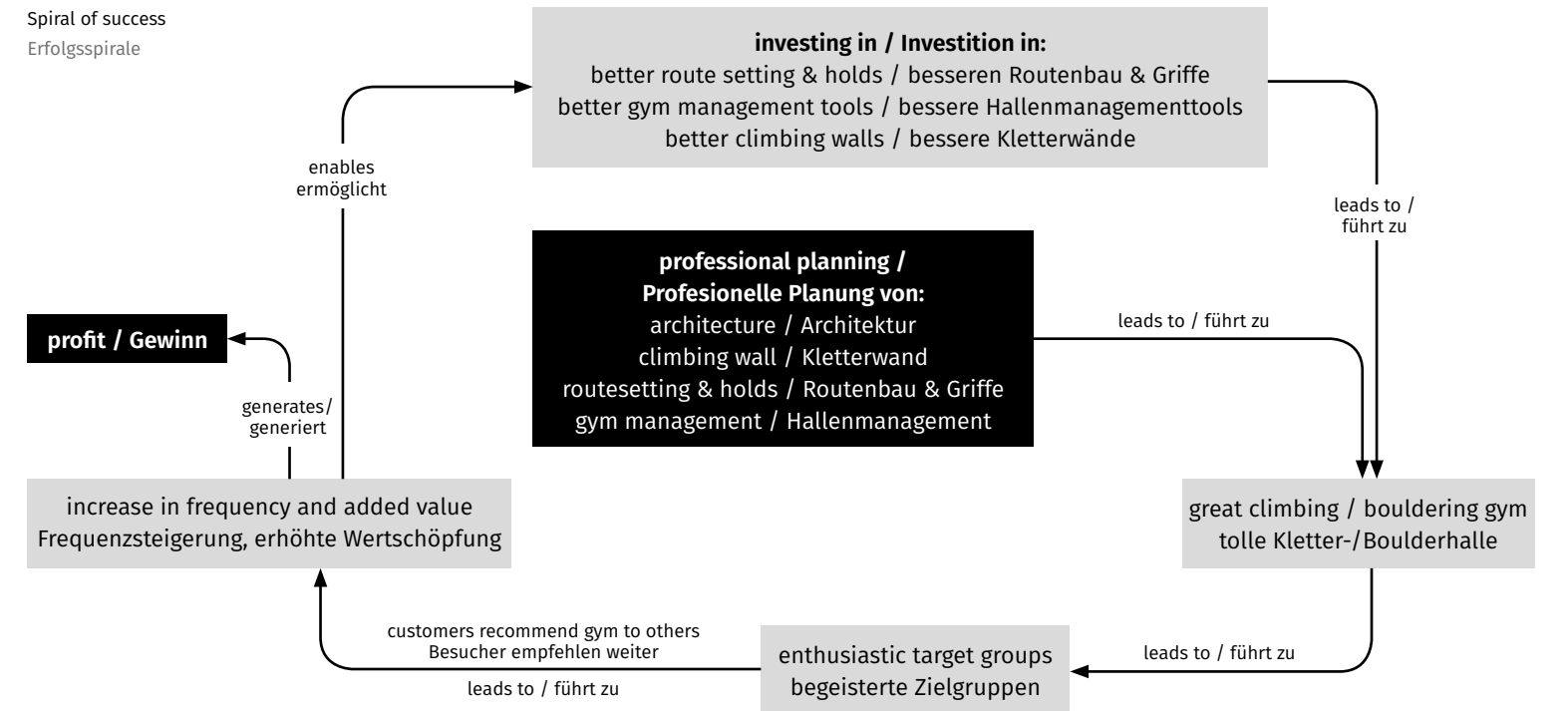
Es ist wichtig zu beachten, dass die Wünsche der Zielgruppen weit über das Kletterwanddesign oder den Routenbau hinaus reichen. Die Kletterer und Boulderer verbringen nach wie vor die meiste Zeit am Boden und wollen sich auch dort wohlfühlen. Eine angenehme Raumatmosphäre, gute Luft, gut gewählte Sicherheitsabstände und Verkehrswege, schalldämpfende Raumakustik, direkter Zugang ins Freie, Kursangebote oder Kinderbetreuung sind je nach Zielgruppe wesentliche Bausteine, um eine Kletterhalle attraktiv zu machen. Trotzdem wird die Qualität einer Halle von den Planern und Hallenbetreibern häufig in Kletterfläche oder anhand der Anzahl von Griffen und Volumen definiert. Aber mal ehrlich: Kletterspaß lässt sich nicht in Quadratmetern messen!

### Was macht eine Halle erfolgreich?

Klettern liegt voll im Trend und viele Kletter- und Boulderhallen funktionieren aufgrund der wachsenden Anzahl von KletterInnen gut. Einiges deutet jedoch darauf hin, dass in Zukunft ein Verdrängungswettbewerb einsetzen wird. Die Ansprüche des Publikums steigen und werden spezifischer. Gut geführte Hallen mit Top-Routenbau, eleganten Wänden und einer angenehmen Raumatmosphäre werden eher Erfolg haben, andere werden es vermutlich schwerer haben, genug Besucher anzulocken.

Wer es schafft, durch gute Planung seine Zielgruppe zu erreichen und zu begeistern, wird die anfängliche Investition in Form einer steigenden Besucherfrequenz vergütet bekommen. Das steigert den finanziellen Spielraum der Hallenbetreiber und ermöglicht es wiederum, in Griffe, Routenbau und neue Kletterwände zu investieren. Das Gesamtangebot in der Halle verbessert sich ständig; die Erfolgsspirale beginnt sich zu drehen und ein positives Wirtschaften der Halle wird dauerhaft möglich.

Spiral of success  
Erfolgsspirale

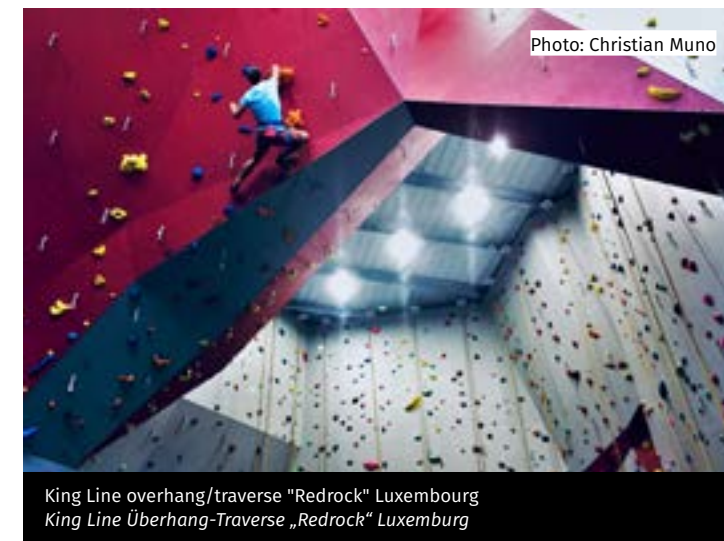


still and keeps improving its facilities. This creates an upward spiral of success and the gym will be able to continue generating positive economic growth.

### Why are 'king lines' important?

In his film "King Lines", Chris Sharma coined a term that stands for spectacular, unforgettable, and highly desirable routes set apart by their course, form, aura, and surroundings. As with rock climbing, climbing gyms can become more unique by turning individual routes into special attractions.

Many route setters are familiar with the 90-degree dihedrals and aretes found in gyms dating back to the 1980s. These angles and transitions don't lend themselves to creative route setting, often resulting in repetitive moves. This is why – and rightly so – there is a trend towards large wall structures that give route setters as much free rein as possible to unleash their creativity. In gyms with around 50 quickdraw lines or more, it is possible to create additional highlights by designing striking king lines comprising overhanging pillar edges, cracks, dihedrals, or huge roofs. Features like these give gyms a distinct character, setting them apart from the competition.



King Line overhang/traverse "Redrock" Luxembourg  
King Line Überhang-Traversal „Redrock“ Luxemburg

### Warum sind King Lines wichtig?

Chris Sharma hat mit dem Film „King Lines“ einen Begriff bekannt gemacht, der für spektakuläre, unvergessliche und begehrenswerte Linien steht, für Routen, die durch ihren Verlauf, ihre Form, Aura und Umgebung aus der Masse herausstechen. Ebenso wie am Fels können Kletterhallen einzigartig werden, indem sie einzelne Routen zu besonderen Attraktionen machen.

Jeder Routensetzer kennt das: 90-Grad-Ecken und Kanten in den mittleren und kleinen Kletterhallen aus den 1980ern erlauben es kaum, beim Routenbau kreativ zu werden und zwingen zu immer denselben Bewegungen. Der Trend geht daher sinnvoller Weise hin zu großen Wandstrukturen, welche maximale Freiheit in der Gestaltung der Klettertouren bieten. In Hallen ab etwa 50 Sicherungslinien bietet es sich an, mit ästhetisch außergewöhnlichen King Lines an überhängenden Pfeilerkanten, Rissen, Verschneidungen, oder gewaltigen Dächern zusätzliche Highlights für die Besucher zu schaffen. Dies gibt der Halle einen unverwechselbaren Charakter und macht sie einzigartig.

### Zusammengefasst

Wenn Gebäudearchitektur, Kletterwanddesign, Routenbau und Hallenmanagement aufeinander abgestimmt sowie gut auf die Zielgruppen ausgerichtet sind, ist die notwendige Basis für eine erfolgreiche Kletterhalle gegeben. Schwächelt eine dieser Säulen, kann dies durch die restlichen kaum kompensiert werden. Daher lohnt sich die Investition

and tailored to the target groups. If one of these ingredients is missing or of poor quality, this can rarely be compensated for by the other elements. This is why it is worth investing in a professional, impartial specialist planning service. By involving experts from all fields at an early stage, steps can be taken to ensure that the building and building services as well as the climbing walls and route setting, which form the centerpiece of any gym, complement one another. This, in turn, saves costs.

In most cases, technical and financial matters are at the forefront of planners' minds. While these factors are undeniably important and need to be addressed, it is just as crucial to ensure that planners never lose sight of the very essence of climbing – the joy of movement, the exhilaration felt when ascending new heights, climbing with friends. This allows the focus to remain on what truly matters: bringing to life the magic of our sport in each and every gym.

in eine professionelle, herstellerunabhängige Fachplanung. Durch frühzeitige Einbindung von Experten aller Fachbereiche können Synergien zwischen Gebäude, Haustechnik und dem „Herzstück“ Kletterwand und Routenbau genutzt werden, wodurch wiederum Kosten eingespart werden.

Zumeist dominieren technische und finanzielle Fragen die Planung von Kletteranlagen. Diese sind wichtig und müssen beantwortet werden. Aber ebenso wichtig ist es, auch die Frage nach der Essenz des Kletterns während des gesamten Projektes immer wieder in den Vordergrund zu rücken: Es geht um den Spaß an der Bewegung, die Freude an der Höhe, das Klettern mit Freunden. So bleibt der Fokus auf das Wesentliche gerichtet – den Zauber unseres Sports in jeder Halle spürbar zu machen.



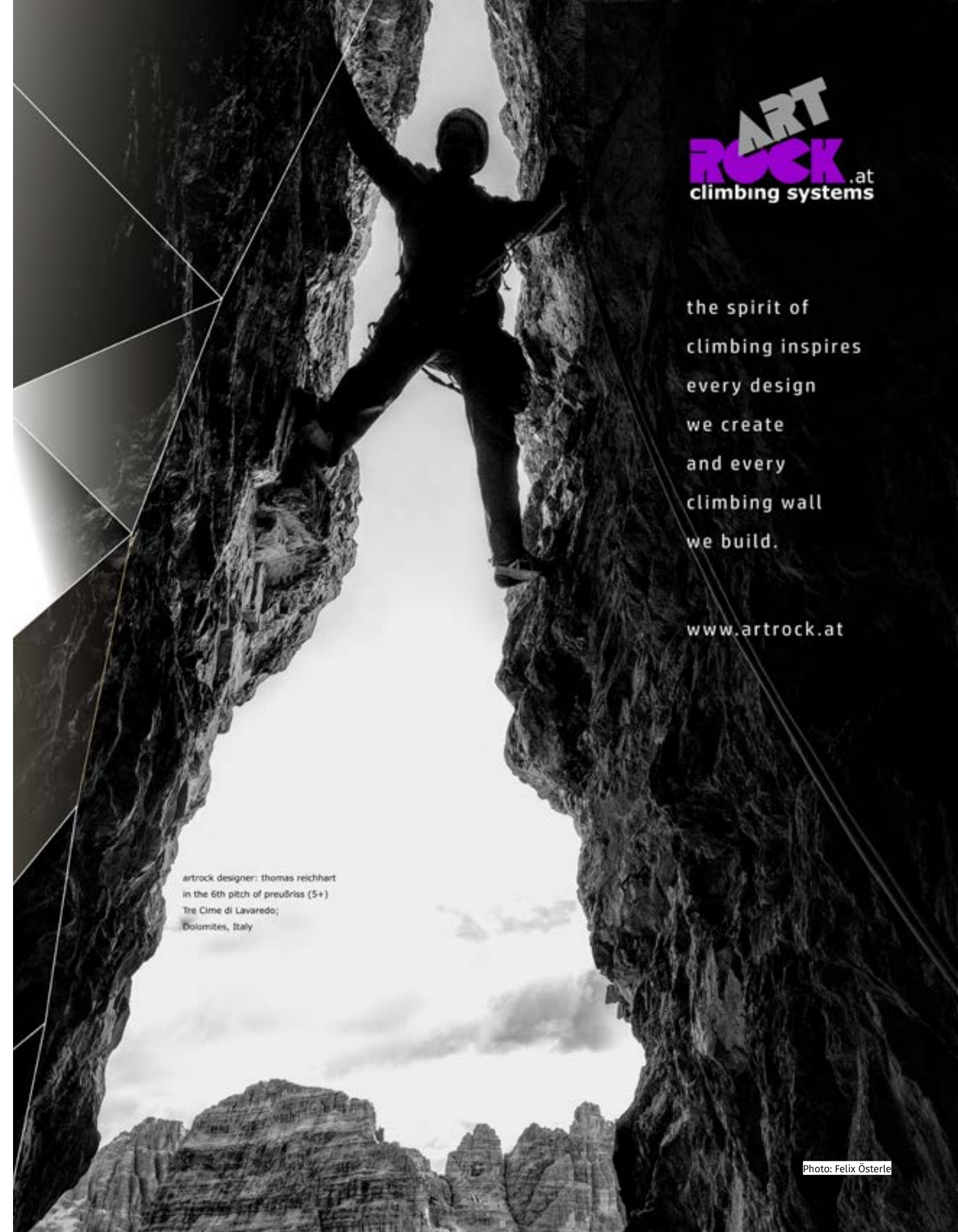
**Thomas Reichhart, Qualified Engineer** (36) is a climbing wall designer at ArtRock and has planned numerous indoor and outdoor adventure projects. He studied architecture and landscape architecture at TU Wien and BOKU Wien (both in Vienna) as well as at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. He has written scientific papers on preference research in the areas of sport and leisure, including for the Austrian Advisory Board for Alpine Safety. In his spare time, he loves nothing more than to challenge himself on long climbing routes in the Alps, and has a number of first ascents to his name.

**Thomas Reichhart, Dipl. Ing.** (36) ist Kletterwanddesigner bei ArtRock Kletterwände sowie Planer von zahlreichen In- und Outdoor Erlebnisprojekten. Er studierte Architektur und Landschaftsplanung an der TU Wien, an der BOKU Wien sowie an der Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Als Autor hat er Fachartikel zum Thema Preference Research in den Bereichen Sport und Freizeit unter anderem für das Kuratorium für alpine Sicherheit publiziert. In der Freizeit ist er am liebsten in langen Kletterrouten der Alpen unterwegs und kann eine Reihe von Erstbegehungen für sich verbuchen.



**Jessica Kratz, B.A.** (28) is a climbing wall designer at ArtRock and has planned and supported numerous climbing and bouldering gym projects. She studied management, communication, and IT at the Management Center Innsbruck and Stellenbosch University in South Africa. As a social and outdoor education specialist, she has led many outdoor learning projects focusing on climbing. She is a passionate sport and alpine climber.

**Jessica Kratz, B.A.** (28) hat als Kletterwanddesignerin bei ArtRock zahlreiche Kletter- und Boulderhallenprojekte geplant und begleitet. Sie studierte Management, Communication & IT am Management Center Innsbruck und der University of Stellenbosch in Südafrika. Als Sozial- und Erlebnispädagogin führte sie Erlebnispädagogische Projekte mit Schwerpunkt Outdoor-Klettern durch. Sie ist selbst leidenschaftliche Sport- und Alpinkletterin.



**ART  
ROCK**.at  
climbing systems

the spirit of  
climbing inspires  
every design  
we create  
and every  
climbing wall  
we build.

[www.artrock.at](http://www.artrock.at)

artrock designer: thomas reichhart  
in the 6th pitch of preußris (5+)  
Tre Cime di Lavaredo;  
Dolomites, Italy

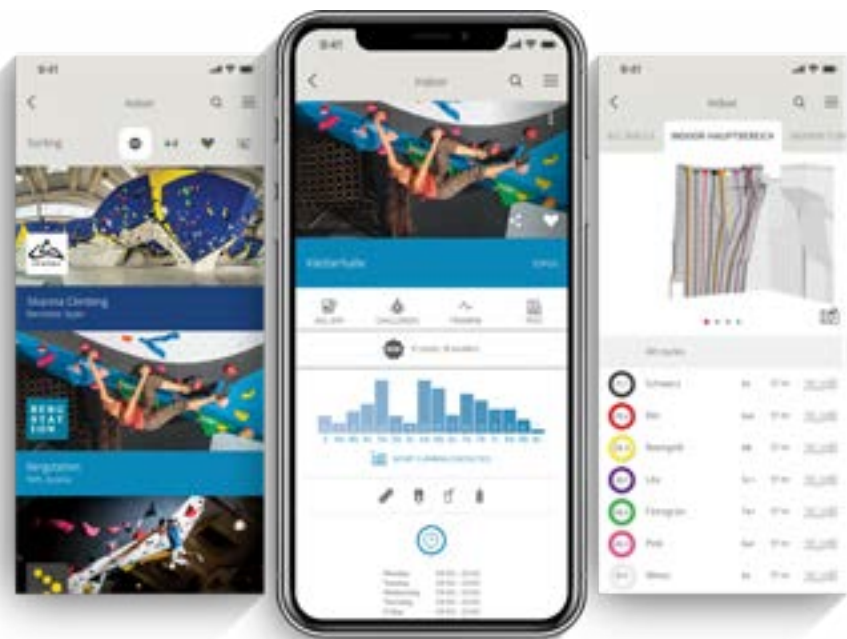
Photo: Felix Österle



# SMART CLIMBING GYM

## VERTICAL-LIFE CLIMBING APP

The Vertical-Life App is a digital climbing guide, social network and training log for outdoor and indoor climbers. The smartphone app offers detailed route information for thousands of sport climbing and bouldering areas. It also provides workout features for a fast growing number of participating climbing gyms. Monthly challenges, personal achievements and the training log add gamification and motivational elements to the users' daily climbing routines.




**178 767**  
Vertical-Life users

**135**  **GYMS**

 **MORE THAN 95**  
CLIMBING DESTINATIONS

**ZLAG!**  
721 042

### TOOLS TO INCREASE CUSTOMER RETENTION

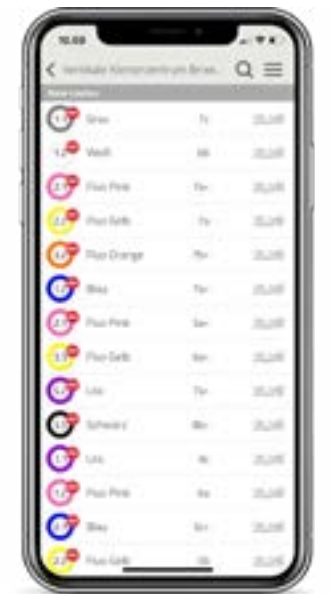
#### GYM TOPOS

- » Route overview
- » Easy to find and filter
- » Tick and comment



#### NOTIFICATIONS

- » New routes
- » Friend updates
- » Challenge updates



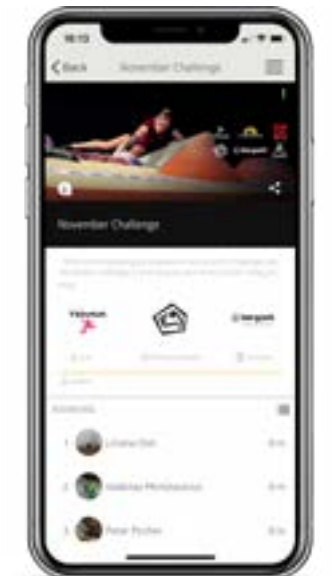
#### TRAINING

- » Statistics and analytics
- » Individualized training plans and workouts
- » Based on routes and boulders in the gym



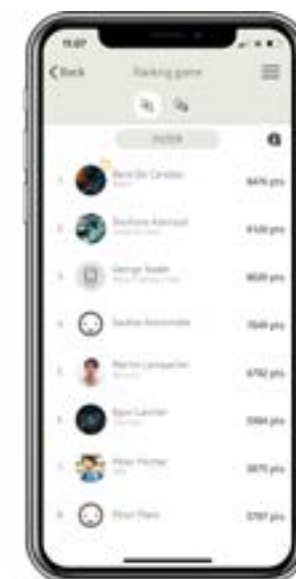
#### CHALLENGES

- » Set monthly goals
- » Join ongoing events
- » Win prizes



#### RANKING GAMES

- » Gym ranking
- » Worldwide ranking
- » Friendly competition



#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- » Collect badges
- » Unlock hidden rewards



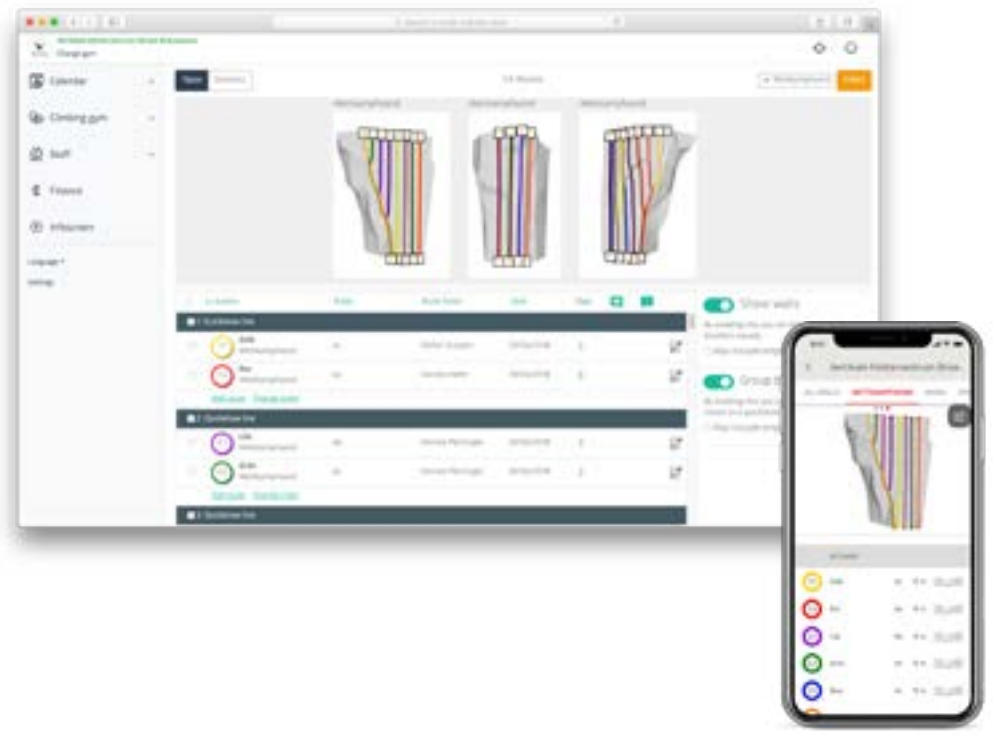


**SMART SCORECARD**

- Participant**
- » Online registration
  - » Intuitive result system
  - » Live rankings
- Organizer**
- » Real-time climbing results
  - » Flexible scoring options
  - » Multiple categories and rounds
  - » Judge mode

**GYM MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**  
*TOOLS TO MANAGE YOUR GYM EFFICIENTLY*

- ROUTE SETTING**
- » Manage routes and boulders
  - » Organize route setters
  - » View analytics and reports
- STAFF MANAGEMENT**
- » Smart calendar
  - » Staff and task organizer
  - » Financial reports
- INFOSCREENS**
- » Showcase routes, courses and events
  - » Promote your sponsors
  - » Plug and play
- COURSE BOOKING**
- » Course management and promotion
  - » Online booking & payments
  - » Smart staff scheduling



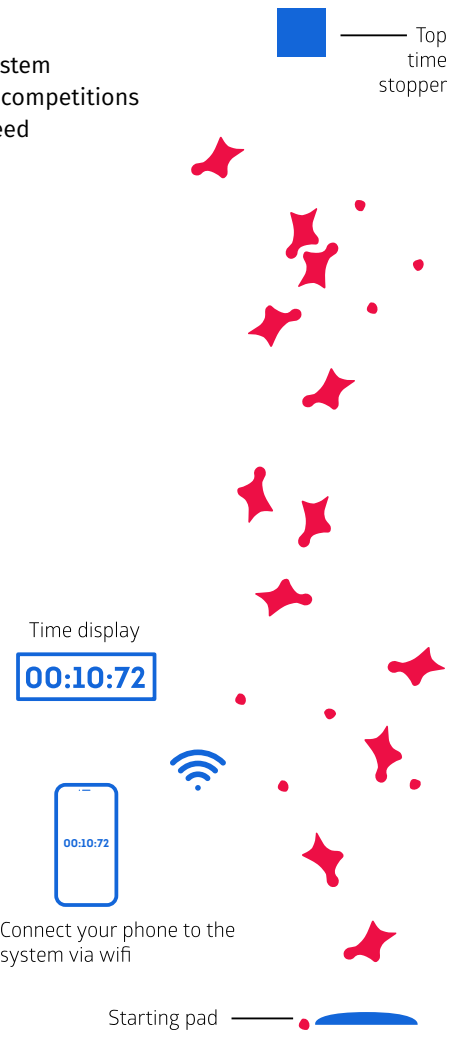
**SMART QUICKDRAW**

- » Anonymous ascent tracking
- » Increased knowledge of customer base
- » Easy to set up



**NINJA TIMING**

- » Wireless speed timing system
- » Interactive rankings and competitions
- » Bring your wall up to speed





# BOULDERADO – THE POS FOR MORE

Boulderado is an easy to use modular POS which will harmonize all your workflows at the entry point, customer terminal and in the office. Over 100 customers in Europe are already enjoying the advantages of Boulderado and our more than 6 years of expertise in finance accounting and gym workflows.

We will support you with a full package of software, hardware, member cards and other useful products for the field of climbing gyms or other sports facilities.

In co-operation with Vertical Life we will also provide effective online features for the climbers mobile device.



## RETAIL AND MEMBER MANAGEMENT

Our POS is a windows based touch system optimized for all climbing gym workflows. It is a very fast and easy to use system and can be used at the front desk, shop, cafe and for general retail. We support different payment methods and offer a full gift voucher management.

## CHECKIN - FAST AND EASY

Most of our effort was put into the integration of an effective member management and checkin process which saves you a lot of time and makes your customers happy.

We support all different kinds of entries like single entries, punch cards, subscriptions, entries via credit and more.



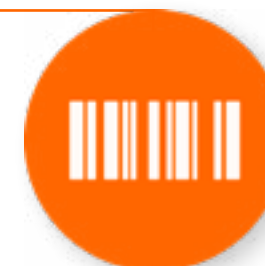
## MANAGE SUBSCRIPTIONS

With our powerful member management you can organize all your member subscriptions. Debit all payments by a monthly export or any other payment period.

## CUSTOMER TERMINAL

Speed up the registration process by using our customer terminal.

For all registered members we suggest to use our Fastlane which customers with credit, punch cards or subscriptions can use for a convenient self-checkin.



## CONTROL YOUR STOCK

Our inventory system makes it especially easy to keep track of your stock and assemble orders for missing items. Categorize your products in a hierarchy and scan them via barcode.

## REPORTING

A wide range of statistics can be exported to be analysed or sent to your accounting software. Our close cooperation with Vertical Life will extend your options to combine and display them in your Vertical Life App on demand.



## EXPECT THE BEST SERVICE

With more than 6 years of experience in the field our team will support you in all aspects regarding the configuration and usage of the POS as well as for procuring member cards, hardware and more.





Photo: Tom Lindinger / Orgasport

# SAFETY FIRST

For over 40 years Petzl is aiming to reach one goal: the development of solutions that offer the possibility to human beings to move at height at minimal risk. Especially looking at mountain sports and climbing, work at height and rescue and headlamps for efficient lighting, Petzl is one of the leading brands worldwide.

The current trend of climbing gyms constantly raises new challenges for gym operators and also route setters. To avoid accidents the issue of safety becomes more and more important.

We at Petzl want to contribute our knowledge to achieve a higher level of safety for climbing itself but also for the safety of route setters during their work. Therefore we constantly work on progress and are happy to provide high quality products and technical expertise wherever a solution is needed.

## PETZL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (PTI)

"We'd like to use our knowledge and global network to achieve a higher level of safety throughout the world of verticality." – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE, PSAgA) is an issue that strongly is driven by knowledge exchange and practical development. At the Petzl Technical Institute (PTI), located in Gelting near Munich, the focus is set on education and training of equipment users and operators.

You can find more information about the PTI and its whole training here [www.petzl-training.com](http://www.petzl-training.com)

You have questions concerning trainings and/or workshops? Please mail to [training.deutschland@petzl.com](mailto:training.deutschland@petzl.com)



## ASAP®

With its unique locking system, the ASAP sets the standard in fall protection for workers at height. In normal use, the device moves freely along the rope without any manual intervention and follows the user in all his/her movements. In case of shock or sudden acceleration, the ASAP locks on the rope and stops the user. The ASAP may also be combined with an energy absorber to work at a distance from the rope. Recommended to use with an OK TRIACT-LOCK carabiner.



## ASAP'SORBBER

The ASAP'SORBBER energy absorber connects to the ASAP (European version) or ASAP LOCK mobile fall arrester to allow the user to work at a distance from the rope, in order to protect it during certain work phases. Equipped with tear-webbing inside an openable pouch, the absorber is protected from abrasion while allowing for regular inspection. It is available in two lengths, to provide the best balance between distance from the rope and reducing fall length.



## ASCENSION

The ASCENSION handled rope clamp is designed for rope ascents and features an overmolded grip and ergonomic upper part for a comfortable and powerful grip when pulling with one or two hands. The ASCENSION handled rope clamp has a wide lower hole for easily attaching two carabiners for a lanyard and footloop.



## PRO TRAXION

The PRO TRAXION progress capture pulley is designed to allow rope installation while the pulley is connected to the anchor. With its large diameter sheave and great efficiency, it is particularly appropriate for hauling heavy loads. The side plate locks when loaded and prevents opening of the pulley during use. The lower connection point can be used to create different types of hauling systems.



## RIG

RIG is a compact self-braking descender designed for experienced rope access workers. It has an ergonomic handle that allows comfortable descent control. The AUTO-LOCK system allows users to easily position themselves at the work station without having to manipulate the handle or tie off the device. Once locked, the rope can be taken up without having to manipulate the handle. The safety gate allows the rope to be installed with the device remaining connected to the harness, facilitating passage of intermediate anchors. The stainless steel wear plate improves durability by reinforcing the rope friction zone.



## SWIVEL S

Positioned between the rope and the load, the swivel allows the load to turn without twisting the rope.



# WE KEEP U SAFE, THE GIGAKLICK FOR MORE SAFETY WHEN CLIMBING...

We – Bernhard Kofler and Andrea Meßner are Team KeepU. Bernhard works as a locksmith and metalworker and he loves to invent and rethink equipment. Andrea studies sports science and physical education and has been a staff member in the climbing gym Vertikale Brixen since its opening in 2012.

Back in 2015, both of us worked as climbing instructors and we were discussing a lot about safety gear, belaying devices and safety issues. When spending every day in the climbing gym, you become aware of the difficulties in teaching climbing, in learning how to belay safely and you get to see all the newcomers who go climbing without any experience in belaying. Especially with beginners and children sports climbing instructors and gym owners carry a big responsibility.

Therefore, we thought about a solution to increase the safety standards. Bernhard invented the Gigaklick and Andrea, still working and teaching in the climbing gym, carried out tests, proposed improvements and provided inputs from experience.

After a lot of revising, testing and improving we decided to make it real and founded Team KeepU. Our product was examined by TÜV Süd in Germany and in January 2018 our first device – the Gigaklick – entered the market.



[www.keepu.info](http://www.keepu.info)

## GIGAKLICK

The Gigaklick is a globally unique TÜV-certified backup system, that can simplify course and hall operation to a certain extent.

The Gigaklick is an additional belay device for Toprope climbing. It has been designed to provide more safety, especially for beginners and children's classes. Our goal was to provide beginners and children an environment for "safe-learning" where mistakes do not necessarily have bad consequences. Nevertheless, all standard conditions remain the same (belaying, partner check, friction, weight difference of climbing partners, etc.).

With proper handling of the belay device, neither climbers nor belayer will notice a difference. Only at a dangerously high speed the Gigaklick slows down and blocks the climber. This avoids accidents with ground impact and increases safety - the ideal solution for your Toprope area!



## More Details

The Gigaklick can slow down the climber dynamically from 14 to 120 kg with with a rope diameter from 9.5-10.2 cm.

Conventional belay devices can get used wrong or defective. The security feature of the Gigaklick cannot be abrogated.

The Gigaklick is the first and only Toprope belay device with Backup function which compensates belaying errors and therefore it can avoid accidents.

The Gigaklick does not change climbing in any way. If you handle the belay device right, neither climbers nor belayer notice a difference.

The Gigaklick is going to be delivered with a custom-made mounting bracket, so there is an easy retrofitting of the climbing gyms possible.



Photo: Andy Earl



## BLACK DIAMOND GYM COLLECTION

At Black Diamond it's all about climbing and skiing. We share the same experiences that you do on rock, ice and snow and these experiences push us to make the best gear possible for our worldwide family of outdoor enthusiasts. What began in the Yosemite Valley has grown into a global company. Black Diamond stands for the spirit of the sports, their values and goals, past, present and future. Since 1957, our innovative gear designs have set standards in numerous areas. This is the result of dedication, desire and diligence on the part of an incredible team of people. It's also a product of each of us being climbers and skiers ourselves.

As premium sponsor of the Innsbruck Climbing World Championships we are enforcing our focus on gyms. Therefore, we offer a specific gym catalogue. Get your gym workbook at orders@blackdiamond.eu



### ATC PILOT

A single rope geometry assisted belay device with enhanced braking, the ATC Pilot introduces a system that provides an added level of security to your belay, while allowing for smooth rope payout. Accommodates ropes from 8.7mm - 10.5mm.



### 9.9 60M GYM CLIMBING ROPE

The 9.9 rope is the ideal rope for all styles of climbing whether at the gym or at the crag, allowing maximum durability and easy handling.

Also available in 35m, 40m and 70m.

### MOMENTUM HARNESS

The Momentum is the most popular choice among BD harnesses, offering an easily-adjustable design and comfort for all styles of climbing.



### TOWER TEE

A stretchy and soft t-shirt featuring 96% organic cotton and a handy chest pocket.

### CREDO PANTS

BD Credo Pants combine a maximum movement with tough durability. Integrated adjustable waistbelt and leg openings provide versatility. Reinforced knees add longevity for grovels through squeeze chimneys. Organic cotton with two front pockets, two rear pockets and brush slot in right rear pocket.



### WOMEN'S CAMPUS TANK

The Black Diamond Campus Tank combines a light, flowy and ultra-soft fabric with an integrated sports bra. Removable pads allow for customizable support.

### WOMEN'S NOTION PANTS

Soft cotton pants with a touch of stretch and reinforced knees, the Notion Pants are ideal for training, cragging and gym climbing.



### REPO CHALK BAGS

All "Repo" or as "Assorted" marked styles are built from repurposed fabric scraps from our sewing factory and come in assorted colors. This applies specifically for the MOJO REPO Chalk Bag or the Mondo Chalk Pot.



### KIDS LINE

Black Diamond provides entry level gear for the young generation with maximum safety and comfort: The MOMENTUM Kid's Full Body Harness, MOMENTUM Kid's Climbing Shoes and the MOJO Kids's Chalk Bag.

### GYM 35 GEAR BAG

With a specific feature set for your gym climbing needs. An elastic pocket keeps your gear separate from your cord, and a one-handed open system speeds up your packing. With a padded shoulder strap, carrying is comfortable and easy.





Photo: Andy Earl

## BD CLIMBING SHOES

Five years. That's roughly how long the designers at BD had been working to create the unique line of climbing shoes, which was launched in spring 2018. As development and innovation driven brand, Black Diamond's designers started from scratch, looking into new materials and a fresh approach. Indicating that "the rack is complete", Black Diamond now offers all climbing products head-to-toe for climbing sessions no matter if at the crag or at the gym. Having been part of the climbing movement since its early beginnings in Yosemite Valley, BD is keen to foster its gym engagement even more. With this step, the growing shoe line is of great significance and covers high performance, entry level and even kids climbing shoes.

### CONTROL OVER USE OF MATERIALS IS KEY

Technical Shoe Designer Linh Nguyen has worked for Black Diamond over a decade and was involved in the shoe project since the beginning. In this process, highest emphasis is put on the quality of the production and working with the right manufacturing partner. "They are all time climbers and speak our language in terms of craftsmanship, innovation and desire to make a better product". In this close cooperation Black Diamond specifically profits from the flexibility of the factory: "Since they are one of the few factories that produce the rubber used on-location, we have full control over its consistency. We can have it as hard, soft or sticky as we want it to be". Instead of die-cut-

ting a sheet of rubber, raw material is molded into a controlled shape, allowing control of the geometry, the recipe for the rubber, the heat, pressure, and thickness. The benefit of this approach to climbing shoe rubber is that each mold is individually created to fit together—unlike the trace, trim and hand-grind method. This allows a variation of the weight, thickness and consistency of each mold to enhance the rubber's overall comfort, durability and performance.

### KNIT TECHNOLOGY – ENGINEERED FOR THE SEND

The same applies in the use of the unique "Engineered Knit" technology used in Black Diamond climbing shoes. Its upper material provides stretch where needed, support where it matters, and exceptional breathability. "We are literally controlling the tension of the knit machine to get the durability of the knit to where we think it needs to be, to get it to hold the right shape, and to have the right openings for breathability. We are in control of all the variables," explains Kasey Jarvis, Vice President of Product and Design at Black Diamond.

The current line will still be expanded in the seasons to come. Already in spring 2019, the gap between Beginner-Gym-Shoe and High-Performance-Shoe will be filled with a high-quality Intermediate model, available in a high and low volume version instead of a Men's and Women's sizing.



### MOMENTUM CLIMBING SHOE – MEN'S AND WOMEN'S

While the Momentum climbing shoe was built with ultimate comfort in mind it excels in performance. With Engineered Knit Technology for exceptional breathability and innovative proprietary molded rubber, the Momentum is the perfect entry-level climbing shoe for all day comfort at the gym or crag.

### MOMENTUM LACE CLIMBING SHOE – MEN'S AND WOMEN'S

Featuring Engineered Knit Technology for exceptional breathability and innovative proprietary molded rubber, the Momentum Lace is built for ultimate comfort and excels in performance. Designed as the perfect entry-level climbing shoe, this lace-up shoe provides ultimate adjustability for all day comfort at the gym or crag.



### FOCUS CLIMBING SHOE – MEN'S AND WOMEN'S

Engineered for high-end climbing, the Focus is built for routes and boulder problems that demand precision. Featuring a slightly downturned last with molded rubber, durable leather, and our Engineered Knit Technology, the Focus is a high-performance Velcro shoe ready for the redpoint.

### SHADOW CLIMBING SHOE

The Shadow is a downturned aggressive Velcro shoe built for steep and overhanging routes and boulder problems. Featuring extra-sticky Fuse molded rubber with added friction strips for better toe-hooking, and a durable microfiber upper combined with Engineered Knit Technology tongue.



### ASPECT CLIMBING SHOE

The Aspect is an engineered trad and high end allround climbing shoe. Designed with fine, durable leather, our innovative proprietary molded rubber and an Engineered Knit Technology tongue, this flat-lasted, slightly asymmetrical lace-up is perfect for plugging gear at the cliff.

### ZONE SHOE – HIGH AND LOW VOLUME

A two-strap Velcro shoe that combines the comfort and breathability of the Momentum climbing shoes, with the high-performance last of the Shadows. A medium-flex midsole adds a balance of sensitivity and power while the downturned last allows aggressive toe-hooking. While the High-Volume shoe has a regular last for regular to higher-volume feet, the Low-Volume shoe has a narrow last for lower volume feet. The Zone comes in 4 colors and is available in March 2019.



# AERIAL PLUS LINE

To help athletes to improve their performance. This is the main objective and the reason of being of the Spanish firm specialized in the design and manufacture of high quality and high-performance shoes. Present in more than fifty countries, Tenaya maintains all its production lines in Spain. Since its foundation, its designs have actively participated in sporting achievements that have significantly contributed to the evolution of climbing.



### MASTIA

A soft and structured performance, enables ultimate control on edging. Mastia last gives superb fit, providing excellent precision on small and difficult holds, while reaching the highest performance on friction and adherence movements. Its close, glove-like fit and its heel with the Friction Lock Technology, optimise lateral control and increase heel hooking performance. All in Mastia contribute to a greater balance among all its features and enables maximum performance in bouldering, while losing no efficiency on steep and overhanging routes.



### MUNDAKA

The perfect combination of form and flexibility enabling ultimate precision. The Mundaka features a close, glove-like fit, providing maximum responsiveness in all types of climbing situations. Aggressive yet balanced, the Mundaka is the widest-fitting shoe in the Tenaya's toe-down range and is superbly capable on overhanging routes and boulder problems, while losing no efficiency on lower-angle smearing.



### IATI

Designed for maximum efficiency the IATI gives you more resources and more precision in every movement. Awarded 'Editor's Choice' (as was the OASI), the IATI features a more curved form and is supremely capable on routes and boulder problems, be they vertical or overhanging.



### TARIFA

Developed in parallel with the OASI, the TARIFA shares many of the technical advances applicable to that model. The major difference is that the TARIFA is slightly stiffer in the forefoot and heel, allowing greater force to be transmitted through the toes when using tiny edges. Perfect for vertical walls and for routes requiring demanding foot placements.



### OASI LV

A new version of the Oasi specifically adapted to the anatomy of the female foot, conceived to have more information in every movement. RBRX and SRX Dynamics technologies, provides you perfect balance and exceptional comfort, making climbing feel easier and intuitive. The final result is a shoe of stunning performance both, on vertical walls and overhanging routes.

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# MAMMUT - SWISS 1862



Mammut is a Swiss outdoor company that provides high-quality products and unique brand experiences for outdoor enthusiasts around the world. The leading international premium brand whose roots reach back to 1862 has been standing for safety and pioneering innovation for more than 155 years. Mammut products merge functionality and performance with contemporary design. With its wide range of

hardware, shoes and clothing, Mammut is one of the most complete suppliers in the outdoor market with a long history of tradition. In 1952, Mammut introduced its first twisted nylon yarn glacier rope, the Mammut Argenta. 12 years later the Mammut Dynamic was the first single rope to be certified by the international mountaineering organization, the UIAA.

## ALNASCA MEN & ALNASCA WOMEN HARNESS

The ultralight Alnasca sport climbing harness boasts the latest technologies and a progressive design with snake print. With the patented Mammut® Split Webbing technology, a new webbing has been developed for this high-end harness: A complex webbing process is used to split one piece of webbing into two sections. The strap passage of the Split Webbing allows even pressure distribution across the whole width of the hip belt and the leg loops – for unprecedented suspension and comfort. In combination with the Mammut® Frame technology, which increases the lateral stability of the belt, the even distribution of pressure across the hip belt is even better. The large ventilation openings and the use of particularly breathable materials make the Alnasca harness very breathable, combined with a very light weight.



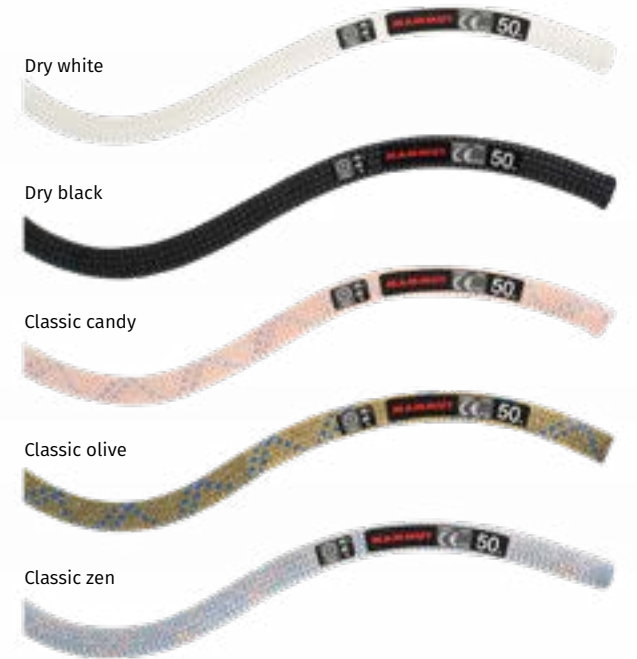
- » Mammut® Split Webbing Technology
- » Combination of two stable gear loops and two ultralightweight gear loops
- » Aluminum Slide-Bloc buckle
- » Ultra-lightweight protector prevents wear on tie-in loops

**Sizes:** S – L (Men) / XS – M (Women)  
**Weight:** 295 g (Men) / 295 g (Women)

## GYM ROPE DRY & CLASSIC

Mammut designed the extremely durable 9.9 Gym Rope, so that it withstands the hard abuse which takes place by intensive indoor lead climbing. The rope has an optimized sheath construction which offers a very fine and smooth surface – the yarns are excellently incorporated into the sheath. Thanks to the smooth structure, the rope is less prone to abrasion. The fine sheath construction also gives the rope an easy handling. The rope comes with two different colored rope end markings, which enables the climber to alternate the rope end he ties in to very easily. This will make the rope last even longer. The 9.9 Gym is available in two different versions: Classic and Dry. The 9.9 Gym Dry has a dry treatment for a significantly improved abrasion resistance compared to the classic version. The 9.9 Gym Ropes come in specific lengths for gym use.

**Length:** 40 / 50 / 200 m  
**UIAA-falls (1 strand 80 kg):** 10 – 11 (Dry) / 9 – 10 (Classic)  
**Weight / m:** 65 g / 65 g  
**Impact force:** 8.5 kN / 8.5 kN



## NEON SHUTTLE S

The Neon Shuttle S combines attractive design and functionality and is the ideal companion for visiting a climbing gym. Its tote bag construction with the removable tote bag shoulder strap allows very easy loading of climbing equipment and carrying. Practical features such as a rope fixing strap ensure great functionality.

**Volume:** 22 l  
**Weight:** 690 g

## SMART 2.0

The Smart 2.0 is the new and improved version of Mammut's tried-and-tested Smart belay device. Weighing just 80 grams, the lightweight Smart 2.0 is easy to use, has no moving parts or levers and offers a significantly improved braking effect. It functions according to the tube principle and is therefore suitable for lead and top rope climbing. In the case of a fall it brakes faster - the newly developed braking insert locks the climbing rope completely.

**Weight:** 80 g  
**Colors:** dark orange, radiance, phantom, dark ultramarine, dark cloud



## SMARTER

With the Smarter, Mammut has developed a solution designed to make rope climbing even safer, including for beginners and children. In combination with the Smart 2.0, the add-on increases safety even in the event of incorrect hand positioning by the belayer. The Smarter is attached to the Smart 2.0 and, in the case of a fall, it locks the rope even if the brake rope is held above the Smart 2.0.

**Weight:** 8 g  
**Colors:** phantom





Photo: Sebastian Straub

# EDELRID – A STRONG PARTNER FOR YOUR CLIMBING GYM

EDELRID is your competent and reliable partner, whether for initial provision for equipping your wall or its continuing day-to-day operation. We offer wide range of products – from innovative anchor systems to dedicated ropes for climbing gyms to a PPE app to manage your rental equipment. When it comes to software solutions for climbing gyms, EDELRID relies on Vertical Life's Climping app. This way, all EDELRID partner halls receive a free connection to the Vertical Life Climbing App.

## GEAR PILOT - THE NEW PPE-APP FROM EDELRID

Whether you are operating a climbing gym, you are a PPE inspector or a gear junkie – the EDELRID GEAR PILOT enables you to have optimum control over your business.



### RENTAL

Fast and efficient administration of PPE products in real time.



### PSA INSPECTOR

Inspection and documentation of PPE products.



### KNOW-HOW

Everything you always wanted to know about PPE products.



### QR-Code

Scan to learn more about the Gear Pilot.



### ZACK GYM

Specially designed for rental, fully adjustable harness. With 2 symmetrical, high-strength gear loops and adjustable leg loops for easy and secure fitting.

### OHM

Assisted-braking resistor to increase rope friction when there is a large weight difference between belayer and lead climber. In the event of a fall, the OHM increases the amount of rope friction so that a lighter belayer can hold a heavier lead climber without difficulty.



### TOPPER STATION

The non-plus-ultra concerning safety for all gym anchors. The large inner radius of the steel carabiner ensures far lower material wear on the rope and top anchor.



### BOA GYM

Special gym rope with extremely abrasion-resistant polyester sheath. The ideal rope for intensive training in the gym.



NEW



NEW

### SESSION AIR

The ultimate rental shoe with a highly robust, non-marking RX5 sole that does not leave any black streaks on climbing walls – the perfect choice for intensive use in gyms and for rental purposes.



tied to be free  
TENDON

Adam Ondra,  
Silence 9c, Flatanger,  
Norway

# TENDON – TIED TO BE FREE

brand stands for highest standards, quality and innovations for dynamic and static ropes. Appreciated by professionals around the world as well as best climbers and sport users who care for safety and quality without compromises. Tendon might not be the biggest manufacturer. But is certainly number one as for development, innovations and quality. Even though other rope producers are more visible, worldwide professionals at the most demanding areas like Fire Brigades, Rescue, Police, Army, Arborist work and Work safety, these people know why they choose Tendon. It is the very same reason why the best rock climber in the world, Adam Ondra, choosed this brand. Tendon is a brand of company LANEX specialized rope manufacturer based in Czech Republic since 1949.



**MASTER 9.7 TEFIX®**  
Technologies keep advancing. Favorite MASTER 9.7 with TeFIX® technology became even more safer and durable than its older brother. Permanent connection of a core and sheath ensures that the sheath cannot slip. Check the fresh design.



**AMBITION TEFIX® 10.2**  
An new version of a robust rope Ambition 10.2 enriched with TeFIX® technology. The fact that the core is connected with the sheath prevents the sheath from shifting and provides maximum possible safety in case of the sheath damage. An ideal rope which will guide you through many vertical miles.



**MASTER PRO 9.2**  
If you are a sport climber and you like small diameters of ropes but you are not satisfied with their life spans, your problems are gone with Master PRO. With a small diameter of 9.2 mm, the rope withstands as many falls as the 9.9 mm rope and the improved SBS sheath enhances its abrasion resistance. Our development engineers have also put a lot effort into the softness of the rope that you will become fond of in a trice and you will not want to change it.



**MASTER 8.6**  
The thinnest single rope we offer. The low weight, which is only 50g, makes it an ideal weapon, which will help you to send your hardest projects.



**MASTER 9.4**  
An excellent single rope with low weight, great technical parameters and SBS construction of the sheath, which makes the rope not only more resistant to abrasion, but also soft and easy to manipulate. The best choice for both hard and sport climbing.



**MASTER 9.7**  
A top-class single rope with low weight and our SBS sheath construction that combines both increased resistance to abrasion, and great handling qualities. If you care about maximum performance, you have just found the right rope.



**LOWE 9.7**  
This new ultralight rope is a top-ranking product in its category. With its weight of 55 g/m it is comparable to ropes having a diameter of less than 9.2 mm. This will be appreciated in sport climbing where every gram counts toward success. By maintaining the bigger rope diameter in the Lowe 9.7, you gain improved handling properties over narrower ropes.



**AMBITION 9.8**  
A more conventional sport rope designed for climbers aiming to get better. Although having a narrow diameter, this rope will give a long lifespan and high abrasion resistance. Its low weight, higher fall rating and excellent ease of handling are all benefits to help you push your own limits.



**ROPE STATIC 10.5**  
This excellent rope with low elongation and high static strength is intended primarily for work at heights and for securing people above vertical drops. The thicker the diameter, the stronger the rope. Sewn termination is available on request.



**STATIC ROPE SECURE 10.5**  
A rope for any application where the sheath and the core may suffer damage. When using this rope you will significantly increase your safety margins, in cases where mechanical damage to the rope due to sharp edges or falling objects. Thanks to the unique sandwich-type construction of braided layers and the use of specially developed staple fibers, the rope is able to hold the suspended person or load even in the event of considerable sheath or core damage. Even if the rope is heavily damaged, the suspended person has enough time to abseil to the ground or to a safe anchor point. Sewn termination is available on request.





How to care for your skin

**COMPARISON WITH WAX BASED PRODUCTS**

Climbskin® hand cream is an oil-aqueous emulsion, a property that allowed us to get closer to our goal of creating a product of outstanding properties. It contains both fat-soluble ingredients of the highest quality like shea butter and buckthorn and rosehip oils, but also, unlike waxes, it includes effectively water-soluble ingredients such as aloe vera, tincture of benzoin, dragon's blood, extract of centella asiatica, and aquillea millefolium. This is why the capacity of absorption and penetration of Climbskin® hand cream is remarkable; it allows deep hydration, better regeneration, and leaves less residues on the skin.

Waxes are cheap cosmetic products of low quality, easy to manufacture, which leave our hands full of oil and wax residues. But it is not only about sensations, each skin needs a specific hydration, a very difficult target to hit with waxes since they act more like bombs of hydration. We must keep in mind that, in the cases of raised calluses, cracks and cuts, an excess of hydration is counterproductive because it softens the tissue too much and slows down its healing.

Being able to apply Climbskin® hand cream in thin layers (1 or 2 is usually enough depending on the type of your skin) is essential to achieve the right hydration, which is a KEY factor in the recovery process. You must learn to know and take care of YOUR skin.

Climbskin® hand cream also contains tincture of benzoin and natural silica that, in addition to their intrinsic properties, help regulate sweating, a very limiting factor in wax-based products.

At Climbskin we take into great consideration the origin of our ingredients. We do not like the industrialized process that obtains waxes of animal origin. Taking care of the bees, that we think is vital!

Quality, sustainability, and respect for the environment are values that will always go hand in hand with Climbskin. #whyclimbskin

**CLIMBSKIN REVOLUTION**

**YOUR SKIN IN YOUR HANDS**

Climbskin is a young company created by a group of friends, all of us lovers of nature, sports and particularly climbing in all its disciplines and branches. In our wish to overcome the limitation caused by the hands skin damage, we decided to pool our knowledge to create Climbskin Hand Cream. We have a Ph.D. in chemistry, a Biologist with over 20 years of experience in the manufacture of cosmetics, a nature-based health Physician and above all many years of climbing among friends.

At Climbskin we are proud of the products we have created because we know the great work there is behind them, but even more, we are proud of the people who have joined us to share our enthusiasm and commitment for a Project that combines top quality with values. All of you, especially our Ambassadors, Teams and friends, are a brutal source of motivation, thank you very much!

**CLIMBSKIN HAND CREAM 30ML.**

CLIMBSKIN® HAND CREAM contains the most potent skin regenerative agents found in nature, under a novel formula that combines eight major components. CLIMBSKIN® HAND CREAM combines oils and extracts of the best quality in a product of dense texture but fast absorption, resistant at extreme conditions yet not oily. Climbskin Hand Cream contains no artificial colors or perfumes, just the best ingredients, combined to give a pleasant aroma, natural and characteristic. The entire manufacturing process is environmentally friendly and cruelty free. Not tested on animals. 100% Vegan.



Our cosmetic products are registered in the CPNP, the european portal according to the new regulation 1223/2009 and they are dermatologically tested. 0% irritability dermal. Microbiological Testing passed with 100% effectiveness. NOT tested on animals. We manufacture under GMP (good manufacturing practice according to ISO 22716).



**ORGANIC SILICIUM GEL 75ML.**

This is a new GEL that includes extracts and oils of the highest quality with anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties, combined with Organic Silicium in a unique and innovative formula. These ingredients help during all phases of treatment in the recovery of muscle, tendon and joint injuries. Especially indicated for sports injuries, arthropathies, contusions, as well as to speed up and optimize tissue recovery after intense sessions of climbing, training or competition.

**CLIMBSKIN SKINFILE**

Hand made skinfiles are 10,5 cm, perfect to have in your pocket our climbing bag always ready to hand to keep your skin in good condition.

- » Wood is curved for a better balance and efficiency to iron out our skin of our fingers.
- » 2 sandpapers that are replaceable, 1 smooth and 1 rough, different colours, one on each side.
- » 4 extra sandpapers( 2 of each texture)
- » With an orange high quality Korda's cord that helps you find it in your pocket or bag, as well as increases the chance of finding it if you drop it.





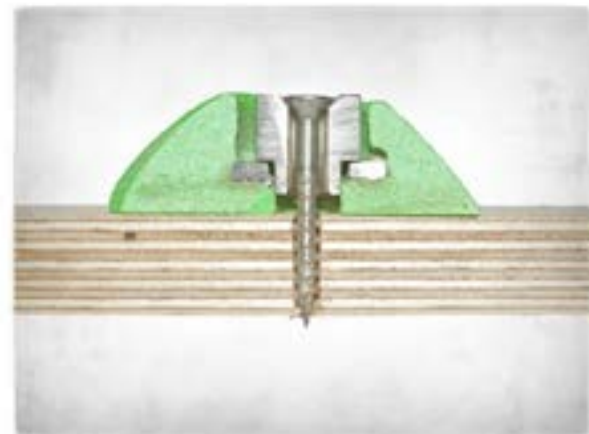
**goodgrip**.info

## FOR THE DETAILS

Here we could now have a lot of praise and BlaBla about goodgrip, but we prefer to keep it as with our brushes - little frills, but meaningful: Social, fair, environmentally friendly, customer-oriented and efficient – done.

### RINGO'S

Detached from the hole grid of the wall, can be screwed closer to edges and to volumes. More possibilities to let your creativity run wild.



### CUSTOM-SERIES

Your own range of brushes, chalk (solid or liquid), tape and skinshapers. Together with you we develop a design, produce and deliver your own custom series.



### INDOOR PRO

Our IndoorPro series has been specially developed for commercial bouldering halls and their requirements, from cleaning poles and brushes to wall hooks.



### OUTDOOR PRO

Not a plastic toy, but solid aluminum. Extendable up to 2.2m length you can reach every hold. All our brushes (also custombrushes) can be attached effortlessly and for posterity there is the suitable adapter for your Actioncam.



### HANDMADE BOULDER BRUSHES

It all started with these boulder brushes. Handmade from workshops for the blind and handicapped in Germany. All bristles pulled in by hand and interlaced on the back with a stainless steel wire. In two bristle hardnesses and three different sizes, vegan or non-vegan, there is the perfect brush for everyone.



**benky**® vertical equipment



# VERTICAL EQUIPMENT AND GYM CONSULTING

With the legacy and knowledge from over 50 years of family business in climbing sports, benky vertical equipment develops and produces products for the climbing- and boulder gym industry.

We supply everything to run a professional boulder- and climbing gym. The core product is the Q-MAT. The development started due to the lack of professional solutions of bouldergym mattings which were able to full-fill our high standard. We're celebrating the 8th generation of benky Q-MAT with a constant improvement of our custom system.

## SKUNK X

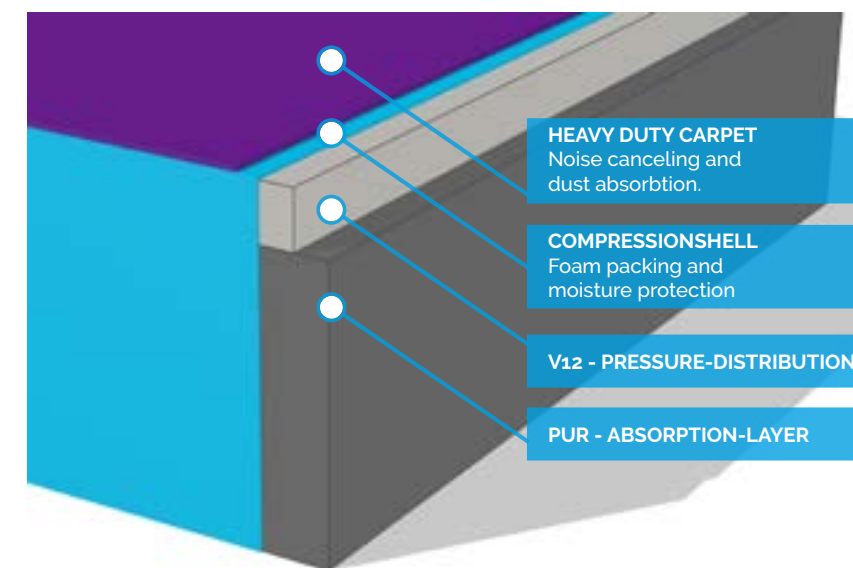
The hygiene pump spray is particularly suitable for climbing hire shoes. It can also be used for mattresses, pads and carpets. Suitable for all surfaces – also textiles – that can be treated damp, except for alcohol-sensitive materials like acrylic glass. Spray on the hygiene spray, allow to take effect for one minute and let dry.



## GRIPWASH

Purification process especially developed for climbing holds. Removes completely all dirt like rubber, chalk, perspiration, grease, oil fast and efficient. Activates the specific texture of modern climbing holds. Clean up to 1200 holds in one hour. Available as Gripwash Classic and Concentrate. Certified products from German production.

[www.benkyclimbing.com](http://www.benkyclimbing.com)



## Q-MAT

The non plus ultra in comfort and safety for boulder-gyms. Q-MAT is a modular and flexible system which will be customised especially for the personal needs of your gym. The sandwich construction guarantees the highest safety standards as well as the carpet surface will provide a less dusty and noise canceling environment.

Conform to DIN EN 12572



## CHIEF SETTER KEY

Steel Key with extra bis handle for comfortable setting. Due to the length of the key you even get into the deepest screw holds.



# BENKY DISTRIBUTION PRODUCTS

## ROPELESS THE BRAND

ropeless has its roots in a small group of boulder enthusiasts, which was formed in the late 90ties around a German superb sandstone bouldering area, the „Süd Pfalz“. Everyone of these close friends is an expert in his trade. So we set out to create a brand we believe in, with products that reflect our commitment. That's how we can supply you the best quality in your personal ropelessgear.



## ROPELESS CHALK

THE FIRST COMPLETE 100% PLASTIC FREE PACKAGING LINE FOR CLIMBING CHALK. Premium dry rock climbing chalk which keeps your hands ultra dry and sticky. Made from 100% pure Magnesium Carbonate. Available as: Chunky chalk 9 oz. (255 g) Bloc chalk 8 Blocks / 2oz. (57 g) Chalk balls 2 oz. (57 g)

## ROPELESS BRUSH

The cheers brush is not just another boulder-brush. It's made from highest quality material. Made in Germany. Wooden brush handle • Natural boar-hair bristle • Metal logo bottle opener • cheers iron branding



## ROPELESS TAPE

ropeless 100% pure cotton tape is available in two different sizes (2,5 cm / 3,8 cm width) and five fresh colours. Every roll comes in a neat reusable tinplate jar embossed with a unique hand-drawn illustrations.



## MORPHO

Morpho volumes and holds are made out of our love for climbing, out of our affinity for climbing culture and out of our pleasure in creating new and intelligently crafted products. We invested many years into developing the production method, researching for the optimal combinations of materials, striving for durable colours and achieving optimal texture.



## CORE

British made Climbing Holds - designed, carved and manufactured in Sheffield, UK. Core climbing hold range is continually growing with over 1486 shapes to choose from and 15 different colour options. We have many sets that are perfect training holds for home walls and kids holds for school climbing and traverse walls.



## FLATHOLD

A common goal of Flathold is to create and develop shapes and grips, to fashion the foam so as to approach the feelings one gets on a natural line. swiss designed climbing holds.

## KITKA

Kitka is a climbing hold company based in northern Finland. Around here we've got reindeers, northern lights and very long and dark winter. It's perfect a environment for indoor climbing. Kitka holds are shaped for climbing with minimalistic and functional Scandinavian design. In shaping, we focus on functionality and ergonomics.



## AIX

It all began in 1996. One of the best known climbers in Czech and Slovak republic Andrej Chrastina started his experiments with making climbing holds. At the beginning the company was called a.9 and Andrej was making holds from epoxy.



## WOODPECKER

Woodpeckerholds are eco friendly. With only wooden materials our products do not cause harm to the environment during the production process and they last longer. With Woodpeckerholds your skin will last longer and you will be able to get more of your daily training session than ever.



## TWINPOINT AUTOBELAY

TwinPoint autobelay it's specially created device for climbing walls, which allows for high and safe climbing without a partner. In case of falling or releasing hands smooth descent occurs on safety belt with the same comfortable speed for all, regardless of climber's weight.



## BEASTMAKER

Wood is far superior to resin in terms of its natural properties of grip, porosity and texture, Wood is far and away the best training material currently available for finger strength, and the good news is it grows on trees!

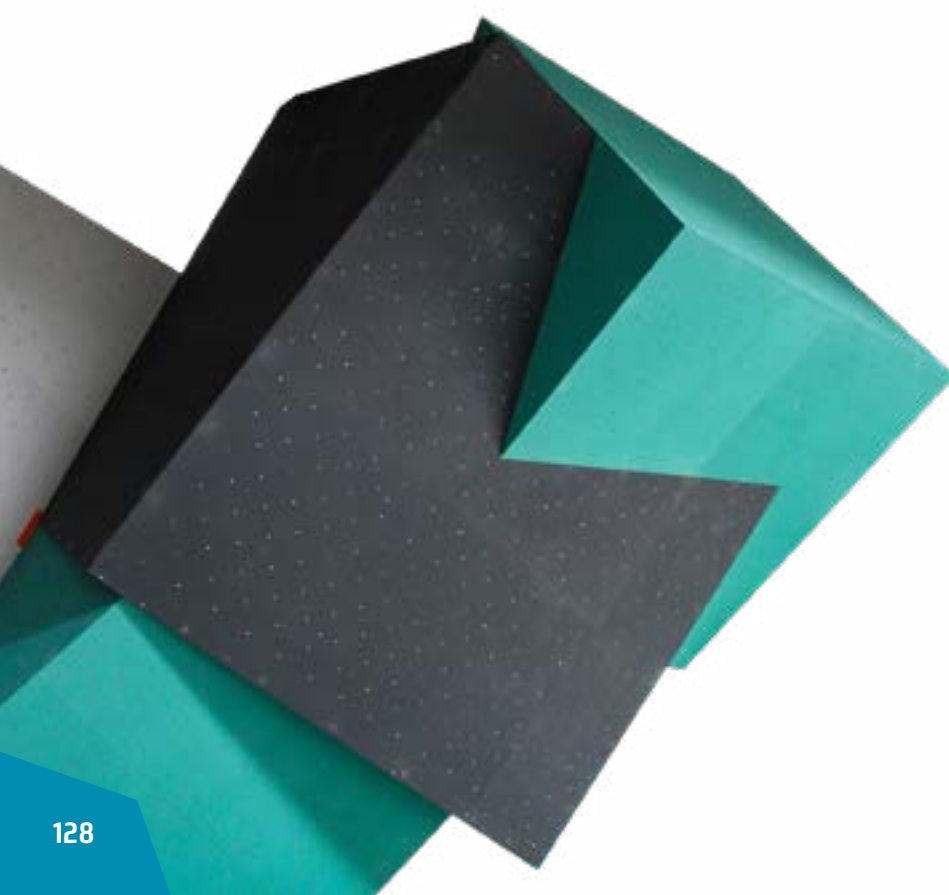


### CLIMBING WALL

All bouldering and climbing walls designed by BOULDERWAENDE are produced by the exclusive partner USTETO from Bulgaria. Working with USTETO we are able to realize even the most difficult ideas and projects. All walls are CNC cut out of 21mm high quality European birch plywood, double sanded and can be colored in almost all RAL colors. Outdoor panels are completely sealed and endued with stainless steel T-nuts. The under construction will be adapted to the given requirements and can be made out of wood or steel.

## WE ARE CLIMBING

BOULDERWAENDE is your partner when planning a climbing wall, bouldering wall or a freestanding boulder block. Together we plan your individual wall and help your ideas become reality. With more than 20 years of climbing wall building and our partner USTETO we are able to provide you with a whole range of products and services starting a climbing or bouldering gym. High quality with reasonable prices is what we do and what we stand for. Get in touch and start your new project right away.



### WALL BUILDING

Whether you plan to build a climbing wall, bouldering wall or freestanding boulder block – BOULDERWAENDE is your partner to realize this project. We build walls for more than 20 years with our exclusive partner USTETO from Bulgaria. Starting a project means bringing heads together and exchanging ideas and thoughts. Our first goal is to realize your ideas and help you with our experience. Always starting with a blank page, together we sketch up the wall. We don't care if it's a 10m<sup>2</sup> or 1000m<sup>2</sup> project – every project needs the same efforts.

### WOOD VOLUMES

Wood volumes made with passion and great quality. All wood volumes are like the climbing walls CNC cut out of 21mm high quality European birch plywood, double sanded and are also available in almost all RAL colors. All volume parts are glued and screwed together to guarantee a long life of the volume. The volumes can be fixed with wood screws, all fixation points do have a washer to spread the energy while fixing it to the wall and protecting the wood at the fixing points.



### GLASS FIBRE VOLUMES

With a smooth surface perfectly harmonized for the need of climbers USTETO glass fiber volumes will be the eye-catcher in your gym. Made with passion and high-quality standards the glass fiber volumes are the lightweight solution for great movements on the wall. With their reasonable prices and great variety of forms and RAL colors they should be in every gym.



# STUNTWERK – EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE!

Ninja Warrior Training. Bouldering. Parkour. Functional Training.

Stuntwerk is the first place to combine all of the above in just one place. Offering prime equipment and highly trained personnel, we set out to help you reach your individual sportive goals - regardless of age, level of experience and physical abilities. If sports stir your blood, you have found just the right place with us!

Our unique approach of combining Ninja Warrior Training, bouldering, parkour and functional training enables us to reach out to a broad target group without facing direct competition. Ever since its launch, this one of a kind concept has proven to be thoroughly successful, having gained Stuntwerk worldwide recognition.

Right from the start, we'll be happy to provide advisory support on all important issues, e.g. location, adequacy of premises, planning and execution of building measures with our partners, opening event, day-to-day business.

With conclusion of contract, you will immediately benefit from our well known name, our

modern corporate design and our hands-on experience in running said business. The Stuntwerk operation manual fills you in on all sequences of operation to ensure smooth execution of all business processes. Additionally, you may rely on our advisory support in terms of running the centre, marketing and merchandising. Your employees will be trained by experienced staff at your premises, at Stuntwerk Cologne and at our base in Rosenheim, Bavaria.

Ensure territorial protection by applying for a franchise partnership!

### THE STUNTWERK SYSTEM: OUTSTANDING ADVANTAGES

- » Unique concept without direct competition
- » Well positioned system with strong recognition value and high-capacity brand
- » Proven and tested concept
- » Facilitated execution of franchising concept thanks to qualified supervision
- » Extensive training spectrum for franchise partners and employees
- » Territorial and trademark protection
- » Developed and tested merchandise material



### SITE QUALIFICATIONS

- » Minimum of 500.000 inhabitants within 30km
- » Proximity to highly frequented arterial roads
- » Easily accessible by public transport
- » 1500 – 3000 m2 floor space, minimum clearance height of 6 m, minimum carrying capacity of 500 km/m2
- » Sufficient on-site or surrounding parking (minimum of 40 spots)
- » Possibility of installing highly visible promotional display



### STUNTWERK - A LUCRATIVE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU!

The brand Stuntwerk is growing and developing constantly. The unique concept, optimal implementation and clear market positioning have already proven a good profitability. This enables us to offer you attractive conditions for the invested capital in our transparent system. Invest in one or more of our ongoing projects! Inform yourself without obligation, please send an email to [franchise@stuntwerk.de](mailto:franchise@stuntwerk.de).

### BECOME A STUNTWERK PARTNER!

Have we sparked your interest? For further information and/ or handing in your application, please send an email to [franchise@stuntwerk.de](mailto:franchise@stuntwerk.de). Benefit from our well established system and become a Stuntwerk Partner!





**PANEL COATING**

Our DURA FINISH coating is appreciated throughout Europe for its excellent friction, resistance to wear and tear and above all for its easy cleaning.



**HIGH RESISTANCE HOLD INSERTS**

All our panels are equipped with an exclusive large surface insert (40x40 mm, high resistance thread, fixed with two 4,5x20 screws).



**TOP BELAY POINT**

Stainless steel plate assembled directly to the supporting frame with two M12 self-locking screws. Two independent rope anchor points on the same route enable for a top rope and, simultaneously, an abseil point for lead climbing.



**EDGE PROTECTION POINT**

All edges that can wear the climbing rope are protected by our built-in system that guarantees: low visual impact, functionality and safety - long-term resistance.

# SHAPING THE HISTORY

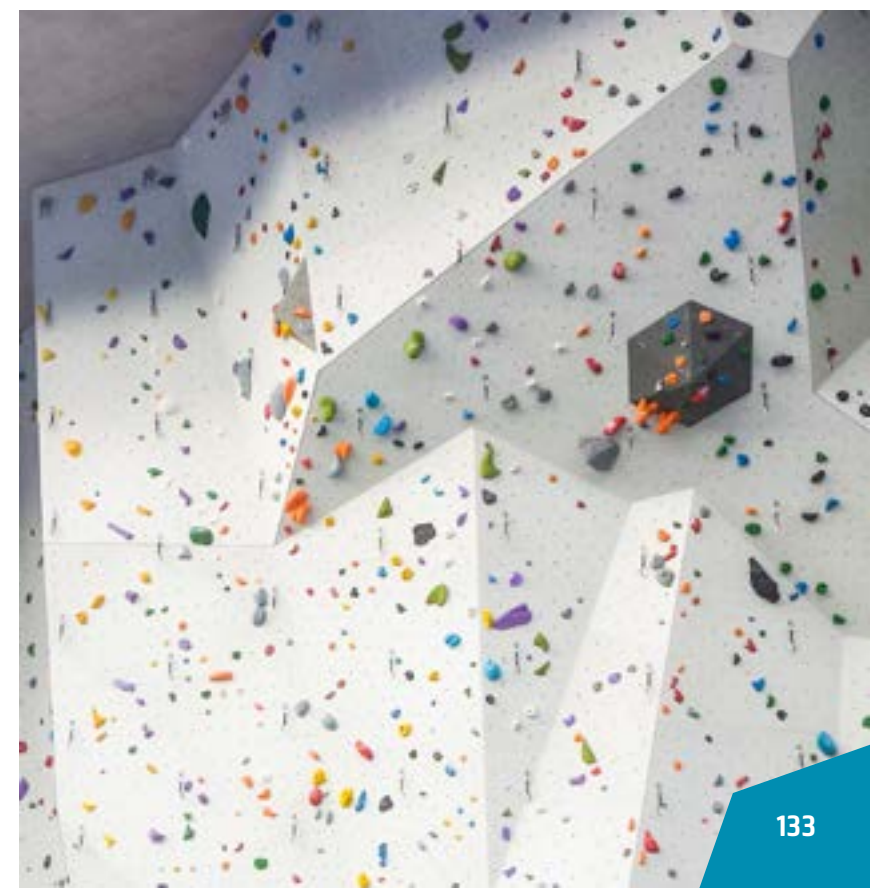
With almost 30 years history Sint Roc has gained a unique experience designing, constructing and installing artificial climbing walls. Our headquarter is located at Arco – the world's sport climbing capital – and the constant contact with climbers of all abilities enables us to know and anticipate the market trends. Hundreds of artificial structures carry our Sint Roc brand, from local schools to commercial climbing centres. Our decade-long partnership as official suppliers of Rock Master, coupled with company founder Angelo Seneci's vast experience at organizing events, enables us to design cutting-edge competition structures. Since 2015 we are an IFSC certified Speed Wall Manufacturer.

**HIGH QUALITY CLIMBING STRUCTURES**

Our mission is to provide our clients with the highest standards, both in terms of quality and safety. The Sint Roc climbing structures are designed, built and checked according to EN12572 European Standard. Our technical department is headed by Marco Bortoli, an Engineer with over 2 decades of experience during which he has designed hundreds of structures. Sint Roc structures are produced and installed by a highly trained workforce who have worked with us for years and who have attended work safety programs.

**DIAMOND SYSTEM**

With this assembly system climbing walls can be designed with panels angled in all different directions. The panels are cut with CAD - CAM machinery to guarantee clean and regular edges for perfect assembly.





[www.4ds.biz](http://www.4ds.biz)

Flat Curves has a smooth curved, organic vision, combined with flat surfaces. Perfect for attaching big holds and volumes.

Flat Curves gives much more freedom for route setting, because of the small angles between the planes. There are no permanent holds at the wall structure at all.

Flat Curves are obtained by a computational method by which smooth surfaces are approximated to configurations of flat N-gons. The number of the plane edges and their size can be changed as an import parameter. The software is backing the new approximate shape according to the algorithm and voala!

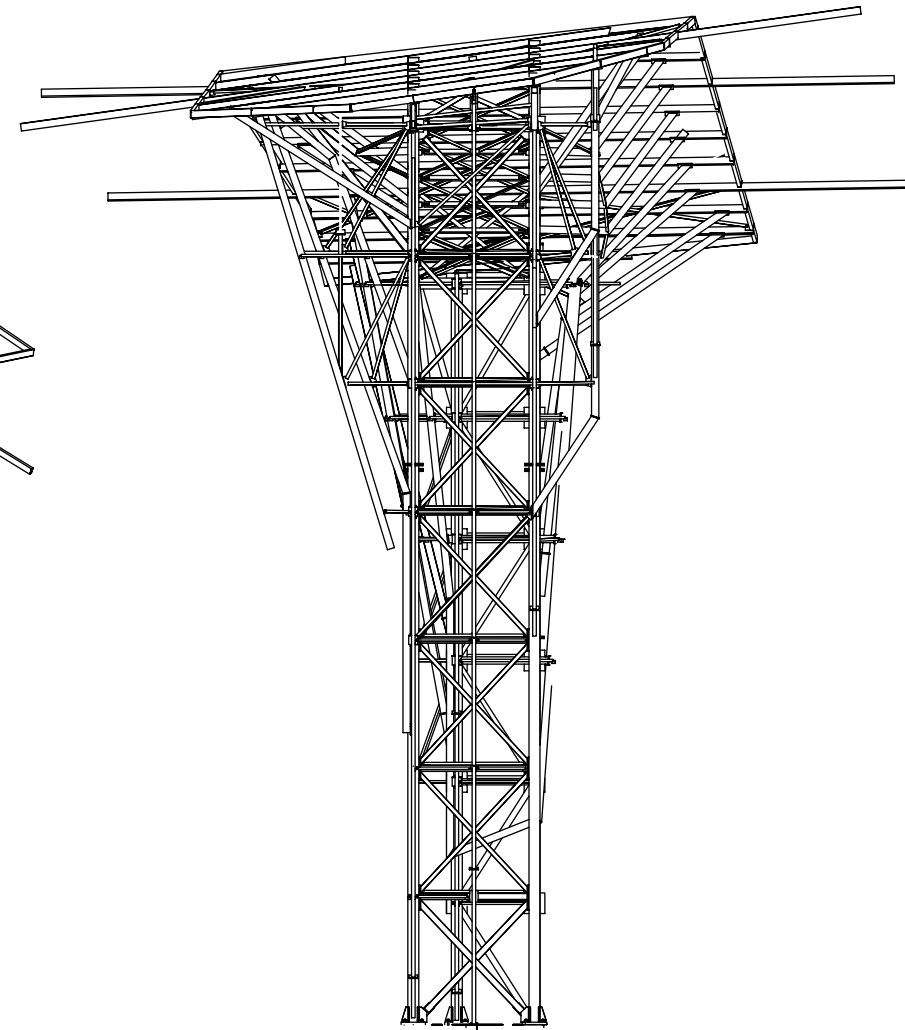
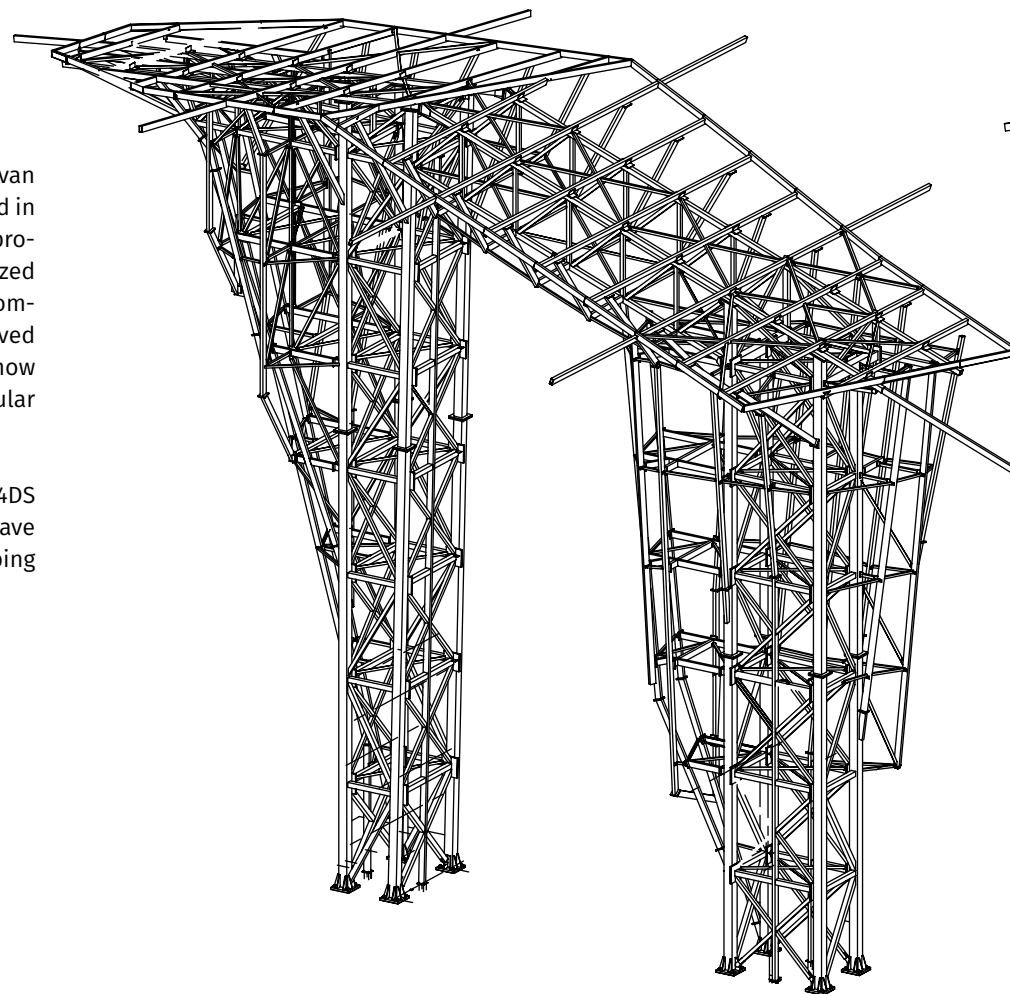
Thanks to the vision and goodwill of **Klatterverket**, we succeed to build the first Flat Curves walls and boulders in their new gym in Stockholm, Sweden.



## FLAT CURVES

4DS is founded in 2007 as an engineering bureau, by Ivan Yordanov, a structural engineer. The company was located in Sofia, Bulgaria. Executing a huge amount of structural projects, varying in scope and complexity we have specialized in climbing wall projects. In 2010 the head office of the company is moved in Leipzig, Germany, where 4DS has evolved to a climbing facilities manufacturer. From then up to now we succeed to build some of the most beautiful, popular and well organized Boulder gyms in Germany.

After 15 years of experience in climbing wall design we 4DS and the computational designer Aleksander Dimitrov have invented Flat Curves - a revolutionary vision of the climbing space.





## IT'S ABOUT SAFETY

Since 1954, BSW has manufactured sport flooring, safety surfacing, impact sound insulation, and many other products from polyurethane-bonded rubber granulate. The owner-managed industrial enterprise has developed into one of the leading providers in the industry by virtue of its constant optimisation of tried and tested manufacturing processes, the development of new products and solutions for the most diverse industrial and services sectors, and international expansion.

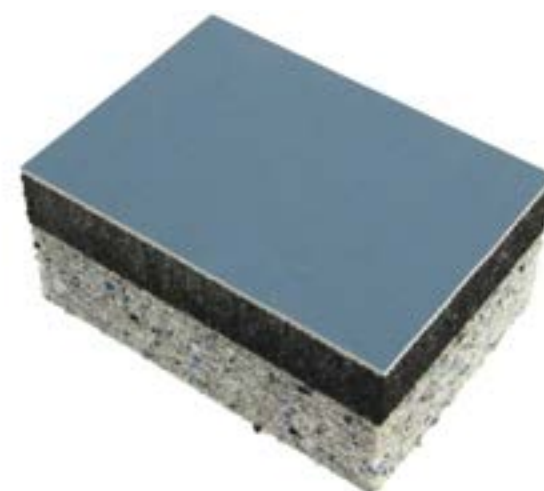
BSW is one of the international market leaders in many product groups. BSW developments and innovations are a result of systematic product and market research. The company operates on a global scale with eight production and distribution sites and around 650 employees worldwide.

Numerous climbing halls in Germany and abroad have been installed with different special floorings for climbing halls from BSW.

### REGUGYM® CLIMB 45/30 PU

There are many design options for this elastic safety flooring. Our huge colour range allows you to define the safety zone with different colours or markings. Furthermore you have the possibility to place your logo on the floor. This elastic sports flooring ensures that the seriousness of any injuries from falls can be minimised. With its seamless surface regugym® climb is very easy to clean.

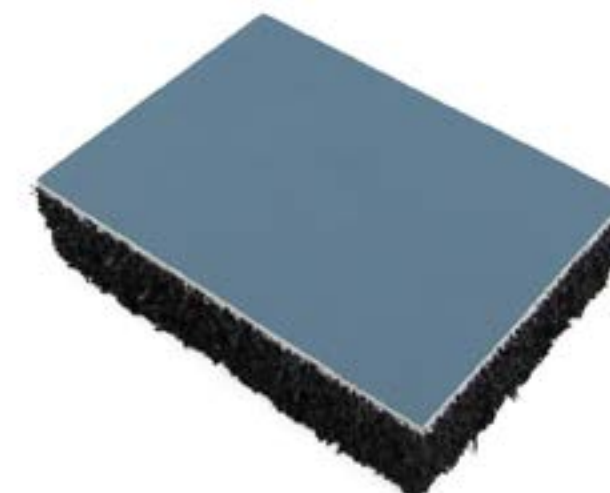
**Reaction to fire:** Cfl-s1 as per DIN EN 13501-1



### REGUGYM® CLIMB 40 PU

This indoor flooring is perfectly suitable for climbing halls with under-floor heating. Both regugym® climb 40 PU and regugym® climb 45/30 PU are installed by experts of BSW. The severity of the consequences suffered by climbers falling from critical heights is considerably reduced. Furthermore you can choose between 16 basic colours and 15 line colours to individualize your flooring.

**Reaction to fire:** Bfl-s1 as per DIN EN 13501-1



### REGUPOL® SAFETY TILE FX 110

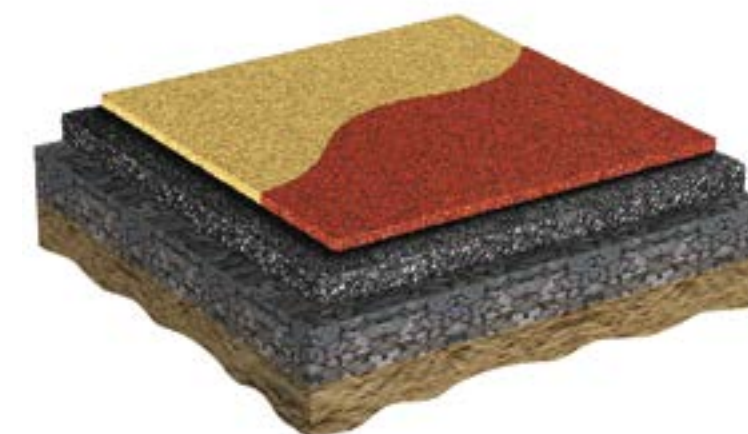
This outdoor flooring is permeable to water and dries quickly. It is used at outside climbing walls and protects them against pollution. You can select between different qualities and thicknesses. This elastic tile has been installed on children's playgrounds for decades. It warrants reliable protection pursuant to EN 1177 for critical fall heights.

**Dimensions:** 1,000 x 500 x 110 mm, other thicknesses possible

### PLAYFIX® SEAMLESS SAFETY SURFACING

Create your individual outdoor flooring with 26 colours and their combinations. Thanks to its water permeability, you can use the flooring again quickly after it has rained. Originally developed for impact absorption on playgrounds, this flooring has also proved itself in a range of different sports activities, in which the risk of injuring from falling needs to be minimised. It complies with standard EN 1177 for safety surfaces.

**Installation:** Only by skilled BSW technicians.





**FIBER IMPRESSIONS**

**NEW** glasfiber shapes: Are made to complete our competition range wiht huge highlight holds.



**FIBER IMPRESSION 6**

This impression is really slopy and almost too bad to pinch it at all.



**FIBER IMPRESSION 10**

Some of the positive impressions you will find in this range of holds.

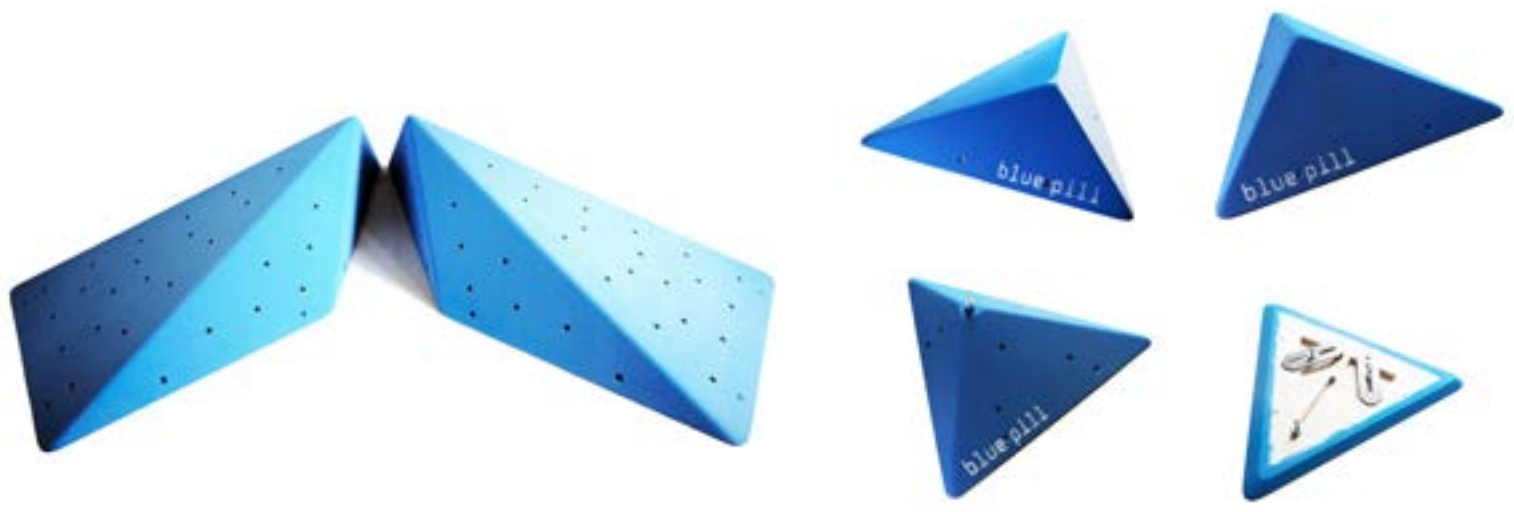


**FIBER IMPRESSION 11**

Although this hold is really deep you can set it to challenge hard!

# BLUEPILL

Do you know which the name BLUEPILL refers to? Is it a hint to viagra? Neo took the red pill... so what kind of information brings the blue pill to our artificial climbing matrix? Or is it simply the fact that we are based in a city that has „blue“ in it's name? It's said the truth lies somewhere in the middle, what might be the case for BLUEPILL



**VOLUMES**

Experience and the passion for quality can create beautiful things. All the procedure until our climbing volumes are finished for you is optimized hundred of times what makes our unique finish.

**VOLUMEN OPTIONS**

BLUEPILL volumes will indivually be crafted according to your wishes in Germany! There are mounting options and texture options to choose, of course also your dream color.

**SPLIT GRIP LINE**

Completely new range of 126 polyester – dual tex holds.



**SPLIT GRIP – MEDIUM CRIMPS**

Delicate possibilities to give bad feet afterwards or just pure crimping.



**SPLIT GRIP – FLAT XX-LARGE HANDHOLDS:**

For sure a set of holds you want to use everytime again!



# BIGGA BETTA BETA!

BETA Volumes were born out of the increasing demand for volumes in climbing walls, more specifically: extravagant and elaborate wooden volumes. Combining BETA's wealth of experience in route setting and moderate craftsmanship, we designed a large range of outstanding, wall changing volumes with amazing aesthetics for the globally growing climbing community.

BETA Volumes are made out of the finest birch plywood. The volumes come without t-nuts to offer more flexibility, creativity and style for setting! All screw placements are reinforced with metal screw washers. Made in Germany.



## WAVES

Premium eyecatcher for 30° and steeper walls. "It's easier to find someone strong enough to help you mount this one than it is to find a good route setter - betta to be not alone".



## PINCHES

"Bigga hands - smaller pinches". Not necessarily in this case. The big variety of pinches contains fat, flat, extra-long and especially cone shaped pinches.

## MINI FINS

With the growing demand for volumes, get rid of your old-school holds and replace them with our handsome mini fins.



## FINS AND FLIPPERS

Not enough good holds? Or did you choose a wall too steep for your slab? With these big triangular volumes every wall can become a slab - just stack up some fins or flippers.



## HARPOONS

Out of ideas? Or simply not in the mood to be creative? These ledges guarantee the perfect line without having to be inventive. Ramps, prows and arêtes can be set in the blink of an eye.

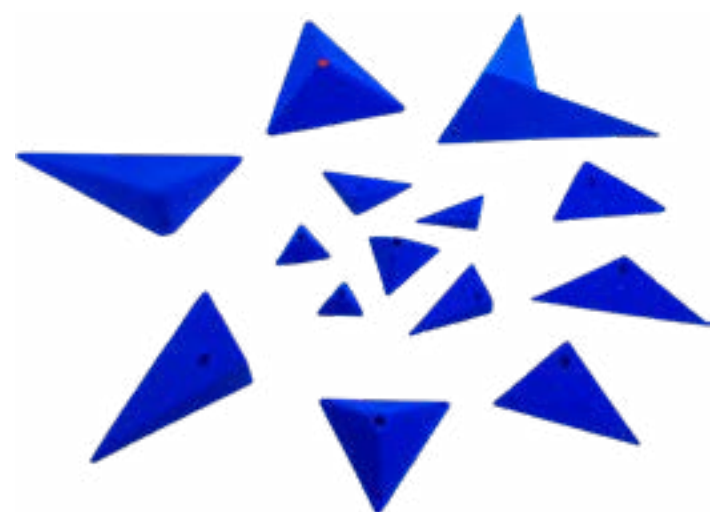


**EUROHOLDS**  
THE CLIMBING HOLD FACTORY

EuroHolds is an association of climbing hold designers and own a modern and automated polyurethane production line at Spain. Currently now we are producing for 12 different brands from all over the world, and we sell our entire catalogue to the European zone through our main web shop [www.euroholds.com](http://www.euroholds.com) where you can find more than 2.000 different shapes

Visit us and take benefit of immediate checkout with **free shipping and fast delivery on almost all european countries**. Euroholds complies with official standards of safety and certification.

\*Ask for your wholesale account at [sales@euroholds.com](mailto:sales@euroholds.com) if you own a climbing gym or you are a professional routesetter or are involved in any way in the climbing business.



### TRIANGLES

All the straight lines you need for setting modern boulder problems. Crimps and flat edges, endless possibilities combining the whole range of triangles.



### SPEED HOLDS

Rokodromo speed holds have the exact official IFSC measures and are perfect for training purposes\*.

\*Ask us about official holds for World record certification



### SCARY FAMILY

Rounded and comfy Jugs hidden inside the giant slots, enjoy them on the steepest walls of your gym.



### BLACKMOOR FAMILY

A true fusion of style and function, the texture is low, leaning definitely towards the middle to upper end of grades, while the contact areas are a mix of crimpy, open handed and pinch. Ace for Comp's, with subtle Tri-texture thumb sprags.



### WOODEN TRAINING TOOLS

We have all you need for your training zone: System holds, different style of campus rungs, hanging tools such as balls, cones, cylinders, peg board, slopers. Our beech wood is perfect for sweat absorbing and longevity.



### DUALTEX PLYWOOD VOLUMES

Rokodromo's Plywood Volumes are resin coated with extra durable and textured multi-layer silica, giving the perfect smooth texture. Our High Quality volumes have steel reinforced inserts for a sure and reliable fixing to the climbing wall which greatly extends the product life span.



# AIX HOLDS & VOLUMES

www.aix.cz

AIX is a Czech company founded in 1996 by one of the best Czech and Slovak sport climbers - Andrej Chrastina. Due to the lack of good hold shapes in his region Andrej started to design holds to train for the World Cups and also for route-setting on competitions on his own. At the beginning he manufactured holds with a mixture of epoxide resin filled with sand under the brand 'a.9'. After several months of research and experiments, Andrej changed from this old fashioned and slow

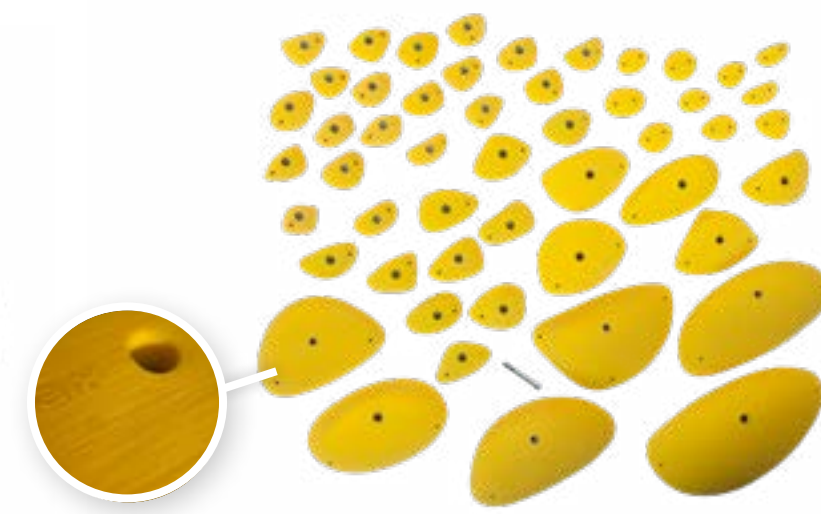
way of producing to polyester composite in the year 2003. He changed not only production, but also the brand name to 'AIX'. In the following years the AIX company was also busy with the construction of climbing walls from plywood and gained experience how to make plywood volumes, too. On Outdoor show in 2008 AIX was the first manufacturer, who offered plywood Volumes together with the holds.

## AIX VOLUMES

AIX ply wood Volumes are made from water-resistant birch plywood 18mm. The surface of the volumes is covered with more layers of polyester adhesive + silica sand filling. The final painting is from extra mat polyurethane which is especially developed for this purpose. The paint is waterproof, UV stable, hard and durable to resist climbing shoes rubber or pressure water cleaner. Each screw hole for fixing has steel washer against damaging by multiple assembling.



AIX Craters with new AIX Crater Giant  
(as the benchmark is the bolt M10 x 100mm)



Newly increased AIX RinX Range  
(as the benchmark is the bolt M10 x 100mm)

## AIX HOLDS

Since 2010 are all big AIX holds with reducer (hollow back) produced from polyurethane resin in the Composite-X factory. All current AIX holds from PU are made from the Dannomond and only with stainless

steel washers through which AIX provides climbers the highest possible quality of materials on the market. AIX offers besides PU holds also large range of holds made from polyester resin in many colors.





KILTER

# KILTER GRIPS



Kilter Grips give routesetters large families of well-designed holds that make it easy to dial in a grade while keeping an aesthetic. Every hold is comfortable, with the best texture on the market and a variety of hand positions that are pleasant to grab.

Kilter grips are shaped by Ian Powell and our Haptic Design Team of pro shapers, setters and climbers including Jeremy Ho and Jimmy Webb. Fbloc are all Dan Yagmin.

#1 Favorite Hold Company four times in the setter-judged CBJ Grip List. 2018 All Time Favorite Brand.

Kilter has unique shapes produced at both Aragon and Composite-X in only the best polyurethanes. Hundreds of new shapes every year. They all go together and are available worldwide.

## WINTER

Super clean, simple, useful shapes that never feel ordinary. Everything you need for good setting, nothing you don't. Directional. Always comfortable. 421 holds by Ian Powell.



## SANDSTONE

Classic and beautiful interpretations of geology. Rock inspired, artist designed for directional, technical, and fun setting. US and Euro-produced work together perfectly. Bring the outdoors indoors. 572 holds by Ian Powell.



## NOAH

Winter's big brother. Simple and clean with organic curves and a touch of funk. Smooth irregularities for varied grip positions. The Noah Kaiju Huecos are legend. 571 holds by Ian Powell.



## GRANITE

Excellent take on some of mother nature's best work. Not just torn foam, Will Anglin sculpted his own granite texture, refining crystals and natural features of stone into comfortable, interesting grips. Ian filled out the line and added junction holds for branching out. 285 holds by Will Anglin and Ian Powell.

## SOUTHERN SLOPERS

Far from average slopers. Jimmy Webb brings the same legendary focus to shaping that he applies to seeking out and sending the hardest lines in the world. He was born of Southern Sandstone and his slopers, pinches, biscuits and crimps are a style all his own. Huge, but they rarely feel easy. 96 holds by Jimmy Webb.



## TRAPROCK

Works of art inspired by the natural world. Dan Yagmin's Traprock are the culmination of over 20 years as a professional artist, setter, and climber. They capture a unique East Coast rock style in a highly-functional line of holds. Stunning. 223 holds by Dan Yagmin.

## STELLA & MOSES

Stella feature deceptively simple contours, Moses elegant sandstone plates. Our close friend Keith Dickey brought years of climbing and setting, thoughtfulness, and a singular perspective into his shapes. His Stella Granite Junction line allows you to seamlessly and aesthetically blend your smooth holds with your granite. 172 holds by Keith Dickey.



## TEXTURE PLATES + JIBS

Kilter's texture plates and jibs transform volumes from basic shapes to intricate features. These comfortable, unique, technical crimps, pinches, slopers, plates and scoops in smooth and rock textures help keep the gym feeling fresh as you explore the full potential of your volumes. 304 holds from Ian Powell.

## LO RIDERS

Sleek, low-profile, custom holds shaped by Jeremy Ho, one of the most experienced Routesetting Directors in North America. His vision of modern setting, where the entire route is an aesthetic installation, influenced the style of these elegantly tapered directional grips. 42 by Jeremy Ho.



## COMPLEX

Industrial design meets climbing holds. Peter Juhl of Urban Plastix has brought clean, tight architectural lines to his first series for Kilter. These rounded geometric blocks work together to perfectly dial in your hold size and positivity, making it easy to tweak difficulty, even between rounds. Futuristic. 26 holds by Peter Juhl.



## NEW 2018 - THE DUNE

Modern indoor bouldering is evolving and the use of larger, cleaner holds à la Dune is shifting the setting style away from brute strength orientated moves towards problems that place a greater reliance on technique and co-ordination, in addition to encouraging experimentation with movement.

With Dune, the frustration of not being strong enough is no longer always the barrier to success – we reckon it's hard to argue against the more engaging and playful experience that this climbing hold style offers the contemporary climber. The new range of The Dune include 162 new models for 2018.

**SLOPERS - RAIN**  
**size:** XXL - Mega  
**material:** PU and PE



### PE - POLYESTER CRISTOBALITE

We chose cristobalite resin for the manufacture of our climbing holds. A precise mix of quartz powder for the resin mortar. A touch close to the rock with unique grip sensations thanks to its hardness. PE resin is cheaper. On the other hand, it is much more stable in U.V.

### PU - POLYURÉTHANE DANNOMOND

Characteristics like higher wear resistance, bright colours, dry soft texture and superior strength make it the first choice material for Climbing holds. Route setters and gym owners alike appreciate the long life and ease of route setting it imparts in the holds.

### ECOLOGICAL HOLDS

At Agripp we are very concerned about global warming and climate change, and we believe that our composite outlet manufacturing technique contributes to the common effort of minimizing the use of fossil natural resources and minimizing emissions. Using 5 times less raw material and producing climbing holds that have the longest life in the market.

**DUNE - SLOPERS**  
**size:** XXL  
**material:** PU and PE



**PINCHES - GENESIS**  
**size:** Mega  
**material:** PU



**PINCHES - GANESH 2**  
**size:** Mega  
**material:** PU and PE



**PINCHES - YOTSU**  
**size:** Mega  
**material:** PU and PE



**EDGES - ZEN**  
**size:** M  
**material:** PU and PE



**EDGES - OCTOPUS**  
**size:** S  
**material:** PU and PE



**JUGS - COMIX**  
**size:** Mega  
**material:** PU



**JUGS - MASU 1**  
**size:** Mega  
**material:** PU and PE



**JUGS - REX**  
**size:** S  
**material:** PU and PE





**ZLAG!  
Board**

## Zlagboard.Evo

The Zlagboard.Evo is the next evolution in hangboard training: the newest product in the Zlagboard series comes with a compact, light design. It offers versatile training options on crimps, slopers, small pockets and jugs. The legendary Zlagboard Contest edges enable the athletes to compare their hang times with thousands of climbers in the world rankings. This board is suitable for individual training, and has been specifically developed for teams.



**Hold Sizes:** Jugs, Slopers (10/32°),  
**Crimps/Pockets:** (20-35 mm)  
**Material:** Alder wood board on steel frame  
**Size:** 70,5x23x8 cm  
**Weight:** 6 kg  
**App:** Free Download

## Zlagboard.Pro

The Zlagboard.Pro is the right hangboard for all performance levels, ranging from beginner to professional. It offers various grip shapes and sizes and can accompany climbers throughout their entire climbing career. On the legendary edges used for the Zlagboard Contest, you can measure your strength and compare your results with climbers from all over the world. This board is suitable for individual training, and has been specifically developed for teams as well.



**Hold Sizes:** Jugs, Slopers (10/30°),  
**Crimps/Pockets:** (10-45 mm)  
**Material:** Alder wood board on steel frame  
**Size:** 70,5x25x8 cm  
**Weight:** 7 kg  
**App:** Free Download

# TRAIN SMART – CLIMB HARD!

The Zlagboard allows you to train with cutting-edge routines developed by pro climbers, complete with our associated app that manages hang and pause times, intervals, and rest days. The statistical overview gives detailed information on development and progress. Most importantly, training with the Zlagboard is motivating and fun!



measure | train | analyse | compete | share |



### FREE APP INCLUDED

Zlagboards come with a free app with individualised training plans. The innovative app allows climbers to train according to the newest plans, written by highly recognised international climbing coaches. Climbers can also create customised workouts for more tailored training plans. The Zlagboard app is the perfect assistant for planning team workouts and keeping track of athletes' performance.

While training on the Zlagboard, you will benefit from the knowledge of some of the world's best coaches, who have designed training programs for the specific requirements of different fitness levels.

## ZLAGBOARD.CONTEST

The official Zlagboard hang-time contests take place worldwide at climbing events.

Participants can measure their finger strength and compete with climbers from all over the world. The contest is straightforward: participants go for a maximum hang-time on the legendary 2cm wooden edges. The Zlagboard app measures time precisely and records all contestants' hang-times in the official world rankings.

### Event marketing

Engage gym climbers with periodic contests. License the Zlagboard Contest setup to create your own contest and rankings. Define your individual contest holds and rules. Collect contacts, evaluate the ranking results, and stay in touch with participants.





# KRAXL-BOARD. AUTHENTIC. STRONG.

Kraxlboard products originate from the heart of South Tyrol, surrounded by some of the most beautiful mountain sceneries to be found on this planet and home of world-famous climbers and alpinists. It is here that in 2014, master carpenter Georg Oberrauch was inspired by his friends to build a training board.

Thanks to a flawless fabrication from multilayer beech wood and a variety of grip shapes, pocket depths and slants the Kraxlboard is esthetic in appearance and versatile in functionality. It offers climbers of all levels a diverse and challenging training experience.

To up the challenge a variety of add-ons, such as the Pegboard, slopers and rings, turn our board into a multifunctional gem. Further training devices such as the Snake Pull-up Bar and the Coreboard complete the Kraxlboard product range, providing all you climbers out there with fun and diverse training options.



### KRAXLBOARD ROCK

This sophisticated Kraxlboard offers extremely diverse ways to train your finger and arm strength. It comes with various rungs on 3 levels - with varying pocket depths, shapes and angles, a pair of roughened slopers on the top and two 80 mm round slopers on the bottom for your pinch grip training. The generous jugs help you finish off your fatigued arms.



### ROUND SLOPERS

These solid wood slopers are a nifty add-on for the Kraxlboard Rock. They come in pairs, with a diameter of 150 mm and an elaborately ribbed finishing.



### PEGBOARD

Made from exceptionally resilient laminated beech wood our pegboard is suitable for direct mounting on a wall. Delivery includes 4 beech wood pegs and mounting screws. The pegboard is great for your arm workout and for training your ice climbing skills!



### SNAKE PULL-UP BAR

Our Snake Pull-up Bar is specially shaped so that it meets the anatomical requirements of the human body. When you grasp a straight bar, your wrists bend unnaturally, thus causing contusion. This is why our Snake bar uses different angles to ensure healthy and pleasant training. Made from multilayer beech wood, this innovative pull-up bar is not only exceptionally resilient, but also convinces with its skin-friendly haptics and appealing design.



### GYMNASTIC RINGS

Our highly resilient training rings made from laminated beech wood will bring your strength training to the next level. These guys have a special grip with great absorbency, which makes for excellent training conditions. They come with 2 adjustable straps.

### COREBOARD ADVANCED SET

This Kraxlboard product ensures efficient training for the whole body. Thanks to the ball casters mounted on the bottom side, our Coreboard can be rotated in any direction, making it a very versatile tool for your roll out training. By exchanging the casters with optionally one or two wooden half-spheres or a wooden roller, the board can be used as a balance board for "instability" exercises.





SHOW YOUR CUSTOMERS WHAT TO TRAIN FOR



Vertical-Life climbing app

FREE APP GUIDE



WE DISTRIBUTE CLIMBING GUIDES FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD. sales@vertical-life.info



Nürnberg Convention Center 22.-23. November 2019



halls & walls The climbing hall meeting of the German Alpine Club

www.hallsandwalls.de

# JUST4RENT

The ultimate rental shoe



5 mm  
rubber sole

4 mm rubber rand

7 mm rubber toe



Size range: 35-49 EUR  
(full sizes only)



Comfort: Easy fitting  
generous last shape



Rubber mix: Extra  
durable and abrasion  
resistant



Pull strap 1: Size  
marked on strap



Pull strap 2: Button  
to join the pair



**BOREAL**  
THE ART OF CLIMBING

[www.borealoutdoor.com](http://www.borealoutdoor.com)