

#3
2020/21

ROUTE SETTER

a magazine for route setters
and climbing gyms

SETTING AROUND THE WORLD

Common ground and contrasts

SHARMA CLIMBING

Going (and growing) with the flow

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Memphis Rox and Womxn Up
make inclusiveness
their measure for success

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

How to build resilience

PRODUCT CATALOGUE

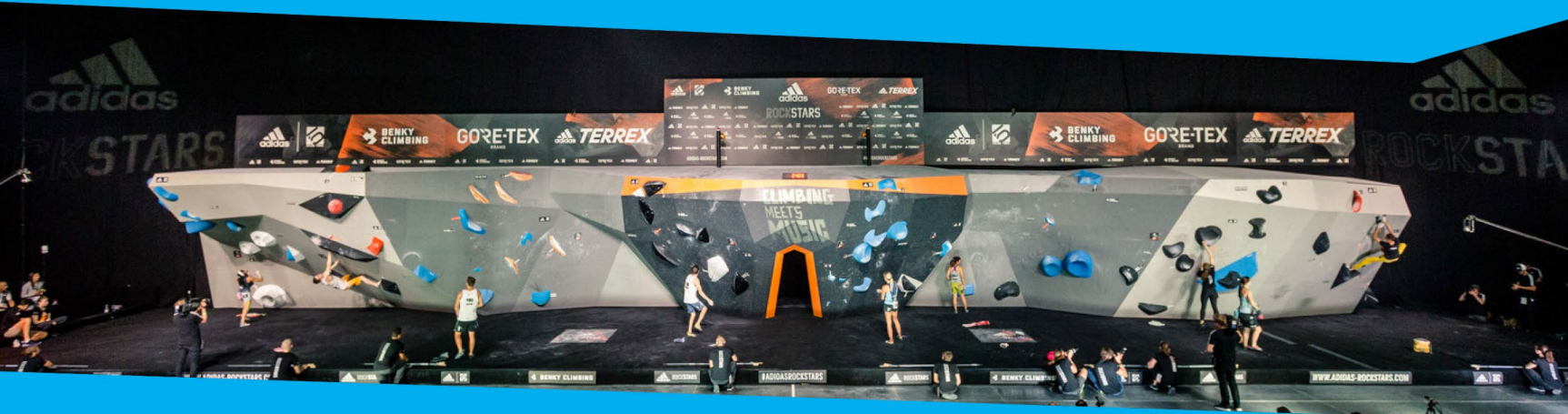
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EDITOR'S NOTE

2020: The Year of the Reset

There's that English expression, "hindsight is 20/20". How fitting it is that as we enter the final months of 2020 we're left with so much to look back on. Undoubtedly, we've all had a few of those, "had I known then what I know now" moments. 2020 will forever be remembered as the year that went off-script. The year that forced everyone and every industry to reevaluate and reset.

Globally we've seen gyms, brands, industry experts and influencers that would often be regarded as competitors come together in an effort to strengthen and safeguard our industry. Time and time again this year we've been faced with unforeseen challenges and we've put our collective heads together to come up with sustainable solutions and policies that have allowed us to overcome obstacles and to work and climb again safely.

This release marks our third issue of Route Setter Magazine. Thanks to your enthusiasm and support the project continues and we look forward to publishing further issues for many years to come. Had this year gone to plan you'd probably be reading about an Olympics route setting recap, how to manage the attendance boom at your gym, etc. Instead, in this issue we've turned more attention to crisis management, safety measures, and making climbing more accessible.

As I reflect on this year, I'm proud of how we've carried ourselves and how we've united to tackle this unforeseen crux. We still have a ways to climb and to say that it hasn't been easy would be an understatement. I'm encouraged by what we saw throughout the midsummer and fall months in the northern hemisphere when gyms, in most places, had a window where they were able to safely and successfully reopen. It reinforced the fact that if conditions allow, the desire to climb, train and visit the gym still exists in abundance. Thus, the possibility for renewed growth and profitability when we return to normality still remains. Whatever lies ahead, we look forward to climbing on with you.

Sincerely,

Matthias Polig & The Vertical-Life Team

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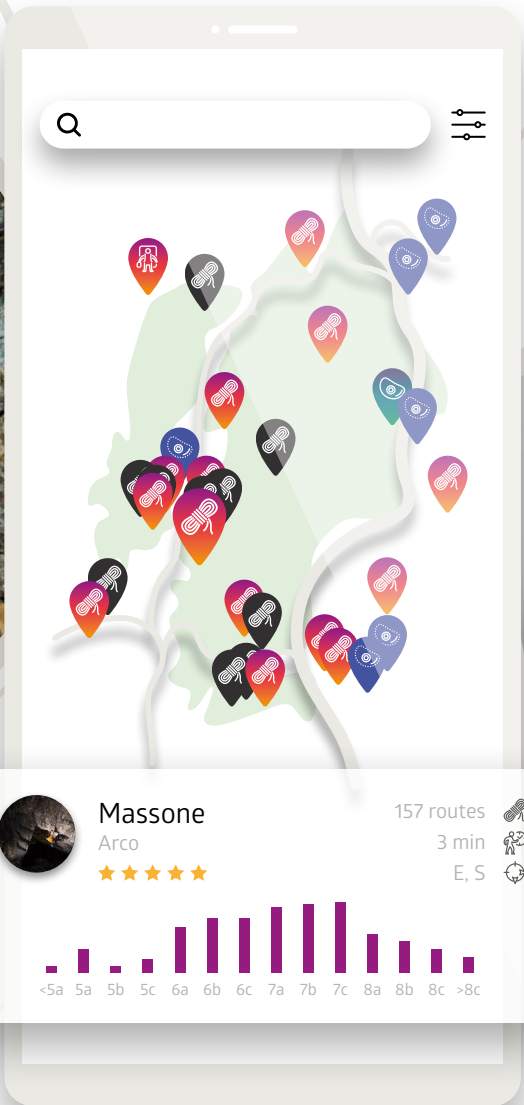
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Vertical-Life

Your worldwide climbing guide



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5 000+
Crags with topos



15 000+
Community route lists



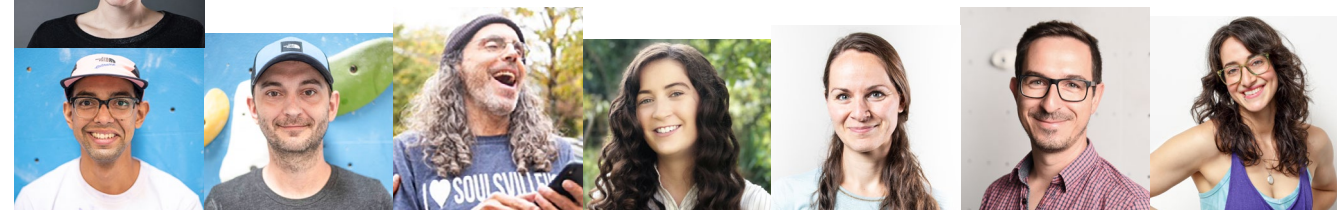
300 000+
Registered users



320+
Smart Climbing gyms



2 000+
Climbing gyms



THE FOUR PHASES OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN CLIMBING GYMS

KRISENMANAGEMENT FÜR KLETTERHALLEN

IN VIER PHASEN ERFOLGREICH DURCH DIE KRISE

TEXT: CHRISTIAN POPIEN

2020 promised to be a successful year for the indoor climbing industry. In 2019, gym operators, climbing hold manufacturers, climbing wall builders, athletes and climbing federations watched with optimism as the sport's consistent positive growth and healthy economic development continued. Sport climbing was attracting greater interest at industry summits and major international sports exhibitions. The prospect of the Olympic Games and the knowledge that sport climbing was due to be presented to a wider audience and would therefore garner even more media attention meant that the industry and all of its stakeholders were looking forward to 2020 with confidence.

The fact that things turned out differently not only came as a surprise to us all, but has also had far-reaching consequences that nobody could have predicted or imagined. Understandably, the climbing industry initially seemed to be thrown into a state of shock. Overnight, crisis management became an essential tool needed to tackle a difficult situation for the likes of which few of us were prepared.

Derived from the Greek *krisis*, the word "crisis" originally meant opinion, assessment and decision. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, gym operators and managers have had no choice but to form an opinion, reassess the constantly changing situation and make new decisions or rethink old ones. As the pandemic continues, we have to keep applying these processes and are constantly jumping back and forth between them.

We must remember that this crisis is not of our own making and has not arisen from fundamental mistakes made within the climbing industry. Once the COVID-19 crisis is resolved, public demand for climbing will be restored once again. Climbing will continue to be a sport in its own right, will keep on growing and will retain its place at the Olympic Games.

At present, it is crucial to manage this time of crisis with as much professionalism and determination as possible. It is a matter of finding solutions, developing ideas and using this enforced period of closure as effectively as we can so that we emerge from this crisis and reopen in the strongest position imaginable.

The current situation challenges us to question existing operational and industry concepts as well as gym management procedures.

Das Jahr 2020 sollte für die Kletterhallenbranche ein vielversprechendes und erfolgreiches Jahr werden. Noch im vergangenen Jahr blickten Hallenbetreiber, Klettergriffhersteller, Kletterwandbauer, Athleten und Verbände voller Zufriedenheit auf die positive und wirtschaftlich gesunde Entwicklung des Sports. Auf Fachkongressen, aber auch auf den großen internationalen Sportmessen rückte der Klettersport immer stärker in den Fokus. Die Aussicht auf eine Teilnahme bei den Olympischen Spielen und das Wissen, dass der Klettersport darüber auch einem breiteren Publikum vorgestellt werden und eine höhere Medienpräsenz bekommen würde, ließen die Branche und alle Stakeholder gespannt in das laufende Jahr schauen.

Dass es anders kommen sollte, traf uns alle nicht nur überraschend sondern mit einer solchen Wucht und solch folgenschweren Konsequenzen, wie es sich niemand vorher hätte ausmalen können. Kurzzeitig schien die Kletterbranche in eine Schockstarre zu verfallen. Von einem auf den anderen Tag war und ist auch weiterhin ein Krisenmanagement gefragt, wie es nur wenige von uns jemals vorher angewendet und vorbereitet haben.

Das vom griechischen *krisis* abgeleitete Wort Krise stand ursprünglich für Meinung, Beurteilung und Entscheidung. Seit Beginn der Corona-Pandemie stehen Hallenbetreiber und Hallenmanager permanent in der Pflicht sich eine Meinung zu bilden, die sich stets verändernde und dynamische Lage neu zu beurteilen und neue Entscheidungen zu treffen oder alte zu korrigieren. Diese Prozesse sind

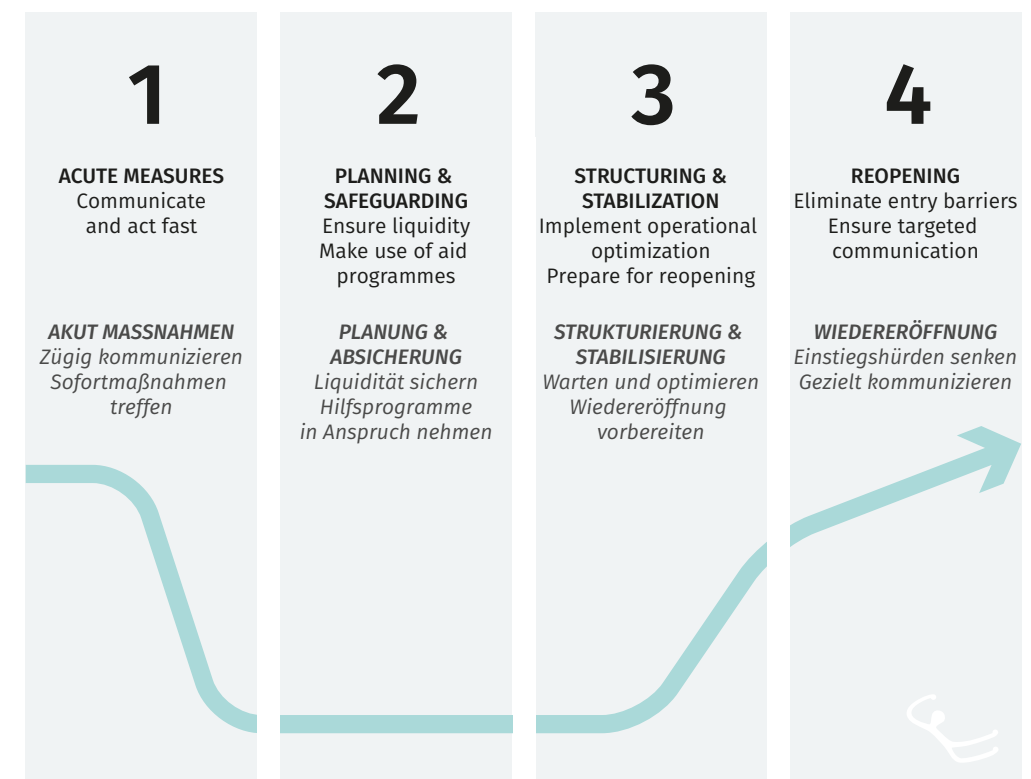
in der andauernden Pandemie immer wieder neu gefordert und wir springen ständig zwischen Meinung bilden, Lage beurteilen und Entscheidungen treffen hin und her.

Diese Krise ist nicht hausgemacht. Sie basiert nicht auf grundsätzlichen Fehlern in der Branche. Und auch nach Ende der Corona-Krise wird es wieder eine Nachfrage der Menschen nach Klettersport geben. Der Klettersport wird weiter seine Berechtigung haben, seine positive Entwicklung nehmen und seinen Platz bei den Olympischen Spielen bekommen.

Weiterhin gilt es die Zeit der Krise so professionell und so entschlossen wie möglich zu bewältigen. Es geht darum Lösungen zu finden, Ideen zu entwickeln und Schließzeiten und

"ONCE THE COVID-19 CRISIS IS RESOLVED, PUBLIC DEMAND FOR CLIMBING WILL BE RESTORED."

„AUCH NACH ENDE DER CORONA-KRISE WIRD ES WIEDER EINE NACHFRAGE DER MENSCHEN NACH KLETTERSPORT GEBEN.“



Concepts and processes need to be optimized in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness more than ever before. The crisis can be viewed as a chance to rethink how we see ourselves and to realize that this self-image might be obsolete. After all, it often takes extraordinary events and external influences to set necessary changes in motion.

If, despite everything, we are to find a silver lining in the coronavirus pandemic, we must view it as an extrinsic motivation that can help keep the industry and sport climbing on the path to economic, sustainable and healthy success.

Four phases can be identified to help us manage the ongoing developments and take the specific steps required. The more structured our actions in these four phases of crisis management, the more likely we are to largely survive the crisis and immediately get back on the road to commercial success.

The following four phases will help us to deal with this crisis:

- 1 - The acute phase
- 2 - The planning and safeguarding phase
- 3 - The structuring and stabilization phase
- 4 - The reopening phase

These four phases are not mutually exclusive, but should be merged together seamlessly to create a fluid process.

Since the current crisis is coming at us in waves, we are not moving through the phases of crisis management in a strictly chronological order. At the time of writing in November 2020, we have suddenly found ourselves in another lockdown and, despite having successfully reopened our climbing gyms earlier in the year, we are now having to take acute action and implement planning, safeguarding, structuring and stabilization measures anew.

The following detailed reflection on the four phases will hopefully help you to find new approaches and ideas for overcoming the crisis and for facing the difficult times more calmly.

1 - THE ACUTE PHASE

Most climbing gyms suddenly found themselves plunged into the acute phase when the pandemic broke out and the first lockdown was imposed. However, as the crisis continues, unforeseen situations are arising time and time again. Governments and local authorities are repeatedly issuing new decrees and regulations and ordering repeated closures with serious ramifications for climbing gyms.

Good communication is key during this phase, which should involve the following steps:

- Announce the closure of the climbing gym and mention the legal grounds for this decision.
- Inform all employees and let them know whether they will receive any financial support. During the initial few days, keep employees in the loop and allow them to participate in the evaluation and planning processes. This helps give everyone a feeling of security,

“IN ORDER TO ACT IN A STRUCTURED MANNER DURING THE ACUTE PHASE, YOU NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE GRAVITY OF THE CRISIS.”

„EIN STRUKTURIERTES UND GEORDNETES HANDELN IN DER AKUTPHASE SETZT VORAUS, DASS MAN DIE KRISE ALS SOLCHE ERKANNT HAT“

Einschränkungen so effektiv wie möglich zu nutzen, um gestärkt aus der Krise zu gehen.

Die derzeitige Lage sollte die Branche dazu auffordern bestehende Betriebs- und Branchenkonzepte aber auch Betriebsabläufe und Prozesse im Hallenmanagement zu hinterfragen und im Kontext der Wirtschaftlichkeit und Effektivität zu optimieren. Die derzeitige Lage kann eine Möglichkeit sein uns von dem bisherigen Selbstverständnis unseres Tuns und Handelns zu lösen. Oftmals braucht es besondere Ereignisse und Einflüsse von außen um notwendige Veränderungsprozesse einzuleiten.

Wollen wir die Corona-Pandemie als Chance sehen, müssen wir sie als extrinsische Motivation betrachten, die helfen kann die Branche und den Klettersport auf einer wirtschaftlichen, nachhaltigen und gesunden Erfolgsspur zu halten.

Aus den aktuellen Entwicklungen lassen sich vier Phasen ableiten, in denen konkrete Aufgaben und Maßnahmen notwendig werden. Je strukturierter wir in den vier Phasen der Krisenbewältigung handeln, desto höher die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass wir die Krise weitestgehend gut überstehen und unmittelbar wieder auf eine Erfolgsspur in unserem unternehmerischen Handeln kommen.

Folgende vier Phasen werden uns durch die Krise begleiten:

- 1 - Akutphase
- 2 - Planungs- und Absicherungsphase
- 3 - Strukturierungs- und Stabilisierungsphase
- 4 - Wiedereröffnungsphase

Diese vier Phasen lassen sich nicht strikt voneinander abgrenzen und gehen fließend ineinander über.

Da die derzeitige Krise wellenförmig über uns hereinkommt, durchlaufen wir die Phasen der Krisenbewältigung nicht chronologisch. Wir erleben gerade in diesen Zeiten [November], dass wir uns nach erfolgreicher Wiedereröffnung der Kletterhallen plötzlich wieder in einem Lockdown befinden und akutes Handeln, Planen und Absichern, Strukturieren und Absichern von Neuem beginnen.

Vielleicht hilft die intensive Auseinandersetzung mit den vier Phasen neue Wege der Krisenbewältigung zu finden, gelassener durch die schweren Zeiten zu gehen und Anregungen für neue Lösungsansätze und Ideen zu bekommen.

1 - AKUTPHASE

Mit dem Beginn der Pandemie und dem ersten Lockdown befanden sich viele Kletterhallen unmittelbar in der Akutphase. Doch auch im laufenden Fortschreiten der Krise kommt es immer wieder zu unvorhergesehenen und schwer planbaren Situationen. Regierungen und kommunale Behörden erlassen neue Verfügungen und Bescheide mit weitreichenden Konsequenzen für Kletterhallen, vielerorts führen sie plötzlich zu erneuten Schließungen und zu akuten Schwierigkeiten.

even if you do not know all the answers and solutions.

- Inform partners and co-owners of the situation and coordinate a joint response.
- Inform customers and the public of the closure and ask them to be patient as you find answers to common questions, such as how to handle annual and monthly memberships.
- Immediately take all possible measures to protect your employees. In some countries, this is likely to include registering for a reduction in working hours, furlough and short-term unemployment, etc.
- Contact your tax advisor and update them about the current situation and the ramifications of the gym closure.
- Proactively inform your bank and lenders about how the current developments are affecting you and assure them early on that a very structured crisis management plan is in place. Ask specifically about the types of financial support available and ask your bank and lenders to keep you informed about ongoing developments.
- Take all measures to secure liquidity. Examples include:
 - Applying for a deferral of tax and advance tax payments
 - Applying for a reduction in social security contributions
 - Asking for your rent to be deferred or reduced (contact your landlord)
 - Reducing all consumption of utilities in your gym
 - Checking all current contracts and requesting a freeze on all non-essentials

In order to act in a structured manner during the acute phase, you need to recognize the gravity of the crisis, even if you cannot yet fully understand and evaluate it. An acute crisis can be easily recognized when it is brought on by a closure ordered by the government and the immediate loss of revenue. In contrast, a crisis that creeps up on you is much more difficult to notice.

The tense overall economic situation, the need for gyms to respect major operational restrictions and hygiene measures, and the wave-like course of the pandemic are all factors that require gym managers to constantly reassess and monitor their company's economic situation. Backup plans for staff deployment and good liquidity planning are more important than ever for gyms to survive the acute phase of a crisis at an early stage.

2 - THE PLANNING AND SAFEGUARDING PHASE

The acute phase is followed by the planning and safeguarding phase. Before entering this phase, it is essential that all measures to secure liquidity in the first place have been implemented. The aim is now to ensure liquidity on an ongoing basis by reducing all current expenditure to a minimum in order to gain enough time to secure the climbing gym's future.

The first task is to reduce the pressure you are under and to strive for calm so that you can find solutions for the new challenges we face. The planning and safeguarding phase should be used to take the following steps:

- Enter into discussions with employees where a reduction in salary or loss of earnings could put them on the breadline and result in them no longer earning a minimum income. Inform them of the

Vor allem ist jetzt eine gute Kommunikation gefordert. Kurz zusammengefasst lassen sich folgende Maßnahmen der Akutphase zuordnen:

- Schließung der Halle bekannt geben und auf die juristische Beschlussgrundlage verweisen.
- Alle Mitarbeiter informieren und signalisieren, ob es Hilfe zur Absicherung des Personals geben wird. Mitarbeiter im Laufe der folgenden Tage ständig über die Entwicklungen informieren und sie an den Denk- und Planungsprozessen teilhaben lassen. Dies gibt ein Gefühl der Sicherheit, auch wenn man selber noch nicht alle Antworten und Lösungen kennt.
- Gesellschafter und Mitinhaber informieren und gemeinsames Handeln abstimmen.
- Kunden und die Öffentlichkeit informieren und um Zeit bitten, um Antworten auf anstehende Fragen zu finden, z.B. zum Umgang mit Dauerkarten und Mitgliedschaften.
- Unmittelbar alle Maßnahmen zur Absicherung der Mitarbeiter ergreifen. In einigen Ländern greift hier das Instrument der Kurzarbeit, die angezeigt werden muss.
- Kontakt mit dem Steuerberater aufnehmen und über die aktuelle Lage und die Hallenschließung informieren.
- Proaktiv Banken und Kreditgeber über die Entwicklung informieren und dort schon früh signalisieren, dass man ein sehr strukturiertes Krisenmanagement betreibt. Hier schon konkret nach möglichen Hilfsangeboten fragen und darum bitten, von der Bank fortlaufend informiert zu werden.
- Alle Maßnahmen zur Liquiditätssicherung ergreifen. Exemplarisch:
 - Stundung der Steuern und Steuervorauszahlung beantragen
 - Reduzierung der Sozialversicherungsbeiträge beantragen
 - Stundung und Reduzierung der Miete beantragen (Vermieter umgehend informieren)
 - Energieverbrauch in den Hallen senken und Reduzierung der Abschläge für Energiekosten beantragen

- Bestehende laufende Verträge prüfen und ggf. die Pausierung beantragen

Ein strukturiertes und geordnetes Handeln in der Akutphase setzt voraus, dass man die Krise als solche erkannt hat, auch wenn man sie vollumfänglich noch nicht verstehen und bewerten kann. Eine von der Regierung angeordnete Betriebsschließung und der sofortige Wegfall von Einnahmen macht es

leicht eine akute Krise zu erkennen. Schwieriger wird es, wenn der Weg in eine Notlage ein schleichender Prozess ist.

Die angespannte wirtschaftliche Gesamtlage, große Betriebseinschränkungen, die geforderten Hygienemaßnahmen und der wellenartige Verlauf der Pandemie fordern die Hallenmanager gerade jetzt die wirtschaftliche Situation ihres Unternehmens stets neu zu bewerten und fortlaufend sehr eng zu kontrollieren. Backup-Pläne für den Personaleinsatz und eine gute Liquiditätsplanung sind wichtiger denn je um in der Akutphase einer Krise frühzeitig bestehen zu können.

2 - PLANUNGS- UND ABSICHERUNGSPHASE

Nach der Akutphase kommen wir in die Phase der Planung und Absicherung. Entscheidend ist hier, dass alle Maßnahmen zur Liquiditäts-

“THE PLANNING AND SAFEGUARDING PHASE REQUIRES A CERTAIN LEVEL OF CALM AND CONCENTRATION.”

„DIE PLANUNGS- UND ABSICHERUNGSPHASE BEDARF EINER GEWISSEN RUHE UND KONZENTRATION.“

- state aid for which they are now entitled to apply.
- Prepare business management evaluations, such as an annual financial statement for the previous year, as quickly as possible. Thorough documentation and accurate, up-to-date financial statements are often a prerequisite for applying for emergency aid and support loans.
- Make sure you are fully aware of the aid packages and subsidies being offered by the government and banks, and examine and evaluate them case by case.
- Continue to proactively inform your bank and lenders about all the measures you are taking to secure your company's liquidity. This is likely to be an urgently needed, confidence-building measure.
- Talk openly with your bank about ongoing financing options.
- Immediately apply for all sources of emergency aid from the government. Before seeking credit and loans, see if you are eligible for financial support that does not have to be repaid.
- Evaluate the measures initiated to secure liquidity and obtain an overview of the remaining liquidity and financing needs.
- Review and apply for deferrals of private taxes for the gym's managing directors and company owners.
- Inform your members of their current membership options. Make sure you obtain legal advice on what is required under current contract law. It can be very helpful to inform customers about the current emergency situation and to ask them to continue their existing and ongoing memberships. The primary aim of this is to secure a certain level of liquidity in order to consolidate the planning and safeguarding phase. This should be considered a short-term solution for climbing gyms.

The planning and safeguarding phase requires a certain amount of calm and concentration. It is only possible to determine the liquidity requirements and use different models to work out potential scenarios and time frames once the results of the initiated measures are known.

It will be vital to factor longer closures or additional future closures into your planning and calculations as well as to assume that these plans and calculations may have to be adjusted and corrected.

Only sound planning will enable climbing gyms to make the right decisions concerning the financing needed during periods of closure. Various options offered by private investors, banks and credit institutions are available for consideration. With a dash of creativity, it might also be feasible to find ways for your gym to generate additional income. For example, you could advertise punch cards, gym passes and gift cards for courses, classes and your pro shop or café if you have one. Climbers are also making donations to their favorite climbing gyms on platforms such as kaufnebenan.de (Germany), justgiving.com (UK) and fundly.com (USA). It should be noted, however, that although the sale of vouchers generates short-term income, it also creates liabilities. When the gym reopens, vouchers initially lead to reduced sales.



sicherung unmittelbar umgesetzt wurden. Es geht darum eine Grundliquidität zu sichern und die laufenden Ausgaben auf ein Minimum zu reduzieren, um Zeit zu gewinnen die Absicherung des Unternehmens und der Hallen vorzunehmen.

- Nur wenn es uns gelingt etwas Druck herauszunehmen und ausreichend Ruhe zu finden, sind wir in der Lage Lösungen für die neue Herausforderung und Situation zu finden. Die Planungs- und Absicherungsphase sollte genutzt werden um folgende Punkte umzusetzen:
- Gespräche mit den Mitarbeitern suchen, bei denen man Sorge hat, dass eine Reduzierung des Gehalts oder Wegfall von Einnahmen zu Existenzangst und Gefährdung der Grundsicherung führt. Ggf. auf staatliche Hilfen verweisen, welche Mitarbeiter jetzt zusätzlich beantragen können.
- Schnellstmöglich sind aussagekräftige, betriebswirtschaftliche Auswertungen, wie z.B. ein Jahresabschluss des Vorjahres, vorzubereiten. Solche belastbaren Unterlagen sind häufig Voraussetzung dafür, dass Soforthilfen und Hilfskredite beantragt werden können.
- Umfangreich über die Hilfsangebote der Regierung und Banken für Unternehmen informieren und diese differenziert betrachten und auswerten.
- Weiterhin die eigene Bank proaktiv über alle Maßnahmen informieren, die man im eigenen Betrieb zur Liquiditätssicherung vorgenommen hat. Das sind dringend notwendige, Vertrauen schaffende Schritte.
- Offen über die laufende Finanzierung mit der Bank sprechen und verschiedene Optionen abstimmen.
- Soforthilfen der Regierung sofort beantragen, wenn es sich nicht um Kredite und Darlehen handelt, sondern um Hilfgelder, die nicht zurückgezahlt werden müssen.
- Die angestoßenen Maßnahmen zur Liquiditätssicherung evaluieren und sich einen Überblick über den noch verbleibenden Liquiditäts- und Finanzbedarf verschaffen.
- Stundungen von privaten Steuern der Geschäftsführer und Unternehmensinhaber prüfen und beantragen.
- Kunden über den Umgang mit den laufenden Verträgen informieren und sich juristisch beraten lassen, welcher Umgang nach geltendem Vertragsrecht korrekt ist. Es kann sehr hilfreich sein, Kunden über die aktuelle Notlage zu informieren und kurzfristig um ein freiwilliges Beibehalten der bestehenden Verträge (z.B. monatliche Abonnements) zu bitten. Diese Maßnahme sollte primär dazu dienen unmittelbar eine gewisse Liquidität zu sichern, um die Planungs- und Absicherungsphase zu festigen. Sie stellt keine langfristige Überbrückungslösung für die Kletter- und Boulderhallen dar.

Die Planungs- und Absicherungsphase bedarf einer gewissen Ruhe

und Konzentration. Erst wenn man die Ergebnisse der angestoßenen Maßnahmen kennt, ist man in der Lage den Liquiditätsbedarf zu ermitteln und verschiedenen Szenarien und Schließzeiten zu berechnen.

Es wird dringend erforderlich sein, auch längere Schließzeiten

3 - THE STRUCTURING AND STABILIZATION PHASE

Once a solution has been found to financially secure your gym during the period of closure and loss of income, it is time to take care of maintaining your facilities and, above all, to ensure that your operations are as efficient as possible. This phase can and indeed should be used to scrutinize and adapt existing structures and processes.

These days, modern and up-to-date climbing gym management systems need to fulfill even more stringent requirements than ever before. More effective and efficient software solutions are available for many necessary tasks within the five pillars of asset management (see article in Route Setter Magazine #1).

The structuring and stabilization phase is an ideal time to carry out restructuring measures for which there are often not enough hours in the day during normal operation.

The current situation clearly shows that effective software solutions make it much easier to work during a crisis. Gym operators who were already using software solutions for their finances and accounting can now not only work from home, but can also provide the relevant data and documents for processing and applying for government support and loans more quickly.

Now is the time to implement and configure software solutions for gym management and customer communications. Periods of closure are also the perfect opportunity to train employees on how to use new systems.

Forced closures should also be used wisely for other staff training and for facility management, including the fulfilment of documentation obligations.

The phase shortly before reopening is also an ideal time to carefully review the programs currently available. It is important to check which forms of support and loans are offered and to evaluate how suitable they would be for your business. A strategy should be devised on how to apply for support and use it sensibly.

4 - THE REOPENING PHASE

It is essential to thoroughly prepare for your gym's reopening. Lay the groundwork for different scenarios and keep in mind the wide variety of factors that might influence operations.

First of all, we should anticipate longer closure periods for sports facilities. For example, when restrictions first lift, sports facilities might be excluded. It is also conceivable that certain restrictions will still be in place following the reopening and that the number of occupants may be limited.

Depending on the duration of the measures and closures enforced to contain the coronavirus pandemic, it is possible that your gym will reopen at a time of year when fewer people traditionally visit it.

oder erneute und spätere Schließzeiten in seine Planungen und Rechnungen mit einzubeziehen. Man muss davon ausgehen, dass erstellte Planungen und Berechnungen unter Umständen angepasst und korrigiert werden müssen.

Nur eine fundierte Planung ermöglicht es den Kletterhallen, über Finanzierungsmaßnahmen in der Schließzeit richtig zu entscheiden. Bei Bedarf können unterschiedliche private, staatliche oder von Banken und Kreditinstituten angebotenen Lösungen in Betracht kommen. Mit ein bisschen Kreativität lassen sich vielleicht auch Ideen entwickeln, wie Kletter- und Boulderhallen weitere Einnahmen erzielen können. Beispielsweise können Hallen genau jetzt ihre Community aktivieren und den Verkauf von Punktekarten, Jahreskarten oder Geschenkgutscheinen für Kurse, Kaffee oder Shopartikel ankurbeln, oder Plattformen wie kaufnebenan.de (Deutschland), Justgiving.com (Großbritannien), Fundly.com (USA) nutzen um von Kletterern Spenden oder Anzahlungen zu erhalten. Zu beachten ist jedoch, dass durch den Verkauf von Gutscheinen zwar kurzfristig Einnahmen erzielt, aber auch Verbindlichkeiten gegenüber Dritten aufgebaut werden. Nach Wiedereröffnung der Halle führt das zunächst zu einem reduzierten Umsatz.

3 - STRUKTURIERUNGS- UND STABILISIERUNGSPHASE

Wenn eine Lösung für die finanzielle Absicherung der Schließzeiten ohne Einnahmen gefunden wurde, beginnt die Zeit für Wartung, Pflege und vor allem Betriebsoptimierungen. Diese Phase kann und sollte intensiv genutzt werden, um bestehenden Strukturen und Abläufe zu hinterfragen und anzupassen.

Die Anforderungen an ein modernes und zeitgemäßes Anlagenmanagement sind in den letzten Jahren erheblich gestiegen. Für viele notwendige Arbeiten innerhalb der 5 Säulen des Anlagenmanagements (s. Artikel im Route Setter Magazine #1) können heute effektivere und schnellerer Lösungen aufgesetzt und angewendet werden. Jetzt besteht die Chance Umstrukturierungsmaßnahmen vorzunehmen, für die im laufenden Betrieb oftmals nicht die nötige Ruhe und Zeit bleibt.

“WE NEED TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT HOW WE CAN MAKE OUR SPORT MORE ACCESSIBLE TO A WIDER AUDIENCE.”

„VERSTÄRKT WERDEN WIR UNS MIT DER FRAGE BESCHÄFTIGEN MÜSSEN, WIE WIR DEN SPORT EINEM BREITEREN PUBLIKUM ZUGÄNGLICH MACHEN KÖNNEN.“

Die derzeitige Krise zeigt deutlich, dass gute und funktionierende Softwarelösungen das Arbeiten während der Krise deutlich erleichtern. Wer früh auf stabile Softwarelösungen für Finanzwesen und Buchhaltung gesetzt hat, kann nun nicht nur von zu Hause aus arbeiten, sondern auch schneller die relevanten Daten und Dokumente für die Bearbeitung und Beantragung von staatlichen Hilfen und Krediten bereitstellen.

Softwarelösungen für das Hallenmanagement und die Kundenkommunikation können jetzt gut eingeführt und konfiguriert werden. In eventuellen Schließzeiten bleibt Zeit Mitarbeiter in neue Systeme einzuschulen. Zeiten, in denen die Kletterhallen nicht geöffnet sein dürfen, sollten außerdem intensiv für anderweitige Mitarbeiterschulungen und für das Gebäudemanagement mit den notwendigen Dokumentationspflichten genutzt werden.

Die Phase kurz vor Wiedereröffnung ist auch ein guter Zeitraum um sich noch einmal in Ruhe und mit Sorgfalt mit den aktuellen Hilfsan-



geboten zu beschäftigen. Es gilt zu prüfen, welche staatlichen Hilfen und Kredite angeboten werden und worin sie sich unterscheiden und welche zum eigenen Betrieb und zur individuellen Situation jedes Einzelnen passen. Es sollte eine eigene Strategie dazu entwickelt werden, wie die Hilfen sinnvoll eingesetzt und sinnvoll beantragt werden.

Die derzeitigen Corona-Hilfsangebote sollten nicht als reine Hilfen, sondern als wichtige, betriebswirtschaftliche Werkzeuge und Instrumente verstanden werden, die es im Kontext der eigenen Unternehmensstrategie richtig einzusetzen und anzuwenden gilt.

4 - WIEDERERÖFFNUNGSPHASE

Es wird zwingend erforderlich sein sich frühzeitig auf die Wiedereröffnung der Hallen vorzubereiten. Dabei sind nicht nur verschiedene Szenarien sondern auch unterschiedlichste Faktoren und neue Ausgangssituationen zu berücksichtigen.

Zunächst einmal sollten wir durchaus von längeren Schließzeiten von Sport- und Freizeitstätten ausgehen, die auch nach der Wiedereröffnung anderer Einrichtungen andauern. Denkbar ist auch, dass eine Wiedereröffnung mit Einschränkungen und einer Begrenzung der möglichen Besucherzahl verbunden ist.

Je nach Dauer der Maßnahmen zur Eindämmung der Corona-Pandemie kann es dazu kommen, dass eine mögliche Wiederöffnung in eine Jahreszeit fällt, in der grundsätzlich weniger Besucher in die Hallen kommen.

Es ist denkbar, dass wir nicht unmittelbar an dieselbe Höhe an Besucherzahlen anknüpfen werden wie vor der Krise. Nach einem Lockdown werde vielleicht viele ursprüngliche Kunden und regelmäßige Besucher zunächst einen stärkeren Drang verspüren sich draußen aufzuhalten und sportlich zu betätigen. Ausschließen sollten wir auch nicht, dass die Bereitschaft Geld in Sport- und Freizeit zu investieren zunächst gesunken sein könnte.

Wir werden uns verstärkt mit der Frage beschäftigen müssen, wie wir den Sport einem breiteren Publikum zugänglich machen können. Es wird darum gehen die Einstiegshürde in den Sport auf verschiedenen Ebenen deutlich zu reduzieren. Dabei geht es sowohl um finanzielle Aspekte, also die Preisgestaltung, als auch um Angebote um sportliche Hürden zu überwinden, zum Beispiel attraktive Kursangebote, die den Klettersport einer erweiterten Zielgruppe zugänglich machen.

Wenn wir uns von dem Selbstverständnis lösen, dass der Sport von alleine weiter wächst und die Kunden von alleine in die Kletterhallen kommen, können wir uns darauf konzentrieren neue Zielgruppen zu erschließen. Wir sollten uns die Frage stellen, welche Bevölkerungsgruppen wir generell, auch auf lokaler Ebene bisher noch nicht angesprochen haben. Wer sind mögliche Zielgruppen, die wir aufgrund von fehlenden Angeboten oder aufgrund von unserer Preisgestaltung noch nicht erreicht haben?

Es ist davon auszugehen, dass viele Kletterhallen das volle Potential an möglichen Kunden noch nicht erreicht hat. Insbesondere Kinder und deren Eltern werden in vielen Hallen nicht als wichtige Kunden von heute und von morgen in den Fokus gerückt.

Umfangreiche Kursangebote können hier Abhilfe schaffen. Bestehende Kurskonzepte sollten überprüft und angepasst und neue Kurskon-

It can be assumed that many climbing gyms have not yet attracted all the potential customers out there. Lots of gyms, for example, do not perceive children and their parents as an important customer group for the future.

An extensive program of courses can be hugely helpful when addressing new target groups. Existing courses should be reviewed and adapted accordingly, while new courses should also be developed. **Courses need to be designed as a primary tool for acquiring new customers rather than as an add-on for generating additional income. This is especially the case if they are aimed at beginners.**

Course programs like this should have the following primary objectives:

1. To familiarize the participants with sport climbing so that they start to enjoy it and decide to continue climbing.
2. To generate enthusiasm about your climbing gym among course participants so that they begin to identify with it and want to return.

While it is essential that the courses convey technical and climbing-specific content, the above-mentioned goals need to be an integral part of the concept.

By formulating specific goals, looking at the market situation with a critical eye and viewing courses from the perspective of potential customers, it is possible to create new offers, attract new visitors and convert them into loyal customers. In this respect, the coronavirus crisis should be seen as an opportunity to break new ground in sports facility management within a climbing gym.

We hope that consistent and focused action using the four phases of crisis management will help reduce the economic consequences felt as a result of the current situation and will make it easier for climbing gyms to get back on the road to success.

zepte entwickelt werden. **Es geht darum Kursangebote – insbesondere, wenn sie sich an Anfänger richten – als primäres Instrument zur Neukundengewinnung zu verstehen und nicht als zusätzliches Angebot um Gewinne zu erzielen.**

Solche Kursangebote sollten folgende Primärziele haben:

1. Der Kunden findet generell Gefallen am Klettersport und möchte ab jetzt weiterhin aktiv klettern.
2. Der Kunde begeistert sich für deine Kletterhalle, beginnt sich mit ihr zu identifizieren und möchte wiederkommen.

Die Vermittlung der klettertechnischen und spezifischen Inhalte ist enorm wichtig, darf aber die oben genannten Ziele nicht überlagern.

Durch Benennung von konkreten Zielen, durch eine kritische Betrachtung der Marktsituation und durch einen Perspektivenwechsel auf die Seite jener Menschen, die noch nicht Kunde in der Kletterhalle sind, kann es gelingen neue Angebote zu schaffen und neue Besucher langfristig als Kunden zu gewinnen. Tatsächlich ist auch hier wieder die Krise als Chance zu sehen um neue Wege im sportlichen Anlagenmanagement einer Kletterhalle zu gehen.

Ein konsequentes und fokussiertes Handeln entlang der vier Phasen der Krisenbewältigung soll zu einer Minderung der negativen wirtschaftlichen Folgen führen und einen leichteren Weg zurück auf die Erfolgsspur ermöglichen.

CHRISTIAN POPIEN

Born: 1978

Lives in: Gummersbach, Germany

Background: CEO Climb-Inn Klettersport GmbH & Co. KG, certified social pedagogue / social worker

It is also entirely plausible that your gym will experience a drop in visitor numbers immediately after reopening compared to the numbers recorded before the crisis. After a lockdown, many previous customers and regular visitors may initially feel a greater desire to be outside and to engage in outdoor physical activities. We also can't rule out the possibility that investment in sport and leisure activities may experience an initial decline.

We need to look more closely at how we can make our sport more accessible to a wider audience. This will require us to significantly reduce the barriers to entry and to examine all the contributing factors. In addition to financial aspects such as pricing and special offers, this will involve promoting attractive courses that make climbing accessible to a broader target audience.

If we break away from the conception that our sport continues to grow by itself and that customers visit our climbing gyms without any active effort on our part, we can concentrate on attracting new target groups. We should ask ourselves which groups of the population we have not yet addressed, including at the local level. Which target groups were we not yet reached due to a lack of suitable offers or our prices?

Christian Popien started climbing at the 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, has operated the DAV Kletterzentrum Wupperwände since 2006 and has been the co-owner of the Bahnhof Blo Bouldercafé Wuppertal since 2016. From 2007 to 2016, Christian was one of the five creative minds to help develop the HardMoves Boulder League into one of the largest bouldering events in Europe. Today, he works closely with the German Alpine Association to develop and publish concepts and standards, and since 2013, he has increasingly specialized in consulting with and renovating climbing gyms. Christian lives with his wife and three sons in Gummersbach, Germany.

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

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IMPACT STUDY

GYM MANAGERS' SURVEY

SURVEY CONCEPT, ANALYSIS: CHRISTIAN POPIEN & VERTICAL-LIFE
SEPTEMBER 2020



As climbing gym operators, we are often asked these days how we are coping with the coronavirus pandemic. Both the outdoor industry and climbing scene are looking anxiously at the climbing gyms and how they are getting through the crisis.

We tried to capture the mood among climbing gym operators by conducting a survey throughout the month of September. Due to the extreme dynamics of current developments it is very difficult to collect relevant and valid data. Chances are the gym operators' responses would already look different today, as the following example shows.

A total of 138 climbing gyms took part in the survey. At the end of September, almost 55% of the respondents were still convinced that there would be no further lockdown. At the time of publication of this magazine in November 2020, climbing gyms in many European countries are already closed again, or have to stick to even greater restrictions than before.

The 138 responses showed hardly any regional differences, therefore we took the liberty of presenting the results as an overall picture without differentiating between countries and without claiming to provide a completely representative result.

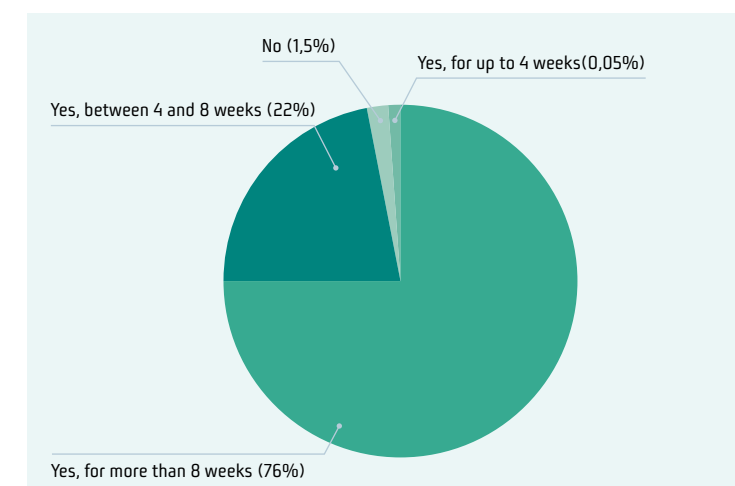
In general, our findings underline the impression of several industry experts and trade associations that the climbing gym industry has so far made it through the coronavirus crisis and the first lockdown in spring 2020 quite well.

Although, as expected, more than 75% of the respondents stated that they were experiencing financial difficulties. They also confirmed that they came out of the first lockdown with very little or no new debts and liabilities. Despite operations with clear capacity limits, the majority of those surveyed are still convinced that they can work profitably.

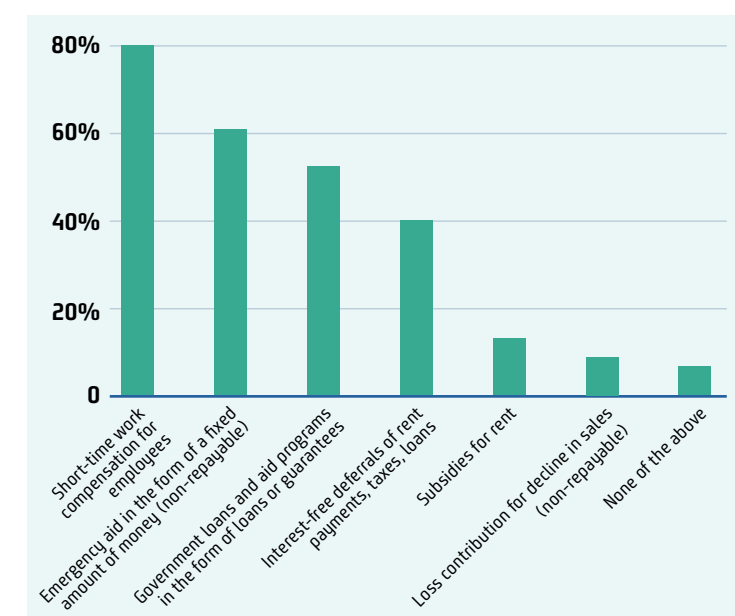
A clear assessment of the future development and growth in indoor climbing is impossible to make. The current dramatic increase in coronavirus case numbers and a second lockdown in several countries hardly allow reliable statements, and yet we are experiencing an industry that is looking boldly and confidently on to the year 2021.

In the last few months, however, we have seen that it will be necessary to better analyse and evaluate the indoor climbing industry in the future, in order to contribute to better lobbying at a political level. A global study with the support of international associations would be helpful and a desirable goal for the near future.

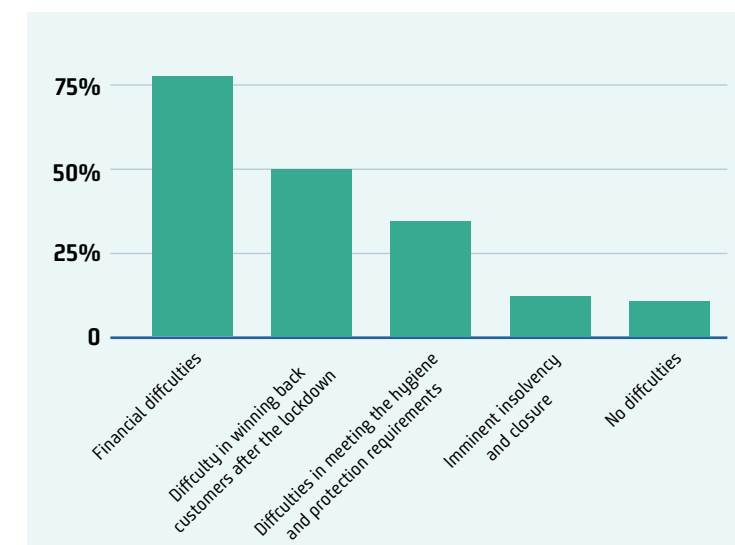
DID YOUR GYM HAVE TO BE CLOSED DUE TO A FIRST LOCKDOWN?



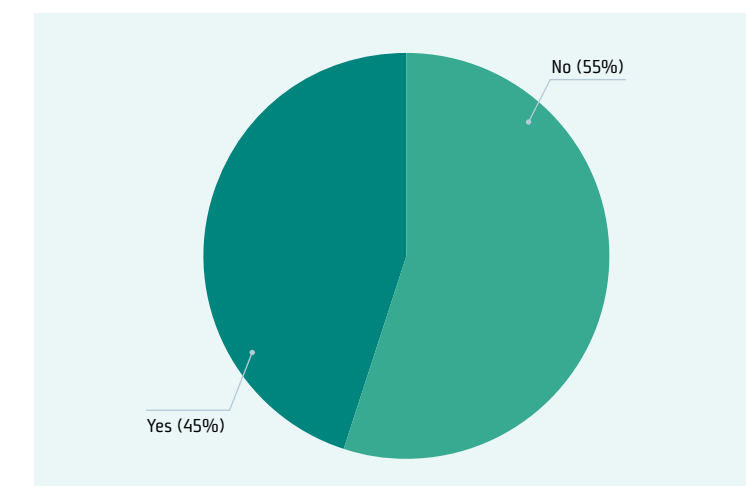
WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT AID WAS OFFERED IN YOUR COUNTRY / REGION?



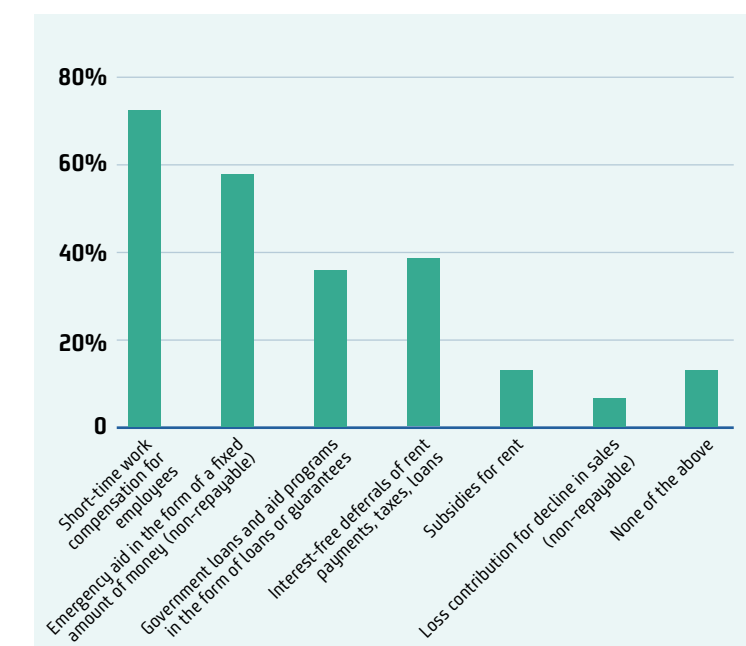
WHAT CHALLENGE HAS YOUR GYM HAD TO OVERCOME DUE TO THE PANDEMIC?



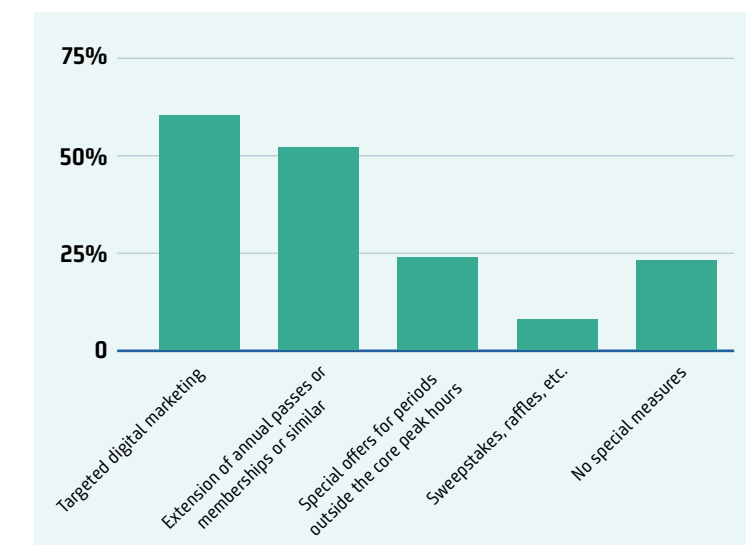
DO YOU THINK THERE WILL BE A LOCKDOWN AND/OR FORCED CLOSURE OF THE GYM DURING THE COMING AUTUMN/WINTER?



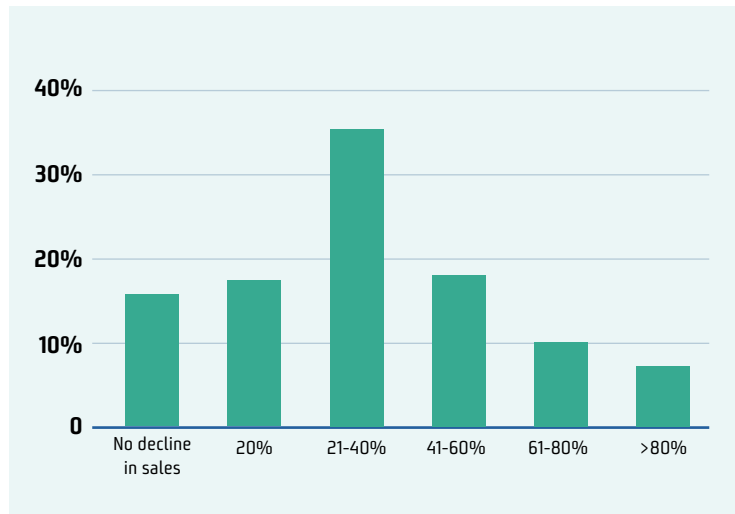
WHAT GOVERNMENTAL AID DID YOU ACTUALLY APPLY FOR?



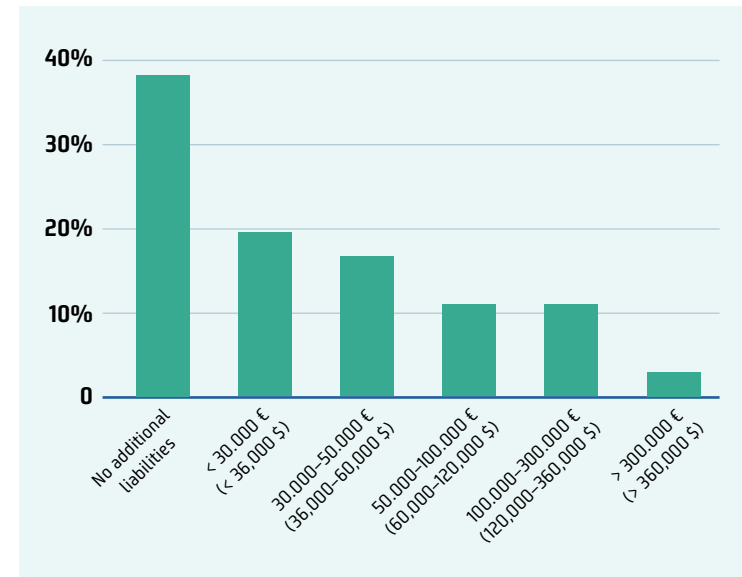
WHAT MEASURES HAVE YOU TAKEN TO GET CUSTOMERS BACK INTO THE GYM OR TO ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS?



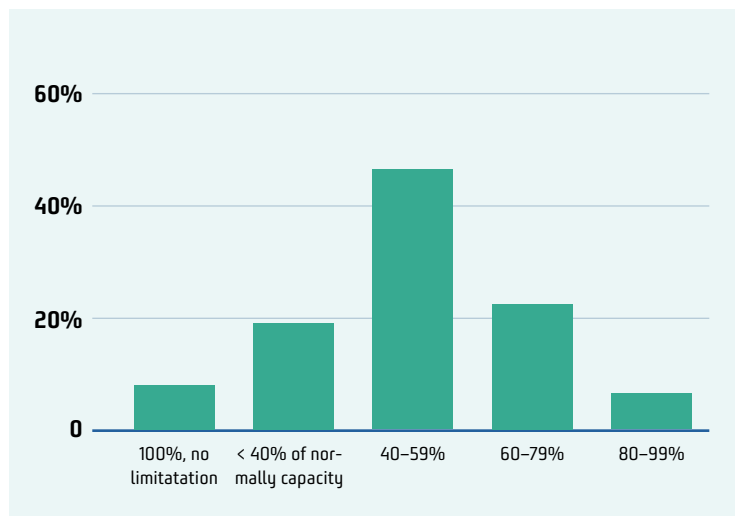
HOW BIG IS THE DECLINE IN SALES SINCE REOPENING COMPARED TO THE REFERENCE MONTHS OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR?



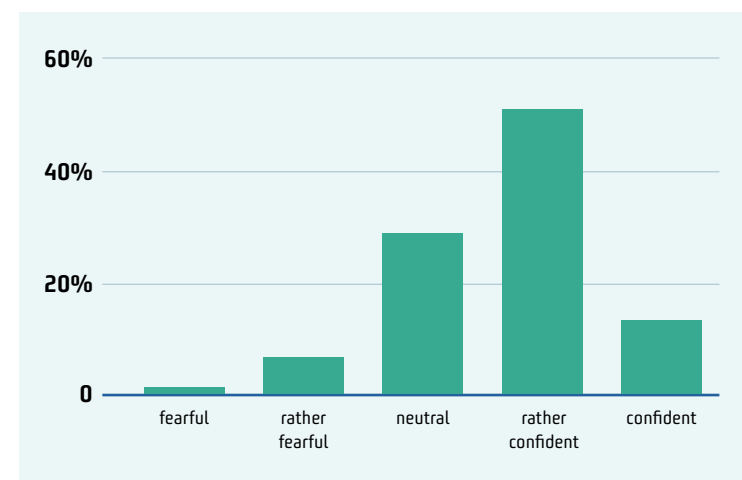
WHAT AMOUNT OF PURE LIABILITIES HAVE YOU BUILT UP THROUGH DEFERRALS OR NEW LOANS DUE TO THE CORONA PANDEMIC?



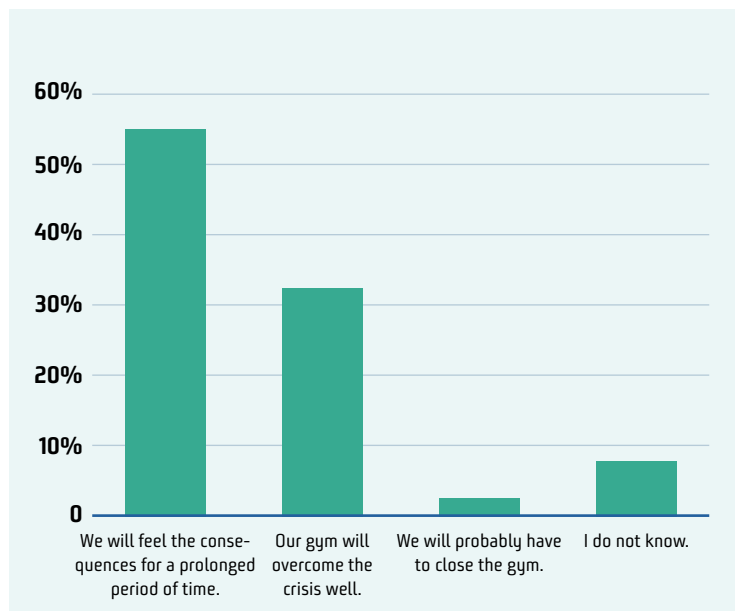
WHAT IS THE CAPACITY LIMIT FOR YOUR GYM AFTER REOPENING?



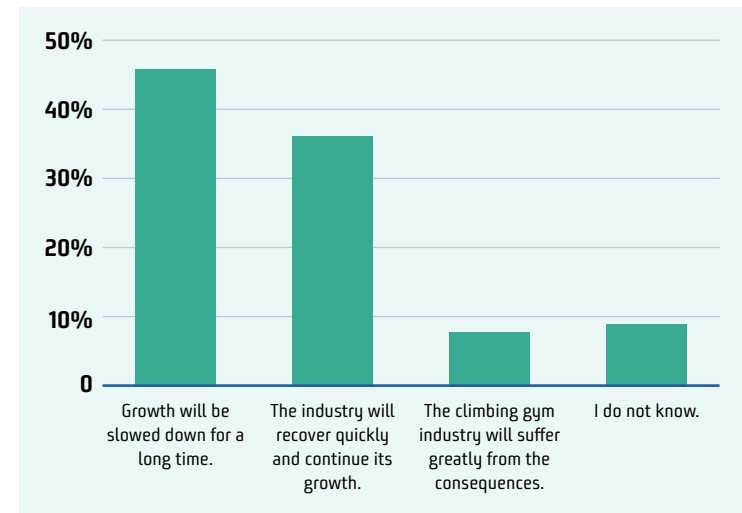
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE GENERAL MOOD OF YOUR VISITORS IN VIEW OF THE DANGERS OF THE PANDEMIC?



HOW WILL THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CORONA PANDEMIC AFFECT YOUR GYM IN THE LONG RUN?



HOW DO YOU THINK THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CORONA PANDEMIC WILL AFFECT THE INDOOR CLIMBING INDUSTRY IN YOUR COUNTRY IN THE LONG RUN?



LOCKED DOWN, BUT CLIMBING UPWARDS

INTERVIEW WITH BOB GIESBERTS, OWNER OF RADIUM BOULDERS IN MAASTRICHT, THE NETHERLANDS

INTERVIEW: CHRISTIAN POPIEN

CP: We talk to Bob Giesberts, owner of Radium Boulders in Maastricht, the Netherlands, about obstacles, uncertainties and positive developments encountered on the road to reopening climbing gyms.

CP: Bob, you own a bouldering gym in the Netherlands, where you're from. But perhaps you could briefly introduce yourself to our readers. What exactly do you do and what is your professional background?

Bob: My name is Bob Giesberts. I'm the owner and manager of Radium Boulders in Maastricht, where I also do some route setting and training. I have a background in industrial design engineering with a PhD in biomechanical engineering. People might be familiar with my SketchUp extension for climbing walls, which many developers use to design and construct new gyms around the world.

CP: When the coronavirus pandemic hit Europe in spring 2020 and brought with it lockdown measures, including in your country, you were one of the first to turn your hand to developing solutions for climbing gyms.

When did you personally first realize that coronavirus would also affect us in Europe and perhaps force your gym to close? What thoughts were running through your mind?

Bob: I realized very late! In the Netherlands many people were still joking about the virus as it hit other countries. Even when it arrived in Italy, we did not take it seriously at all. I've since heard that the first COVID-19 patient in the Netherlands was traced back to Febru-



BOB GIESBERTS

Born: 1987
Lives in: Maastricht, The Netherlands
Background: Owner of Radium Boulders in Maastricht, PhD in Biomechanical Engineering, MSc in Industrial Design Engineering, former routesetter and youth trainer at Cube Bouldergym in Enschede.

ary, just before the Carnival celebrations. It was a long time before it sank in here that the virus had arrived in the Netherlands and that we had to take it seriously. While lockdowns were already happening in most countries in Europe, our government was still talking about herd immunity.

In the days before the lockdown more and more people started worrying about spreading the virus. Some of our team members suddenly started feeling a little under the weather and called in sick at work, so on the evening of March 16 I was working behind the bar at Radium Boulders when I got a call from my girlfriend that I had to close. Immediately. I didn't believe her; like something from out of the movies she told me to turn on the news to see for myself.

There's no point pretending that I saw it coming. I didn't see it coming at all. Like most people in the Netherlands I wasn't taking it seriously at that time and thought it was just the flu.

CP: You acted as a spokesperson for the task force of climbing gym operators, which was established in the Netherlands during the lockdown. The goal was to develop your own COVID-19 risk mitigation solutions and concepts for climbing gyms. What motivated you to initiate this task force and project?

Bob: This climbing gym operators' association used to be a trade association, which was founded in 2006. When the lockdown started, Peter, the chairman, sent a call for action to all climbing gym operators in the country upon seeing that all shops were allowed to stay open. Peter found out that the retail trade association had quickly drawn up a protocol for dealing with coronavirus, which they used to negotiate with the government. He suggested that we formulate a similar protocol for climbing and sports in general, and I volunteered to do it.

A small working group was formed. With no guidance or templates from the government we had no idea what boxes we needed to tick, so we made a very short, one-page protocol and a more elaborate one of 26 pages. We sent the latter to the branch of government responsible for reviewing protocols. Finally, after a few weeks and lots of phone calls, we received the news that they had issued a recommendation for climbing gyms to open again soon.

We managed to do all of this in the nick of time. After our positive news the government decided to stop reviewing protocols because they were being flooded by documents from all kinds of sectors and couldn't keep up. The government stopped being interested in sector-specific measures.

CP: In your view, is our industry sufficiently well structured and professional to exert influence on a political level and represent our interests through lobbying?

Bob: While we are well structured and professional, I do not think that we are big enough to have a big enough impact. So, we looked for bigger parties to join forces with.

We have a national association for all sport associations called the Dutch Olympic Committee* Dutch Sports Federation (NOC*NSF). At first, we hoped they would represent us, but this did not turn out to be the case. Unfortunately they didn't take lobbying action quickly or proactively enough.

So we turned our gaze to our own climbing gym operators' trade association and looked for similar associations of other sport providers. We ended up with a collective association representing all types of sport, from fitness to golf and horse racing. The climbing industry is by far the smallest industry represented in this group.

While we were working on our own climbing-specific protocol, this collective association, called POS, created a general coronavirus protocol for sports, which was submitted for review together with the protocol for fitness and climbing. We were told that we were the first ones to submit a protocol for review and so we felt pretty happy about that.

Then on May 6 our government introduced new measures. By then we had been closed for almost two months. We were hoping for some good news. Restaurants were allowed to reopen from June 1, followed by most other business branches including sex workers, but indoor sports were only permitted to take place from September 1. What the...?!

We later heard that the government never received our protocol covering general sports and sports were therefore deemed a low priority. The working group within the government that had reviewed our protocol had now been closed down, and this meant that nobody informed the government that the protocols for fitness, climbing and sports in general had already been completed.

In the following weeks and months, POS worked hard to lobby the government. Sports were now allowed to take place from July 1. Together, we worked hard to get the government to recognize different types of sports, but in the end sports were considered as a whole, and aspects such as space, contact and intensity were not taken into account. June was the most frustrating month, since everything except indoor sports was open to the public.

CP: One positive thing to come from the lockdown was that for the first time climbing gym operators and associations from all around the world started holding discussions about solutions, strategies and developments. Do we need to see more of this kind of cooperation and dialogue?

Bob: The lockdown brought everybody together, both nationally and internationally. I hope we'll be able to keep thinking on a global scale for a very long time. Together we can do so much more. It was interesting to meet virtually with other players from the climbing industry on a weekly basis and discuss the related measures in different countries, including whether climbing gyms were allowed to open again and under what conditions. For example, Austria was one of the first countries to consider reopening climbing gyms, but this would have been subject to the condition that every climber clean every hold after every attempt – which of course is ridiculous. We shared ideas and strategies, which was very valuable. After a few weeks of discussions, it felt like we had already discussed every possible topic, including the use of liquid chalk and the number of people per square meter. We knew exactly what we had to do to keep our gyms safe. Now we just needed to find a way to convey this to our respective governments. That was the part of the job where we couldn't support each other, everyone had to take care of it in their own country.

CP: How long did climbing gyms in the Netherlands effectively have to remain closed? When did you open again?

Bob: We were told to close on March 16 and were allowed to open again on July 1. So that's three and a half months.

CP: Were you happy with the measures and concepts you came up with, or did you have to make adjustments over time?

Bob: We were happy with our coronavirus protocol and were convinced of its effectiveness. In our view, if shops were allowed to open, we should be too. We believed that our gyms were much safer than any shop or supermarket. I still believe this to be true.

Over time, attention shifted from the danger of touching surfaces (holds) to the danger caused by aerosols (ventilation), and we adjusted our protocols accordingly. Our protocols have therefore always reflected the current science and, thanks to the amount of effort and detail we put into the initial versions of our protocols, making these adjustments was a breeze.

Since the sports sector was the last sector to reopen to the public, we were able to draw on a wealth of experience from other sectors. As such, we knew exactly what to do to get our gyms COVID-ready. I still remember July 1, the day everything reopened: it was amazing. Climbing gyms have become an important part of many people's lives. Being allowed back into this space was therefore very emotional for some climbers.

CP: All in all, the climbing gym industry seems to have come out of the crisis relatively unscathed so far. In a recent survey, 38% of climbing gym operators said they had not fallen into any additional debt. Over half stated that they are still operating profitably under the current conditions.

How do you assess the situation in the Netherlands?

Bob: The Netherlands is struggling to contain the virus. We have the highest number of infections per 100,000 people per week in Europe. We're even being compared to the United States. As of last week [October 13, 2020, editor's note] all bars have had to close again, but climbing gyms are allowed to stay open, with a maximum of 30 people allowed inside at any one time. This is therefore quite hard-hitting for the bigger gyms, but for the smaller gyms it's not that bad. On the whole, however, I don't think many climbing gyms are suffering substantially from this 'soft' lockdown.

CP: The current situation is constantly changing. Some climbing gyms in France and the United Kingdom had to close their doors again in October. What measures have you taken to prepare for what might be to come?

Bob: We know that as long as we are allowed to remain open, we'll be fine. Most gyms in the Netherlands immediately adapted to the current measure of no more than 30 people by extending their opening hours. Many gyms are now open all day every day.

In terms of preparations we have postponed some bigger investments at Radium Boulders. We still hope we can convince the government to apply a more sector-specific approach to any future measures. In the meantime, we are leading by example, so any inspection that comes our way will immediately conclude that we are not the cause of the problem.

CP: How strong do you think the climbing gym industry is? Do you think it can survive another lockdown?

Bob: That depends on the situation. If there was a one-month lockdown, we should be fine. But if it lasted half a year, the industry is not likely to survive without support from the government. A lockdown might have more severe consequences for companies that rely on climbing gyms for their income, however, such as climbing hold or shoe manufacturers.

CP: How will the coronavirus pandemic affect the climbing market in the Netherlands? What do you expect to happen in the next few years?

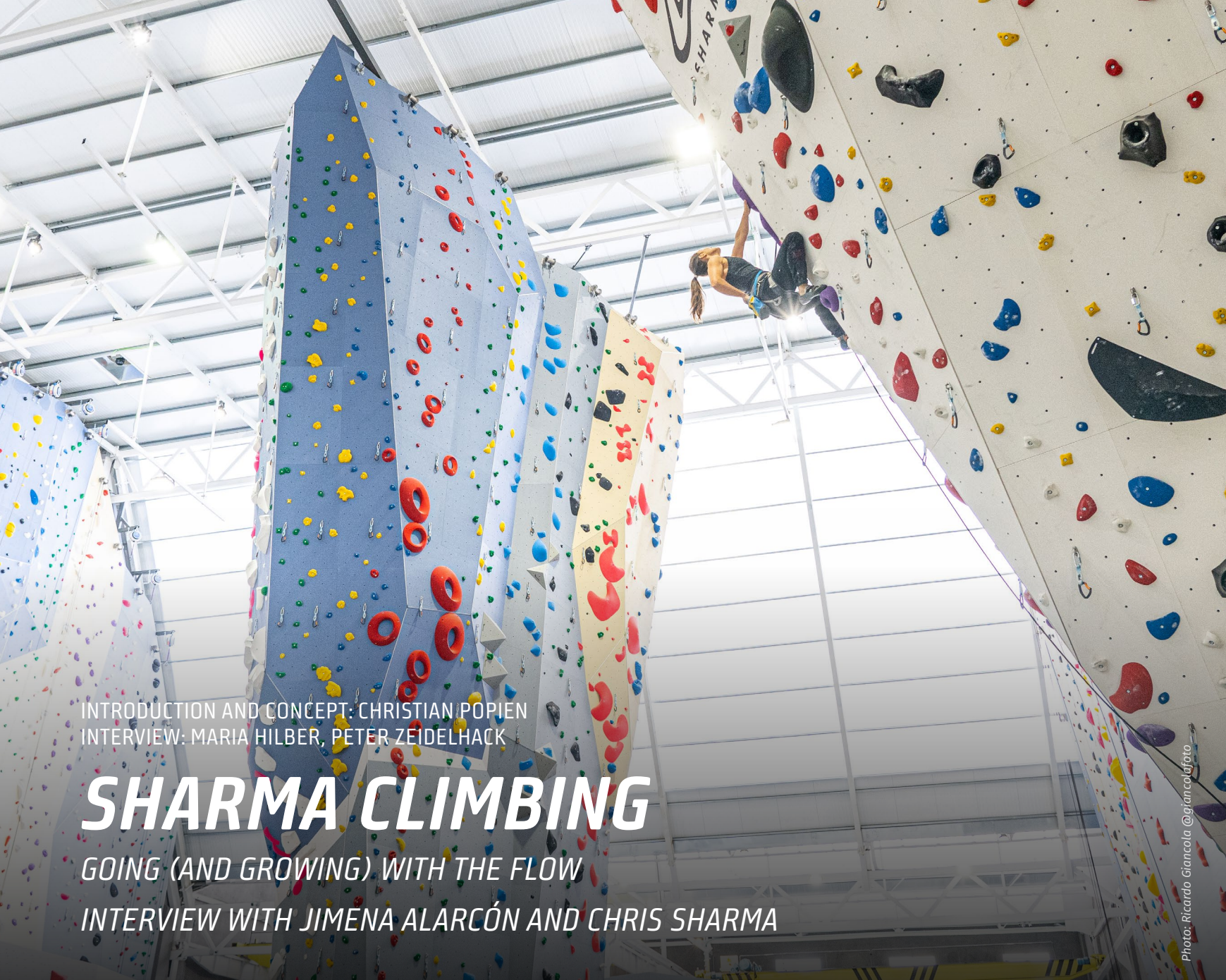
Bob: Without getting too philosophical about how the pandemic could affect things like travel and climate awareness, I think that climbing is a very important part of many people's lives, and therefore the industry won't suddenly stop growing because of the pandemic. I'm looking forward to when bigger events are possible again, or to when we can start planning again without worrying about having to cancel everything. This pandemic has made a lot of people look closer to home and realize that there's also a lot of great outdoor spaces and smaller crags nearby, meaning it's not always necessary to travel far to enjoy climbing. The pandemic has definitely brought us all together – let's keep it that way!

CP: Thank you, Bob, for sharing some fascinating insights into recent and current developments in the climbing industry. All the best for the coming period! Stay healthy! 🍀



REVO

- / Tube with independent back-up
- / Bi-directional loading
- / Panic proof mechanism



INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPT: CHRISTIAN POPIEN
 INTERVIEW: MARIA HILBER, PETER ZEIDELHACK

SHARMA CLIMBING

GOING (AND GROWING) WITH THE FLOW

INTERVIEW WITH JIMENA ALARCÓN AND CHRIS SHARMA

Photo: Ricardo Giancola @giancolafoto

When the first climbing gym in the United States opened its doors in 1987, Chris Sharma was only 6 years old. He discovered climbing as a teenager in a local gym in his hometown of Santa Cruz, California, and from then on, he got fully absorbed in the sport. This laid the foundation for a path as one of the most important ambassadors of climbing.

Chris Sharma has repeatedly lifted the bar in sport climbing with numerous first ascents, among them the benchmark 9a+ “Biographie” in Cêüse in 2001, the psicobloc masterpiece “Es Pontàs” in Mallorca in 2006, and the world’s first 9b, “Jumbo Love” in Clark Mountain, California in 2008.

It was during these years that the climbing gym landscape began to grow and a new generation of climbers grew up, finding a new star and idol in Chris Sharma. The name Chris Sharma was and still is associated with the highest standards in climbing, with pioneering achievements and an authentic, humble approach to the sport. Together with his wife Jimena Alarcón, he brought his philosophy and visionary approach to indoor climbing when they opened their first climbing gym in Barcelona in 2015.

It is not surprising that the entire scene and industry is eagerly awaiting the opening of the new Sharman Climbing Gym in Madrid – a state-of-the-art facility that combines the American gym style with European elements and will probably be one of the most harmonious and holistic climbing gyms of our time.

Shortly before the scheduled opening date of the new climbing gym in Madrid, we had the opportunity to talk to Jimena and Chris about their vision, about the development of outdoor and indoor climbing and about the challenges of the current time.

Peter: Hello Jimena, hello Chris! Thanks for taking the time to speak to us today. What were you doing just before this interview?

Chris: We were just dealing with a small problem at the front desk. Our customers have to book before coming to the climbing gym and a friend of ours had an issue with his reservation. The staff at the reception didn’t know him so he was a bit annoyed.

Jimena: The reservation system usually works quite well, but there is a bit of drama every now and then. But that’s the business we’re in!

Maria: Chris, you are well known for being a very successful climber who has set standards in and significantly influenced climbing in recent decades. Since 2015 you’ve run a bouldering gym in Barcelona, Spain, together with your wife Jimena.

What motivated both of you to get into the indoor climbing business in the first place? And why did you pick Spain?

Chris: I am part of the first generation of climbers who started out climbing in a gym rather than outdoors. I then quickly moved on to rock climbing too, which in my view is a very natural step to take. Throughout my climbing career, I’ve been lucky to have sponsors and supporters at my side who have made my life as a climber possible – something I’m hugely grateful for. At a certain point in my career I asked myself what I wanted my legacy as a climber to be and what I wanted to contribute to the sport. My dream was to launch something of my own, to create something long-lasting that would outlast my career as a top climber.

At that time I was already affiliated with Sender One in California. When I met Jimena and moved here to Barcelona with her, she already had experience in the indoor climbing business, having run her own climbing gym in Venezuela. We saw big potential in indoor climbing in Barcelona, so we decided to set up shop here. We signed the lease on this place, got married and had a kid – all at the same time. It’s been an incredible non-stop journey over the last five years!

Maria: What is your story, Jimena?

Jimena: I started running a climbing gym in Venezuela together with my ex-boyfriend when I was 20. Of course I’d heard of Chris. I remember joking with my ex-boyfriend: “If I ever leave you, I’m going to leave you for Chris Sharma,” and many years later, he called me laughing about it.

There was something very organic between Chris and me, a shared understanding. We had this vision of building something in Barcelona, and it was a mutual decision to open this gym. We motivated and inspired each other to take this step, and that’s how it all started.

Peter: So your decision to open up shop in Spain was more of an organic, go-with-the-flow decision, and wasn’t based on a rational analysis of the best markets for indoor climbing?

Jimena [laughing]: No – it was definitely not the result of any rational analysis! It was rather that we noticed that Barcelona was lacking such a facility. This fed into our vision to create a beautiful, light and airy climbing gym here.

Chris: For me it happened in the same way as everything goes in my life. I like to go with the flow and follow my heart. There are undoubtedly pros and cons to this way of doing things, but so far I’m happy with the decisions we’ve made. Our approach is probably a bit different from common business practice, in that it is less methodical. But climbing has always been more of a passion for me than a business. I believe that you need a passion in life, and that you should turn it into a reality. Do what inspires you and achieve your goals. I try to apply the same philosophy I follow in climbing to everything else in my life.



Maria: Could you describe the concept behind Sharma Climbing and the philosophy you follow?

Chris: For me it is an extension of my personal passion for climbing that I want to share with other people. In essence, I want to create a space for the community and for the entire spectrum of climbers – from beginners to experts.

The Sharma brand stands for the highest standards in climbing, and at the same time is welcoming and inclusive to everyone. The experience we have while climbing is universal. Like other climbers, I try to push my limits and for me that happens to mean striving for 9b+ or 9c. But regardless of your climbing level – whether your aim is to climb 6a, 7a or 9c – we are all equal and share the same passion. I do not want to look at climbing in an elitist way.

And because I have traveled a lot in my life, my family consists of a network of international friends. Therefore, it’s also important to me that Sharma Climbing welcomes people from all over the world.

Peter: Is this inclusiveness what distinguishes your brand from other gyms?

Chris: We haven’t tried to strategically position ourselves in a certain way, or intentionally tried to distinguish our brand from others. It has evolved as a reflection of who we are and we welcome people to be part of it.

As we grow and more and more people join our team, we are of course working to outline our approach more clearly to ensure that our values continue to be understood by others. My approach to both climbing

and my business revolves around the process, the journey, and the relationships and friendships that are formed along the way. This is what I want to communicate to our community.

Maria: *You run the climbing gym together as a couple. How are the responsibilities divided between you?*

Jimena [laughing a little]: Chris is the dreamer. He's the one who comes into work with a rough idea and pitches it to the team. Then we are the ones who start working on it and make it happen. I take care of the team and the operational part of the business, naturally with the support of our staff.

Maria: *How big is the team in Barcelona, and how many employees will you have in Madrid when your new gym there opens?*

Jimena: We have 22 employees here in Barcelona. In Madrid it will be around 35. Some work full time, but most work part time. We are also planning to establish headquarters from where we can manage the two gyms and any future additions.

Peter: *What is the concept behind your route setting program? Do you have guidelines in place to ensure the inclusiveness we were talking about?*

Chris: We have a mixed route setting team of men and women in both Barcelona and Madrid. We are constantly working to improve our setting concept. It is important to note that many of our visitors are beginners, but hardcore climbers tend to set more difficult routes. It is our job to make sure that there are enough suitable routes for everyone.

One thing I have enjoyed in particular over the last year has been adapting and developing our route setting program. We've reduced the density of boulders on the walls but increased how often we set new routes. This means that the overall amount of different boulders available remains the same throughout a month, but the walls are much better structured with better defined lines. I think this makes a big difference. I personally compare it to my experience with rock climbing outside: when I look up and a line catches my eye, it inspires me. The

same goes for a gym wall – the cleaner and better structured it is, the easier it is to spot a boulder problem that inspires you. A lower density also means people have more space and are less likely to get in each other's way, which ultimately enhances our visitors' experience.

Maria: *Is it important to you to check the boulders yourself to ensure they are in line with your concept?*

Chris: Yes, I do my own checks all the time. We've worked hard to create a routine for ourselves. In setting, there can be a lot of ego involved and if you ask someone to change their boulder, you could end up offending them. But at Sharma Climbing we have managed to ensure that we all work together as a group and that the final result of our route setting works for everyone at all levels.

Jimena: When we have finished setting we always spend around one hour trying out the new routes, giving each other feedback and making adjustments.

Chris: Until recently our route setting was anonymous, resulting in nobody getting credit, or blame, for their work from the climbers. This worked well in many ways, but we also found that nobody wanted to take responsibility if something went wrong. Now the name of the route setter is written next to every route. It's really cool because the setters can be proud of their work, get rightly deserved recognition from the climbers, as well as feel a bit more pressure to perform well.

Peter: *Chris, do you route set yourself?*

Chris: Yes, I do. I don't set all the time, but when I'm in on one of our setting days, which are Tuesdays and Thursdays, I'll usually set a few boulders.

Sometimes it goes really well and sometimes it doesn't. [Jimena laughs] It's interesting because I need to work backwards in the process, as I usually start with the end result when opening a route on the rock. I've become an expert at seeing lines in nature. But finding a clear line in the cliff and equipping a beautiful route – that's different. In the gym, you have to create a pathway that doesn't exist yet, which requires a different thinking process.

My approach is not very scientific, but for me it's important to be spontaneous when setting. If I start thinking and planning ahead too much, it often doesn't work out. If I have a very clear idea of a boulder and I try to set it exactly the way I imagined it, it usually takes me four times longer than if I just work away and see where the journey takes me, and I usually end up taking everything down again and starting from scratch.

For me, the best way forward is to let the boulder set itself.

Maria: *Do you also route set, Jimena?*

Jimena: No. I actually tried in Venezuela, but I prefer to test the routes [laughs] – and tell the setters what tweaks and adjustments they need to make.

Maria: *Bouldering is growing rapidly within the industry, with more and more gyms focused exclusively on bouldering popping up in Europe. Why did you decide to open a rope and boulder gym in Madrid?*

Chris: With Sharma Climbing, we want to represent climbing at a high standard and for all levels. We might not have any big-wall climbing walls, but in Madrid we're offering a premium, full-service facility with amazing bouldering and rope climbing opportunities. We chose Madrid because we found a space that fit in with our vision, and we haven't looked back!

Peter: *What makes the Madrid gym stand out?*

Chris: Tom Brenzinger described it very well when he said that it is one of the most harmonious gyms he'd ever seen. The layout is special, with the gym divided into different spaces. There are walkways around all the different climbing elements so that people who are walking around never get in the way of people who are climbing. It took us a long time to find the ideal design and composition, but I believe that the harmonious end result we achieved was more than worth it.

There is a lot of open space to convey openness and brightness. You can be in almost any part of the climbing gym and look across the whole place. It feels like you're inside a city. The old industrial building that houses it also creates a special atmosphere. I can't wait until we can open the gym and share what we have created with others.

Maria: *You were probably in the middle of preparations for Sharma Climbing Madrid when the coronavirus pandemic hit earlier this year. How has this crisis affected you? Did you ever think it would spell the end of Sharma Climbing?*

Jimena: No, I don't recall thinking so. We were confident that we would find a way and a business model to continue working. Like many gyms around the world, we have changed and adapted our services.

Chris: But of course, it added some extra stress.

Peter: *The climbing gym landscape has changed in the last few years. The industry is becoming more professional and managing a gym is becoming more demanding.*

How do you deal with the increasing demands of modern facility management? How do you stay up to date with the latest developments and increasing requirements in terms of safety, marketing and product quality?

Jimena: Climbers want to feel at home in climbing gyms, just as they feel at home outside on the rock. Our goal as a gym is to offer them the best possible experience. At the same time, we as a company have to set certain rules in order to provide a safe and clean environment for everyone. Finding a good balance between these two aspects can be very challenging, because we have to make sure that all of our climbers understand why they have to follow our rules.

For me, I know that I've done my job properly if you, as a visitor, go home with a smile on your face after climbing with us and want to come back again.



Chris: For myself and other people who have decided to dedicate their lives to climbing it's a great achievement that our sport has reached its current level of professionalism. I'm proud to have contributed to this development and I would like to be involved in the next steps.

Maria: *In your view, does the sport becoming more professional mean that we are losing some of the ease and light-heartedness that has defined climbing in many ways since the beginning?*

Jimena: Climbers are free spirits, and it seems to come naturally to our community to show a little resistance when we try to set a limit or establish new rules, even outdoors. In the end, there needs to be a balance and the community needs to adapt.

Chris: It makes me think of a funny story. The other day, a couple was walking by a crag and one of them said in Spanish: "Mira, están haciendo rocódromo!" – literally: "They're doing climbing gym!" Even the use of language shows us that many people instinctively see climbing as an indoor activity, rather than thinking of rock climbing. But are we losing part of our climbing heritage because of that?

We have to see this in a non-elitist way. I myself discovered climbing thanks to our local gym in Santa Cruz in the United States, so it makes me happy to see other people getting the same opportunity. Of course, there is a certain risk that climbing could lose part of its soul, so it's important that we make sure it doesn't. After all, it's more than just a sport – climbing can be whatever you're looking for, be it competing, having fun or just being yourself.





Photo: Ricardo Giancola @giancolafoto

I myself was attracted to climbing because it wasn't a mainstream sport. I felt this freedom of being myself which I couldn't find in other sports. I still feel strongly connected to the foundation of climbing, back when it felt like we were going against the grain of society. I try to keep this original spirit which makes our sport unique. Now, we have to balance this with the realities of society. But as our sport evolves, I believe it's my duty to inspire people to think for themselves and live outside of the norms a little bit.

Maria: *The media likes to talk about a "boom" in climbing. The sport has changed and developed over time. And now, with climbing set to become an Olympic discipline, the media – as well as investors – have turned even more of their attention to the sport.*

What do you think about this development in climbing?

Jimena: "Boom" is definitely the right word! Climbing is growing around the world – I've observed this trend in South America, in the United States and in Europe. When we first came to Barcelona, there were only two or three small gyms here and now the situation is completely different. We're opening a high-end climbing gym in Madrid, but many other gyms will soon follow suit. In ten years' time, it will become more difficult for gyms to stand out from the crowd.

Peter: *Will the demand for indoor climbing continue to grow? Will there be a point of market saturation in Spain?*

Chris: When there is a climbing gym on every corner, then for sure. But we're still a long way off from seeing this happen, especially in Spain. There are other countries like the United States and Germany that are probably closer to market saturation than Spain. It will be interesting to observe how things develop over there to gain an idea of what might happen in Spain in the future.

Maria: *When we talk about climbing growing in popularity and recognition, at some point we need to ask ourselves: How sustainable is this current development? Can and should climbing continue in the way it's developing now?*

Chris: Once you've really caught the climbing virus [everybody smiles a little], it becomes part of who you are. Climbing gyms have become important places for so many people – not only for practicing climbing, but also as a social network. To me this shows how important and sustainable climbing is for those of us who have made this sport a part of our lives.

Maria: *What about the relationship between indoor and outdoor climbing – do gym operators and players in the industry need to take responsibility and educate climbers on how to behave outdoors?*

Chris: Yes, absolutely. We're in the process of creating programs to take climbers outside and teach them how to rock climb. Just a few years ago, however, we were worried that indoor climbing would result in lots of people taking to the outdoors and causing damage to nature and crags, but the reality is that many people are happy to just climb at their gyms and only very seldomly climb outdoors, if ever.

I'm sure that, in the future, we'll see more and more people coming to the crag. I hope that will be the case, as being in touch with nature is a great feeling. But I don't think there's anything to worry about at the moment.

Peter: *Many of my friends who run climbing gyms today were and are passionate climbers. But owing to the demands of the business and family life they are now climbing much less or have even essentially taken off their climbing shoes for good. What is your biggest challenge when it comes to balancing business, family life and your own climbing and private activities?*

Chris: Running our gym projects has been an interesting challenge for us – a little bit like having third and fourth kids. But our children are the real challenge. Having kids changes your life more than anything else.

For me in particular, it's also important to continue my passion as a climber, and thanks to the support of Jimena and the rest of our team I'm able to dedicate a lot of my time to rock climbing. I feel very privileged to have been able to climb all my life and now it has become an important part of our brand too. If I were to stop climbing, Sharma Climbing would stop being as authentic as it is. You have to talk the talk and walk the walk. Nowadays, I limit my climbing mostly to the area around Barcelona. Having so many wonderful crags around allows me to integrate climbing into my week.

There's another interesting aspect to it. Being further away from climbing areas and having less time makes you miss something and want it more. When I lived in Lleida in Spain right next to the cliffs, I had everything a climber could dream of. But I found that I was getting complacent and making excuses for everything – for example if the conditions weren't perfect or if it was a tiny bit humid. When I was trying to complete La Dura Dura, I put aside six months to give it my full attention. But even that was not as effective as I would have liked. Right now, I don't have as much time as I would like, but I have learned to make the most of any time I do get.

Jimena: For me it's a little harder because I work all day long in the gym, and after that I have to take care of the kids. I don't have as



Photo: Ricardo Giancola @giancolafoto

much time for myself as I would like, but when Chris spends time with the kids, I can usually meet friends and do my thing. We're somehow managing to find a balance between business, family, having time for ourselves and spending time together.

I'm aware that Chris has two businesses – the climbing gym and being a professional climber. I respect that this requires time, too. Sometimes I don't like it, but I also feel proud of his career and I like to see him happy.

Maria: *The new gym in Madrid is about to open. Are you already thinking about what will come next? What's the big vision for Sharma Climbing?*

Chris: We're already working on another amazing climbing gym project on the opposite side of Barcelona, in a location called Gavà. We're very excited about it, even though the works have been delayed for almost a year owing to the pandemic and the current circumstances.

In the future, more opportunities will arise in our industry and I believe that we can bring the Sharma brand to many other places too. As we grow, we'll take everything step by step.

I guess it's like climbing a route. As long as you're projecting it, you expect to be really satisfied when you finally reach the top. But when you're there, you realize that you need something else to focus on.

Peter: *What's next for you as a climber, Chris?*

Chris: I was just in Mallorca on an incredible deep-water solo project that I'm really excited about. Even though there are a number of sport routes and boulders I'd like to try, the deep-water solo project is the most important one for me right now. It's the hardest psicobloc I've ever tried. Climbing above the sea in this amazing style is so outside of the box; it's a free form of climbing that I'm really attracted to. For me, it embodies the true essence of climbing. It combines elements of

sport climbing, bouldering and even alpine climbing. It's a discipline that epitomizes adventure, it's unique and beautiful, and it makes you feel free.

Maria: *Jimena, have you ever found it particularly hard or easy being a woman in this industry and in the position you occupy?*

Jimena: To be honest, for me it's been quite easy. I come from a big family, all guys. I am used to being surrounded by men. And I enjoy being the boss. It hasn't been hard for me in my position because I'm an assertive person. [Chris laughs]

At the same time I like having the opportunity to balance the composition of our personnel, and try to ensure that we have an equal number of men and women in our teams, including in our setting teams.

Maria: *In general, do you think it's very hard for women in the industry? How's the situation in Spain?*

Jimena: That's a good question and I think it's a delicate topic. I can only speak about my personal experience. I like to involve other women in our business. That's how I want to inspire them and create equal opportunities for everybody.

Peter: *Before we go, is there anything else you'd like to touch upon?*

Jimena: It's a challenging time, but we're still having fun and are working hard to open our gym in Madrid.

Chris: It would be great to see you all there!

Maria & Peter: *Thank you for taking the time to speak to us, Jimena and Chris. Good luck with the new gym opening!* 🍀

JIMENA ALARCÓN

Born in 1980, Venezuela

CHRIS SHARMA

Born in 1981, United States

Jimena and Chris live in Barcelona, Spain.

Their background: Jimena Alarcón is a social communicator. Before moving to Spain, she previously worked in television and radio and as a model, and also ran a climbing gym in Venezuela.

Chris Sharma is one of the world's best climbers and an important ambassador for the sport. He is known for his dynamic style of movement and his humble, meditative approach to life. Chris is responsible for some of the most difficult and spectacular first ascents in rock climbing and is a pioneer in deep-water soloing.

Jimena and Chris married in 2015. Their daughter Alana was born in 2016, and they were joined by their son Julian two years later. Together they have been running Sharma Climbing in Barcelona since 2015 and are about to open another facility in Madrid.



SETTING AROUND THE WORLD

TEXT: NIKI WIECHMANN



Kaleb Thomas, route setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, Canada



Matt Cousins, setter at The Arch, London, United Kingdom



Jake Mason, freelance setter from London, United Kingdom



Ward Byrum, route setting director at El Cap, United States



Holly Duce, freelance setter from London, United Kingdom



Aaron Kyle, setter at Boulderklub, on his experience in Detroit, United States



Hilman Haron, route setter at Boulder World and Onsite Climbing in Singapore



Lucas Thompson, head setter at Boulderklub, Berlin, Germany



Yossi Sundakov-Krumins, owner and head setter and at Skywood Climbing, Sydney, Australia



Jack Masel, head setter at 9 Degrees, Sydney, Australia



Genya Kot, setter at Urban Climb, Australia



Daniel Gordon, director of setting at Urban Climb, Australia

◆ *I would like to thank the person who gave this magazine, Route Setter, its name. At long last we no longer have to fight for our profession to be taken seriously. We have reached our goal of being acknowledged as service providers, professionals and creators of the core product of every climbing gym: routes and boulders.*

In Germany, where I'm from, there are many full-time setters working in different gyms and in different styles. Freelance setters, travelling from city to city, make it easy for gyms to add variety to their sets. Now, setters have become better known than the gyms they work with, and social media can make setters more popular than the quality of their routes.

But what does route setting look like around the world? Over the last few years, I have been lucky enough to meet, talk to and work with setters in a number of countries. Below, I share my insights with you.

BECOMING A SETTER

With gyms busier than ever and with setting flourishing as a profession, it's more difficult than ever to become a setter.

I was fortunate enough to grow up around climbing – my parents owned a climbing gym and every year I would help to strip and clean holds for our annual competition in November. As I grew older, this gradually evolved into setting. I started getting paid for my help and never looked back. Meanwhile, some of my friends kick started their setting careers by working on the front desk or coaching, before eventually picking up a drill.

How do climbers become setters?

Indoor climbing is growing in popularity at different rates all over the world.

While Australia is a long way from seeing core industries related to indoor climbing, like wall and hold manufacturers, take hold, the number of climbing gyms in the country has grown rapidly over the last few years. I first came to Australia in 2015 for the opening set of 9 Degrees Bouldering Gym, the first gym of its kind to land in Sydney. Back then, Australia only had one bouldering gym, which was located on the other side of the country in Perth. 9 Degrees founder, Martijn van Eijkelenborg, originally from the Netherlands, flew me to Australia to host a series of setting workshops for his team and other setters from across the country.

Times have changed since then, with Sydney alone now home to 11 bouldering gyms and counting. 9 Degrees runs four of these Sydney-based gyms and, together with Urban Climb and BlocHaus, is at the forefront of efforts to advance indoor climbing in Australia.

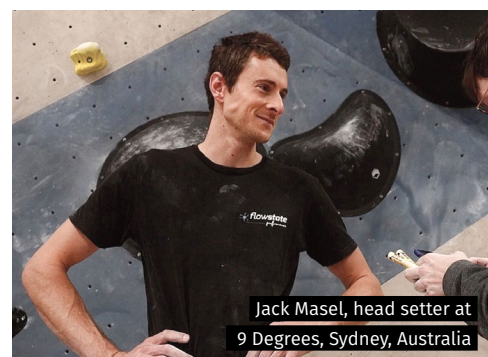
Head setter at 9 Degrees, Jack Masel, told me how he became a setter:

The gym I was working in was so quiet that I was able to do some setting during my front desk shifts to help pass the time. Back then I would just set the odd route or boulder here or there using just a T-bar. This was before I moved to New South Wales and joined 9 Degrees.

I haven't had much formal education in terms of route setting, mainly because there really isn't any in Australia. I think learning to set is more like an apprenticeship. It's about learning on the job, and the better the people you work with, the quicker you will improve.

Jack Masel,

head setter at 9 Degrees, Sydney, Australia



Jack Masel, head setter at 9 Degrees, Sydney, Australia

When I first visited Urban Climb in July 2015, the company only had one climbing gym but was working on plans to expand. At the time, Australia did not have enough gyms generating enough work for freelance setters, so director of setting Daniel Gordon set up a structured setters program to cater for Urban Climb's setting needs.

We want to be doing this for a long time because we love it. And we want to change the face of climbing in the country. To achieve that vision, you need to have people that are willing to join you on your mission and are in it for the long haul. You need to build a career for people and you need them to stay for ten or 20 years. This is what prompted us to create a program and a pathway for route setters, with the aim of helping them to progress and grow with us as we grow as a company.

Daniel Gordon,

director of setting at Urban Climb, Australia



Daniel Gordon, director of setting at Urban Climb, Australia

One of the first steps for Urban Climb was recognizing the need to recruit new members for its setting crew to support the demand its future gyms would create. After this, Dan

SETTING CREW AT URBAN CLIMB, AUSTRALIA

The senior setter is essentially in charge of the set. They have the knowledge to understand how to create safe routes and whether everything works well in the overall circuit. The senior setter is also in charge of functionality. They look at the end result and decide whether any parts need tweaking. Alongside these tasks, they are continuously assisting and teaching the route setter and the apprentice. This requires a huge amount of knowledge and skill.

The route setter has a basic understanding of safety in route setting. They should be able to gauge whether a boulder is safe, as well as understand basic climbing moves, be familiar with the Risk, Intensity, Complexity (RIC) scale and be a decent climber themselves.

The apprentice setter has a varying amount of knowledge and skill when it comes to route setting – they might not know a lot, or they might not know anything at all. For example, they might have very limited knowledge of how to use a drill, volumes and big holds.

Information from Genya Kot, setter at Urban Climb, Australia

looked into improving the diversity of not only the gym's setting, but also its team – nowadays, there are four female setters on the Urban Climb setting crew, making up a third of the team.

Each setting crew at Urban Climb consists of three setters: a senior setter in charge of the day, another setter and an apprentice who spends six months learning from the more experienced setters. Regular reviews are held for each setter, promoting a culture of constructive feedback, learning and development.

To become a setter, the two major boxes that need to be ticked are climbing ability and motivation. There are no castings or schools for future setters. Rather, each gym picks the setters they think will best match their values and philosophy. The typical pathway to becoming a setter involves stripping holds at first and then working your way up.

When you first start out, it's important to show the setting team that you're truly interested and committed to learning the craft. That also means doing some "dirty work" like stripping holds from the walls and washing them or working at the front desk. For most of us it took a lot of work and time to get a foot in the door to the setting world.

Aaron Kyle,

setter at Boulderklub, on his experience in Detroit, United States



Aaron Kyle, setter at Boulderklub, on his experience in Detroit, United States

Things are different in Singapore. Despite having just 5.7 million residents and no significant mountains, the country has seen ten bouldering gyms pop up in the last four years. A highly competitive and comp friendly climbing scene means that the majority of setters are still climbing in the "Open" category or are retired competition climbers. Many of them started out setting for competitions, which was a steep learning curve.

My experience of learning how to set mostly involved the senior setters teaching you how to use an impact driver – beyond that, we had



the freedom to let our creativity run wild. I started out setting for internal school competitions. I'm a geek when it comes to movement. I love how I can change or manipulate the way climbers move through route setting. But, for the harder skills like ladder and rope management, I learned everything from the former owner of OnSight.

Hilman Haron,

route setter at Boulder World and OnSight Climbing in Singapore



Hilman Haron, route setter at Boulder World and OnSight Climbing in Singapore

When I visited Vietnam in 2019 I joined VietClimb in Hanoi for a setting day. With the climbing gym's custom-made volumes and cheap, polished PU holds, it felt like I had gone back in time. The custom-built walls with weird angles and mats with different custom-built layers made setting both exciting and adventurous. The climbing industry in countries like Vietnam or Chile is vastly different compared with Europe, Japan or the United States. Even the act of importing holds into Vietnam was a nightmare, with a lack of distributors meaning that manufacturers of holds had to be contacted directly for small, yet disproportionately expensive, orders.

This goes to show that not all countries have the same access to holds, volumes and a good distribution infrastructure, which has

resulted in route setting evolving at different paces around the world. This is also seen in another typical phenomenon at big climbing events, which usually turn into flea markets after each round. Holds are no longer needed and some of the distributors try to sell them on site. At the 2019 World Youth Championships in Arco, Italy, crowds of athletes, coaches and parents from all over the world would gather around the hold sponsors' tents every day at sunset to buy holds and take them back home to their gyms.

FREELANCERS VERSUS IN-HOUSE TEAMS

Indoor climbing is still a young sport in Australia. The vast distances between cities means that, except for in Sydney, there are relatively few freelance setters. Employing an in-house team of setters seems to be the path many gyms are taking.

By contrast, the majority of climbing gyms in Germany have one full-time head setter and an in-house team made up of freelance setters or staff members who alternate between holding classes, doing desk shifts and setting routes.

I think that we're not really bound to many things. We don't have much mountaineering or climbing history, or even indoor climbing history, to live up to. As such, we have a rather blank slate in front of us. We can pick and choose our techniques, taking some tips from Germany and some ideas from Japan, or perhaps drawing inspiration from the way France sets up its national team. At this point in time, we have the freedom to carve out our own future and the industry we are in. That's really exciting. It's also terrifying, however, because it always feels like you're pioneering



Daniel Gordon - Opening set of Urban Climb Collingwood Melbourne - 2018

new methods or looking for answers which have probably been already solved by someone else. Often, these answers are out of our reach. But I think the advantage is that we don't have any history. We can kind of do what we want.

Daniel Gordon,
director of setting at Urban Climb, Australia

In Germany, becoming a full-time employed setter at one climbing gym is difficult. Freelance setters are much cheaper, and allow gyms to be more flexible. In addition, some gyms don't want to spend money teaching apprentice setters, may not be able to afford a full team or may not know how to set up a team. With some gyms only being able to reset their routes once a week, this does not generate enough work to employ a full-time setting crew, and does not exactly convince managers to hire their own in-house team.

Europe is home to a multitude of single-owner-run gyms. Only a few brands like Arkose, Boulderwelt, The Arch and The Climbing Hangar have grown enough to open multiple gyms with in-house setting teams.

London in the United Kingdom is probably the indoor climbing capital of Europe, boasting more than 25 gyms. Despite some climbing gyms like The Arch and Mile End having in-house teams, there's also a vivid scene of freelance setters.

In 2017 I had the opportunity to spend six months at The Arch in London, where I joined the team as a resident setter. This position saw me work at four sets a week across three centres in a team with three other setters, which was really exciting. In all my time in Germany, I had never experienced the luxury of working in a team of four full-time setters with assistance from another four or five part-timers.

Singapore, too, is also mainly home to freelance or part-time setters.

We only had Onsite and Climb Asia at that time. The owner asked me if I wanted to be a full-time route setter. I thought to myself: "Why not? I can pioneer route setting in Singapore." Now, my colleague and I are the only full-time route setters in Singapore. The country's other setters occupy dual roles, consisting of two or three days of setting and then other tasks in the gym.

Hilman Haron,
route setter at Boulder World and Onsite Climbing in Singapore

Meanwhile, the US market is dominated by El Cap climbing gyms, which incorporate three different brands under one umbrella. In these environments, one head setter is not enough, so different setting directors are employed to ensure that their setting programs can progress. Ward Byrum is one of three route setting directors, he is responsible for affiliate El Cap gyms in the East Coast region. In total there are currently 16 El Cap gyms with several more coming in 2021/22. Seven Earth Treks, six Planet Granite, three Movement gyms combine to make El Cap an industry leader in the US.

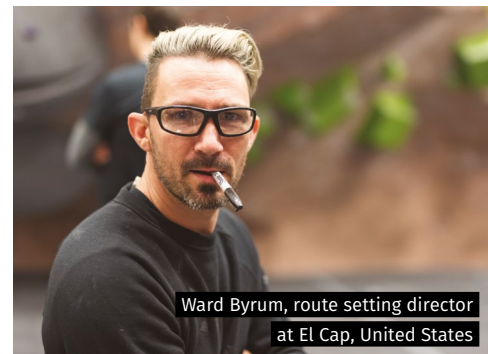
I oversee all the setting operations for all of the gyms in the East Coast region. The other two directors and I collaborate to flesh out our vision of route setting for our gyms. Then we work out how to turn our ideas into a reality, setting priorities and ensuring this all fits within our budget, all the while meeting community needs and ensuring our team benefits from a professional-level career path.

Working underneath me and the other directors is the head route setter. There's one of those in each gym. My region is essentially divided into North and South as well, with each of these subregions also having an assistant route setter. The assistant route setter can step in if the head setter is on vacation or lend support to a head setter if they are ever stretched thin. This position is a little

like a gateway into moving into a head setter position in the future.

I think every setting team needs to have people capable of climbing more complex routes. But that does not mean that there is not room for someone in the team who could create a product for a V4, V5e or 5.11 climber, for example. In my opinion, that person would probably be more able to step into the average consumer's shoes, and the average consumer is certainly not a V12 rock climber.

Ward Byrum,
route setting director at El Cap, United States



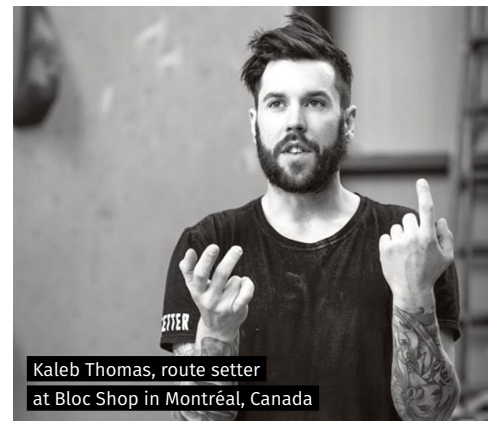
Ward Byrum, route setting director at El Cap, United States

With ten gyms per 3.5 million residents, Montréal, Canada, also has a high density of climbing and bouldering gyms. While you can make a living as a freelance setter there, some gyms run a mixed system.

There are several freelancers, but the most promising setters tend to get snapped up by the bigger gyms in the city.

We also have Movement Factory here, a setting company that also sells holds. The team of six or perhaps eight do all the setting for the small satellite gyms. There are three or four right in the city, several more in the outskirts. These small gyms can only really afford to have one setting day per week, or less. The Movement Factory takes care of all their route setting needs and this arrangement works perfectly for them.

Kaleb Thomas,
route setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, Canada



Kaleb Thomas, route setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, Canada

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF BEING A FREELANCE SETTER?

By using freelance setters, climbing gyms can save money and take advantage of new styles and influences for their customers on a regular basis. The downside is that most freelance setters are not familiar with the hosting gym's grading system and individual perks and features.

A well-chosen freelancer can fill in the gaps, introducing teams that could be stuck in a rut to missing styles and new ideas. If properly managed by the head setter, freelancers can be a great addition to the team. But teams can rely too heavily on freelancers' abilities to set difficult climbs, and this could prevent them from developing their own style or philosophy. After all, a good setting crew knows the needs and feedback of their customers better than any freelancer. Is it a burden for a freelancer to have to adapt their skills to every new gym they work for or is it a skill every professional setter should have?

I think you need to keep adapting your skills and techniques, especially if you are a freelance setter. For example, if you are brought in to set at a gym and there are three setters there who are really good at setting jumpy, dynamic boulders, it's probably a good idea to do something a little more basic or movement-based than to try to add more of the same.

When you are a freelance setter, there are more expectations on you. You are probably getting paid a bit more than the in-house staff. Especially in the United Kingdom, gyms will try to get the most out of you. If you are going to a new place, you may put too much pressure on yourself to try hard. When I started out as a setter I always tried really hard to set something amazing every time.

Matt Cousins,
setter at The Arch, London, UK

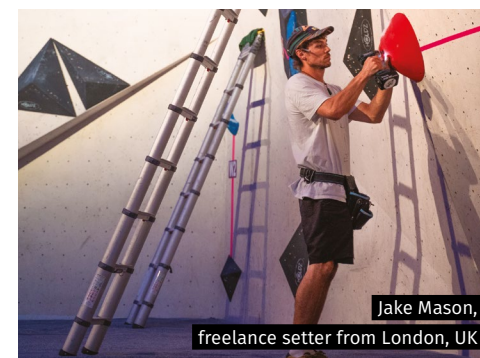


Matt Cousins, setter at The Arch, London, United Kingdom

As a guest setter it is really important to make your mark and set routes in a way that expresses the techniques you are really good at. This is the whole point of getting freelance setters in: You don't want the same style all the time. So I always make sure that my routes reflect my style, whilst ensuring that I follow their grading system and their rules.

If you know the right people, working as a freelance setter can definitely pay off. For me it also helps that there are so many good gyms in my area. Within 40 minutes I can be at 15 different gyms. I'm also fortunate enough to be in contact with the three or four best gyms in London. This means that, even though I'm a freelancer, I can still be part of a good team. In these scenarios, having the right mindset and being open to learn is always key.

Jake Mason,
freelance setter from London, UK



Jake Mason, freelance setter from London, UK

I think the biggest difference between freelance setting and working in an in-house team is that freelance setting involves much more variety, especially if you are travelling to lots of different walls. It is a good way to gain confidence and experience new things. That being said, setting within a team is a really great way to develop your route setting abilities in the safety of a group you are comfortable with, especially if your team proactively gives you feedback or constructive criticism. That is something I miss now that I'm working as a freelancer.

Holly Duce,
freelance setter from London, UK



Holly Duce, freelance setter from London, UK

THE SETTING PROCESS

Regardless of whether you are freelancing or part of a team, you still get to put holds and volumes on a wall.

In my early days as a setter, I was invited to a gym to set a circuit and ended up setting, tweaking and testing 28 blocs in one day. Nowadays, the setting process looks very different. You would be hard pressed to find someone who would take on such a task. While some gyms around the world still reset their routes by colored circuit, the majority now focus on individual sections and areas.

In a commercial environment, a normal setting day in Germany lasts for eight hours, while in a competition setting it can vary depending on the organization and type of competition, and can easily result in 13-14 hour days full of setting and tweaking.

The number of boulders set each day in each gym varies depending on the gym's perception of quality and dedication to forerunning and tweaking. Experience, level of difficulty, materials available and the expected quality all play a key role here. While a German setter is asked to set at least six boulders a day, some Australian gyms set sections with ten to 13 boulders with a team of three. I have heard of some Spanish gyms that are known to set 16 boulders over two days with four setters each day. In London, the average number of boulders to be set in a day varies between six and eight, with this number increasing the further north you go in the country.

B-PUMP in Tokyo, Japan, run by Katsuaki Miyazawa, is one of the world's most famous climbing gyms for hardcore climbing. Katsuaki wanted to open a gym with high-quality boulders in every grade, even at World Cup level, with many world-class climbers taking a trip to Japan at least once a year to test their limits. With ten-hour setting days and the need to set up to V14 for climbers like Tomoa Narasaki, their setting team also needs to be world class. Having a Boulder World Cup winner like Tsukuru Hori as a head setter makes this a much easier task. Guest setters are not invited to set routes at B-PUMP, except for during competitions or special occasions.

Continuously learning and improving seems to be an attitude held by both customers and setters in Japan.

The situation is different again in Singapore. I met Hilman Haron, one of Singapore's most experienced setters, in 2016 when I hosted a workshop in the country.

For Onsite and Boulder World, I would say that most of our customers are competitors. So we set accordingly. We try to base our grading on the ability of the competitors. For setting we normally talk about colors and not grades. A red boulder, for example, should not be too difficult for an 'intermediate' man or an 'open' woman to climb within a climbing session.

I think the average climbing ability in Singapore is fairly high, but we do not have any exceptionally strong or successful climbers in the World Cup circuit or outdoors. This is because we do not really have places to climb outdoors, and projecting is very difficult when we are only allowed to take vacations up to two weeks once a year. Competing in the circuit would also be tough with annual leave being 12 days a year or as a student. You would have to decide carefully on where the 12 days should go.

We start setting at 8 am and usually finish at 4 pm or 5 pm. At Boulder World each of the setters is required to set four boulder problems a day. We set the first draft over the course of about three hours in the morning, followed by a quick lunch break, and then forerun until 3 pm or 4 pm. We have three setters working each day, with 12 boulders per wall.

Hilman Haron,
route setter at Boulder World and Onsite Climbing in Singapore

While the difficulty level of boulders may vary in different countries, the setting procedure is roughly the same. Some gyms set fewer boulders per day because they spend more time ensuring high quality, while others have to comply with stricter work regulations.

In Australia, work regulations only permit the use of A-frame ladders with wood underneath, which means that almost 25% of the setting day is spent moving the ladder around, drastically slowing down the technical side of setting. It does, however, make the process much safer. In Germany, meanwhile, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) during setting is not mandatory or commonplace.

While the technical part of setting at Urban Climb, for example, is slower (but safer), the organizational work that goes into each set is perfect for dividing between team members.



Stuntwerk Team Event at Gravical 2016 in Singapore

The head setter sets out a plan with the first round of boulders, describing factors like creative filters, location and grade. With such areas set in stone, this makes it easier for newer setters to concentrate on their individual task rather than being overwhelmed by a blank canvas or the vast number of volumes and holds in front of them.

Other crews depend more on the individual skills of their head setters and setters and their ability to keep track of the contents of their climbing gym and organize a set.

The process is not too systematic. But we always work in the same team – a big core team with three setters. We are all usually involved in the boulders that are being set. As such, we know what's on our walls. We rely on good communication with each other and our own instincts.

Lucas Thompson,
head setter at Boulderklub, Berlin, Germany



The majority of setters set, test and make their first tweaks independently. After that the crew tests the boulders as a group and makes any remaining tweaks. In the past, freelance

setters were mainly responsible for their own boulders, but this has gradually changed over the last few years and shifted towards a more group-based testing approach.

Setting a boulder as a team, from start to finish, is something that very rarely happens in the United Kingdom. This is also the case when it comes to testing. It can be tricky to try and add your own idea to routes that have been set because people can get offended and assume that you are criticizing their work by suggesting a change. But this isn't true. You just want a good end result.

Matt Cousins,
setter at The Arch, London, UK

Comparing the income of a freelancer setter from country to country is difficult. However, during my time in different places I did encounter different models of payment. For example, some gyms still pay per boulder set while others pay a daily rate.

Before The Arch in London changed its payment system to a daily rate, setters used to get paid for each boulder they set. It was not uncommon to hear of setters battling over each set of holds, setting at a really fast pace, placing multiple dynos (requiring fewer holds, and thus resulting in more money for the setter) and setting an insane number of boulders set in one go. Fortunately, things have changed, and such things are mostly a thing of the past now.

The setting schedule and workflow change dramatically depending on the team of in-house staff or freelancers working with you. Factors that come into play include how

early you start work, how familiar you are with the gym, how well you know the materials and the walls, whether you have an organized head setter on board and how agreeable the gym's style and philosophy are.

Planning can be a good source of guidance for setters, but can also be cumbersome if setters are not used to it, especially freelancers who are mainly used to working alone and setting in their own style.

It's very rare for a head setter to tell me what to set. I don't like my creativity being curbed. For my first bloc I almost always have an idea or some shapes in mind that I want to put together and make a problem out of. So it's almost always up to me. I pick the area that I want and if no one else wants it I just go to town.

Jake Mason,
freelance setter from London, UK

I talked to Kaleb Thomas, a setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, to see how things are in Canada.

In my experience it doesn't always make sense to push for perfect consistency across gyms

in different cities. It is important to take into account regional differences, not only in setting style but also in outdoor climbing style. Usually gyms in different cities are not the same size and don't operate with the same budget.

I think some consistency with regards to circuit systems, labelling of the boulders, starts, finishes, etc. makes sense. Little details like that can go a long way, but trying to match problem density, bell curve or style across the gyms often does more harm than good. I think a good director can offer aid to those setting programs, provide training, and create a certain harmony, but overall it's best if the gyms can develop their own personality.

Kaleb Thomas,
route setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, Canada

The flexibility also shows in his management style:

I never put climbing style on paper. I used to write things down more for competitions, and I will sometimes make a plan if I am setting a competition and am not familiar with the team. I don't think it makes sense to put

pen to paper when it comes to setting for the gyms. I believe it's best to let the setters do what they want early in the set. I usually put target grades on the wall, but that's about it. As the set goes on you can see what is being put up, and make suggestions for what we might need, or have too much of. If someone is in a good mood, it might be a good day to offer them a specific challenge or something. Ultimately, if the setting team is communicating well it's rare you end up with multiple boulders in the same style.

I think that, unfortunately, setting for a gym can be very monotonous if the program is run with too much structure. It's important to keep it loose and change things up often to keep new ideas coming.

Kaleb Thomas,
route setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, Canada

Ward Byrum, route setting director for El Cap, United States, implements a different, more design-oriented, setting routine for his gyms.

We usually start work at around 8 am. We start by stripping the product we want to reset that day, and the head setter surveys the layout and assesses which grades need to go on





When we first started Boulder World we only needed to set three boulders each per day. The boulders turned out to be extremely difficult, requiring intense strength and precise climbing. It was really difficult for climbers to break the beta. With time we started to set more boulders, having less time for testing which, in the end, benefits the climbers: They are able to find more options to break the intended beta and find easier, less intense ways to climb a problem. They can get away with poorer techniques.

Hilman Haron,
route setter at Boulder World and Onsite Climbing in Singapore

DIVERSITY

Ensuring diversity in setting teams is just as important as ensuring diversity in boulders. To this day, many teams have at most one female setter, which means that women hoping to break into the scene often have to fight for this one spot. This can result in a toxic atmosphere, which is something that needs to change. Australia seems to be at the forefront of efforts to transform the industry, with most Australian climbing gyms having at least one woman on their setting teams. In Urban Climb, for example, women make up 25% of the setting team. There are regular female sets and female setting workshops, which is pushing forward the industry in this area.

In the United States, Jackie Hueftle, one of the chief setters of the Women Up Climbing festival since 2017, has been leading the way for women in the setting scene. The United Kingdom and Germany, too, are also seeing an increase in setting and climbing festivals directed at women, while other countries are still lagging behind.

Two female setters I have worked with extensively in the past gave me a great insight into the problems women face in the setting industry worldwide.

When I joined the team at Urban Climb, the team had been climbing and setting together for almost a decade. That scared me at the beginning. Having grown up with two older brothers, however, I was quite used to being in male-dominated environments. I didn't realize how much I missed the presence of women at the time. Now I'm much more appreciative of having another woman around who understands how I'm feeling, even without me having to say anything. It's also nice to have someone who understands what it's like

to set during your time of the month. It can feel horrible and you can feel really run down. As a woman in setting, you also experience a lot of casual sexism, albeit this has probably improved slightly compared with when I first started.

Genya Kot,
setter at Urban Climb, Australia



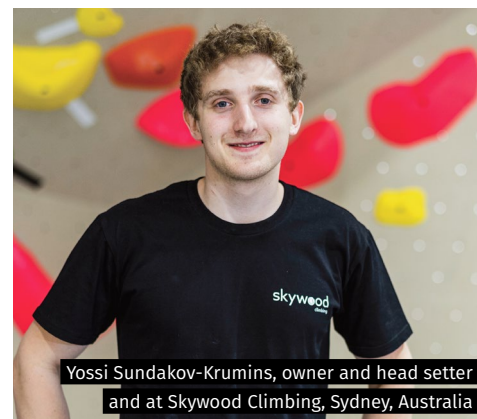
I was the only woman on the full-time team at The Arch. It's very rare that I get to set with another woman, even on a freelance basis. I used to feel so much pressure to prove myself, especially in comparison to other women, and the atmosphere could turn pretty toxic as a result. I don't feel this pressure as much anymore, but I used to get very anxious before sets. I'm pretty sure that if there were more women in the industry this wouldn't be the case.

Holly Duce,
freelance setter from London, UK

While some progress has been made, it is undeniable that diversity in setting teams and among freelancers is something all gyms should continue to work towards.

Meanwhile, setting styles around the world are more diverse than ever, with subjective, hard-to-categorize styles and setting schools seen all over the world. The Arkose climbing gyms in France are still leading the way in creating visually appealing and design-influenced boulders. Tonde Katiyo has brought this style to the US Bouldering Project gyms, while Yossi Sundakov-Krumins is trying to push the boundaries of designer setting in Sydney.

My goal for each set is to engage with our members by making them truly solve problems and use a multitude of techniques and muscles to top a climb. This means challenging them with a wide variety of styles and visual compositions so that each climb feels like a new experience.



Yossi Sundakov-Krumins, owner and head setter and at Skywood Climbing, Sydney, Australia

Yossi Sundakov-Krumins,
owner and head setter at Skywood Climbing, Sydney, Australia

Setters seem to be less bound by "old-school" setting styles and more free to explore and develop their own styles when there is less climbing history or fewer outdoor crags in their specific area.

While when setting boulders, the focus on dynamic moves is still very popular, it has reached its peak in commercial environments. It remains a well-liked tool for competitions worldwide, however.

But diversity in setting is not merely about creating moves, as my friend Matt Cousins, setter at The Arch in London, points out.

I think there are a lot of different layers to setting. You need to tick certain boxes, such as taking care of the practical side of things like screwing holds on the wall safely, before you can set good blocs. You also need to be a good setter, and be able to set in many different styles, as well as make your routes comfortable and safe for climbers to ensure they do not injure themselves.

Matt Cousins,
setter at The Arch in London, UK

A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE CAREER?

But how sustainable is setting as a profession? Having a five-day, 9 am to 5 pm, job as

a setter is almost unheard of. A maximum of three days of setting a week seems to be sustainable for setters' health as long as they take care of their body. Urban Climb offers physiotherapy to its setting team members, as well as recreational team trips to outdoor areas to help them develop a long-lasting career.

For freelancers, the ball is completely in their court to take care of their health. Steady increases in pay could promote a healthier setting lifestyle, but could also be indicative of a more demanding industry.

Ultimately, the industry is still too young for us to know what the future has in store for setters. One thing is certain, however: With more gyms opening worldwide, finding good setters cannot be taken for granted. On the flip side, a good setter can always find a good gym to work for if they are motivated and flexible. The challenge of the industry lies in attracting even more people into setting, training them, providing sustainable career paths and supporting novices in becoming good setters.

For me, setting is not a sustainable career to do for five days a week. Although I could just about manage five days a week, I wouldn't be able to or want to climb outside of that. It would also be difficult to take on such a physically demanding role as well as be creative for so many days a week.

Matt Cousins,
setter at The Arch, London, UK

I have been working for five days a week for almost eight years now. Often I am exhausted when I come into work, and don't even want to look at holds, let alone set. But then I think about how the customers feel about climbing in the gym and this motivates me to keep going.

Hilman Haron,
route setter at Boulder World and Onsite Climbing in Singapore

Especially here in Montréal, the bigger gyms

tend to keep their setting teams a bit of a secret. Our gym and Bloc Shop in particular, being the biggest two gyms, definitely invest a lot of time and effort into cultivating our teams because we believe it gives us an edge over the competition. But, at the same time, we are both in a position to offer two or three, maybe even four, setting days a week to our team. We also have lots of coaching and desk positions available, enabling us to create full-time positions with full-time salaries.

Kaleb Thomas,
route setter at Bloc Shop in Montréal, Canada

I think that the US is a little ahead of the curve when it comes to creating positions that allow route setters to rely on and live off their route setting wages. This could be because of how the industry has evolved here, but I think that it is also a reflection of our culture.

Ward Byrum,
route setting director at El Cap, United States

At its core, setting is not so different around the world. Even if the gyms, the material, the style and work environments may differ, at the end of the day we all use a drill and climb a ladder. It's the best job in the world – period. 🇨🇦



Niki Wiechmann spent most of his childhood in the woods or his parents' climbing gym, where he started setting when he was a teenager. His passion for climbing led him to quit university and took him out of Germany to London, Singapore and even Australia, where he lived from 2017 to 2019. Before that, he co-founded two bouldering gyms in Germany and discovered a new love for filming. He returned to Germany in July 2019. As part of Beta Routesetting he sets, hosts workshops, records and edits videos and publishes Climbing World Cup reports – always with a cup of tea in hand.



NIKLAS WIECHMANN
Born: 1988
Lives in: Berlin, Germany
Background: professional setter since 2010, Beta Routesetting, amateur gamer, amateur video artist



Photo: Vladék Zúmr / adidas Reclastor

TEXT & INTERVIEW: CODY ROTH

THE SILENT SETTER

REINI FICHTINGER SHEDS SOME LIGHT

ON NEARLY TWO DECADES OF IFSC ROUTE SETTING EXPERIENCE

◆ *Reini is the type of person that treads lightly and lets his work do the talking. He's never one to jump into the limelight, to brag or boast, or to draw more attention to himself. Perhaps that's down to his old-school upbringing. He's been an IFSC setter since the early 2000s, therefore he could now be considered part of the group's old guard. Back when he achieved his IFSC certification he was still an active lead climbing competitor in his own right, having been crowned Austrian national champion and placing in the top ten at a handful of World Cups and international events. Now in his forties, he's still as prolific as he was back when he started his setting career in his mid twenties. Ageing hasn't slowed his groove or his ability to produce top-shelf routes and boulder problems on competitive climbing's largest stages. Furthermore, in an age of specialization, Reini bucks the trend by being just as comfortable setting lead events as he is bouldering events. He is, effectively, route setting's box-to-box midfielder.*

In addition to setting, Reini is also a successful photographer, having shot campaigns for large brands such as Red Bull and adidas. He's also the main shaper behind the Squadra holds brand. He's a producer in every sense of the word, but he staunchly avoids all forms of social media. Forget finding him on Instagram or Youtube. Reini serves a reminder to all would-be route setting professionals that if you continually show up and bring your A-game, you can succeed without the personal marketing and mob following. Still an avid climber in his own right, he can be found most weekends climbing with his wife, Tanja, and their border collie pup, Yuki. RSM recently caught up with Reini at an agriturismo below a crag in Arco to find out more.

RSM: When did you start route setting?

Reini: We got a little lead wall in my hometown (Zwettl, Austria) in the early 90s. At this time, indoor climbing walls were only seen as training facilities during the winter months.

I soon found out that this wall offered more to me than just training; it became a place where I could start creating my own moves. Basically, the complete opposite of rock climbing.

In 1999 I started to set for national comps, and in 2002 I became an IFSC Routesetter.

RSM: What were your early days of setting for World Cups like?

Reini: Looking back, I think I really started in quite interesting times, especially with the start of bouldering competitions in 1999.

Route setting was very lead-orientated at this time; I remember bouldering wasn't even on the agenda at my IFSC course.

So a boulder problem wasn't usually more than a short route (at least in my bubble - international exchange wasn't easy in pre livestream and Youtube times).

After working with some of the pioneers of boulder route setting, I learned that the format of these comps demands and allows much more than just short routes. It's about creating whole body movements instead of simple moves, something that feels hard and complex at

the beginning, gets easier attempt by attempt and eventually can be solved within 5 minutes.

The creative potential for the upcoming years was huge, and I really enjoyed being part of the process of creating new challenges for the climbers, season by season.

A lot of things became possible. And the climbers adapted quickly. The emergence of new holds and volumes, especially for bouldering, also played an important role – volumes were used with hands and feet, just like holds, and not only as something to put a hold on.

RSM: And World Cups now?

Reini: Basically, it's still the same. I think the climbers are much more complete nowadays. They grew up with triple dynos, toe catches, etc., and they are able to understand complex moves very quickly and climb them in a few tries. That's why I think that boulders get more physical and coordinative at the same time. It also allows us to set more attractive lead routes.

RSM: Can you recall a particularly stressful comp setting moment that stands out to you?

Reini: I can't say that there's one that stands out above the others. There's been plenty of moments, but the longer you've set the less stressful it gets. All of the prior mistakes and moments along the way teach you to be calm. You kind of think to yourself, 'what's the worst that can happen?'. It can't be any worse than your past mistakes and blunders, and you survived those, so...

RSM: If you were to give up-and-coming route setters any of your unsolicited advice, what would it be?

Reini: Don't take it too seriously. But also keep in mind that your work has a big influence on the sport; not so much on the result of one specific comp (I think here the influence of a single route setter is over-rated) but more in general. How the sport is presented and evolving, which skills climbers need to train, how they train, how they have to "look" and maybe even how much they eat.

Route setting is not a competition between setters and climbers, but more a cooperation to help them show their best. There is a nice sentence in the IFSC guidelines for route setting that sums it up: "The work of route setters comes to life through the performances of athletes in competition".

And with all this in the back of your mind, allow yourself to forget about it for a moment to start to play and be creative.

RSM: Finish this sentence: I route set because:

Reini: I like creating moves. ◆

Reini doing his best Walter White impression while working in the Squadra shaping studio.



Photo: Hannes Wair, Alpsolut

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY & SETTING BY REINI FICHTINGER





加快建设江宁区“...” 组团’和“九大重...”

005

CTV 5 体育 IFSC

平伟集团

華人置業



F2

F2

F4

F4

IFSC WORLD CUP
START













World Cup Chon Qing, China 2014



World Championships Paris, 2016



World Championships Innsbruck, 2018



STANDARDS FOR CLIMBING GYMS

EN-12572-1:2017 AND EN-12572-2

TAKEAWAYS FROM 51 PAGES OF TEDIOUS READING

TEXT: NATE MCMULLAN / PETER ZEIDELHACK

◆ *Safety is critical in climbing gyms, and we all know it. Skills checks, floor-walking, harnesses, ropes and safety flooring are all part of the normal routine, but what about standards? And by standards we mean EN standards – the long boring written kind which as a typical climber we use all the time, but we may not know much about.*

In this article we hope to shed a little light on what the standards are and how they are applicable for day to day operations. We will try not to delve into lots of numbers or debate minutiae, so please consider the following to be a summary of what we think is important, and please do not consider what is included as definitive. If you need clarification or more information, many main manufacturers can help, or you can get in touch with either Nate or Peter.

Nate McMullan Nate is Managing Director of Climbing Wall Services, Chair and Founding Member of the Route Setting Association (RSA), Chair of the Technical Committee of the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC), IRATA qualified (Level 3), and holds the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor qualification. Nate has completed over 2000 Main Inspections (UK, EU and beyond) and has been an Expert Witness in numerous climbing wall related cases.

Peter Zeidelhack Peter is a member of the executive board for a company that runs four climbing gyms in the greater Munich area, director of route setting for these four gyms, head of the commercial route setting training for the DAV, technical advisor to Petzl, a route setter himself for over 15 years, and a loving husband and father of three girls.



NATE MCMULLAN

Born: 1977

Lives in: Sheffield, UK

Background: Managing Director of Climbing Wall Services



PETER ZEIDELHACK

Born: 1977

Lives in: Munich, Germany

Background: Diploma in sports science, focusing on media and communication



HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Interview with Elias Hithaler, responsible for ACS within the DAV and part of the standardization committee.

RSM: How has the standard for ACS (artificial climbing structures) developed?

Elias: When more and more climbing walls and above all climbing gyms were built in the 90s, the question arose which requirements these wall structures actually have to meet. The various stakeholders came together under the DIN secretariat and developed the first European standard for artificial climbing walls, which was published in early 1999. At that time François Savigny, the owner of Entre-Prises, the world's largest manufacturer of climbing walls from France, was chairman.

RSM: How should one imagine the work in the standardization committee?

Elias: Standards are usually developed by those who later apply them. Anyone can submit an application for standardization. All parties interested in a topic have the opportunity to contribute and share their expertise. The national standardization bodies, which are also members of CEN, the European Committee for Standardization, can send representatives to the European working group. In this working group, the proposals made by the national working groups are discussed and decisions are made that are acceptable to all involved. This process can sometimes be very tedious, as the requirements and wishes are sometimes far apart. Before they are adopted, the draft standards are published and put up for discussion. The experts involved must then generally agree on the final content.

By the way, you have to pay for participation in the standardization committee. The contribution is calculated according to the turnover of the companies involved; for association representatives it is a fixed amount. DIN, the German Institute for Standardization, is an association and is financed through the contributions and through the sale of the standards, which can only be obtained from Beuth Verlag.

RSM: From what background are the members of the Commission?

Elias: On the manufacturer side, climbing wall, hold and mat providers are involved. On the consumer side, gym operators, association representatives, monitoring associations such as TÜV and Dekra, and the statutory accident insurance companies, VBG and DGUV are also involved. This means that all relevant representatives are involved in the development of the standard.

RSM: Do you already have a schedule for the next revision?

Elias: Standards are reviewed every five years at the latest. If there are enough suggestions and valid input from the climbing gym community, these are forwarded to TC 136, the responsible commission in CEN. They then decide whether the standardization work can be started and the standard can be updated. This would be by 2022 at the latest.



ELIAS HITHALER

Born: 1962

Lives in: St. Heinrich am Starnberger See, Germany

Background: Chairman of the European Standards Commission, Civil engineer and master carpenter

PART 1: EN 12572-1:2017

(SORRY, THE NUMBERS BEGIN!)

Roped climbing walls (i.e. climbing gyms, depending on your location) – technically, the standard is titled: **Artificial climbing structures – Part 1: Safety requirements and test methods of ACS with protection points.** As noted previously, the content is intended for manufacturers, but many aspects are also important for operators and staff. We have attempted to extract what is most relevant, from the big picture to the small details, while at the same time identifying helpful hints for management.

STRUCTURE

⇒ If the worst happens, the entire structure fails. This is unlikely but possible, so how can we avoid this catastrophic event? The standard states that the structural integrity and stability shall be justified by calculations. These calculations are described

in the standard and include formulas to which a competent Structural Engineer will reference when designing the climbing wall. Calculations are also required to be referenced for all permanent protection points (top and lead).

⇒ In simple terms you need to have a record of the design calculations of the climbing structure as developed by a competent Structural Engineer, and these will be on record.

⇒ If the structure pre-dates the standard or calculations are not available, retro-engineering is possible.

NOTE: There is a misunderstanding that “proof” testing can take the place of calculations, but this is not the case. There is a condition of the standard which relates to protection points only (not the structure). However, the test involves loading the point with up to 20kn, which is a very scary proposition and not recommended.

MAINTENANCE: Even if designed to meet the standard, the structure may degrade over time or with use (timber rot, steel corrosion, etc.). Therefore, conducting a Main Inspection as dictated by the manufacturer is required (normally annually). This may be completed by a manufacturer or other competent party (with manufacturing and inspection experience of climbing walls).

TOP PROTECTION POINTS

⇒ Normally referred to as anchors or final protection points, these will provide safety for the climbers both when top roping and/or as the last lead climbing protection point.

⇒ The connection for the rope will be “secure” – not a single snap gate carabiner or similar.

⇒ The protection point will be attached to the structure by at least two fixation

points. Each of these will have a minimum breaking strength of at least 20kn.

⇒ All components of the system (all links) will have a minimum breaking strength of at least 20kn.

⇒ A “proof” test of all top protection points must be completed after initial installation and again after any re-installation of the system (more on this later). This test is only to confirm that the fixation hardware is correctly assembled, and does not take the place of calculations.

⇒ All protection points will be secured by a locking nut, if applicable.

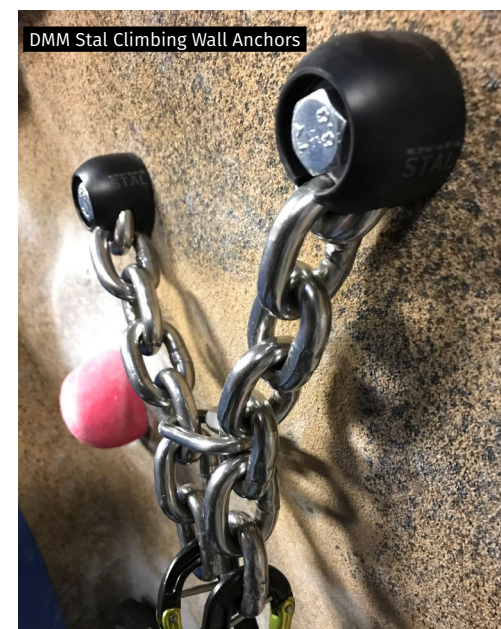
⇒ There is more than one way to achieve this, but a Nylock nut is most common.

⇒ The origin and conformity of all protection points is expected to be identifiable: Are they marked?
– CE / EN label
– Manufacturer

MAINTENANCE: The condition of the points can greatly affect the strength. Typical inspection of all protection points will be conducted every 1–3 months (depending on use, design, conditions) and be recorded.

- Corrosion and wear
- Safety notices
- Recalls
- Obsolescence
- If in doubt – change it out

If the anchors are not traceable, they should not be used! Simple. There have been a number of concerns about the safety of anchors used in climbing walls over the past few years. It is important that all staff who carry out inspections are kept up-to-date and understand when to retire / replace anchors. This particularly pertains to corrosion on stainless steel and ensuring that there are markings to this standard.



RSM: Are there any controversial issues in the current version of the Standard?

Elias: Yes, there are some points that have been controversial. In the load test, for example, the first three and the highest securing point of each line must be tested with a load of 6.6kN (previously 8.0kN) immediately after the climbing wall is installed. For the manufacturers, the test is a great deal of additional effort, which from their point of view does not add any extra value, since they have to provide arithmetic proof of the design anyway. The monitoring associations, on the other hand, argue that any weaknesses in the construction can be identified immediately in the stress test.

NOTE: Some manufacturers of climbing walls have designed the structure of the wall to be extended and used as a protection point for climbers. As each example is different, it is critical to obtain confirmation that the design / anchor is acceptable for use.

– Measure the distance, reference the standard (section 4.1), and get someone to check your work.
– Deviation for competitions and/or traverse routes may change the spacings – check it!

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION POINTS

⇒ Normally referred to as lead point or intermediate protection point, which protects the climber as they progress on the climbing wall.

⇒ These protection points have a minimum breaking strength of 20kn (all components), just like the final protection points.

⇒ They also have to be identifiable and traceable: Markings as with the final protection points

⇒ Height of the first point is not to be above 3.1m
TECH NOTE: The measurement is to the inner radius of the “attachment point” e.g. the carabiner on the quickdraw.

⇒ Spacing of the points is determined by the equation as per the standard, which has changed in the most recent version.

– Confirming the correct spacing is important as old walls (and some newer builds which do not comply) may have a large distance between lead points, even more critical when lower down.

⇒ All protection points will be secured with a locking nut or similar.

⇒ Volumes should not have added protected points (unless specially designed)

⇒ Protection points are required to be part of the calculated structure. Some manufacturers have designed the climbing panels to be part of the protection system, but this is not common and will be indicated in the plans of the structure. It may also be identified by the presence of the following, but – important! – just adding a hanger to a hold placement on a panel is not good enough:

- Oversize and higher density of panel fixation points
- Spreader plate or other
- Thicker panels

⇒ A “Proof” test of the first three protection points on every line must be completed after initial installation and again after any modification of the system. This test is only to confirm that the fixation hardware is correctly assembled. The test does not take the place of calculations.

RSM: Are there any points that you wish were solved differently?

Elias: Personally, I would have waived the 10% tolerance for the newly defined hook distances (lead protection point). However, the vast majority were in favour, arguing that, especially with older and smaller systems, a lot of modifications and adjustments would be necessary if the tolerance was not introduced. On the whole, however, I am very satisfied with the result when you consider that a consensus has to be found among all the member states involved.

MAINTENANCE: As with the top protection points, all lead points should be inspected (recorded) every 1–3 months, with extra attention to the textile components.

Common issues with lead points include:

- Wear to the webbing / stitching
- Wear to the maillon
- Loss of function of the carabiner gate
- Obstruction from hold / volume / feature
- Material loss from abrasion on the climbing panel

FREE / FALL SPACE

⇒ This is one of the most common issues we see, both with roped facilities and bouldering walls, particularly in older buildings which were not purpose-built.

⇒ The Standard stipulates that the climber is required to have space in which to fall which is free from possible hazards, not including climbing structures or walls able to withstand the impact of a falling climber.

⇒ The free space extends to the side (1.5m), behind (2m) and below (8m) the actual protection point, so it moves around the wall a bit.

⇒ Typically, steelwork / ledges / lights and railing are common possible hazards.

TOP TIPS: Ideally the possible hazards will be removed from the free space. This is not always possible, so other options could include:



- Cladding steelwork with climbing surface
- Padding
- Route setting with avoidance
- Signage
- No lead climbing and/or climbing to reduce risk level

NOTE: In addition to free space on the wall, the new standard also includes the stipulation of free space for the climber to land and other users to move around without obstacles. We are not exactly sure what the intention was with this, but it is assumed that an area of free passage is made for other users to move around the facility without being landed on.

CLIMBING SURFACE

⇒ Climbing surface has changed tremendously over the evolution of climbing walls, beginning with brick/block inserts or actual rock sections mixed with concrete, GRP panels, plywood/ resin hybrid panes and many other variations.

⇒ All points in this section are also applicable to bouldering walls and, to a lesser extent, volumes, which will be discussed in a later article.

⇒ In terms of the standard, the climbing surface needs to be strong enough to take the impact of a falling climber for obvious reasons, as putting a foot or hand through the panel can have serious repercussions.

– All climbing surfaces will pass the impact and deflection tests.

– **TECH NOTE:** Heavy flex of the panels, cracking, heavy perforation (or other material loss), and/or water damage may all contribute to weakening of the panel.

– Older and/or thin fibreglass or plywood panels may not pass the impact test and continued use of these panels should be considered carefully (or even better, replaced).

⇒ In addition to the surface strength, the surface must be free from possible entrapment features (gaps) and sharp edges (hazard for climbers and equipment). This does not pertain to intended cracks for climbing or hold inserts.

– **TECH NOTE:** Even though allowable according to the standard, sharp constricting cracks may not be desirable as they can present a degloving hazard if not manufactured carefully.



CLIMBING PANEL INSERTS

⇒ Also known as hold placements – these can be “Tee-Nuts” or other internally threaded sleeves of various types.

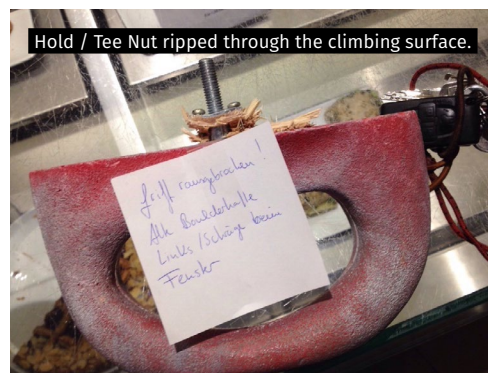
⇒ There are numerous examples of holds ripping through the climbing surface. Thankfully, injury appears to have been avoided. From height, however, the placement failure could be deadly, so it is critical the strength of all hold placements is verified.

⇒ The climbing panel (surface) as well as the insert (Tee-nut) is tested and they must hold 12kn with no failure.

TECH NOTE: The load for the Insert test has increased from 5kn to 12kn, as it was realised that 5kn was far too low.

– Older, thin or damaged panels (or Tee Nuts) can fail at a very low load; in testing we have seen placements fail under 3kn, so if movement is noted or the placement is in question, do not use it!

– Even new Tee Nuts can be very weak. During conformity testing, some hammer-in (pronged type) inserts had a 20% barrel shear rate, under the stated 12kn. Even if the barrel did not shear, they tend to pull



RSM: What about controversial points?

Elias: The breaking load of the flange nut, i.e. the handle mounting nut in the climbing wall, has been increased from 5KN to 12KN. This value has even been questioned by some surveillance associations. During tests with the Technical University of Munich, however, we found that when route screwing, by hand or with hammering screws, much higher tensile forces act on the nut for a shorter time than are possible at all through climbing.

through thin or low density plywood as they approach 12kn.

- If in doubt, get a certificate of conformity from the supplier – Ebay may not be the best place to buy from!

DOCUMENTATION

⇒ Important (but not very exciting): the documentation for all aspects of the climbing wall are required to ensure safety and prove the operator’s due diligence. It is also very helpful to know you are getting what you paid for when having a wall manufactured for you.

⇒ Marking: This aspect is the same as for bouldering walls, and the following will be visible:

- Who manufactured the facility and supplier if not a direct build.
- The standard it has been manufactured to (e.g. this one).
- Date of install and next Main Inspection (more on this later).

⇒ Additionally, all manufacturers are required to supply an “Instruction Manual”. The content and quality will vary depending upon the resources of the actual company, and even self-builds are required to provide this. The manual needs to include the following: The above mentioned markings.

- Details on location and type of all protection points, including the maximum lines to be used simultaneously (in the



bouldering standard this is the maximum number of users).

- How much extra load may be applied to the structure: This is assumed to represent the weight of holds and volumes which are allowed to be added, without de-stabilising the structure. How many holds and volumes would you guess are on your wall? How much do they weigh? LOTS!
- Usage restrictions and maintenance and inspection requirements (more on this later).

⇒ The preceding is what should be commonly available. In addition, the operator is required to have Technical Documentation:

- Calculations of the entire structure and all protection points, including location, rather than just a proof test.
- Certificate of conformity or testing reports for: Impact testing of surface, hold placement test, proof testing report.

TECH NOTE: Proof testing (identified as an in-line test at a specific angle) is only required at the first installation and on other re-installations. If this refers to the structure install, or if the protection point is unclear, it is our view that some sort of test upon reassembly of the fixation bolts should be required. Is utilizing the in-line tester required? I don’t think so, and I think a torque test with an actual calibrated torque wrench is adequate. But this is my opinion and I could be wrong...

INSPECTIONS AND MAINTENANCE

MAINTENANCE

This area is key to the ongoing safe use of every climbing wall. It covers not just the actual structure but everything about the climbing wall; from steelwork to holds, there needs to be a written record to document why you can keep using the wall people pay to use (or use at no cost, as all walls need this, even those in schools and clubs).

The point of reference for all aspects of this section should be provided by the manufacturer, however this is often (almost always) lacking or non-existent, so the operators may need to develop/expand it themselves, which is pretty difficult. Some climbing walls enlist consultants to help develop a reasonable plan, and if you do, make sure they know what they are doing, as climbing experts may not be maintenance experts.

To start, it is impossible to know how to maintain your wall if there is no plan. Ideally, this will be provided upon completion of the build and include:

Instructions for operator maintenance, including (as required):

- A plan for what needs to be checked and how often.
- Drawings to identify what and how to verify what needs to be checked.
- If items are operator-repairable, instructions on how to do this.
- A schedule on when checks need to be commenced.

TECH NOTE: The reality is that climbing walls can be extremely complicated and include many different areas in which the wall manufacturer themselves may not have expertise. An example would be the protection points: if a builder has supplied a specific anchor, will they be an expert on that anchor? Maybe. Some are very good builders but may not be as knowledgeable on the anchor systems. Ultimately, the operator is responsible for ensuring that the systems which are being used are safe and comply with the relevant standard. Get conformity documents!

INSPECTIONS

According to the standard there are three levels of inspections:

Routine visual inspection:

- This is the daily check, looking for obvious damage and or hazards from the ground (unless otherwise required, as is the case for auto-belays). Trained wall staff would



the manufacturer of the particular equipment regarding details.

Main inspection:

- The big one. Normally conducted on an annual basis (or as stated by the manufacturer), this inspection evaluates the overall condition of the wall with a focus on the structure, internals and protection points.
- Who conducts this inspection is very important, as the areas of expertise are varied and the actual access requirements may be complex (complicated Working at Height and possible confined space – e.g. IRATA level work+).
- The documentation required will reflect the level of inspection.

TECH NOTE:

⇒ A typical commercial level Main Inspection report would be 20-30 pages, including images, recommendations, and a Certificate of Inspection. Many operators use this as a reference for their Operational inspections and to help plan ongoing maintenance.

⇒ The Main inspection is not a compliance evaluation, rather a conditional inspection, however it is normal for any obvious discrepancies to be noted, and competent inspectors should be versed with the standard as well as relevant ongoing concerns with typical issues including:

- Recalls
- Anchor safety notices from UIAA or other
- Usage and configuration of anchors / auto-belays

⇒ Access to the sub-structure is normally required, and ideally access panels are provided in the design.

OTHER STANDARDS

EN standards may not be the only standards which are relevant. Many countries have local or an “industry” standard which may apply. An example for this is safety flooring under roped climbing, which is not part of the standard (oddly) but is required according to the industry standard in many countries – and is a really good idea! If your country has a trade association, this will be the best reference. The UK has the ABC (Association of British Climbing Walls), Germany has the DAV (Deutscher Alpenverein / German Alpine Club), USA has the CWA (Climbing Wall Association).

- normally conduct this inspection.
- It will include a visual check of panels / surface / area / safety flooring / foreign objects (bottles, etc).
 - Although not specifically required to be documented, it is recommended to do so (checklist or simple method would be typical).

Operational inspections:

- Conducted every 1-3 months, depending on manufacturer, usage, environment, complexity, this level of inspection focuses

- on the condition of equipment and components.
- Panels, protections points, safety flooring, actuators (for articulation) and PPE (personal protective equipment) would all be included.
 - A physical and functional inspection is required, meaning Staff may be Working at Height (a whole different article) and have a heightened level of training and/or certification.
 - Detailed documentation is required. For any PPE or protection points, check with

PART 2: EN 12572-2:2017

The bouldering wall standard, or formally: **Safety requirements and test methods for bouldering walls.**

Generally, the majority of this standard is the same as Part 1. This includes:

⇒ All aspects of the structure are to have calculations, and those calculations are to include any additional load from holds / volumes and people standing on the top (yes, calculations are required. No, a pull test is not adequate). Additionally, there is a clause that the structure to which the bouldering wall is attached (if not free standing) must be able to hold the forces applied to the bouldering wall (including holds / volumes/ people). In simple terms, an operator must have calculations for ALL types of climbing walls.

⇒ Protection points: Normally a bouldering wall will not have protection points, however there may be a situation where these are needed. If so, all conditions of Part 1 apply, and the normal bouldering structure is not suitable for adding protection points.

⇒ Panel strength and impact resistance are the same.

⇒ Hold insert strength is the same.

⇒ Marking and documentation is the same (except the obvious lack of protection points).

⇒ Maintenance and inspection: Three levels of inspections with each level being recommended to be recorded. Yes, even the daily check of safety flooring, panels, climbing area.

BOULDERING WALL HEIGHT

The height of a bouldering wall is measured from the top of the safety flooring to the highest possible point a climber can hold; this is not necessarily the last hold.

4500 mm - max. height of bouldering (without possibility to stand on the top of the wall)

4000 mm - max. height if it is possible to stand on the top of the wall

TECH NOTE: This does not say “Top Out” height, so if it is possible for climbers to stand on the top, and the height is over 4000mm, you will need to do something to restrict height or access. Signage, route setting or other procedural restrictions may be enough, depending on the situation.

DEVIATIONS: Special events or higher bouldering walls exist, some going up to 8m or even higher. In these situations, a very thorough risk assessment must take place and extra precautions implemented; special mats, extra training for landing or lifeguards (if over water) might be part of the process to allow deviations.

SAFETY FLOORING

This is the obvious difference, and the standard has changed to include tests for manufacturers of safety flooring in the most recent version. By definition, the impact absorbing material must be appropriate to handle a fall from the maximum height a climber may reach. This is a little vague, but gives some flexibility for higher or shorter walls, including training areas, traverse walls (whole different standard and more complicated) or special events.

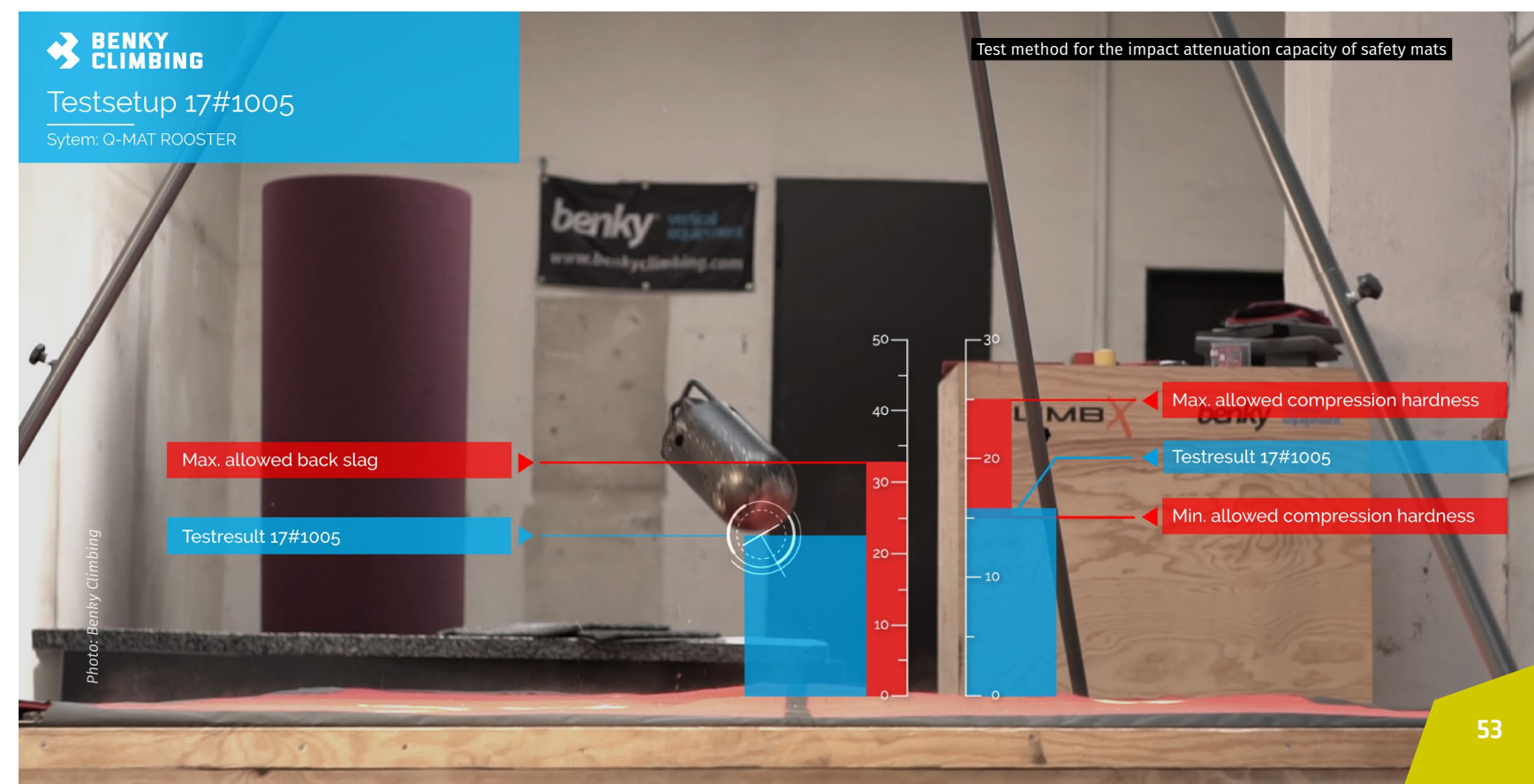
⇒ The standard acknowledges there are various materials in use to protect boulderers, but generally refers to the flooring as boulder mats. Boulder mats must pass tests, (who knew!) including:

- Peak deceleration
- Deflection
- Resilience

⇒ The mat tests are detailed in the standard and include testing samples and joints. When buying mats, you should be supplied with some sort of certificate of conformity. If not, you may want to ask for it.

⇒ Other types of safety flooring are referenced, like shingle, and may be used, however the height is limited to 3000mm if used alone. Use of outdoor boulder mats are noted, however extra procedures would be required.

⇒ Other systems are referenced (air bags) but only to note that you need to reference their specific data if used.



RSM: Are there any points that need to be revised?

Elias: The requirements for sloping mats on bouldering walls were not specified in the last revision. I also assume that the question of the operation of a facility will be discussed during the next revision. So far, the standard only describes the safety requirements and test procedures for climbing and bouldering walls as well as bouldering mats and climbing holds. The requirements for a climbing gym floor, or even a climbing gym itself, have not yet been discussed further. Perhaps, as a result of this interview, new and additional suggestions will come about the various aspects of climbing and bouldering walls that have not yet been considered.

MATTING PROJECTION (SIZE)

This is one of the most common problems we see when conducting inspections. It is a pretty simple formula to determine the extent of mat projection, but due to special constraints it is often restricted. It is fundamental that climbers should not be able land off the mats, so it is worth checking for adequate projection, even if you have been told they are okay.

⇒ The projection of mats can be separated into two categories: above 3000m and up to and including 3000mm. Each category has a side and rear projection identified (as measured from the furthest projection point of the wall).

⇒ The required projection is identified in the standard, with various constraints, and is open to a bit of interpretation. However, the basic question should always be: Can a falling climber (spinning from a missed dyno) land off the mat?

TECH NOTE: Have big volumes? This changes the projection requirements of the safety flooring, and you should re-measure accordingly. Normally, the manufacturer has not accounted for extra distance on the mats, so when adding large volumes you may need additional mats – check it!

MATTING OTHER

In addition to projection, all mats should provide a secure and uniform fall surface, so there are no gaps (gap at bottom of slab = bad) and relatively of similar deflection when tested. Is this unclear? Of course not. This is one of the questions we get most often: “When do the mats need replacing?”. In discussion with many manufacturers, the answer is: It depends. Not helpful, I know. The tests in the standard are for manufacturers and new mats, so even if we had a mobile testing rig, the results would be meaningless. Currently there are a few options; some use a makeshift test to judge deflection (how deep a weight

goes), but that only really works if you can gauge what it should be from the start. And when do you replace it? The threshold is a bit arbitrary. We tend to pace the entire mat area and “get a feel” for how the mats should be, and use that as a tare point to rate soft spots. Not very scientific, but after over a decade of pacing mats you do get a feel for what they should be like. I also like to jump from height and see how the mats react. Again, not very scientific, but seems to work.

DEVIATION FROM THE STANDARD

We know this material can be dry and may not seem relevant to everyone, but it is (both dry and important). We also know that not every wall is fully compliant in all aspects. I would go so far as to suggest not a single wall is fully compliant in every single aspect. So, what do you do if you are not fully compliant? The first step is knowing what areas need attention. We do encounter operators who are convinced their amazing new climbing wall is perfect in every way, only to find out that in fact there is a possible issue. The discrepancy may not be a major one and could actually be easily fixed with adapting a procedure, adding a sign or simply adjusting where route setting commences. However, you can't fix the problem if you don't know it exists – knowledge is key. I recommend asking your Main inspection team, and if you are not satisfied, ask an independent party. Below we have added a few options to typical areas of concern:

Structural calculations:

- If you don't have them, you can retro-engineer. Definitely not an easy job, but with a good team and structural engineer it is normally possible.

Retro testing:

- Most tests can be completed off-site with a sample; panels / hold placements are not very hard to test.
- Proof testing can also be completed post-installation. Again, it is not a particularly long process, but calibrated testers and access will be required.

Protection points:

- Spacing issues – either do not lead or add protection points.
- Conformity – if you cannot provide conformity documentation (or they don't actually confirm), the points should be replaced. There are a variety of products on the market specifically for climbing walls. Check out DMM Stal, Petzl Easy Top or Edelrid Topper for a few options.

Surface:

- Reinforce or replace – if holds are pulling through, it is past time to upgrade.
- Free space concerns – see free/ fall space section above.

Hold Placements:

- Use quality placements with a quality surface material from the beginning and ask for confirmation that what you are using conforms – any supplier should be able to provide this. If not, look elsewhere.
- Reinforcements can be retro-fitted, but this is a time-consuming process. Fibreglass or plywood patches can help and are a cheaper option than full wall replacement.

Mat projection:

Restricted mats? This is a common issue, and the best solution is to extend the mat. That is not always possible, so other options could include:

- Avoid setting in areas of restricted projection.
- Only set the very low starts in this area and work away (depending on projection).
- Spotting (pretty hard to accomplish in reality).

CONCLUSION

We hope this article has been useful and informative. Please remember that it is not a substitute for the actual standards, and if you have further questions, let us know! 🍷



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TEXT & INTERVIEW: MARIA HILBER

IVAYLO PENCHEV

THE FUTURE OF INDOOR CLIMBING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSTANT INNOVATION
AN ENTREPRENEUR'S VIEW



Photo: EVA Magazine / Walltopia

Ivaylo Penchev is co-founder and CEO of Walltopia. He founded the company in 1996 in Sofia, Bulgaria together with Metin Musov, and has turned it into the largest climbing wall manufacturer in the world. Penchev started studying Theoretical Physics, but dropped out of university to concentrate on his business activities and, ultimately, the foundation and development of Walltopia. He consequently also got involved in other businesses, like HRT climbing holds, CompositeX and others.

Ivaylo Penchev is known for liking expensive cars and has made a recipe for success out of his innovative spirit, strict management style and ego. Bulgaria's cheap labour played into his hands while at the same time, Bulgarian origin was an obstacle for Walltopia on the international market. The company had to prove itself all the more to be accepted as a serious player – an impediment Penchev was able to overcome thanks to perseverance and responsibility. That's why he also demands a lot from his employees, expecting absolute commitment and sense of duty. Walltopia has wall components produced in its factories and then sends assembly teams around the world to build the walls on site in climbing gyms.

Walltopia grew up first in Europe, then in the United States, which continues to be the most important market. Now Penchev is looking at the potential of the Asian market, Chinese in particular. We talked to him about his origins, the current development, about his view of the indoor climbing industry and about the future.

MH: Where did your passion for and know-how about climbing originally come from?

Ivaylo: I was a climber for many years. I used to climb with my company partner – outdoors, of course, as there was no indoor climbing back then. I don't remember why we started climbing in the first place, but I suppose the simple answer is that it's in our genes. I believe in the science of evolution, telling us that we descend from monkeys who live on trees. Climbing is something very natural for the human being.

MH: How did the idea for Walltopia come about?

Ivaylo: Together with my business partner Metin Musov, I used to build climbing walls for competitions in Bulgaria, and later for international comps. That was about 25 to 30 years ago. At that time I ran another successful business and supported other climbers. We worked voluntarily and unpaid, the walls were not meant for commercial climbing. But this way we got to know the state of the art in this business quite well and we decided that we could do better, even much better. Out of this ambition we started to build walls commercially. That was 24 years ago.

MH: What were the most important milestones and breakthroughs for Walltopia?

Ivaylo: We have developed clever systems for the design and assembly of climbing walls. We were the first to create fully three-dimensional structures with complex typology, and everyone started to follow – at least that's my impression. And even when others began to follow us, they built rigid systems. Working with rigid wooden frames requires experienced specialists, as mistakes are very difficult to repair. Our structure, on the other hand, is very flexible and a lot easier to fix. Even inexperienced technicians can do a good job with our system. I would say this is the most important technical innovation that has brought us to where we are now.

MH: What part has automation played in this development?

Ivaylo: Until now there was not much automation in climbing wall construction. In our industry, automation has developed only recently. In this respect we are still a very immature industry, almost nothing is standardised and it is still difficult to automate processes because climbing structures are so diverse. Every project is done from scratch.

MH: How did Walltopia grow?

Ivaylo: We have expanded with the growth of the industry. At first we only worked in Europe, then the USA became one of the most important markets. We are now active in 70 countries. However, expansion has not been easy for us, and this is because we are Bulgarian. Bulgaria is not a good and trusted brand – on the contrary, for us our origin was rather a hindrance. I'm neither proud nor interested in nationalities, but I didn't want to hide anything. Some write "made in the EU" on their products to avoid admitting that they come from Bulgaria.

MH: What made you trustworthy for customers around the world?

Ivaylo: I think it's our sense of responsibility. We're acting responsibly and we are well-organized. We do make mistakes, but we fix them. I remember a case in our early years in Germany. We had built an outdoor wall of fiberglass. But the client was quite dissatisfied for two reasons. First, there were gaps between the panels. But I don't think that was the most important reason, because the gaps were no bigger than any other manufacturer's. But secondly, the assembly team behaved totally out of line. Not at work, but in the apartment that our client had rented for us. He got the whole blame from the landlord and was in turn angry with us – for understandable reasons. So although the gaps were not extremely large, they became the major problem. To fix the issue, we simply dismantled the wall completely, took it back to Bulgaria and brought a brand new one with us. It was assembled by a new team and everything went smoothly. When we do s---, we try to clean it up as best as we can.

MH: How many facilities have you built so far?

Ivaylo: I do not know the exact number. Until a few years ago we tried to count them, and at that time there were more than 1,500, but now there are certainly 2,000.

MH: Where do you see the greatest potential for growth?

Ivaylo: The United States is our largest market, followed by the European Union and then China. I see potential everywhere, but most certainly in China. The Chinese climbing community is just beginning to develop and the Chinese population is larger than the American and European combined.

MH: Where will Walltopia go in the future?

Ivaylo: For five years we have been involved not only in climbing but also in the active entertainment business, which now accounts for half of our total volume. It may be that we will completely separate the two parts in the future. However, due to the Covid-19 situation this step has been delayed.

In the future we want to push both product lines with the same passion and work ethic to create value for people by offering them the best possible product. In this respect we are and will remain product-driven. I probably exaggerate when I say that our marketing sucks. We may not have the best marketing, but we have the best product. ... Or, let's say, one of the best.

"IF WE DO NOT ADAPT CONTINUOUSLY BY INNOVATING OUR PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES, WE WILL DIE."

MH: What emphasis do you put on innovation and development?

Ivaylo: If we do not adapt continuously by innovating our products and processes, we will die. The current Covid situation is a very good example. It is a powerful disrupter and one of the most significant things that has happened to our company lately – in a good sense. Because we needed to adapt.

Before that, we had over 700 employees. Now we're only 400. We've laid off 40 percent of our staff, but at the same time we manage to maintain 80 percent of our capacity. The reason for this is that we were too bloated before. The vicious circle is that you constantly hire new people when you have a lot of work. Only when a case like Covid hits you do you start thinking about efficiency. We will continue to innovate products in the future, but right now we are focusing on optimizing workflows.

MH: Will you continue to work with reduced personnel? Do you think Covid-19 will have a long-term effect or can you return to normal soon?

Ivaylo: I actually don't believe anything, I only have opinions that are stronger on some days than on others. There is still too little scientific knowledge about the virus and its future effects. I have studied theoretical physics and always have a scientific approach when I plan and make predictions. Human science tells us that people are reluctant to change their habits. The current Covid crisis is forcing them to change, but when the strong external influences pass, people will very quickly return to old habits.

Some changes will probably be maintained, for example working from home. But people will not climb less in the future, they will do fitness, go out, have a drink in the bar. The big question is when that will happen.

MH: So the crisis wasn't really that bad for Walltopia?

Ivaylo: It's very volatile. Just yesterday I was looking at our plans. Right now [July] until October, we're just as busy as before Covid. But who knows if another wave and new closures will come. It could of course be that we produce a lot for current projects now, but then we won't be able to deliver.

The good thing is that we are financially stable and even with zero income and without laying people off we could continue to exist for three years. Let's just say that we are on the safe side because our staff is now smaller and we generate more than zero income.

MH: In which direction do you think indoor climbing will develop in the future?

Ivaylo: The future will be bright. I don't know any other sport where you can socialize so well while you are practicing it. Maybe in golf, but that's for older people. For the young, socializing is very important, therefore I believe that climbing will continue to grow and that it will be a sustainable growth. It's not prone to trends.

MH: What about the Olympic Games? What effect will they have on climbing?

Ivaylo: There will be more than one effect. Of course, the recognition of climbing by the Olympic Committee has made the people who are involved there happy and proud. That is only natural and human. There will certainly be more governmental support and more money, but there will also be more corruption. All in all, I'm not sure whether it's rather good or rather bad. For all those who are dependent on state support, it's good. For me personally it is rather irrelevant. There are many bizarre sports that have been part of the Olympic Games for a long time and never became popular, therefore I would not overestimate the impact of the Olympics. We should be more cautious in the future, as there will certainly be more corruption. I am not sure if there will be any true positive effects.

MH: Can you tell us something about the climbing wall project in Abu Dhabi?

Ivaylo: There is actually not much special to say about it. At least at the moment, it's the highest indoor climbing structure in the world. It was certainly a difficult project. During the construction a big fire broke out on the facade and also hit the climbing wall, half of it had to be rebuilt. But Abu Dhabi's climbing community is not big and the gym is to be seen as an amusement place rather than a true climbing wall. The project, which also houses the world's largest wind tunnel, is part of Yas Island, just like Ferrari World and other attractions. It is a place of entertainment, a leisure island.

It's actually a good sign that climbing is becoming part of the amusement industry, just as fitness has become part of the hospitality industry with almost every hotel offering a fitness room. It would be great if one day, many hotels had a bouldering wall. Or every amusement park had a climbing wall.

MH: What kind of climbing walls will we see more in the future? Where is the trend going - will walls become easier or more difficult?

Ivaylo: In global terms, the walls tend to become easier. The times when climbing was only for climbers and the gym owners built their

gyms for themselves are over. Back then, we built big roofs, arches and impressive hardcore climbing stuff. Today, facilities are more focused on less ambitious climbers. But there will certainly be phases in the future. For a while the walls were too difficult, now they're getting easier. The communities will mature and with an increasing number of climbers, the demand for harder walls will increase again.

The biggest visible trend is of course bouldering. It's not only a new sport, but a new style of it has already emerged, far different from the climbing of 20 years ago.

MH: Does the professionalisation of climbing mean that in the future, it will no longer be just climbers who operate the gyms?

Ivaylo: That will definitely be the case. No business activity in the world is exempt from this. There will be more professionalisation, more big chains, corporate culture. Of course there will still be free and independent climbing gyms. Maybe this sounds like bad news for some climbers, because many of us believe that we are somehow unique. But we're not, we just want to be.

MH: Will climbing lose its community spirit and ethics?

Ivaylo: Why should it? Besides, ethics and corporate culture are very strongly connected. I do not share the view that growth and corporate culture lead to worse ethics. Corporations create strong ethics, and ethical codes are reinforced with a growing number of people.

What role does digitalisation play in the indoor climbing industry? Digitalisation is a strong trend that can be felt everywhere. Nevertheless, climbing as a physical activity cannot be digitised. Only the processes around it.

MH: What advice would you give someone who wants to open a climbing gym?


Ivaylo: I could give a lot of advice based on the knowledge that someone already has. In general, I would say that the most important challenge for a climbing gym is exactly the same as for a restaurant or a hotel - location! There is nothing more important. I have seen s---ty gyms - s---ty in every sense with bad walls, dirty mats, bad management - in great locations that were always full and made a lot of money. On the other hand, I have seen beautiful gyms with top class architecture and excellent management, but in unfavorable locations that had to fight for survival. 



Photo: EVA Magazine / Walltopia

IVAYLO PENCHEV
Born: 1970
Lives in: Sofia, Bulgaria
Background: Entrepreneur

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INTERVIEW: MARIA HILBER

THE CASTLE IN LONDON

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE LANGLEY

ABOUT A PLACE WHERE WALLS, PEOPLE AND FOOD CAN GROW

Photo: Georgina Lawrence

◆ **Mike Langley is slowly becoming recognised as one of the hardest working guys in climbing. Born and raised in and around London, The Castle has been his second home since 2004. Climbing wasn't an obvious choice with no local crags and very few gyms at the time. He has now been climbing for close to 20 years, having achieved multiple Font 8a boulders and French 8b routes. He started managing a large team of route setters from his early 20's and became an accredited National Route Setter in 2008. He now likes to concentrate his energy across the sport. On top of his role as Wall Development Manager at the Castle, he is the driving force behind one of the most successful bouldering event series in the world, Blokfest, is a commentator for the IFSC and still manages to find time to route set and bring up his young daughter.**

BUILDING AND PHILOSOPHY

RSM: What is special about The Castle, its building, and its community?

Mike: The Castle is unique amongst its peers. It's North London's largest climbing wall in a historic, Grade II listed building. It started life as a Victorian water pumping station, and is now home to a cutting-edge climbing centre. I can't think of anywhere else in the world quite like it. It's a pretty amazing place to work.

RSM: Which other areas belong to The Castle besides climbing and what other services are part of your offer?

Mike: Our premises are also a home to a 1.4-hectare permaculture garden, which, as well as being an oasis in the city to relax in after a climb, provides Castle Café with our own organic produce. We've won a bunch of sustainability awards for it. This summer some of the staff have loved to chill after work in the garden with a BBQ and beer. The state-of-the-art new outdoor boulders have really linked the Castle's outdoor spaces with the indoors. Beside that, we have a large gear shop and various outbuildings for film screenings, local community projects and parties.

RSM: The building has of course its charm. But are there restrictions or challenges you face because of it?

Mike: The biggest restriction is its Grade II listing as a building of significant historical interest. This not only limits what we can do with the external appearance, but dictates what we can do inside the building too. We also have massive repairing obligations which require us to agree the method and material for any major repair work with Historic England. Before the pandemic we had plans for roof and brickwork repairs that would take 5 years and cost about £2m.

RSM: What are the general challenges of running a climbing gym?

Mike: While indoor climbing has been around in the UK for over 20 years, it has transformed over the past 3 years and in a lot of cases, we are still working out the best way to do things. For us personally, before the pandemic the biggest challenge was dealing with the number of customers and their vastly different needs! That's changed now. The pandemic has brought the need for business agility and greater financial security into sharp focus.

RSM: Which values are at the heart of your philosophy?

Mike: Expertise, Creativity and Care are our guiding principles.

TEAM AND WORK

RSM: What is the size and composition of your team? Do you work mainly with full-time employees, or part-time, or with freelancers / occasional employees?

Mike: There are about 75 employees at the Castle. Although the shift patterns of much of the work make it hard to pin down exactly, about half of these could be described as full-time. We have used freelance instructors and route setters in the past, but steadily that is changing as we grow and adapt to how the industry is evolving.

RSM: What is the Employee Benefit Trust?

Mike: The EBT holds shares in the Castle (High Performance Sports Ltd) on behalf of the employees. The Trust is governed by elected members of staff, including one who sits on the board as a full Director of the business. Each year, the Castle uses some of its profits to buy shares off existing shareholders and gifts them to the Trust. It was only set up a couple of years ago so the shareholding is still quite small, but the ambition is for the trust to hold a significant proportion of the shares eventually. As the Trust is a shareholder it receives a dividend and it is this money that it can use to the benefit of the employees.

RSM: How many route setters are there on the team?

Mike: Pre-Covid, we had a nice mix of freelance setters from all around the UK and a small in-house team. The structure of the setting team has really gone full circle over the last 10 years. Back in the day we had our local team, but as we grew we started using freelance and "celebrity" setters. Now we are building from the bottom up again with a team of in-house heroes. The switch to just in-house setters has been led by the market. More and more gyms have opened and the pool of talent is being stretched across the country. We were not willing to compromise on quality, so we were left no option other than to refocus on an in-house team and nurture our own talent properly. We now operate as a team of five to six setters. Two are full time, the rest are part time but their hours are increasing as the centre expands and their skills improve. Last year it was a team of 15 setters, mostly freelance contractors! It's a big change.

"WE DECIDED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO FUTURE PROOF SETTERS IN THE BUSINESS WAS TO BUILD OUR OWN SQUAD OF HIGHLY TALENTED, ENTHUSIASTIC AND MOST IMPORTANTLY RELIABLE SETTERS FROM THE GROUND UP."

RSM: Can you tell us more about the route setting trainee programme you set up in 2017?

Mike: Our Route Setting manager Kornelija spotted this issue of setter demand a few years ago, and together we decided that the only way to future proof setters in the business was to build our own squad of highly talented, enthusiastic and most importantly reliable setters from the ground up. As we know, there is virtually no internationally recognised route setting courses or qualifications to choose candidates from. Becoming a setter still relied upon schmoozing, who you hang out with, and how much time you spent at the gym. We wanted a transparent and fair way into the game. Equal opportunities and a career path for all applicants was so important to us.

From the outset we did not want this to be a few days washing holds and then jumping on sets. It was felt the only way to train setters properly was with a three-year commitment from each applicant, working to a setting training syllabus and goals. Some people thought we were crazy asking for such commitment. We felt that, if this is what one truly wants to do, then commitment is what they will need to build a foundation as a good setter. The toughest thing we have found is making sure we get the right applicant from the beginning. It's a huge risk for the business to train "route setting" for three years as it's such a complex field. We put a massive emphasis on the hiring procedure and really have to trust our instincts as setters to get the right people. So far we have hired four trainees with two completing their three year traineeship in 2020. At times they are now showing us how it's done. It's incredibly satisfying to develop this talent.

"IT'S ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE AND PUSHING CASTLE STAFF TO GET INVOLVED IN AS MANY ASPECTS OF OUR SPORT AS POSSIBLE."



RSM: How regularly are your routes and boulders reset?

Mike: Top rope and lead are set every sixteen weeks and auto-belays a bit quicker at twelve week frequency. Boulders are now on a seven week rotation. But don't forget at the Castle we have over 390 routes on the wall and 350 boulder problems. Setting that many new lines in a building like this is a huge logistical challenge including four different setting stores all over different levels, multiple hold washing stations and an electronic goods lift to move the grips around in one area of the building. You get very fit working here!

RSM: Your team seems to be involved in a lot of industry side projects, why do you do this?

Mike: As a business we have always been keen to help push the game forward and invest time and money into it. Our setting manager Kornelija was making some significant hold orders. She made good contacts with hold carvers, distributors and manufactures including Dan French of Composite X. A few years ago, we were really unhappy with the state of PU holds so she volunteered our facilities and time to help test, feedback and develop better PU. She was quite influential in pushing the latest PU formula forward with Dan. If the industry gets

better quality products we get better durability and safer holds on the walls. It takes effort but I would rather be on the inside working hard than on the outside complaining about it and not seeing change.

RSM: You seem to put a big emphasis on events, comps and parties?

Mike: As a team of climbers we thrive on the big occasions and each year we always try and go really big. Somehow it always seems to end up with a banging party! Maybe it's a London thing, but people are really keen to get together, climb and party. The business is aware of the importance of investing in the climbing community, and events are a great way to do this. It will look very different this year, and we're looking at hosting online events as a way to keep our community together. But pre-Covid events have included the first ever Blokfest Para climbing festival, BIFF, The North Face party and many garden celebrations! This year, it's our 25th birthday as a company so we are looking for the next big thing.

RSM: How does your work for the IFSC affect your work at the Castle?

Mike: The Castle gives me amazing support to go to World Cups and other events as a broadcaster. It wouldn't be possible for me otherwise. Again it's about the bigger picture and pushing Castle staff to get involved in as many aspects of our sport as possible. It's cool coming back to work and chatting to customers about the World Cup over the weekend and bringing that competition energy back to London. It's been really useful to pick up knowledge on the latest holds, get to know the best setters, feedback the wall design and equipment I see on the road – the good and the bad!

"THE BUSINESS IS AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN THE CLIMBING COMMUNITY, AND EVENTS ARE A GREAT WAY TO DO THIS."

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS & THE FUTURE

RSM: You seem to be always changing walls and developing new areas. What's new and how does it affect customer experience?

Mike: We are always keeping an eye on the latest industry trends and design. As an older gym I feel it's hugely important to keep up with the latest "look" and "feel" whilst maintaining your character. With a facility this big it's so easy to start looking tired and out-of-date as a gym. It's an epic task to constantly refurbish the walls and it takes careful planning around closures when you are so busy. We are committed to reinvesting huge lumps of cash into the facilities though and the customers seem to be able to see that.

The pandemic has meant that we have had to focus on making the building as safe and hygienic as we can. However, as we went into lockdown we had a couple of projects already in motion. We have replaced a section of lead wall, re-painted another to sit with our lighter, brighter look and we have changed the shape of one of the bouldering walls. The new



section of bouldering wall will provide more very steep problems, something our customers had been asking for. On the bounce back from Covid-19, we will be looking to build a massive new route climbing building with around 50 new lines of roped climbing including two 10m speed lanes.

RSM: How badly was the Covid-19 crisis affecting you? In your opinion, will the effects last long?

Mike: The crisis was very bad for us. We went into 2020 with big expansion plans and we had invested heavily in these over 2019 and this left us in poor cash position as we went into lockdown. Fortunately we have a good relationship with our bank and they have helped us manage this. I don't think the crisis will improve until there is an effective treatment or vaccine. I think we have to plan for things not improving until next summer.

RSM: Will the industry as a whole get into difficulties?

Mike: I think this winter will be the real test. The risk of local lockdowns with limited financial support and people's reluctance to return to the sport could make it very hard for all gyms. But I remain fundamentally hopeful. I believe climbing as a sport, and climbers as a community, will get through this together. 🧡



MIKE LANGLEY
Born: 1986
Lives in: London
Background: Started out on reception in the gym as a teenager and never looked back!



WOMXN UP

TEXT: JACKIE HUEFTLE

Touchstone's Dogpatch Boulders, a stunning open floor plan bouldering gym in San Francisco, California, was completely packed. As the setting team made our way past the front desk and into the gym we entered a luau. Tropical decorations, festive balloons, and a giant inflatable unicorn pool float stuck out from the throng of the crowd. We passed a costumed dancing bird, feathers waving high on stilts above the competitors still checking in and having a quick coffee. Two steps further we were on the climbing floor where the judged open qualifier was underway. Pro climbers like Alex Johnson and Alex Puccio worked for top scores on their 10 hard qualifiers while redpoint competitors clutching scorecards both watched their heroes and planned their own climbing strategy for the next few hours. After a quick judge's meeting the redpoint comp began, and hundreds of climbers descended on a week's worth of new problems from VB to Vhard. In many ways it was like comps around the world. The main difference with this comp, Womxn UP 2019, was that for the third year in a row Touchstone was throwing a competition and festival set completely by womxn and set completely for womxn. Men were allowed in the gym to support their climbers, but the climbers themselves were all female, female identifying, or non-binary humans.



◆ **Lyn Barraza, longtime manager of Touchstone's Berkeley Ironworks, on the Womxn Up Mission Statement: "The mission of Womxn Up is to gather women and underrepresented genders of all climbing levels who want to empower one another, form strong partnerships, find their community, achieve their personal goals, and to inspire womxn to join the climbing industry."**

Touchstone, an independent, community-driven California gym chain based in the forward-thinking cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, was the perfect organization to create an event like Womxn Up. The inaugural event, called Woman Up, was held in 2017 at Dogpatch Boulders. In 2018 Woman Up (referred to internally as Womxn Up with an "x" to better represent the inclusion of trans and non-binary humans) was held at The Cliffs of Id in LA. In 2019 the event name was officially changed to Womxn Up and was back in San Francisco at Dogpatch Boulders.

Womxn Up is more of a festival than a comp and putting it on represents a huge investment of time and resources by Touchstone. Each year they close most of one of their gyms a full week in advance of the three-day event and take an all-hands-on-deck approach to staffing, organization, and execution. They gather major sponsors to help cover the event's many expenses and organize a full suite of events for attendees. They also pick a non-profit that helps more girls and women enter the climbing space and, after the festival, they make a donation of 10% of the event profits. In 2017 the donation went to GirlVentures, a non-profit that "inspires girls to lead through outdoor adventure, inner discovery, and collective action". In 2018 it went to Brown Girls Climb, which "promotes and increases visibility of diversity in climbing", and in 2019 it went to the TS Community Fund, which is a new organization Touchstone started as a structure for all the donations to different community organizations they want to support.

"WOMXN TEACHING WOMXN IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE PARTS OF THIS FESTIVAL. I WANT [WOMXN] TO BE CLIMBING A TRAD ROUTE IN YOSEMITE AND THINK BACK TO THE TIME THEY LEARNED HOW TO PLACE A CAM FROM BETH RODDEN OR HOW TO LAYBACK A CRACK FROM LYNN HILL."

Heather Bellgren,
Touchstone's Marketing Director and
one of the organizers of Womxn Up



From the setting side, Womxn Up is largely a teaching event. The goals are to show that female setters can set a big event and to give even newer female setters the opportunity to take part in doing so. The setting crew for each year is all womxn chosen by the Chief Setter (who, from 2017-2019 was me) and the Touchstone managers. The first year everything was organized pretty quickly. There were no Touchstone female setters to participate, and the crew was me and 6 of the other 7 female setters I knew at the time. The second year we had four of the original crew back plus female setters from Singapore and Finland, plus some other female setters I'd met teaching other clinics, plus three Touchstone interns. The third year our crew had doubled in size and over half the crew were Touchstone female setters!

For 2020, an event cancelled by Covid-19, I had stepped aside as Chief Setter and Sarah Filler, who was an intern at the 2017 event, was to be the Chief. The non-Touchstone staff part of the setting crew was also going to be largely brand new to the event and chosen via an open call for applications. The impetus for crew members stepping aside and new setters chosen for the event is that, over the past few years, the number of capable female setters has multiplied exponentially and everyone involved in Womxn Up wanted to create more opportunities for women who haven't had those opportunities yet. Crew members cycling through the event means someone like Sarah can go from an intern to an assistant to a Chief, and someone

who interns under Sarah might be Chief a few years later. Setting a large event, especially at a gym outside your home gym, is a fantastic opportunity that can be hard to come by. Events that can create these opportunities will increase people's knowledge, abilities, and confidence in a way that will change and improve the industry by creating a more competent, experienced, and diverse pool of routesetters.

Sarah Filler: "Coming into year one, Flann, Syd and Kasia [Flannery Shay-Nemirow, Sydney McNair, and Kasia Pietras, three other pro setters on the 2017 crew which also included Christine Deyo and intern Lauren Reynolds] were higher up in the industry so I was psyched to work with them. I was not that confident and questioned myself, but when I was there in that environment I realized I fit in and I was capable. I didn't feel held back in any way even though it was one of the first big events I set outside my normal gym [The Spot in Boulder]."

The setting job at Womxn Up includes 70ish problems for a Citizen's Redpoint Comp, a pro round of 10 Open Qualifiers and 4 Open Finals, mentoring intern setters on the crew, and teaching two clinics – one during the setting week for any interested Touchstone female or non-binary staff who want to participate, and one on Sunday after the comp for any interested citizens. The staff clinic boulders are tweaked and integrated into the redpoint competition, giving those new setters the full experience of watching people enjoy their climbs. The inclusion of intern setters on the main crew and the staff and citizens' clinics are important to the Womxn Up mission of opening doors for women in the industry.

Sarah: "As part of the crew over the last three years it was super motivating to go through that process. Year after year I had more

Touchstone Womxn Up Organization Team 2019





responsibilities and built more confidence at Womxn Up. Outside the event I also got more confident in my place within the industry and when I went back every year I felt like I was supposed to be there. I was given larger and larger responsibilities like organizing the full redpoint route list which I was thrilled to do at a high level outside of my home gym and which I taught to my own intern Claire [Miller, now Head Setter of The Grotto in San Diego, CA]. It was so exciting to share ideas and work with Claire and all the other younger setters who were eager to learn."

The event has had a positive impact on Touchstone's setting department as well, says Mailee Hung, Touchstone's Director of Communications and Community Engagement. "We have had considerably more female routesetting applicants and hires, and we've changed a lot about our program. Now our new setters can expect better mentorship and clearer guidelines than the typical, 'here's a drill, have at it' approach that previously dominated routesetting culture."

Womxn Up is not just about the competition or the routesetting. The weekend festival is focused on giving womxn community, mentorship, inspiration and opportunity. There is an opening night keynote speech and slideshow (2019 featured Beth Rodden), a vendor village with giveaways and athlete appearances, parties, food and drinks, group yoga sessions, and a full day of clinics with pro athletes and industry professionals teaching climbing and related skills like strength training and climbing photography. The final panel discussion, when attendees gather around while a board of speakers from different backgrounds answer questions and speak to their experience as a Womxn in the climbing realm, is both the wind-down and highlight of Womxn Up. The panel discussion is filmed and shared online, and over the last three years has included representatives from different marginalized groups including women of color, Latino women, trans women, older women, female pro climbers, female setters, and female representatives from climbing organizations like The Access Fund. Womxn

Up creates a space of inclusion, a non-judgmental environment where womxn of all backgrounds can learn and participate.

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

Mailee Hung: "I think climbing has better gender parity than most sports, but it still falls into the trap where its leaders and paragons are men. Womxn Up is really about womxn uplifting womxn to take their places in the community, not just as participants but as leaders. It is a truism that 'you can't be what you can't see', so events like Womxn Up go a long way towards reimagining a more inclusive future for everyone. This is true for other underrepresented groups in climbing, too, though you can't just make a one-size-fits-all solution for each one. Sometimes people doubt the value of affinity events or groups, but if you ever join one, you'll feel the difference immediately. It's not about creating divisions, but about opening up people's eyes to the possibility of difference."

This concept – that representation is truly important – rings true across the spectrum of life. Just giving women a competition where they felt comfortable trying a problem, much less turning in a scorecard, was a huge win for Touchstone and for the climbing community as a whole. An opportunity to interact with, learn from, and be inspired by a pro like Lynn Hill or Lisa Rands or Nina Williams, even for a few hours, may seem small but could reverberate across a lifetime.

Heather Bellgren, Touchstone's Marketing Director, and a major driver behind and organizer of Womxn Up: "Womxn teaching womxn is one of my favorite parts of this festival. I will never forget my first woman climbing mentor. It was 2005 and I showed up to my home gym in Orlando, FL and they were having a woman meet up. The woman leading the group pulled out her cams and explained how you place them into cracks. My jaw hit



"WE WANTED WOMXN UP TO BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE WHAT WOMXN ARE DOING IN THE INDUSTRY, AND INSPIRE MORE TO TAKE UP SPACE AND CELEBRATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS."

Mailee Hung,
Touchstone's Director of Communications and Community Engagement



the floor and my life changed forever. I want Womxn Up participants to have those life changing moments. I want them to remember these experiences forever. I want them to be climbing a trad route in Yosemite and think back to the time they learned how to place a cam from Beth Rodden or how to layback a crack from Lynn Hill."

Womxn Up has also opened a door to many womxn to feel empowered to participate more fully in the climbing community.

Mailee: "At our regular Touchstone comps we'd see a fairly even male/female gender ratio for competitors, but so few women would enter their scores, or would have scores that showed they ought to have put themselves into the harder climbing categories. Womxn are taught to downplay their skills and abilities. We wanted Womxn Up to be an opportunity to showcase what womxn are doing in the industry, and inspire more to take up space and celebrate their accomplishments."

The event has continued to grow, with over 400 participants the first year and over 600 in 2019. Other events and organizations have grown out of Womxn Up as well. One such organization was started by Lam Thuy Vo, a journalist and recreational climber living in Oakland at the time. Friends invited her to

the 2017 Woman Up and, though she'd never done a comp before and wasn't particularly interested, she went. The experience was eye-opening for her.

Lam: "I was a recreational climber who didn't push for grades. My journalism job is crazy, so the gym was about no pressure. But at this comp it was different. The climbs were not graded, and I knew they were progressively harder, but I realized I knew what I was doing and could just try things that looked good. It felt so liberating to be in a whole gym set by women, surrounded by women. For the first time I didn't feel too short, didn't feel not strong enough or not clever enough. Having that was really helpful. I came out of the first day being so excited. Other women I climbed with at the event agreed that it felt different than other gym experiences. The next day when the gym put up grades I saw a climb I had onsighted was given V5 and I was like, 'what?!' It was a nice feeling. I remember climbing at Womxn Up felt so different from before when moves seemed undoable. Even dynos and upside down moves seemed approachable because we knew they were set with us in mind."

Lam attended the panel discussion that Sunday and was further inspired by things the panelists said. As a gym climber she had never

considered that most climbs were probably not set for her demographic, and it gave her a whole new perspective on how the gym could be a place for her and other climbers who don't necessarily fit the body type or climbing style of a traditional setting crew member. Later that year Lam attended a Color the Crag event for BIPOC climbers, and the combination of the two events gave her the inspiration to start a new group focused on getting more women and underrepresented peoples into and improving at climbing and routesetting. She and her two co-founders, Atongular Monique and Jen Tse, called the group Try-Hard Crew and began organizing climbing and skill-based meet-ups and working with gym staff on setting clinics in New York City.

Even womxn who have been heavily involved in the industry for a long time, womxn who help organize Womxn Up, are inspired by the event.

Heather Bellgreen: "Each year during the event I run around the gym like crazy making sure everything is running smoothly for 3 days straight. I try to remember to slow down and take a few minutes to myself for a small moment of reflection. I walk around and just listen. Every year it brings me to tears listening to the laughter and supportive voices of this incredible community."



“OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, THE NUMBER OF CAPABLE FEMALE SETTERS HAS MULTIPLIED EXPONENTIALLY AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN WOMXN UP WANTED TO CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN WHO HAVEN'T HAD THOSE OPPORTUNITIES YET.”

Mailee Hung: “Walking the floor during the comp at Womxn Up gives me chills every time. To see so many womxn laughing, supporting each other, and encouraging each other is really, really special, especially those I know who don't usually like comps at all. It's a huge bonus to see dads/boyfriends/sons/male friends just walking around carrying scorecards! It's just so heartwarming, and the energy is truly different.”

Lyn Barraza: “The first year's panel literally made me cry. It was so powerful to watch a group of strong, inspiring womxn who had been in the industry as either a setter (Jackie Hueftle), athlete (Lynn Hill, Beth Rodden, Anna Pfaff), or industry insider (Selma Jun, Katie Goodwin), speak so honestly and clearly about their climbing experiences. It was validating and uplifting. I also love the energy of

each citizens comp – the ladies who say they have never competed before and are having a blast being encouraged and supported by the other womxn competitors.”

ShiHui Tan from Singapore helped set Womxn Up 2018 and now owns her own gym, Lighthouse Climbing: “Setting at Woman Up was an amazing opportunity to work with like-minded womxn and gave me the confidence that we deserve better and can do better. It made me feel empowered as a female setter and I wish that I can do the same thing on local soil too.”

“SETTING AT WOMAN UP WAS AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH LIKE-MINDED WOMXN AND GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE THAT WE DESERVE BETTER AND CAN DO BETTER.”

ShiHui Tan has since opened her own gym, Lighthouse Climbing, at home in Singapore



Photo: Saki Calie



Photo: Saki Calie

failure dependent on many factors including the relative temperature and humidity, who made finals, how tired the competitors are, if anyone is having a magic moment, if anyone is really good or really bad at something, if a move is just too reachy or not reachy enough, and more. A routesetting crew has to predict these things as best they can and set for the abilities of the expected competitors. You want your finals to be fun to watch and approachable for competitors but not too easy and not too hard. You want to create a perfect show, and that requires a ton of educated guessing and at least a little bit of luck.

One particular memory that stands out for me is from the first year, Woman Up 2017, moments before finals was supposed to begin, and the setting crew and I were standing in the purple light behind the tarp that hid the finals from the rest of the gym. We were discussing a key hold and move on Final 4. Earlier in the week when we'd set the finals we had Nina Williams and Alex Puccio as our top-two competitors, and we knew from years of setting for both that Final 4 would be a great ultimate separator for them if the low percentage slab moves on other finals hadn't done the job already. Now Puccio was out with a hurt wrist, so we had Nina vs the rest of the field, who at that point were still basically unknowns. We'd already made a few changes to Final 4 when Alex dropped out in the morn-

ing, but from watching the redpoint round we felt like we might need another change. We knew there was a really tall girl who was pretty strong and a really short girl who was really strong. We didn't necessarily think that anyone would be able to beat Nina, but we wanted to give them a chance to do so if they were strong enough, and so we were behind the tarp, cautiously changing our contingency hold and trying to predict the future. Would it be too easy now? Would someone else flash? Would they already be separated by Final 2 or 3? Would everyone get shut down early and make it boring for the crowd?

One of the biggest dangers in comp setting is last minute tweaks. You can easily ruin a problem and make it too easy or too hard by second-guessing yourself. A rule I try to stick to is: set, tweak and forerun finals early in the week when fresh, make a contingency plan then for possible tweaks (“if this person shows up, we'll spin that hold further left”) and then trust yourself. Don't change everything at the last second when you're tired and your judgement may be off. That all said, sometimes, like when one of your top competitors drops out or when you discover a super strong very short person in qualifiers or when you realize the bottom of the field is not as strong as you expect, changes have to be made, even at the last minute.

For 2017 we had more contingency plans than normal, as we had so many climbers of unknown ability in finals. We did a quick once-over of finals 1-3 and found them appropriate for the range we'd seen in qualis, and then were back at final 4, wondering if we were going to shut everyone down or if we should ease up just a tad at the first crux to try and get a little more action on the problem. We wanted separation, and if the competitors performed well on finals 1-3, then final 4 was the last place to get it. We turned the hold, put a different one up, took it back down. We hemmed and hawed. We finally decided to meet in the middle – changing the hold made it so the shortest climber would be able to reach through the move if she was strong enough to do it, but the new hold was more angled so it was not a giveaway hold for the tallest climber. We decided the next move – a dramatic cut-foot sideways dyno – would be too much for the field, and by changing that one

hold we tweaked the move down a little and made it possible to static with power. Then we stopped. We didn't make a bunch of other changes, we just did enough to satisfy the new criteria of short and strong having a chance, and then we made ourselves put away our tools and told the emcee it was go time. A few minutes later the tarp was pulled and finals began.

The pressure was both high – the last thing we wanted was to have a bad final – and low, in that everyone was so psyched just to be at Womxn Up that even if all the competitors flashed, or all the competitors had a hard time getting too far off the ground, I think the spectators would have had fun. In any case it didn't come to that – we'd done our job well and the competitors performed beautifully. There was a big dramatic moment on problem 2 when the strong short competitor, Alex Plotnikoff, couldn't seem to do a sideways slab traverse section with overhead presses. She was just a smidge too short to keep her body in. As one of the strongest finalists and a local favorite, the crowd was rapt as she tried over and over to stick a complicated sequence. She didn't give up and before time ran out she somehow made it through, and the crowd went absolutely nuts as she finished the boulder.

The change we'd made to Final 4 ended up being completely appropriate, as it gave short strong Alex a fighting chance, as well as the tall strong Cloe Coscoy and another strong smaller finalist named Emma Palmer, though in the end none of them made it to the top. One competitor did though – in a perfect finals moment, Nina Williams came out last and handily flashed the boulder. The crowd went nuts again and carried on cheering as she went back to Final 3, which she'd dropped the last move of a few minutes earlier, and finished that one as well. It didn't

count of course, but she'd already won and it was nice to see all the boulders sent. With Nina crowned champion and good separation amongst the rest of the field, we had happy competitors, a happy crowd, and a happy setting crew. It was an ideal result and a fantastic ending to the comp section of this amazing, inspiring event.

So what do you do if you want to run a womxn centered event at your gym? Reach out to female setters in your community or the larger climbing community to hire an experienced chief and then let them choose a crew of other womxn to work with. Enlist sponsors – both local businesses and international companies – and build an event around the comp. Invite pro climbers and new climbers, and set up clinics and other events, and advertise so womxn in the community feel comfortable and excited to attend. Then have your event. Etc... As three years of Womxn Up have shown, the improvement in the diversity, attitude, and enjoyment of your climbing community will be worth the investment. ♥



Photo: Saki Calie

JACKIE HUEFTLE

Born: 1982
Lives in: Boulder, Colorado, USA
Background: Routesetter, writer, Routesetting Institute, Kilter Grips

Jackie Hueftle has been climbing and setting since 1998. She helped set her first USAC Nationals under pro setter Molly Beard in 2006 and for several years she and Molly were the only two women in setting events in the USA. Molly had been the only one for a long time before that – she'd actually set the last Junior National Jackie competed in 2001! Now due to industry expansion, increased awareness of the importance of variety in size and perspective of routesetters on a crew, and events like Womxn Up, there are far more female setters – too many to count!

Instagram: @thegirlinlongshorts @routesettinginstitute

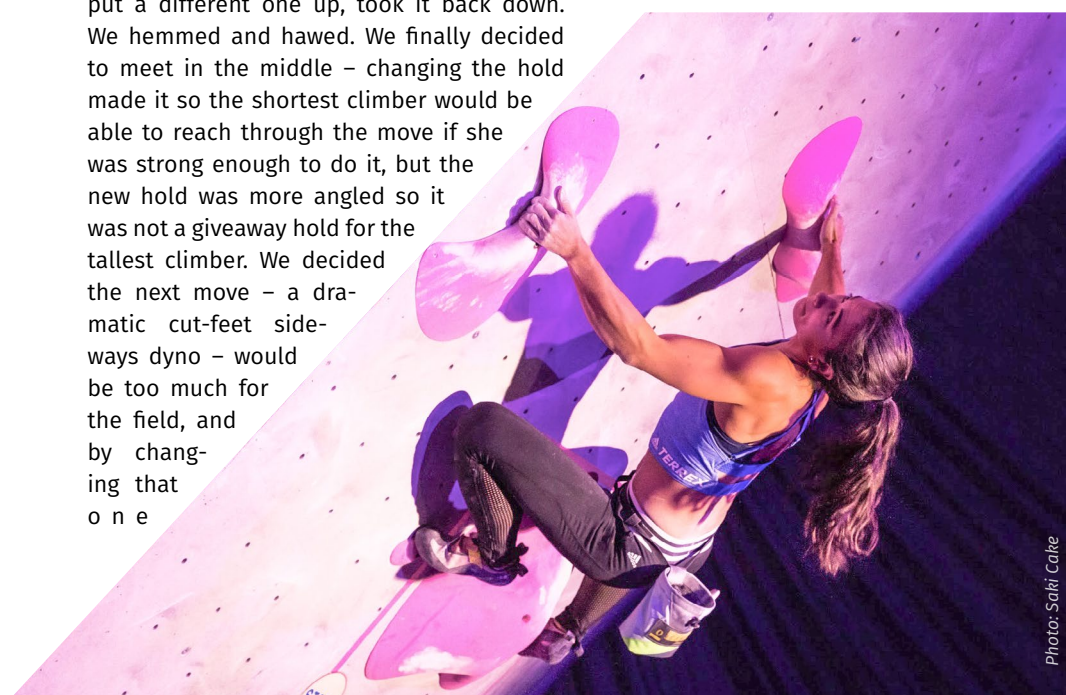


Photo: Saki Calie



The Rox community coming out on Global Climbing Day with Conrad Anker.

TEXT: CODY ROTH / PHOTOS: MEMPHIS ROX

MORE THAN A GYM: THE MEMPHIS ROX PHILOSOPHY

No one is ever denied entry from Memphis Rox due to an inability to pay. Those without the monetary means to pay an entry pass are still allowed full access to the Rox facility so long as they volunteer some of their talent, energy or time at Memphis Rox or within the local Memphis community. Rox operates with the philosophy that everyone has something to contribute, but not everyone has it in the form of money.

"EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE, BUT NOT EVERYONE HAS IT IN THE FORM OF MONEY."

BUILDING A GYM IN ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST UNDERSERVED NEIGHBORHOODS

Memphis is known for its BBQ ribs, and for being the home of the Blues and the birthplace of rock 'n' roll. Elvis Presley, B.B. King and Johnny Cash all recorded albums here. Memphis is loved for its contagious spirit, culture and hospitality, which belies the fact that it is among the poorest metropolitan areas in America and has one of the highest violent crime rates.

THE FIRST NON-PROFIT COMMERCIAL GRADE CLIMBING GYM IN AMERICA

Memphis Rox is the brainchild of Tom Shadyac, a former writer and film director in Hollywood. Tom got his start in Hollywood



Sadie, a member of Memphis Rox's Soul Sender climbing team, doing some pre-comp training.

as a joke writer for the comedian Bob Hope, and from there he went on to direct comedy classics such as Ace Ventura, Pet Detective, The Nutty Professor, Patch Adams and Bruce Almighty. By the mid 2000s Shadyac was becoming disenchanted with his Hollywood lifestyle. He traded his Malibu mansion for a mobile home and began donating a large portion of his earnings. In 2007 Shadyac suffered a cycling accident that further changed his life and Hollywood trajectory. Following his accident he turned his attention to making a documentary called *I AM. I AM* sought to answer two questions: What is wrong with the world? What can we do about it? Perhaps founding and funding Memphis Rox was part of Tom's personal answer to that existential question.

In Tom's own words: "I came to Memphis to teach film at the University of Memphis. The plan was to teach here for one semester, but I've been here for eight years now! I fell in love with the students I was teaching to. I admired the way they stood up to challenges, and their resilience. They introduced me to the south Memphis neighborhood, Soulsville. Soulsville is one of the most underserved zip codes in America. The crime statistics are grim, but the people are exceptional. It's called Soulsville for a reason! As I got to know the young people in this area, it became clear that they were in need of a safe place to recreate. The reason it's one of the most violent neighborhoods in America is due to generational oppression and a lack of options and opportunity.

"NORMALLY, GYMS SEEK TO BUILD IN AFFLUENT NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT WE CHOSE INSTEAD TO OPEN A GYM IN A PLACE THAT WASN'T RICH IN MONEY BUT RICH IN SPIRIT AND POSSIBILITY." TOM SHADYAC

I fell in love with climbing ten years ago while I was living in Boulder, Colorado. I wondered if the kids in south Memphis would also fall in love with climbing if given the opportunity. So to find out, I took the kids to gyms in Nashville and back to the Boulder Rock Club, where I started, and we also took some outdoor climbing trips. The kids loved it, so when we came back to Memphis we set about founding a gym in the Soulsville neighborhood. Essentially, we renovated and rebuilt what was a vacant grocery store. We bumped up the ceiling to 50ft (15m) and built a gym where everyone in the industry would say you shouldn't! Normally, gyms seek to build in affluent neighborhoods, but we chose instead to open a gym in a place that wasn't rich in money but rich in spirit and possibility.



Pro climber Meagan Martin dropping in and striking a pose with Rox regulars.

Martin Luther King gave his final speech in Soulsville and was assassinated two miles away from our gym. From that moment King was shot, so much energy left Soulsville and never returned. It's a strange thing that humans do. When our body gets sick our energy runs to that place to fight that sickness. Human populations do the opposite. They run away from places that are injured and that need our energy and attention. Our organization takes a lot of inspiration from MLK. His dream was for people from all walks of life and colors to have equal access to opportunity, to recreate together, and to experience life together. We hope that Memphis Rox is one of the ways his dream lives on and manifests".

MEMPHIS ROX WELCOMES BETWEEN 400 AND 600 CLIMBERS DAILY

"People in the community come here to climb but they also come here to work out, study,

learn and socialize", says Memphis director Jon Hawk. Head route setter Josh Jimenez adds, "We've even had people use our yoga room

for barber shop training courses! We also let people use that space for dance classes and whatever they want to teach and put on. We've basically become a community center attached to a climbing gym. We've made it a cool and safe place to hang out."

Rox also has a juice bar/cafe onsite called, "Juice Almighty" which also runs on a pay what you can/suggested price concept. In their first year alone they delivered 17,000 free meals to the community. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the organization continued to deliver free meals to the community and they purchased three 55 gallon drums of hand sanitizer, which they then bottled individually and distributed throughout the community for free. The gym intentionally doesn't use auto-belays in order to further encourage interaction. There's always a steady stream of volunteers and staff belayers ready to belay newcomers and people who come to the gym solo.

BUILDING A LOCAL ROUTE SETTING PROGRAM FROM SCRATCH

"In 2017, prior to Rox opening, there were probably less than 50 active climbers in Memphis! It has been interesting figuring out how we can set things that are successful in teach-

One Life Changed, Changes Us All



"One life changed changes us all" is the Memphis Rox motto.

"THE WORLD ISN'T WORKING THE WAY WE HAVE ORGANIZED IT. WE'RE STUCK IN THIS OVERLY-COMPETITIVE IDEA THAT WE'RE ALL AGAINST EACH OTHER, BUT NATURE AND CLIMBING SHOW US IT'S REALLY ONE BIG COLLABORATIVE." TOM SHADYAC

to the setting team and said, 'how would you feel about doing what those guys do?' He was like, 'yeah, I want to try that!'"

Shadyac adds, "Josh does a great job of teaching by example. He's so creative. When he's done setting he's building volumes. He doesn't ask anyone to take on a job that he won't do himself. When I started the gym I knew enough about climbing to know that if we didn't have a good route setter it would be like opening a restaurant without a chef! In Josh we have found the greatest chef." Hawk adds, "Our setting team works hard. They have a wood shop adjacent to the gym where they build volumes. During the Covid crisis and our closure they learned how to build hangboards, which we then sold."

COPING WITH COVID

Memphis Rox, with its community-based ethos, strives to serve and listen. When Covid hit, Rox realized they still had a community to feed, so they started making lunches to go. They started with preparing 100 daily lunches and they instantly ran out. They quickly

worked up to serving 200. They teamed up with friends at another local non-profit as well as a local produce company, and the lunches morphed into weekly community care packages. Subsequent hygiene packages were also created as the community expressed a need. As Tom puts it, "A non-profit model like ours thrives in a time of crisis. I think we're being shown right now that the world isn't working the way we have organized it. We're stuck in this overly-competitive idea that we're all against each other, but nature and climbing show us it's really one big collaborative. If the mountains teach us anything, it's that nature is in cooperation with itself. As humans, we're not that system right now, but at Rox we're trying to operate differently and be that cooperative. I think the world is going to continue to move in this direction. If we don't, there's going to be more Covids, George Floyds and inequities and the world will continue to burn".

FINANCING A NON-PROFIT CLIMBING GYM

A model like Memphis Rox that excludes no one cannot survive on the standard day pass, classes, parties and recurring membership model that most American gyms follow. To make up the difference, Rox relies on private donations and grants from other charities and

ing people what we want them to learn. We try to expose climbers to modern comp style setting, but we also make sure that we maintain some of that old school, pull hard, try hard climbing."

To grow a local route setting team, Jimenez created a route setting mentoring program. "People work their way up from the ground floor, starting by helping with hold washing and fore running. As you wash and sort holds you start to analyze them and grasp a better understanding. We give anyone who's interested in learning a chance. They can start at a volunteer level and go from there." Hawk adds, "some of the setters that have gone through our program and then worked for us have even gone on to be head setters at other facilities. One of our current full time setters started route setting after just three months of climbing! He was at the gym every day and his climbing ability was improving by the week. I came up to him one day and pointed



The Rox's community clean up team does their briefing in front of the Martin Luther King mural before heading out into the streets.

unfortunately stalled some of the grants and funding that we were previously eligible for this year."

FUTURE GOALS: GETTING MORE ROX CLIMBERS OUTSIDE

Memphis is perched on the notoriously flat banks of the Mississippi river. There aren't any adjacent outdoor venues, but world class climbing looms a three to four-hour drive any direction. On an informal basis, Rox facilitates many outdoor climbing experiences for its patrons. However, the Rox team would ideally like to be able to offer such opportunities on a more formal and organized level. The Rox team hopes to be able to invest one day in a company van for transport, instructors and insurance.

projects. According to Hawk, "We're always in the red and we always need money. It's the cost of serving. Plus, we pay our people better

than most climbing gyms. Our operating costs are high, we team up with other organizations and foundations for additional funding. Covid

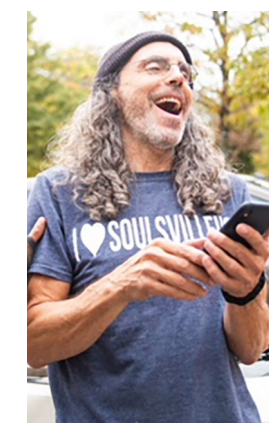
To learn more about Memphis Rox and how you can get involved, visit www.memphisrox.org



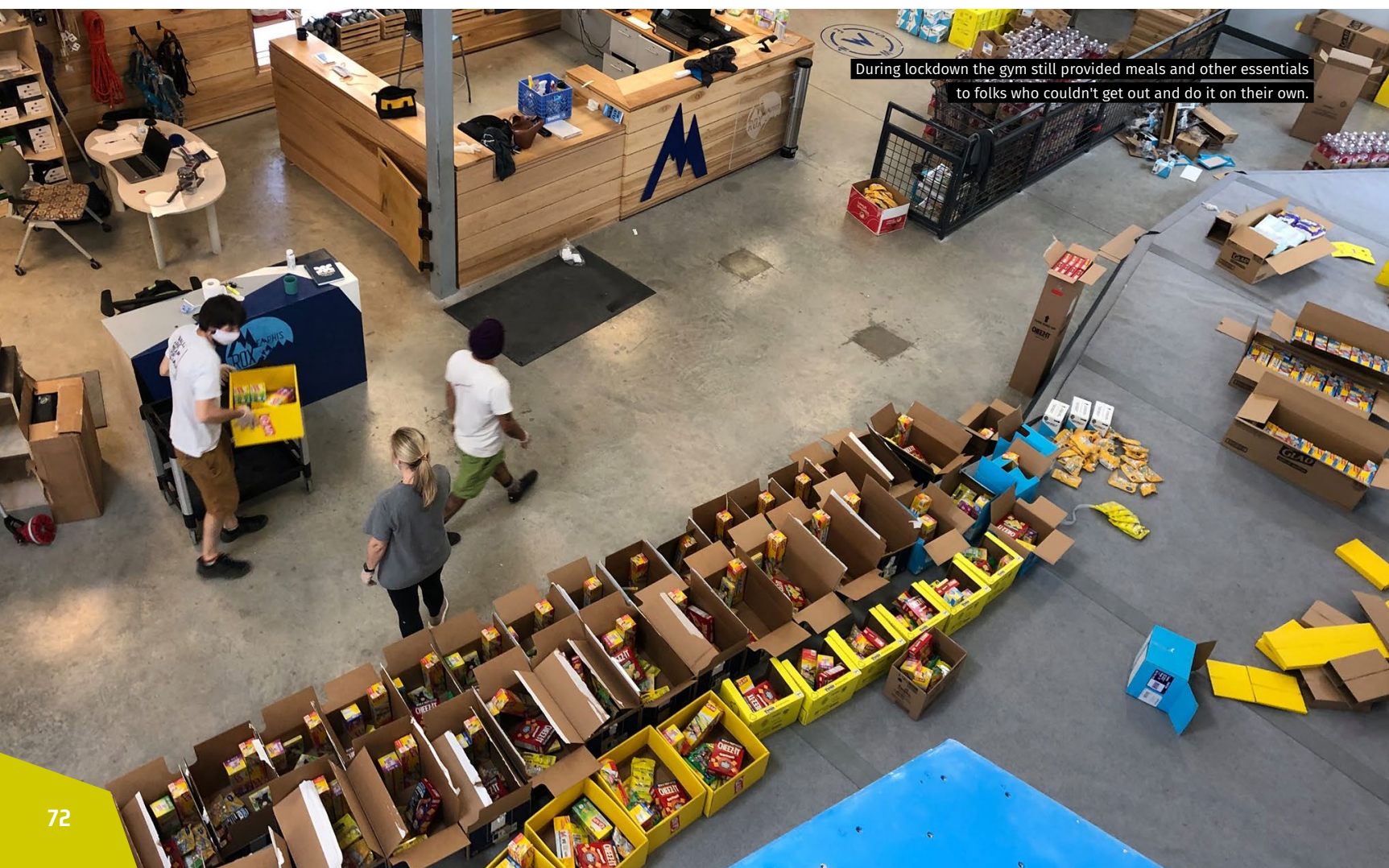
Josh Jimenez is the Director of Route Setting for Memphis Rox. A devoted climber, Jimenez joined the industry in 2010 and quickly found a passion for route setting. He has been a setter for multiple gyms throughout the South East prior to managing the setting department at Memphis Rox. Jimenez loves the community impact that setting provides and the mentorship that it allows through training new setters. He finds setting to be a very creative endeavor and a way to create a functional piece of art.



Jon Hawk is the Director of Operations for Memphis Rox. A devoted climber, Hawk joined the industry in 2004 in an effort to grow the community around the sport. After managing multiple climbing gyms throughout the South East, he relocated to Memphis, Tennessee to spearhead the Rox mission of creating a safe space to recreate while never turning anyone away for an inability to pay and expose the beauty of climbing to those who might not have had the opportunity. For Hawk, climbing is more than the act of scaling a rock wall. It's an access point to mentorship and an outlet to help one another overcome life's obstacles.



Tom Shadyac is one of Hollywood's most successful comedy directors having directed *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, *The Nutty Professor*, *Liar Liar*, *Patch Adams* and *Bruce Almighty*. Tom provided the financial force that allowed Memphis Rox to open its doors in the Spring of 2018. In addition to Rox, Tom has also opened and funded a homeless shelter in Charlottesville, Virginia and was a key donor in an initiative that set aside a nature preserve near the town entrance of Telluride, Colorado. Tom is an avid climber and cyclist and has taught communication and film at Pepperdine University, The University of Colorado Boulder, The University of Memphis and the LeMoyne Owen College. In 2013 he published a book called, *Life's Operating Manual* which found its way onto the New York Times Best Seller list.



During lockdown the gym still provided meals and other essentials to folks who couldn't get out and do it on their own.



Renowned Alpinist and Rox advocate, Conrad Anker showing the next generation the tricks of the trade.

2020 INTERNATIONAL CLIMBERS' CONSUMER STUDY

EXCERPT OF KEY FINDINGS

TEXT: MARIANA WEST, MAREIKE STOBBE
 ANALYSIS & REPORT: VERTICAL-LIFE, PROF. OLIVIER AUBEL PHD
 STATISTICS & DIAGRAMS: STEFANO GAIO, EGON LARCHER

Photo: Vertical-Life

Branching out from its roots in mountaineering and alpinism, sport climbing has grown into a true worldwide phenomenon. Formerly considered as a noble practice exclusively reserved for silent mountainous landscapes, climbing has also become a significant presence in everyday urban life. Although originally founded as a training grounds for outdoor climbers, indoor climbing gyms, particularly in urban areas, have been reimagined to take on a persona and clientele of their own. Using a multifaceted-approach, gyms have transformed themselves into a new form of mainstream fitness centers, often showcasing features such as co-working spaces, guided fitness classes, and cafes. These gyms are considered to be the urban gathering place for climbers of all backgrounds, many of whom now climb exclusively in gyms. In the U.S. alone, there are approximately 500 thousand new indoor climbers annually, with the quantity of gyms themselves doubling and even tripling in numerous countries over the past decade.

The growth of sport climbing through urbanization has also propelled many professional climbers into stardom. Landmark climbing achievements and their associated media coverage are consistently capturing the attention of the masses and continue to widen the overall reach of the sport.

As a result of this exceptional upward trend, the climbing industry is now estimated to be composed of 44 million climbers worldwide, with a market size of 44 billion euros, growing 15-20% year-over-year. Although we can assume that the events of 2020 may have temporarily slowed this trend, recent surveys (see article by Christian Popien) show that the industry itself believes that growth will continue in the long term.

With consistent trends towards mass commercialization, extensive media coverage, and significant future growth potential, the climbing market looks promising. Such new lucrative markets, nevertheless, come with their own set of risks, including increased competition from new market entrants and minimal historical data. What's most notable in the climbing industry, though, is the lack of consumer understanding. There has been no comprehensive international consumer study of the climbing industry to-date - all while the climbing community itself has undergone a significant transformation associated with the evolution of the sport. This development persists even until today, meaning that the typical climber of today, likely won't be the typical climber of tomorrow. With that being said, consumer insights and a clear understanding of target segments are going to play an increasingly important role in developing and maintaining a competitive advantage within the industry.

For the greater part of this year, Vertical-Life has been dedicated to developing a deeper understanding of the audiences within the climbing industry. In order to do so, they teamed up with sports sociologist and bolter Olivier Aubel PhD and set out to conduct the most comprehensive international consumer study of the industry to-date. Over 13.000 survey responses and 3 months of data analysis later, this duo is now eager to share their findings, in hopes of assisting organizations in kick starting business and creating a successful strategy for the upcoming years.

ABOUT THE FINDINGS

All in all, over 13.000 climbers across over 100 countries participated in the study, allowing the team of researchers to learn about climbers from all walks of life. Approximately 50% of responses were gathered through Vertical-Life's network of climbers, while the remaining responses came from supporting organizations including the IFSC, climbing gyms, and alpine clubs. Each respondent answered a series of questions pertaining to six subject areas:

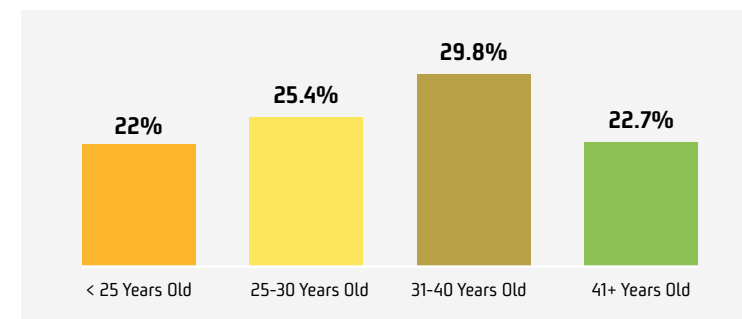
1 DEMOGRAPHICS - Age Groups - Income Levels - Gender Distribution	2 CLIMBING INTERESTS - Skill Level - Experience - Habits	3 TOURISM AND TRAVEL - Travel Habits - Spending - Information Sources
4 CLIMBING MEDIA - Social Media - Websites - Mobile Applications	5 VALUES AND ETHICS - Core Values - Outdoor Safety Funding - National Federations	6 SHOPPING BEHAVIOR - Spending Habits - Brand Perception - Pre-purchase Research

In doing so, the team was able to identify interests, behaviors, and beliefs of the climbing community. We'd like to share some key results with you.

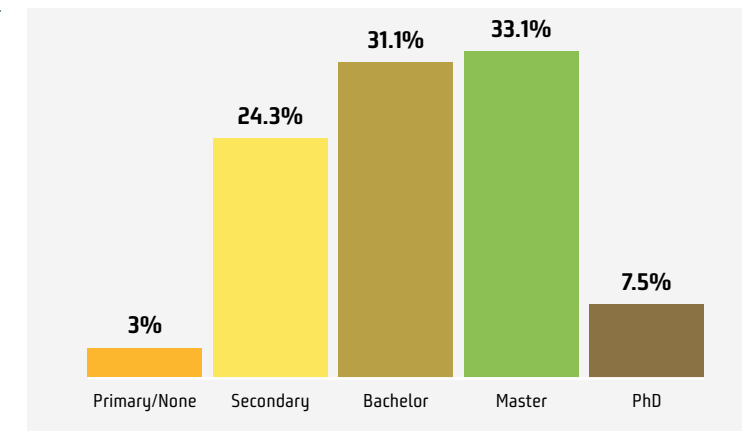
BASIC RESULTS

The typical climber tends to be middle-aged and predominantly male. Climbers are also a part of a tight knit community and are often introduced to the sport through family and friends. This community also tends to foster a growing competitive spirit in which entering in friendly competitions, events, and professional matches is commonplace. Climbers are also incredibly dedicated and take the sport with them to travel destinations across the globe.

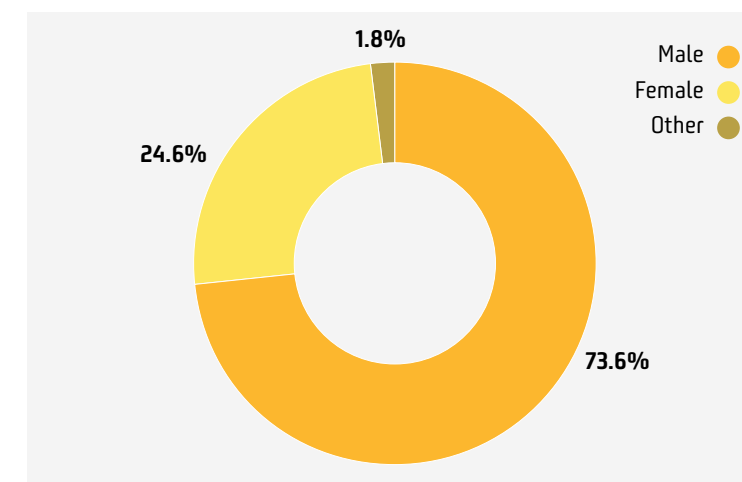
AGE (N=8.994)



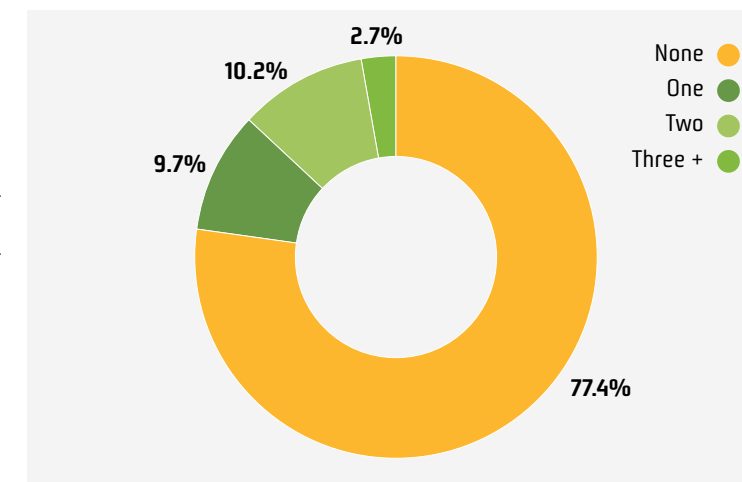
EDUCATION (N=8.841)



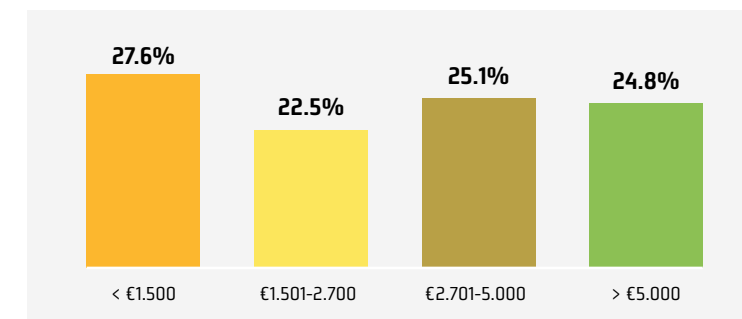
GENDER (N=9.003)



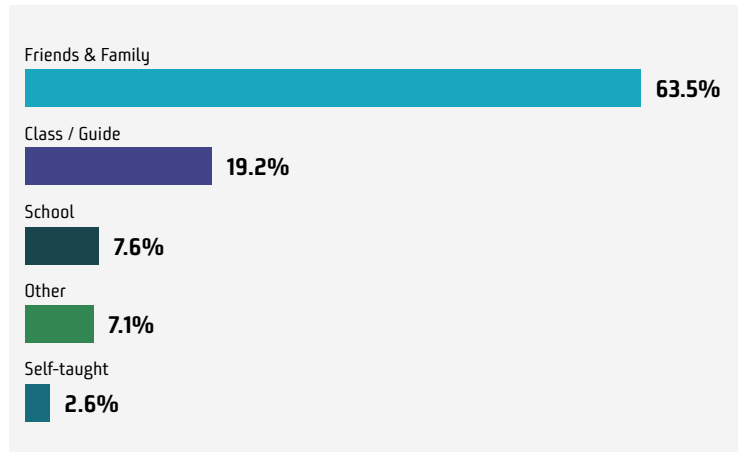
CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD (N=8.104)



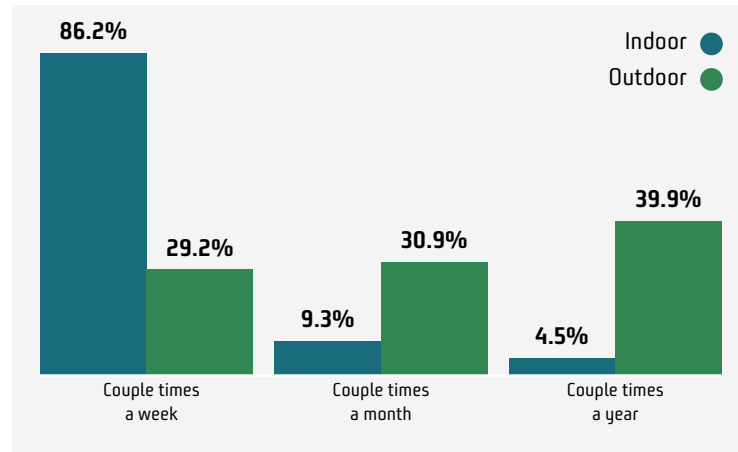
NET HOUSEHOLD INCOME (N=6.677)



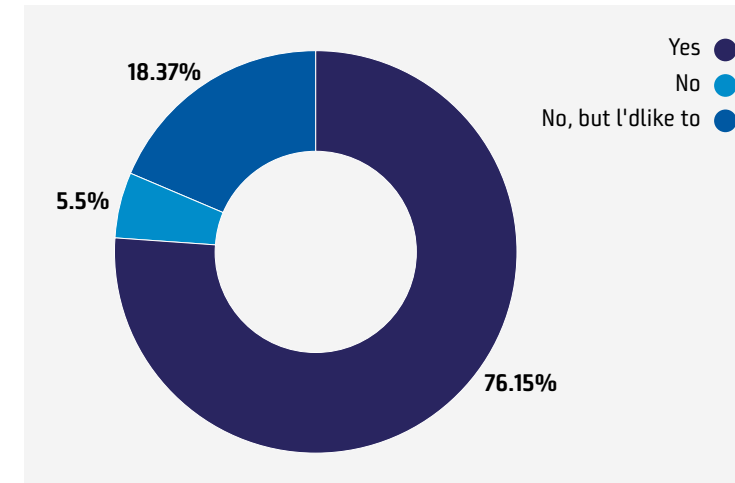
FIRST INTRODUCTION TO CLIMBING (N=11.262)



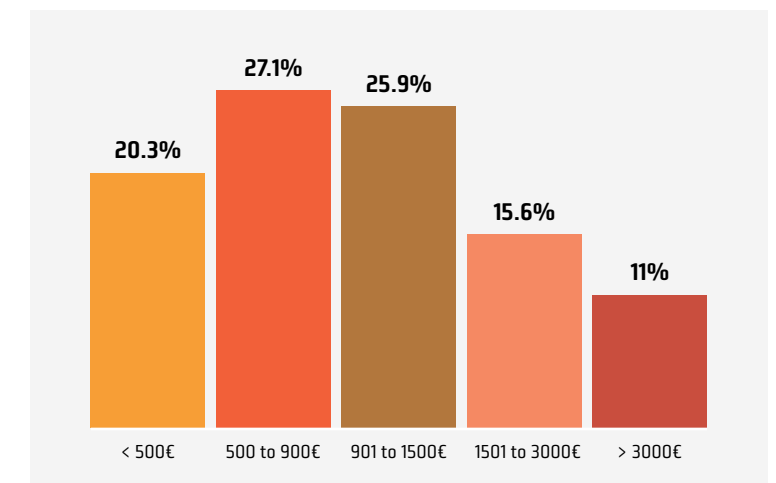
CLIMBING FREQUENCY (N=11.262)



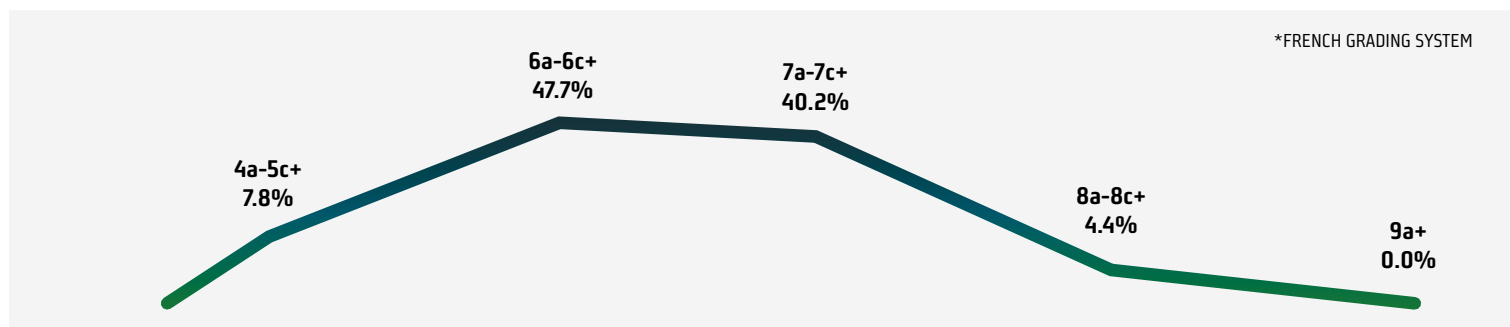
DO YOU CLIMB ON VACATION? (N=9.003)



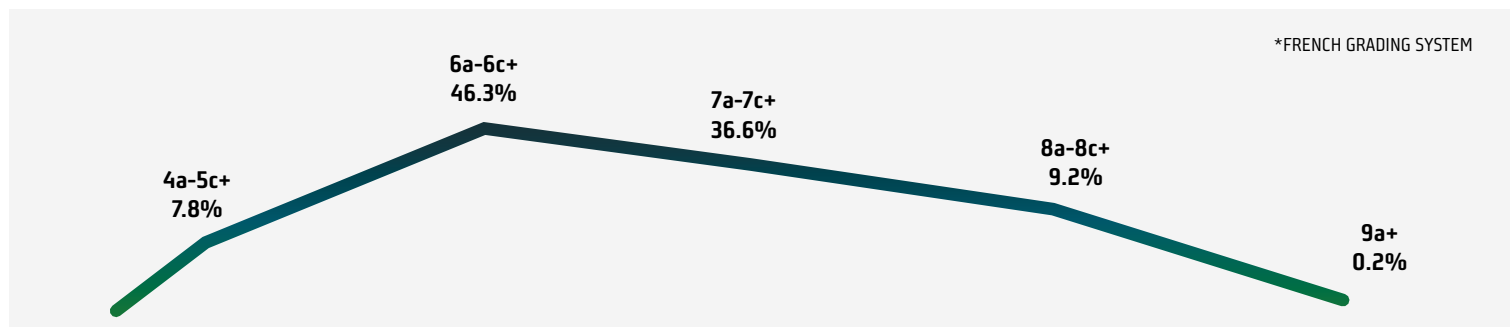
ANNUAL CLIMBING EXPENSES (N=11.620)



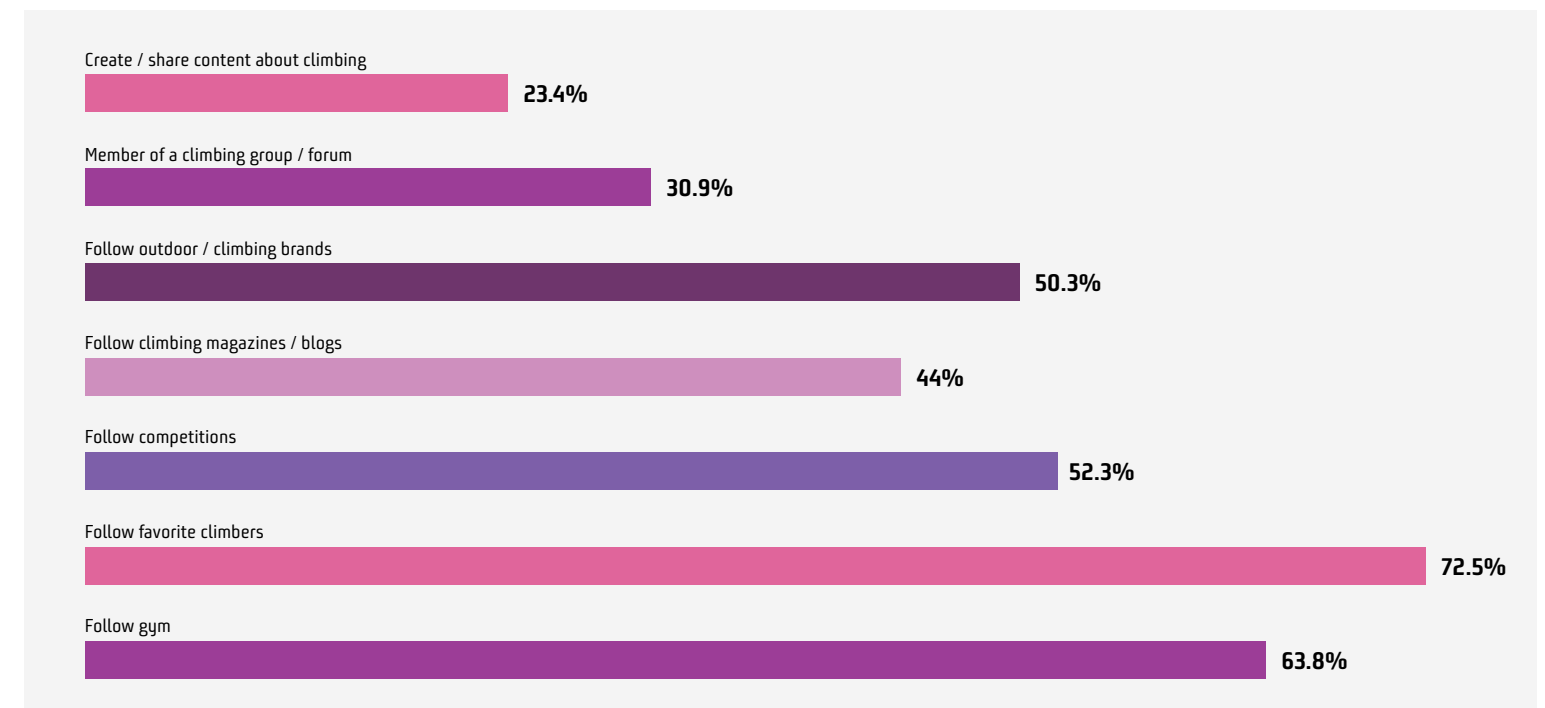
HIGHEST GRADE CLIMBED, BOULDERING (N=9.986)*



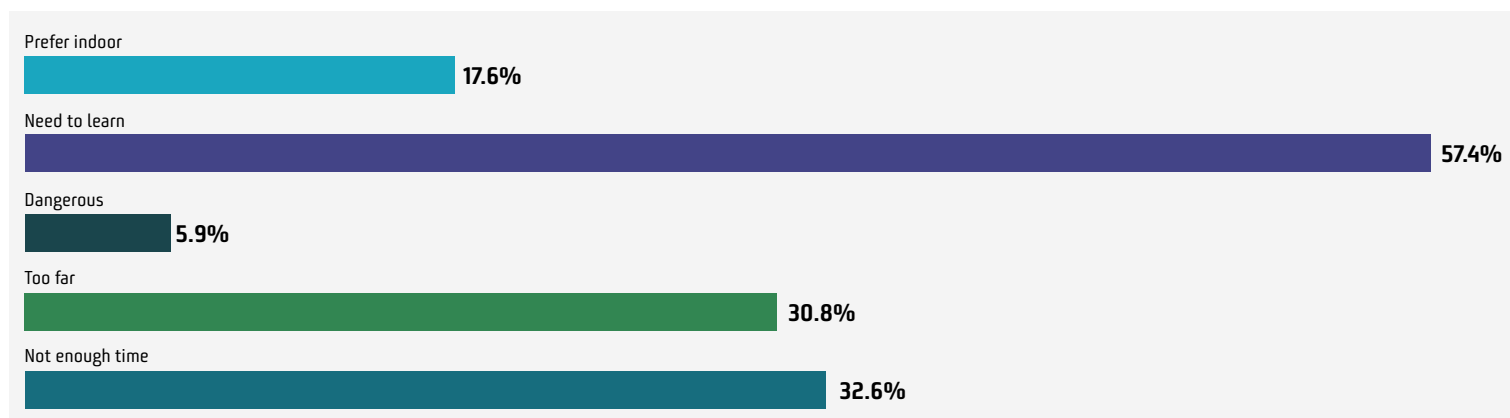
HIGHEST GRADE CLIMBED, LEAD (N=9.950)*



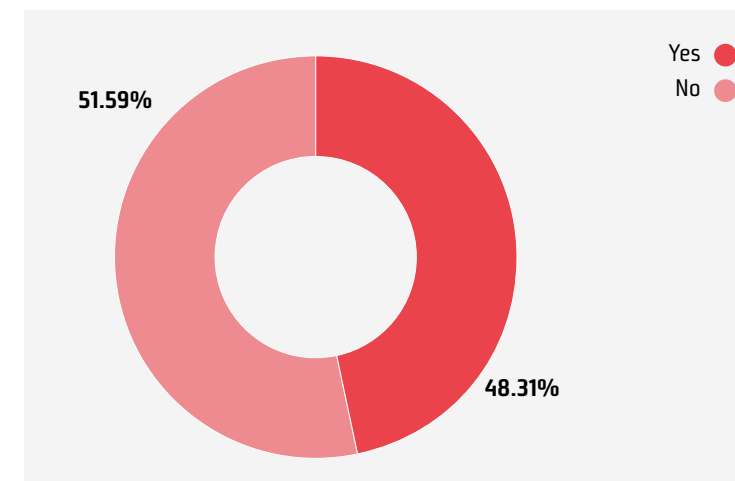
HOW DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CLIMBING? (MULTI-SELECT, N=9.299)



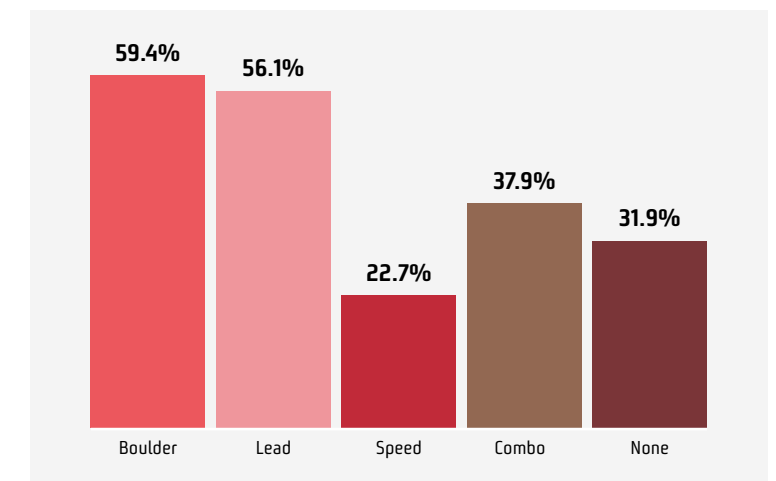
REASONS FOR NOT CLIMBING OUTDOORS (MULTI-SELECT, N=1.783)



PARTICIPATION IN COMPETITIONS (N=11.038)



WORLD CUP VIEWERSHIP (MULTI-SELECT, N=11.261)



KEY TAKEAWAYS

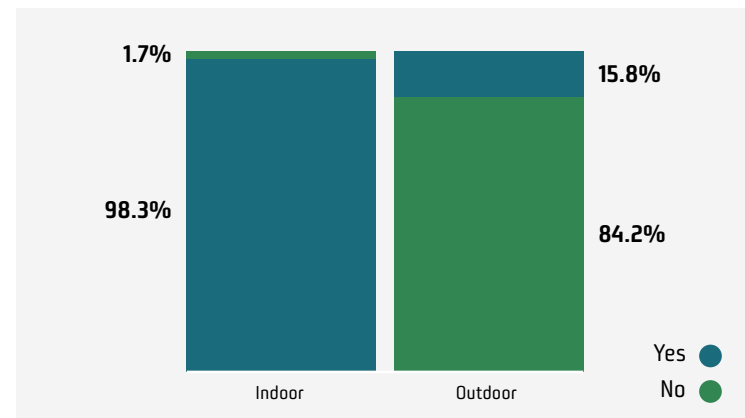
Climbers are passionate and dedicated to the sport (but we already knew that). Climbing isn't just a sport, but a lifestyle ingrained into the core values of individuals. Climbers dedicate a significant amount of their time, money, and energy into the sport, including an average of 1.256€ spent annually on climbing-related expenses. Whether it be at the crag, in the gym, or heading off to an exotic climbing destination, climbers are just happy to simply be climbing.

There is no "outdoor only" climber. Much to their surprise, the team uncovered that there is essentially no climber who climbs exclusively outdoors. Nearly every climber reported using a gym to some extent, even if only as a place to train when circumstances don't allow for the preferred outdoor alternative.

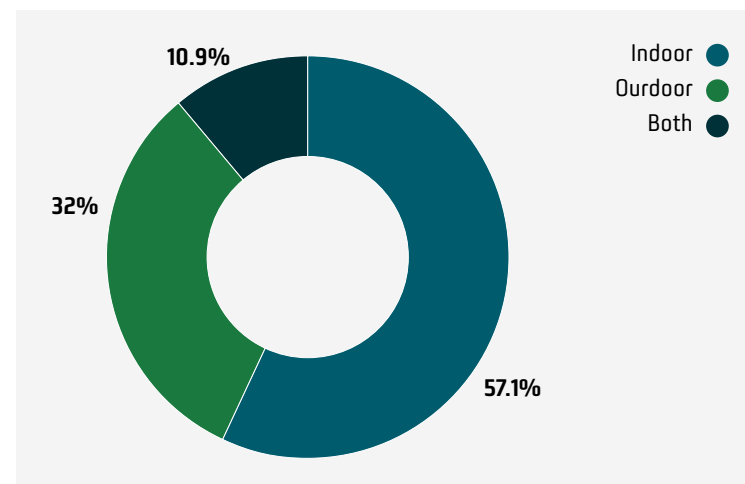
The gender imbalance persists... but not for long. Climbing participation amongst the younger generation is significantly more gender balanced. This trend will continue to close the gap as the community grows.

Climbers have the travel-bug. They don't just set out to finally finish that project at their local crag, but crave to get out and explore new surroundings. Some of the most sought after destinations? You guessed it.. Fontainebleau, Yosemite, and Frankenjura. Though there are endless destinations to be explored.

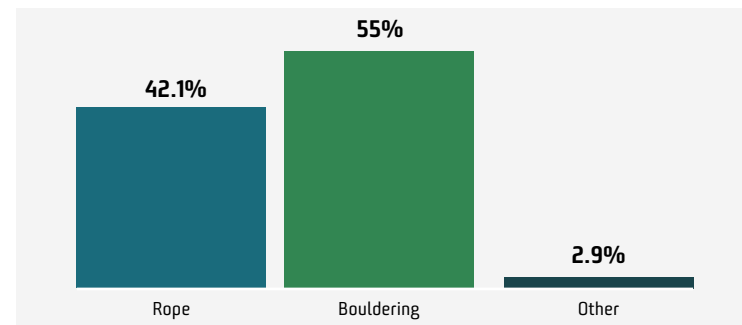
DO YOU CLIMB INDOOR / OUTDOOR? (N=11.262)



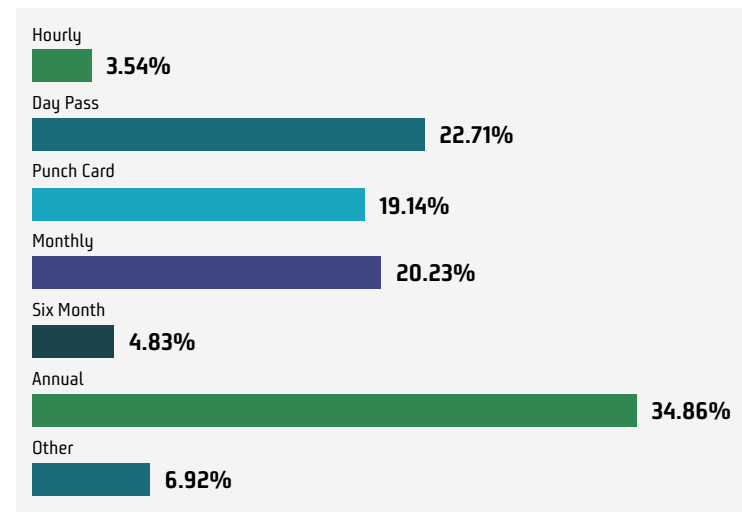
DID YOU FIRST START CLIMBING OUTDOORS OR INDOORS? (N=9.299)



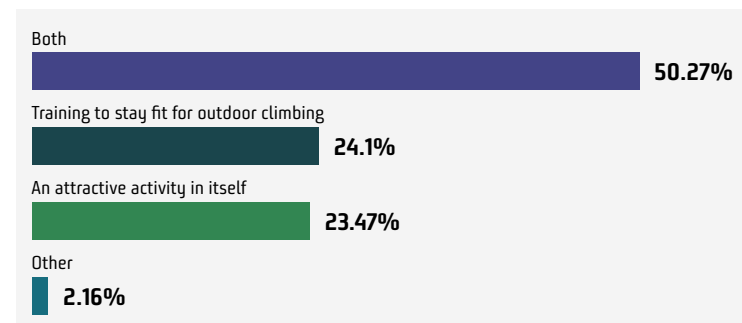
CLIMBING ACTIVITIES INDOORS (MULTI-SELECT, N=11.262)



TYPE OF ENTRY PASSES (MULTI-SELECT, N=11.262)



PERSONAL MEANING OF INDOOR CLIMBING (N=11.046)



TARGET AUDIENCES

The climbing community is made up of six key target audiences. For the very first time, the key consumer segments of the international climbing industry were uncovered, each of which has their own unique behaviors, interests, and beliefs.

Beginner Gym Climbers are the new generation of climbers. Being gym first-timers, they may have yet to find their place amongst the crowd, but will surely grow in their skill and passion for the sport over time.

Recreational Climbers have gained enough experience in the gym and are completing their first outdoor sends. They are gaining experience, improving their technique, and are no longer beginners.

Hardcore Boulders are exactly as they sound. This group climbs quite hard, but sticks nearly exclusively to the bouldering scene. Training in the gym and sending outdoors is the name of the game.

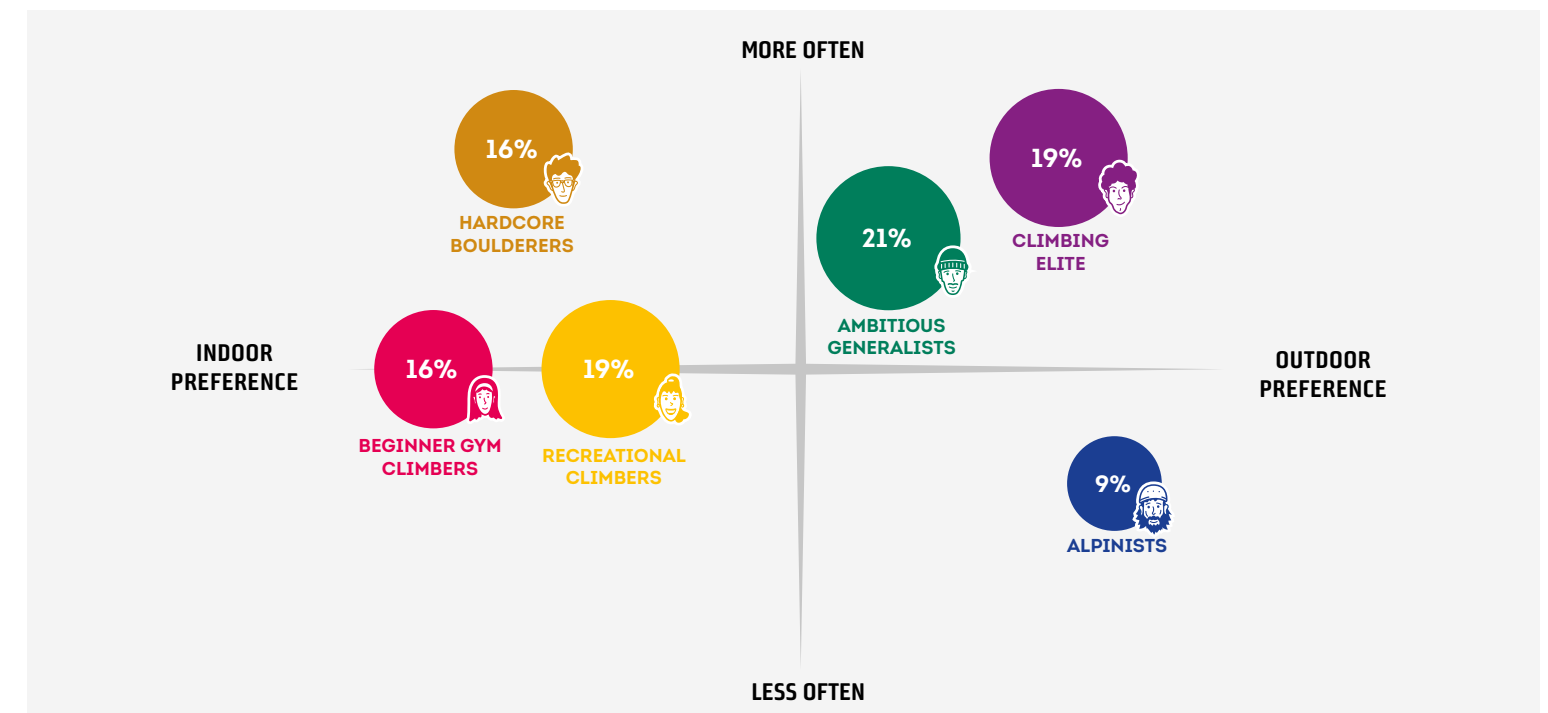
Ambitious Generalists want to do it all. They are all-around adventurers and outdoor enthusiasts. They are eager to get out there and explore all kinds of climbing.

Alpinists live for the mountains. They are amongst the most experienced climbers around and pursue it not for the sake of reaching a physical goal, but rather to adventure around in the great outdoors.

Climbing Elite are out for the gold. They climb the hardest, train the hardest, and are out to make climbing history.



SIX CONSUMER PROFILES BY PREFERENCE AND FREQUENCY OF CLIMBING



This study, though a clear milestone in the industry, is just the beginning. As the community continues to grow, Vertical-Life will continue to track and document up-to-date market insights. Please keep in mind, this is merely a preview of some results obtained from the study and does not reflect the entirety of response options or questions. To get more detailed data such as climbers' interests, shopping behaviors, brand preferences and media usage, please contact survey@vertical-life.info.

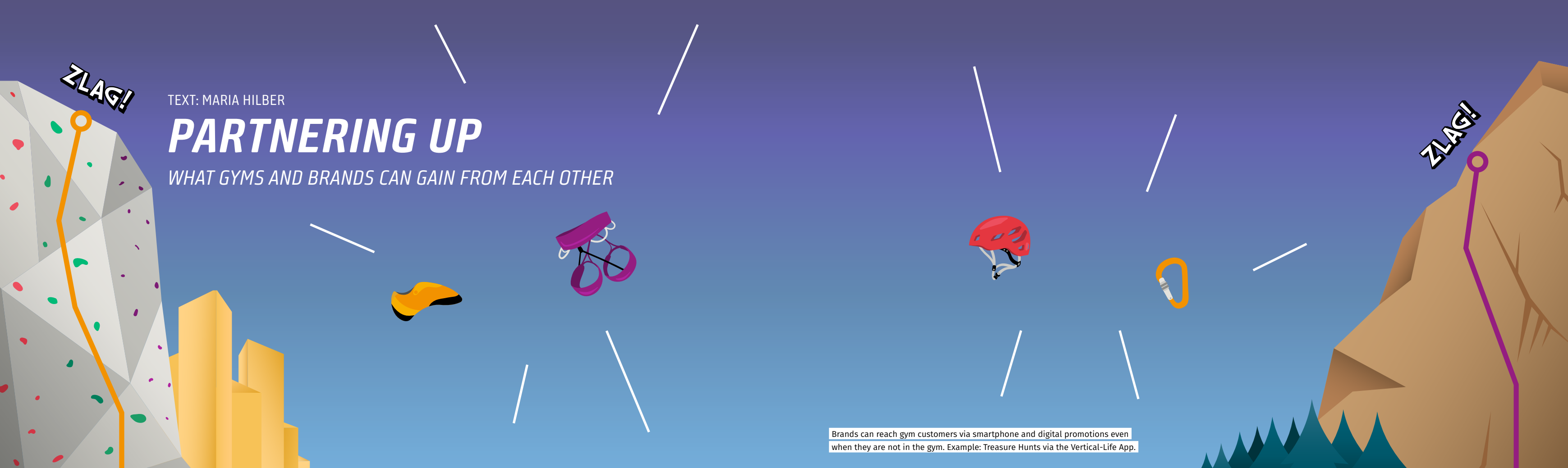
ZLAG!

TEXT: MARIA HILBER

PARTNERING UP

WHAT GYMS AND BRANDS CAN GAIN FROM EACH OTHER

ZLAG!



Brands can reach gym customers via smartphone and digital promotions even when they are not in the gym. Example: Treasure Hunts via the Vertical-Life App.

There was a time when wearing old, worn-out pants and camping in caves up close to the rocks was part and parcel of a climber's lifestyle. Back then, it was not worth brands spending a penny of their advertising budget on trying to reach climbers. Those times are definitely over now. We know that climbers today have an above-average income and spend an average of EUR 1,342 per year on climbing, with 31% spending more than EUR 1,500.¹

The climbing market is growing and becoming an increasingly attractive space for fashion and equipment brands. Event organizers and tourist destinations, too, have discovered climbing as a highly promising segment.

GROWING POTENTIAL

Unlike in the past, climbers are no longer limited to scaling the walls outdoors, where they are difficult for brands to reach. Indoor climbing has become a key facet of the sport. With their increasingly modern structures and state-of-the-art equipment, climbing gyms have become important drivers of growth and play a key role in attracting public attention to the sport, with 68% of climbers stating that

a gym was the first place they came into contact with the sport. Now, in excess of 86% of all climbers visit a climbing gym several times a week². With this in mind, what more obvious place is there to target and engage the consumer?

For Andreas Linder, Marketing Manager at Edelrid, a gym's potential lies in its playful, direct access to the core target group. Nicole Chernyakhovsky, a company consultant in the United States with many years of experience working in different areas of indoor climbing, believes that climbing gyms are extremely valuable touchpoints for brands to interact with climbers – as long as they are brand-aligned: "As revenue growth for the North American indoor climbing industry approaches the billion dollar mark, brands will have more reason to look to climbing gym companies for strategic partnership opportunities."

ARE GYMS UNDERESTIMATING THEMSELVES?

There are probably several reasons why, so far, only a limited number of gyms and brands have started to realize the potential and benefits of embarking on major, long-term collaborations.

"Because climbing gym companies often don't have a cohesive brand message that presents them as unique amongst their competitors, I believe that many brands and manufacturers don't yet see climbing gyms for what they are – a pool of invested and valuable leads that can multiply their brand awareness across a diverse array of markets," says Nicole Chernyakhovsky.

The involvement of brands is often limited to the local area, with sponsorship only taking place for small, occasional events. A number of gyms consciously avoid being tied to one brand because they run their own stores where they sell products from different brands, and thus do not want to risk a conflict of interest.

In many cases, gyms simply don't have the knowledge about what kinds of business opportunities can arise from long-term collaborations. At their core, their business models are focused on generating revenue from the sale of entrance passes and courses, supplemented by side offers such as bistros and shops. Many smaller facilities in particular have yet to notice that well-established collaborations can generate additional regular income and save costs.

BRANDS NEED TO BE MORE COURAGEOUS

At the same time, it is also up to brands to seek out new ways of working together with gyms, proactively approach these gyms and support them in reaching their full potential.

"At present, I believe it's most common for gyms to reach out and pursue sponsorship with brand-aligned companies they like or admire. The degree to which this happens depends on the climbing brand and the strength of their marketing arm," says Nicole Chernyakhovsky.

Christian Popien, gym manager and initiator of the HardMoves Boulder League, criticizes the hesitation of many brands to try out new formats as well as their lack of foresight, and calls for a new approach to the matter: "Brands have to move away from advertising purely in the form of banners in the climbing gym. That's old-school marketing!"³

The modern equipment on offer in many gyms opens up innovative ways for brands to be seen on site. For example, visitors may be looking for opportunities to network, exchange information or even gain inspiration – all areas in which brands can make their mark. Another way for brands to be heard is on digital media, which is used extensively in the climbing com-

munity, thus creating a wealth of new possibilities for communication, interaction and events.

"The thing I often find is missing in the outdoor industry, and especially in marketing departments, is the courage to break new ground. Any time something new comes to the fore and perhaps cannot yet be gauged, people tend to stay away." For Christian Popien, many brands miss the opportunity to try out new ideas and be pioneers. "To give a concrete example, let's take a look at climbing shoes. A pair of climbing shoes are not only the piece of equipment most often rented in climbing gyms, but also a product that someone who becomes a regular visitor will purchase sooner or later. With a

"MANY BRANDS AND MANUFACTURERS DON'T YET SEE CLIMBING GYMS FOR WHAT THEY ARE – A POOL OF INVESTED AND VALUABLE LEADS THAT CAN MULTIPLY THEIR BRAND AWARENESS ACROSS A DIVERSE ARRAY OF MARKETS."

NICOLE CHERNYAKHOVSKY

well thought-out marketing and sales strategy, shoe manufacturers could not only bring their products to the gym for rental, but they could also consider the gym as an ideal marketplace for active sales. When buying their first climbing shoe, customers of climbing gyms like to choose the brand with which they have already gained experience by renting. However, manufacturers are still lacking convincing ideas for cooperation with climbing gyms."

While Christian is speaking about his experience in Europe, the same also seems to be true for the United States, as Nicole Chernyakhovsky points out: "There are some brands that do pursue gym partnerships as part of their annual planning. That said, in my experience the scope of these partnerships tend to be small, not data-driven, and without any focus on the long game or a strong mutual benefit in mind."



¹82 Global Climbing Market – Consumer Survey, Vertical-Life 2020.

³ Find out more about Christian's view on the subject in a recent episode of the Spuzziness Podcast with Kim Scholze (available in German).



Edelrid Red Chili UrbanTour: The Castle, London

Edelrid is an example of a brand that is doing things differently: “Frequently, collaborations between gyms and brands are based on sales deals for the initial equipment,” says Andreas Linder. “For many brands, forming partnerships with these gyms that already have a strong focus on their branded equipment often follows as a logical conclusion.” Edelrid’s approach is more holistic than this, however. The company wants to embark on collaborations that are equally attractive for both sides, not only from a monetary point of view: “We see every collaboration as a partnership in which both parties can grow and push each other forward.”

The possibilities of such collaborations extend far beyond mere sponsoring for materials and equipment. While the method of placing a simple advertising banner in the entrance area of a gym is fast becoming obsolete, there are many other ways in which a sponsor can advertise themselves, for example by holding events, festivals, digital competitions and challenges.

SO WHAT DO GYMS HAVE TO OFFER?

It seems obvious that the easiest way for brands to find climbers will be where they practice their sport. It therefore goes without saying that climbing gyms are the ideal place for this. For collaborations to work, both parties need to offer the right commitment. What conditions does a gym need to meet to offer brands a suitable environment and channel for their activities and messages?

“THE THING I OFTEN FIND IS MISSING IN THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE MARKETING DEPARTMENTS, IS THE COURAGE TO BREAK NEW GROUND.” CHRISTIAN POPIEN, GYM

MANAGER AND CONSULTANT

For a climbing gym to become an interesting partner for brands, it needs to be able to market itself to a wide audience so as to offer brands and manufacturers new channels, says Andreas Linder: “The focus is therefore no longer just on the visitors to the gyms that brands are striving to target through collaborations. Now, harnessing important new multipliers for sharing information and messages is much more important.” In this sense, valuable touchpoints come in the form of having a presence both on site in the gym and on digital channels.

Since brands and gyms both have their own unique selling points and philosophies, it makes sense to look for partners who fit the respective brand values and share a common vision. Nicole Chernyakhovsky emphasizes the importance of having a shared culture: “Key factors brands consider when looking for a strategic partnership – specific customer personas, environments, target markets and/or demographics and brand alignment – stem from a gym’s culture, which is created through its company values. These values are reflected in a gym’s personnel, in



The Climb To Tokyo campaign organized by Edelrid together with the German Alpine Club (DAV) and Vertical-Life was one of the most extensive and successful engagement activities ever initiated, but unfortunately had to be cancelled owing to the current circumstances related to the pandemic. It was using all of its partners' and partnered gyms' analog and digital channels to communicate a shared message and thus raise awareness in a global way.

the design of their environments, and in the kind of offers and programs they create. Living by these values and incorporating them into their decision-making will enable gyms to stand out from the crowd and attract partners and sponsors.”

DIFFERENT LAYERS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration can come in many shapes and sizes. The support a gym receives when partnering with a brand can vary, and usually starts with discounts on materials, free samples or cash payments, but can also involve the brand providing active assistance in reviewing the gym’s programming and service offers.

The benefits that a brand derives from the collaboration vary according to the extent to which it manages to build and maintain an authentic relationship with the people in the gym – not only the climbers, but also the personnel, such as the route setters and front-desk staff. The stronger the brand’s involvement the more likely the collaboration will succeed.

Visual ways of promoting the brand, such as placing banners in the gym, does not result in a high level of involvement from the brand. In addition, such measures only attract the climber’s attention for a short time and, while they may convey a message, they do not convey an experience. Without additional activities, this type of advertising will have little effect.



ANDREAS LINDER

Born: 1981

Lives in: Scheffau, Germany – a small village on the border to Austria

Background: Marketing Manager of the Sports, Professional and Customer Solutions divisions at Edelrid since 2015, previously Creative Director for various advertising agencies

Stronger involvement from the brand in the form of services and support for gym visitors and staff is more likely to have an impact, make a brand’s values more tangible and thus reach consumers on an emotional level. Providing sponsoring apparel for staff and training teams, offering route setting sponsorships and retail partnerships are examples of more advanced forms of sponsorships.

In an ideal scenario, the brand will establish a real-life connection with climbers, communicate with them directly and thus establish a feedback loop. This can be done by actively participating in the creation of evergreen programming, design of concepts and implementation of courses and events. Advanced digital marketing and participation in virtual leagues will give brands an opportunity to connect with climbers even outside of the gym.

MUTUAL SUPPORT PAYS OFF DURING THE CRISIS

In terms of digital opportunities, the current COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis it has triggered show us clearly that gyms and brands alike benefit from having access to their customers through virtual channels.

Nicole Chernyakhovsky believes that facing crisis situations together as partners opens up a great opportunity: “With the changing landscape of COVID-19, the arrival of virtual events and the cancellation of annual events



CHRISTIAN POPIEN

Born: 1978

Lives in: Gummersbach, Germany

Background: CEO Climb-Inn Klettersport GmbH & Co. KG, co-owner of the Bahnhof Blo Bouldercafé Wuppertal, co-developer of the HardMoves Boulder League (2007–2016), certified social pedagogue / social worker

programming, many gyms are reducing the number of staff on their events and marketing teams. There’s an argument to be made that the staff on this payroll should not be reduced, but rather that their efforts should be channeled into finding, curating and building strong, brand-aligned partnerships that will mutually benefit businesses in this time of uncertainty and beyond.”

“WE SEE EVERY COLLABORATION AS A PARTNERSHIP IN WHICH BOTH PARTIES CAN GROW AND PUSH EACH OTHER FORWARD.”

ANDREAS LINDER, EDELRID

The broader and more diverse collaboration is, the better it will impact the climbing community and enable the partners involved to support each other when it counts. Even if it is not yet clear to what extent the current crisis will affect the industry, one thing is sure: climbing gyms and brands aren’t going anywhere anytime soon. Collaborating will bring benefits to all involved – and strengthen partners for years to come. 🍀



NICOLE CHERNYAKHOVSKY

Born: 1985

Lives in: Denver, Colorado, USA

Background: 12+ years of experience in the climbing industry working various positions from instruction, routesetting, membership and customer service, and 8+ years as a senior executive team member in program design and implementation, learning and development, operations, and people and performance management. Formerly employed by Brooklyn Boulders, Nicole recently started her own consulting business called LevelUp. www.levelupconsultingco.com



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.



4 SLIDE HARNESS

The very comfortable 4 Slide Harness is an allround climbing harness with very easy handling and therefore ideal for both beginners and expert climbers. Thanks to its four Slide-Bloc buckles, it is easy to use and allow flexible adjustment to every body size and situation. In addition, a red material woven into the tie-in loop ensures extra safety. Should the fabric be damaged by wear and tear, the red colour shines through and alerts climbers to a potential risk.

Sizes: XS-M, M-XL
Weight: 490 g
Colors: vibrant orange-black, dark ceramic, black

9.5 CRAG WE CARE CLASSIC

The 9.5 Crag We Care Classic Rope is designed for sports and classic climbing. MAMMUT enables eco-friendly rock climbing by reducing the ecological footprint of rope production. The sheath of the single rope is made from residual yarn left over from changes between different colors. Previously disposed of, this yarn is a high-quality, brand-new raw material. Therefore, all ropes fully comply with MAMMUT's high quality standards and are at the same time unique, as each rope has a unique pattern.

- » sheath 100% made of material leftovers from the production
- » visible center mark
- » PFC-free
- » Bluesign certificate

Length: 60 / 80 m
UIAA-falls (single rope 80 kg): 8
Weight / m: 59 g
Impact force: 8.8 kN



10.1 GYM STATION CLASSIC

Mammut designed the extremely durable rope for intensive gym use! The special braided core construction of the 10.1 Gym Rope minimizes sheath slippage, especially when used as a top rope. Gym operators also appreciate its durability in the daily operation of climbing gyms and the specific lengths for gym use.

Length: 40 / 50 / 150 / 300 m
UIAA-falls (single rope 80 kg): 7-8
Weight / m: 67 g
Impact force: 8.1 kN



SENDER BRUSH

The new ergonomic Sender Brush offers optimal care for the rock and hands. The brush is made from 100% recycled plastic and reliably removes residual chalk and dirt, while the ergonomically angled handle makes it much easier to use. With the practical sandpaper on the back of the shaft, skin and nails can be kept in perfect condition so that even more time can be spent on the rock. It is suitable for bouldering but also for rope climbing.

Colors: black, sapphire, magma



LIQUID CHALK SENDER

The Liquid Chalk Sender uses an innovative formula of liquid magnesium that dries out the skin faster and keeps it dry for longer. At the same time it acts as a disinfectant, so that you can comply with the established hygiene regulations also when climbing. The liquid magnesium guarantees a firm grip and was specially developed for use in climbing gyms. Mammut Pro Team athlete Jakob Schubert swears by it.



SMARTER BELAY PACKAGE

The must-have package for beginners. The Smarter pack ensures additional safety for the Smart 2.0 belay device and locks to prevent falls even in the event of incorrect use (belaying hand held above the belay device). The Safety Gate prevents the Smart HMS from twisting in the climbing harness' belay loop.

Weight: 180 g
Colors: phantom, galaxy





Access
the
inaccessible®

Photo : © 2020 - Petzl Distribution - Sam Bié

MAKING YOUR WORK EASIER

For over 50 years, Petzl has developed innovative solutions and techniques for those who work in the vertical world and for those that make it their playground, day and night.

As a routesetter, you work to make every route an opportunity for adventure, physical challenge, and new experiences for each climber. At Petzl, we work to make your work easier. That's why we have designed a line of products that is dedicated to you, taking into consideration all the demands and needs of your work.



STRATO VENT

The STRATO VENT helmet is very lightweight and comfortable, thanks to its CENTERFIT and FLIP&FIT systems, which help maintain a secure fit. It provides excellent impact protection for the head and has large vents to allow airflow through the helmet. Available in four colors (white, yellow, red, and black) and has many possible accessories including face shields, name tag holders, nape protectors, hearing protection, stickers, and more.

EASYTOP WALL

EASYTOP WALL is a complete anchor system designed for indoor climbing gyms. The carabiner design makes clipping easy. The system is extremely durable, thanks to the steel frame, the reliable locking system and the structure's protective shell. Installation is simple and compatible with most climbing walls. The inspection pin (included) allows operators to rapidly inspect the function and wear of the equipment. The anchor system can be installed on an overhang of up to 65° maximum.



ASAP LOCK + ASAP'SORBER

The ASAP LOCK mobile fall arrester is designed to facilitate handling during rope ascents. In normal use, the device moves freely along the rope without any manual intervention and follows the user in all his/her movements. In the event of a shock load or sudden acceleration, the fall arrester locks on the rope and stops the user. The integrated locking function allows the user to immobilize the device in order to reduce the potential fall distance. The connection arm makes the system drop-resistant when passing intermediate anchors. The ASAP'SORBER lanyard connects to the ASAP or ASAP LOCK mobile fall arrester, allowing the user to work at a distance from the rope in order to protect it during certain work phases. Equipped with tear-webbing inside a pouch that opens on each end, 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 reduced fall distance.



I'D S

The I'D S self-braking descender has an ergonomic handle that allows comfortable descent control. The integrated anti-panic function and anti-error catch reduce the risk of an accident due to user error. The AUTO-LOCK system allows users to easily position themselves at the workstation 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. I'D S is compatible with 10 to 11.5 mm ropes and allows handling of loads up to 250 kg. Available in two colors: yellow and black.



TOP CROLL S

The TOP CROLL S chest harness integrates a CROLL S ventral rope clamp to transform ASTRO SIT FAST, AVAO SIT and AVAO SIT FAST harnesses into fall-arrest harnesses. The textile sternal attachment point optimally reduces weight and bulk. The padded shoulder straps are widely spaced to reduce neck chafing. When the waistbelt is loaded, the straps help distribute the load over the shoulders. The rear connections on each side of the waistbelt offer excellent stability.



ASTRO SIT FAST

The ASTRO SIT FAST seat harness features a gated ventral attachment point that allows optimal integration of equipment (rope clamp, lanyard, seat). The wide, semi-rigid waistbelt and leg loops give excellent support. They are contoured and lined with breathable foam padding for comfort when suspended. The harness also makes it easy to carry and organize work tools, with multiple gear loops and slots for attaching CARITool tool holders and TOOLBAG tool-holder pouches. This seat harness is designed to be converted into a fall-arrest harness when combined with a TOP CROLL S or L chest harness. The ASTRO SIT FAST features leg loops with FAST LT automatic buckles.



PODIUM

The PODIUM provides optimal comfort during prolonged suspension. The wide seat offers excellent stability. Rigid sides help prevent the webbing straps from cutting into the thighs. The easy-to-use seat has two gear loops, as well as a rear hook to stow the seat on the waistbelt, facilitating movement. The seat connects to the ASTRO SIT FAST harness with two shackles (available as accessories).





WILD COUNTRY - PURE CLIMBING EQUIPMENT – GYM SET

www.wildcountry.com

For further information please contact: info@wildcountry.com

Pure climbing equipment. This ethos is felt by every climber who uses our equipment. Climbing is their passion, and every route they venture on is an expression of it. Because like us they are not prepared to compromise.

In everything we do, and everything we create, and everywhere we climb; our ambition, energy and expertise drive us on. We're always pushing the limits of what is possible. And out of this attitude our products are created.



SESSION HARNESS

The Session is a versatile harness with a lightweight, comfortable fit. Designed with our unique V-Flex™ belt and Dura-Weave mesh construction.



FLOW CHALK BAG

A medium-sized, cylindrical chalk bag made of abrasion-resistant (grit-proof) ripstop fabric.



ASCENT LITE BELAY

Using the superb Ascent Lite HMS screwgate karabiner as a starting point we added a lightweight wire gate keeper. This simple elegant solution ensures the Ascent Belay karabiner stays perfectly positioned on your harness belay loop. No more karabiner flipping dramas, your belay device will always work as expected and to its optimum performance.



REVO

The only automatically locking belay device which: Has a completely panic-proof locking mechanism. The REVO has no method of over-riding the locking mechanism, during belaying, or when lowering a climber. Is bi-directional, the locking function works regardless of the rope direction. Has an intuitive belaying method, which requires no changes to standard belaying technique.

BOREAL



Climber: Bryon Casas Torremontalban/Leidermann Berlin
Photo: Leonardo Méndez Lenk

BOREAL JUST4RENT - THE ULTIMATE RENTAL SHOE

BOREAL have been leading the way in climbing and mountaineering footwear since 1975. For over 40 years, the family run company has designed, manufactured, tested and developed the products in-house in Villena, Spain, allowing the brand to remain at the forefront of innovation.

From the first use of "sticky" rubber on climbing shoes back in 1979 to the development of the unsurpassed Zenith® compound; from the pioneering use of waterproof membranes in mountaineering boots to the unique Dry-Line® system; BOREAL continues to set new standards.

BOREAL has applied their knowledge and experience to help open up the world of climbing to beginners taking their first steps at indoor walls. The unique, hard-wearing rubber formulation, comfortable last shape and patented "Integrated rand system"(IRS) which provides a one-piece sole and rand, allow for a joyful climbing experience from the very start.



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



Climber: Marie-Luise Kühne in Magic Mountain Berlin
Photo: Pablo Quevedo

www.borealoutdoor.com



JUST4RENT BLOC

is a dedicated rental shoe made to offer a higher performance alternative to conventional rental shoes. The tough knitted textile upper allows the shoe to be washed to keep them fresh. With an asymmetric last shape and highly durable rubber, Just4Rent Bloc is the ideal bouldering gym rental shoe for increased performance.



JUST4RENT VENT

is a rental shoe built to withstand the demands of repeated indoor use. The upper is constructed from fully washable, tough and breathable knitted textile making it easy to keep them fresh and hygienic. Our unique IRS construction combines the rand and sole as a single piece of rubber, eliminating delamination and placing 8mm of durable rubber in the high wear zone at the toe.



JUST4RENT

is a comfortable rental shoe with a relaxed last shape. The generous sizing helps ease beginners into their first climbing shoe experience. Hook and loop straps make them fast and easy to put on. As with all models of the Just4Rent family, features include a highly durable one-piece rand and sole with hardwearing rubber; an easy to see sizing label; and press stud attachment for speedy pairing together.



JUST4RENT LACE

is a durable rental shoe with lace closure for a more adjustable fit. The high quality leather upper is tough and breathable, with a relaxed comfort fit. The one piece rand and sole in hard-wearing rubber ensures longevity, meaning Just4Rent Lace is the ideal gym rental choice.



Photo: Noe Berger training session



E9 - CLIMBING WEAR BUILT WITH ART

Since 1998, E9 means creative climbing wear built for the rock lovers! The company was born in Italy when the owner Mauro Calibani, first boulder world champion, inspired by nature began designing and producing unique clothes for the climbing and bouldering generations.

The artistic and researched style, the attention for each single detail and the closeness to environment and the climbing community are all the elements that made E9 an iconic brand, recognized for its distinctiveness by thousands of enthusiasts.

Since the beginning E9 produces exclusively in Italy and the entire production cycle takes place in a range of 30 Km within the company district. "Made in Italy" means selection of the best organic materials together with creativity and a continuous care towards innovation to guarantee season after season beautiful and high-quality products.



STRONG HERO CRUSHED CHALK

A new crushed chalk of the finest quality created to guarantee strong grip and durability performances. This high purity chalk - without additives, drying agents, and fillers - is presented in its eco-friendly paper packaging in two sizes, 200g and 400g. The E9 superheroes invite us to fight not only the "wet villains" but also against bad habits by describing on the back of the pack practical advices to preserve the rock and the surrounding environment.



STRONG HERO WARM UP BAND

The new warm up bands signed E9 Strong Hero. Not bulky at all and perfect for an excellent warm-up before starting climbing. The 100% paper package contains two elastic bands of different tension, one softer and one harder. Printed on each band there is a mini guide of exercises suggested for a good warm up.



STRONG HAT

New hat in the E9 Strong Hero line. Made of breathable and lightweight cotton. Wide visor slightly curved to ensure protection from the sun. The inner band guarantees the best absorption of sweat. Circumference adjustable to ensure the best fit.



STRONG HERO CLIMBING TAPE

To protect your fingers during long climbing sessions, is coming the first tape of the Strong Hero line, which combines functionality together with the creative and imaginative style of the E9 brand thanks to the illustrations drawn in every inch! The tape is made of 100% cotton, 4 centimeters wide, 10 meters of length



SASKI

Women's tank top in modal jersey. Modal is a bio-based fabric fibre directly derived by wood pulp and 100% biodegradable and compostable. Extremely comfortable and soft on the skin, Modal is revolutionizing the textile industry with its lightweight, stretchy and breathable nature for an eco-conscious and durable choice for clothing. The back opening contributes to greater flexibility and comfort in movements. The print on the front embellishes this top by combining quality and excellent performance with a touch of femininity. 100% Made in Italy.



ARIA

Women's climbing trousers in linen & organic cotton. This is one of the items that shows the E9 further attention to the environment and sustainability by including garments made not only in organic cotton but also in linen in the collection. This fabric offers excellent resistance to abrasion and tear and it has exceptional natural properties (anti-stress, hypoallergenic and antibacterial). Adjustable waist and leg bottom ensure a good fit and excellent comfort. Embroidered logo on the pocket and small label on the leg. Perfect for climbing and outdoor sports activities. The product is available in 5 colours and is entirely produced in Italy.



RONDO ARTROCK

Men's climbing trousers in super stretch organic cotton. Super stretch presents great tear resistance and high elasticity. New entry in the historic Rondo family, this item presents the insertion in the collection of the Skinny fit, which expands the range of E9 fits, increasingly attentive to responding and meeting the diversified demands of the climbers. Inside pockets in poplin, embroidery on the back, adjustable waist are the characteristics of a unique model for style and attention to details. Entirely made in Italy.



IRO

Women's tank top made with three different bielastic printed fabrics. The integrated bra guarantees maximum comfort during all sport activities. The crossed straps on the back give excellent mobility in movements. The logo embroidered on the heart side in tone with the relief stitching on the body and the modern cut are further evidence of E9's attention to satisfying female tastes without ever giving up on excellent product quality. 100% Made in Italy.



ONEMOVE

Men's bielastic cotton t-shirt. The organic cotton makes it comfortable and soft, with a fit that leaves the freedom to make any movement. Perfect for the crag and in everyday life. The simplicity of the design is its strength, together with the bright and fun colors. The E9 logo on the back will immediately make you recognize as a climber, everywhere! 100% made in Italy.



ONDA SHORT

Women's climbing shorts in stretch organic cotton gabardine. Opting for organic cotton is an act of caring for both the skin and the environment at the same time. This is the short version of the historic Onda slim, one of the flagship items of the E9 collection for woman. They are comfortable, light and colorful with an elastic waistband to ensure maximum comfort, contrasting colored inserts and colored pockets. An E9 classic, for climbers who want to climb in style in warmer summer days. Brush holders on both sides. 100% Made in Italy.



PENTAGÒ

Men's climbing shorts in organic cotton poplin. The super comfortable knit band that can be adjusted with a drawcord accompanies every movement without restrictions. A five corner pocket with E9 logo on the front of the right leg and closed with velcro closure is the touch of these pants. A boulder brush loop and two side pockets complete the attractiveness of these successful climbing pants. Perfect for climbing and outdoor sports on warmer days. 100% Made in Italy.



E9 BRUSH - E9 LILBRUSH - E9 WOODBRUSH

The family of E9 brushes is expanding and today there are 3 types available for every need. The classic E9 brush in recycled ABS, the first born for bouldering and crags. The completely natural and wooden Woodbrush is the largest of the family. Optimal for bigger grips and larger surfaces with sandpaper on the back to sand off the damaged of the fingers between each attempt. The Lilbrush is the new entry and the smallest of the family, also in recycled ABS and specifically designed in terms of size and shape for the smallest holes and grips. The asymmetrical shape of the larger versions is useful for cleaning the grips using the different inclinations of the brush. All the brushes are equipped with natural hair bristle.



COTTON CHALKBAGS

Here are the new E9 chalk bags renewed in style, colors and materials. Alongside the classic polyester models, here are the cotton versions, created to include more natural materials in the world of chalk bags. In pastel colors, soft to the touch and always super-functional with their brush holder, adjustable waist strap with clip for quick attachment and release. The cotton models in the pictures: Goccia and Osso chalk bags.

GULP CHALKBAGS

The iconic bouldering chalk bag Gulp by E9 in polyester or cotton as well. A model much appreciated by bouldering lovers that combines style and functionality. Two brush holders, a very useful pocket on the front of the glove compartment and the innovative closure with a magnet that allows you to easily open and close the bag and which protects the loss of chalk from any accidental spills.

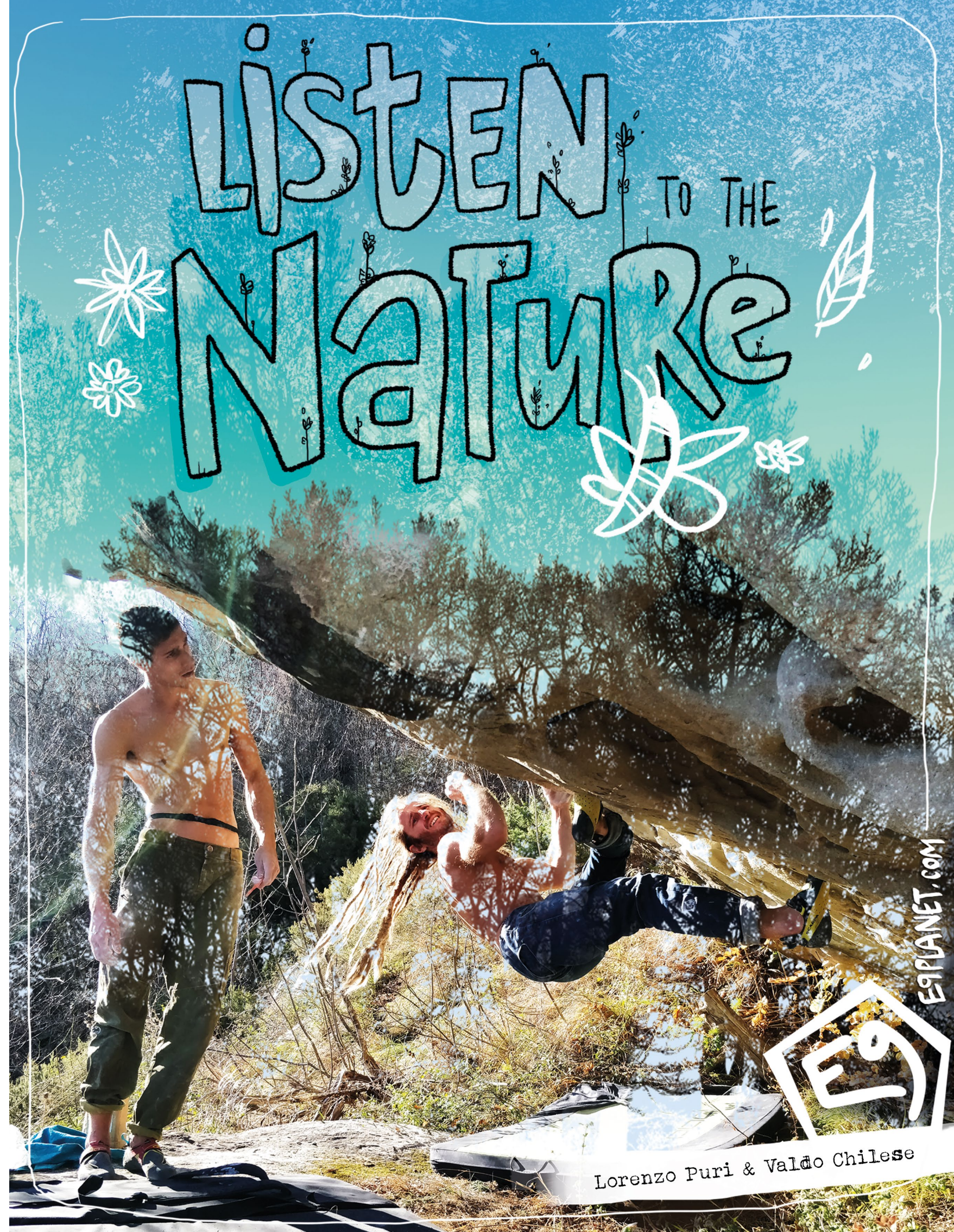
B BAG

A large and spacious shoulder bag to give you all the space to carry everything you need for your bouldering sessions. The B Bag has been designed to meet the needs of those who, moving with a crashpad on their shoulders, need to optimize the transport of everything necessary. Equipped with two pockets, one inside and one outside with zip.



PAUL SUNGLASSES

In the Spring Summer 2021 collection E9 launches the first polarized sunglasses. Take care of your eyes with these extremely functional models, dedicated to those who live in nature and want quality eyewear at an affordable price. The model in the picture is the Paul, a pair of sunglasses with category 3 polarized lenses, mirrored effect and with the frame made of 100% bioplastic.



E9PLANET.COM

Lorenzo Puri & Valdo Chilesse

GOODGRIP



CLIMBER



ROUTE SETTER



GYM OWNER

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.

STICKBRUSHES

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.



CUSTOM

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.



HANDMADE CIMBERS STUFF

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.



ROUTESETTING

We developed the little parts of routesetting - the Ringo's!
Our next step; The biggest stock on bits.

Actually, we having all standard bits for the european and american climbing market in different lengths.

For example:

TX20, TX25, HEX 8, HEX 6m, HEX 7/16", HEX 5/16", SQ2





EXCLUSIVE DESIGNS
 VANGUARD MATERIALS
 QUALITY AND SAFETY
 WORLDWIDE SERVICE

FIBERGLASS
FIBERTECH®



NEW POLYURETHANE
EUROPUR® V3



WOOD

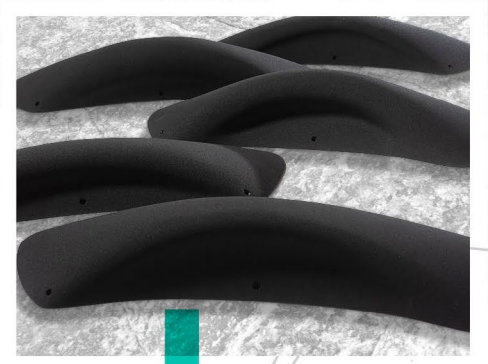
web shop -> www.euroholds.com





artline
Holds

Unique Shapes



artline
LAB

ARTLINE #UNIQUE SHAPES

A new era beckons for ArtLine. We have rethought our visual identity, inspired by the personalities of the brand's different members, especially the owner Brice Anziutti. A new website dotted with funny little avatars. A new R&D strategy built on the ArtLaB, a collective of setters that we are training in the art of shaping, or supporting with innovative technologies. The winds of change are blowing here at ArtLine, and it's just the beginning...

MERCY XXL
It didn't take long for the Mercy XXXL to become the stars of the ArtLine collection thanks to their unique shape and avant-garde design! Here they are in a smaller size and with dual texture. The more compact version means they are sleeker and slopier... pretty daunting in fact!

size: XXL
grip type: sloper/edge
material: GRP / Fibreglass
With or without dual texture



SLOPES

The Slopes range was inspired by Mike Fuselier's experience. It's the first joint venture to come out of the ArtLab: a collective of setters that ArtLine is training in the art of shaping so that they can explore their creativity to the full. Slopes come in several angles (10°, 15°, 20°, 25°, 30°), making it possible to reduce or increase the incline of an overhang.



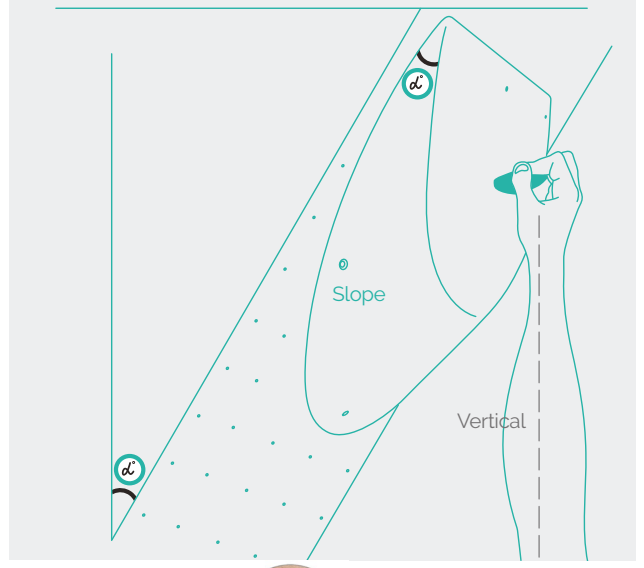
Slopes are circular holds that come in different sizes (S to XXXL).

One of the edges is straight, so as to align perfectly with the edges of volumes or structures

Micro holds or other Slopes can be screwed on their flat surface, to assemble different shapes.

www.artline-holds.com

INCLINE ADJUSTER



The 9mm plywood board at the back provides durability, and support for the screws, without adding weight.



AGRIPP

www.agripp.com

FIBERGLASS MACROS

Available: 21 models; 15 new models in 2021

LUNA 3



LUNA 4



SPOUTNIK 7



**SUPPER
VOLUMES**



AGRIPP



AGRIPP IS A BRAND OF HOLDS AND MACROS FOUNDED AND SHAPED BY PHILIPPE CEULEMANS.

Philippe is a climber and he will remain so all his life, as soon as he can he shares a session with friends, this passion is the spirit of the brand, from its forms he transmits us this passion, this love of movement.

We produce our holds at Composite-X with the best polyurethanes. For the Fiberglass macros and wood volumes at Escape structure.

A CATALOG IN CONSTANT EVOLUTION

This is why the IFSC renews our licence as a producer of macros and woods.

Agripp follows the way of climbing and has been selected for the Tokyo Olympic Games 2021, if this is not a great adventure!

Dune is the name of the competition style range with elegant and clean lines PE 155 and PU 181.

And here are the very latest Dune dualtex 200 holds. A complete range covering all sizes and grips for demanding route-setters and climbers!!

CHILAM



FLASHED



MILLENIUM



SAMOURAI



MASTER



SUPPER VOLUMES



A MIX OF EXPERIENCE AND PASSION.

Available: 7 categories with 24 models; up to 4 sizes; 15 new wood 2021

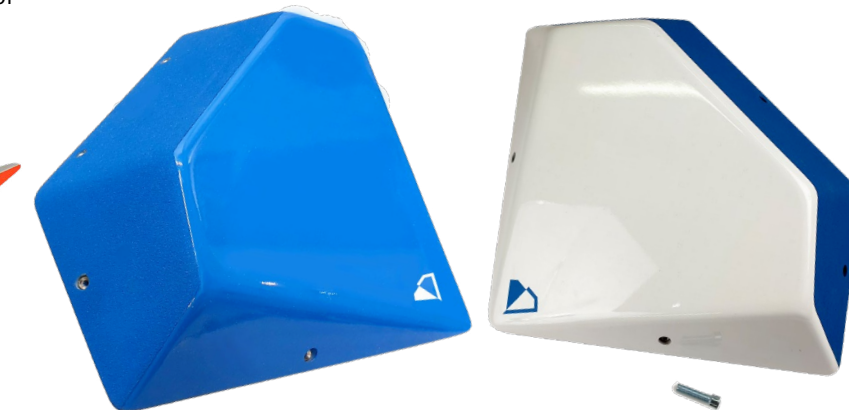
The SUPPER volumes were born from the meeting between two great climbing enthusiasts, Philippe from Agripp and Gautier SUPPER (World Cup victories, podium at the World Championship in Lead).

They are therefore of remarkable quality and innovative design to create movements that are even more so. For gyms and competitions of the highest level.

BIRD DUAL



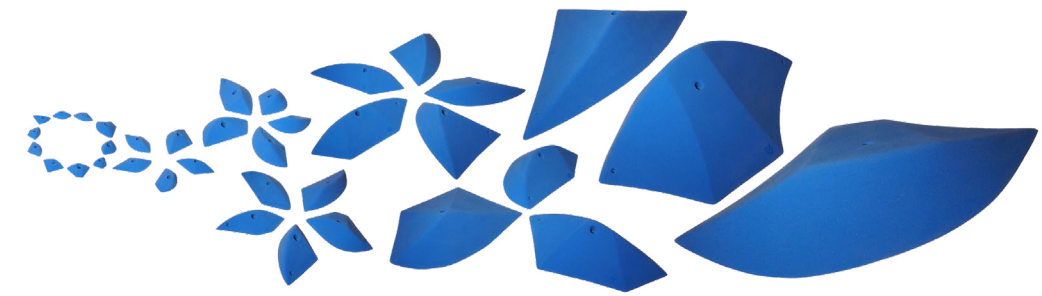
DIAMOND DUAL





RIDGELINES

36 gorgeously sculpted slopers that will demand tension and strength from any climber. These will quickly become your feel-good favorite sloper to set with as you discover all of their subtleties.



SINKHOLES

28 huecos that will leave your members wanting more. These huecos range from incut to slopy to give you the perfect hold combinations for a variety of angle changes. Shaped with our finer texture to ensure climbing on these is always a good time.



FLOODS

34 pinches ready to fill your forearms with pump. With this set you will be able to put any climbers power endurance to the test. Each size includes holds with a variety of to ensure consistency when setting routes or boulder problems with lots of wall angle changes.



GRIZZLY HOLDS



Grizzly Holds was launched at the 2019 CWA Summit where it quickly made a large impact into the climbing industry winning the first ever People's Choice award. Our vision is to inspire routesetters through high-quality climbing holds with a focus on ergonomics, creativity, compatibility, and aesthetics. We want to provide routesetters with

the tools to leave climbers with a memorable and positive climbing experience in the gym. Our mission is to produce timeless shapes that inspire routesetters to think outside of the box and push routesetting into the future.

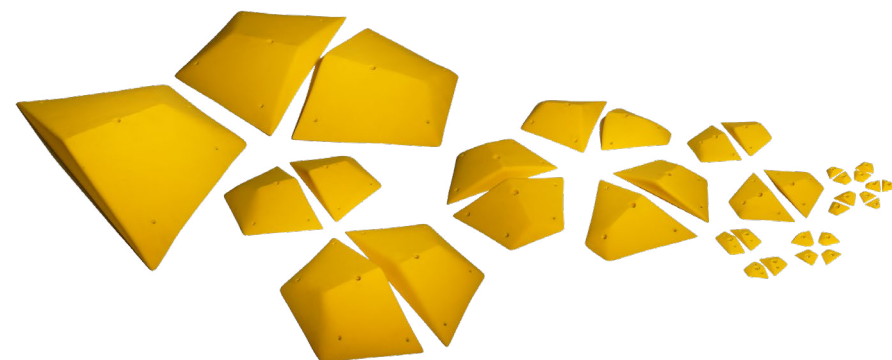
GLACIERS

40 clean jugs make up this entire set. These have been designed and shaped with feel and ergonomics in mind to give new climbers a pleasant first experience. However, these will make even your strongest climbers work for it whether it is on long steep routes or powerful roof boulder problems.



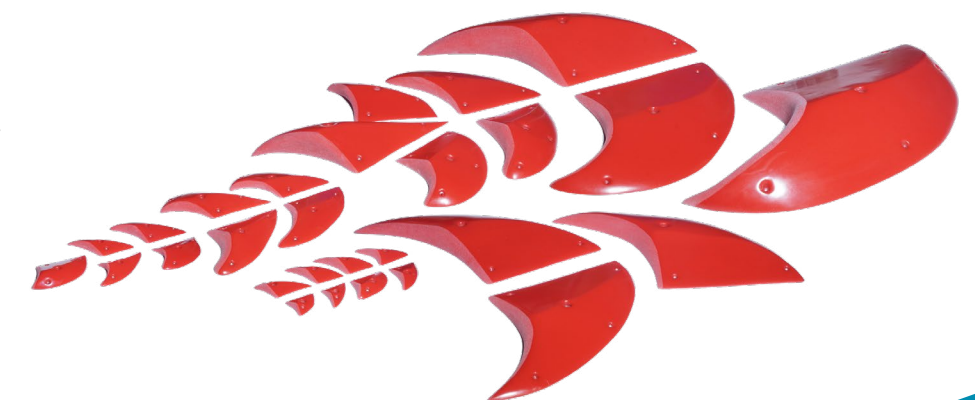
TECTONIC PLATES

35 holds in this complete set. Force movement and precision with these paired blocking geometric edges ranging from incut to slopy. Place them wherever you like as all shapes come with a both bolt on and screw on option.



FANGS

28 beautiful dual-tex edges that run slick all the way into the bolt holes. Ranging from slightly slopy to slightly incut, this set has both bolt-on and screw-on capabilities to make setting aesthetically functional boulders a breeze. Have fun!



MICROBES

33 dual tex screw ons. Precise hand and footholds for your next competition or technical boulder problem. They work great for directional placement and are perfect for that small jib needed to force any move.





Nina Arthaud climbing on IBEX holds on the Womans Final BRIANCIÓN 2020 organised by: Les Arts de la Grimpe



IBEX REMASTERED



For the past 12 years we have been trying to push the boundaries of what a hold should look like. We strive to strip things down to the bare essentials. We aim to shape holds with enough individuality to market themselves. Our goal for 2020 and beyond is to enhance your climbing experience. With that in mind we've added 250 new shapes to our line and retired 43 previous sets. Check out our updated photos and 360 videos to learn more. Having spent the past years shaping over 600 dual texture shapes for other brands we are taking that experience and putting all of our focus and energy into IBEX.

NISYROS

Nisyros is our newest line, designed to offer the best balance between simplicity and functionality. The idea was to create a very technical dual texture competition line of holds both for boulder and lead climbing. Nisyros is one of our bestseller lines and one of the best dual texture sets of the market. We have only just released another 140 new holds.



www.ibexholds.com



THRILL SEEKER HOLDS FEEL THE THRILL

Thrill Seeker Holds are shaped with tremendous commitment to the detail and anatomical design. Our sets are organized into ranges with unique design and variety of different grips.

The company is based in Bulgaria and features line up of professional shapers from around the Globe, including Dario Stefanou and Keegan Minock.



OBSIDIAN L PINCHES HARD

Shaping is a state of the art and we believe Art and Science are disciplines that must walk together hand in hand. This is why Thrill Seeker Holds are poured in what we believe is the best material available on the market – **Dannomond** by Composite X.

www.thrillseekerholds.com



OBSIDIAN MEGA SLOPER 2



OBSIDIAN 5 EDGES



KITKA - SCANDINAVIAN CLIMBING HOLDS

Kitka is a climbing holds company based in northern Finland. Around here we've got reindeers, northern lights, and very long & dark winters. It's a perfect environment for indoor climbing.

Kitka holds are shaped with minimalistic and functional Scandinavian design, with a special focus on ergonomics. Everything we put onto a hold is there to be grabbed. Add a little bit of chalk, and you're good to go.

FACETS - HARD SLOPERS

The hardest holds of the Kitka so far. Facets family holds are difficult slopers and are designed for serious climbing. Whole family includes 72 holds. Available in PU.



DIMPLE - JUGS

What's better than a good handful? We've got them. Dimple family holds are simple, easy and ergonomic jugs. Available in both polyurethane (PU) and polyester (PE).

HALF DOME - ICONIC HOLDS

Name and idea for the holds came obviously from Yosemite National Park's famous granite formation. Sets are named after different climbing routes of Half Dome. Holds are shaped to be ergonomic and meant for fun climbing. Include 38 holds and are available in PU.



GRANITE - FEEL THE STONE

Feel the granite at gym. A perfect set for setting routes of easy/moderate difficulty. The family includes holds with variable sized edges. Available both in PU and PE.

SPACE - FUTURISTIC FUN

Versatile holds, which can be used on overhangs or slabs. Holds have geometric shapes with the small crimp grooves. Whole family includes 52 holds. Available in PU.



SCANDI - BASICS

Scandi holds are basic jugs and pinches. Clean and simple, which is just what you need. No nonsense. Available both in PU and PE.

GROOVY - SYSTEM HOLDS

Groovy holds are system holds with slopers and edges. Holds look the same but are different. A good set for setting competition routes or training walls. Available both in PU and PE.



MARE - SEA LIFE CRIMPS

Difficult holds with a weird look, what more can you ask for? Ring shape and small edges and crimps. Available in PU.



Photo: NG

DIGITAL CLIMBING HOLDS – THE FRENCH FORM FOR MOVEMENT



Created by a pioneer gym owner and passionate climber, Frederic Nigoul, Digital Climbing Holds is now defined by a diverse crew that tirelessly strive to make a difference in a market that is rapidly growing.

Our development over the past three years has been based on a four-dimensional strategy: strong partnerships, technically challenging and fun, artistic attractiveness and operationally friendly. We specifically adapt to new professions such as full-time routesetters and the more and more demanding capacity of indoor climbers and of course, professional athletes.

Our growth has been amazing. Our innovative shapes, especially the flowers conceived in collaboration with Micka Mawem and the Cha Balls created by Eric Chanourdie are extremely popular with routesetters. We are like kids on Christmas morning this year with our new range of eggs.

Our holding company, Les Arts de la Grimpe Distribution, has provided holds for the Briancon World Cup event for the past four years. This strong partnership has allowed Digital Climbing Holds to stand with other stellar new IFSC brands such as IBEX. Both Digital Holds and Macros are official IFSC and we are immensely proud of this. Our ambition, like Micka and Bassa, is of course, Paris 2024.

Our biggest Digital decision is recent; transpose a maximum of products to Fiberglass. Is it great to have fantastic shapes, but we must participate in the preservation of our profession, so the weight and durability of holds is paramount. We have managed to remain with our price sensitive market position, continuing to produce high quality to an accessible budget (not an easy exercise these days). End November, we are relaunching Digital with a new stronger lighter PE from XS to L holds. XL and beyond will move to a top-quality Fiberglass.

Frederic Nigoul : Fred@lesartsdelagrimpe.com
Roisin Boileau Nigoul : Gestion@lesartsdelagrimpe.com

MONSTOR EGG 1
Saula and Louise fully enjoying the new Monster Eggs !



Photo: NG

BROTHER BIG CRIMP 1 AND 2
These crimps are as playful.



BROTHER JUGS
A myriad of routesetting solutions!



BROTHER BIG FLOWERS 1 TO 5
One of our most successful series with route setters, the brother flower series.

CHA SUPER PINCH

Part of our 2019 collection that will move to an elegant Fibre glass range. To arm to the left is our new addition to the Digital family. A very exciting surprise to come



Photo: NG

MONSTER EGG 2

This new add on to our Egg series has already won the Micka Golden foot award :)



Photo: NG



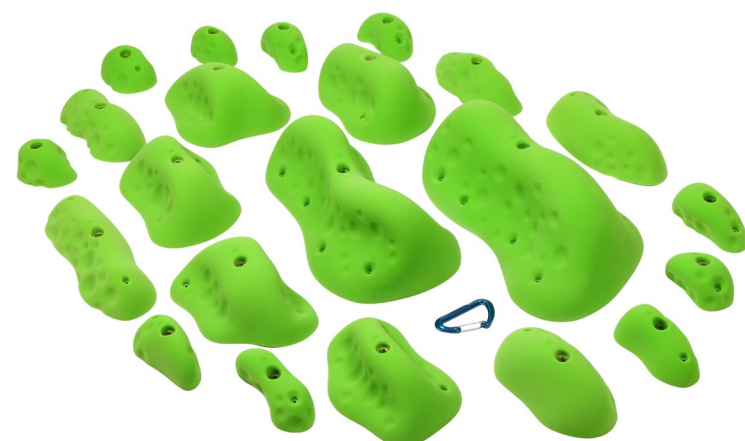
ATOMIK CLIMBING HOLDS

Here at Atomik Climbing Holds, we have manufactured our brand since 2002. What that means to you is a speedy turn-around time on every order. This business model also allows us to offer Manufacturer-direct pricing. Our new texture that we call Atomik 2.0, offers the climber a skin-friendly experience while maintaining a superior grip.

GOLFUS LINE

We are designing the Golfus line to be ergonomic and comfortable while directing the climber on to the divots. The holds become substantially harder if you try and avoid the divots.

Using golf ball divots as our inspiration, we have located the divots as fingertip landing zones. The divots help you lock into the hold. When searching for the divots, the climber, whether small hand or large, finds an option that meets their hand size.



GOLFUS PINCHES

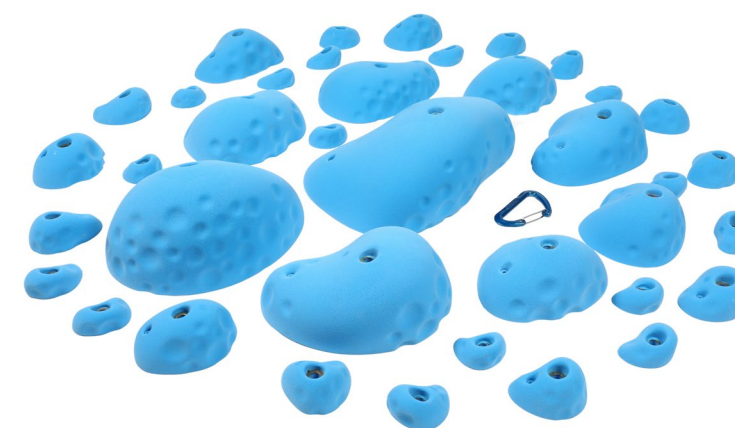
The Golfus Pinches come in a variety of incuts and widths. The divots will force you to engage, no matter the wall angle. The different sizes will allow you to set a wide range of problems throughout a variety of grades.

Sizes: Small-XXXL

GOLFUS JUGS

Atomik is known for being a company that has an extensive line of affordable jugs. The entire size range of the Golfus jug line is no exception. With everything from mini jugs to double-handers, this line has you covered when you need an affordable and comfortable hold.

Sizes: Medium-XXXL



GOLFUS RAILS AND EDGES

Golfus rails excel at being affordable eye candy. Their low-profile and small footprint makes them an excellent choice for the home wall builder as well as the commercial route-setter. The rails almost route set themselves by linking from one to the next.

Sizes: Small-XXXL



DOWN CLIMB JUGS

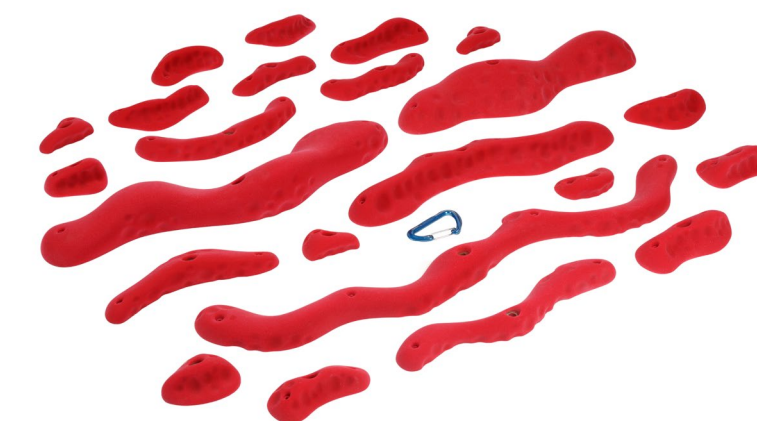
Multiple models of down-climb rings and jugs. Search "down climb" on our website.



GOLFUS SLOPERS AND FEET

The Golfus Pinches come in a variety of incuts and widths. The divots will force you to engage, no matter the wall angle. The different sizes will allow you to set a wide range of problems throughout a variety of grades.

Sizes: Small-XXXL



T-NUTS

Multiple models of T-Nuts. Search "t-nuts" on our website.





ENTRE-PRISES HOLDS

In 1985, ENTRE-PRISES (EP) created the first artificial climbing holds and revolutionised the future of the sport. The development of individual and moveable holds presented new creative possibilities, ultimately providing routesetters with the tools and freedom to invent boulder problems and routes that could continually challenge climber's physical and mental abilities.

A year later and EP re-invented the wheel once again, building the first artificial climbing wall; adding another new dimension to the sport's evolution. 30 years on and with over 6000 climbing walls built around the world, ENTRE-PRISES continues to lead the way in new innovations and standards of quality. **This expertise leads them to Tokyo 2021, to the first Olympic Games where climbing will be present, providing the walls of the discipline.**

ENTRE-PRISES is the world leader in climbing walls and is proud to be a long-term partner to the official Climbing Wall Supplier for the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC). EP has helped to develop and support the promotion of Sport Climbing since the early days of the IFSC's 2007 debut and has been a major IFSC partner since 2011.

At its core is ENTRE-PRISES's guiding principle is that; climbing should be accessible to everyone.

EP is recognised for its outstanding quality as an:

- » IFSC Official Speed Wall Manufacturer
- » IFSC Official Sport Equipment supplier for Holds, Volumes and Macros categories

This year, we are pleased to present you an overview of our newly released products and discover without further delay a focus on our **selected wood volumes of the Tokyo 2021 catalogue** which may appear on the official wall provided by us!



TOKYO 2020 VOLUMES

"These climbing volumes are huge part of creating these much more dynamic environment in which to climb, in which to train and in which to compete. It's something that as made indoor climbing a much more exciting activity as well as a much better training tool for climbing. We can see that we have brass inserts for attaching the volumes, we have well-rounded edges so they are more comfortable for climbing. Now this is important to note this does not make the climbing easier, it just makes us more comfortable while we're trying really hard. Then as we look finally at the face of these volumes, they're flush without any t-nut holes and what that means is that we can't use t-nut holes for advantage while climbing which is a huge advantage for setters who want to make sure that the climbers are utilizing the holds & volumes in the appropriate way during competition. It's important to note that while these can of course be utilized individually when setting that they're actually designed to be blocked and stacked with each others in order to create significantly more modularity when setting."

Graham Zimmerman, Bend, Oregon

- » Ergonomic round-over
- » Brass inserts at attachment points
- » Proprietary granual texture

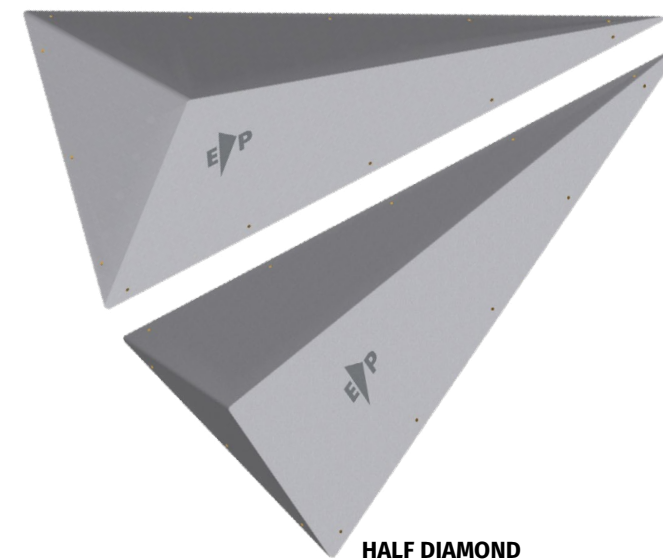
Number of macros: 20

Material: Wood

Size: S / M / L

Colours: Grey

LONG TRIANGLE



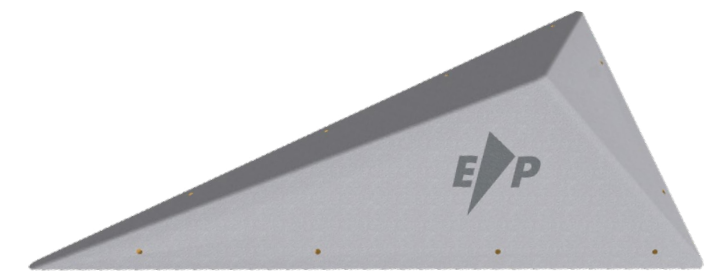
HALF DIAMOND



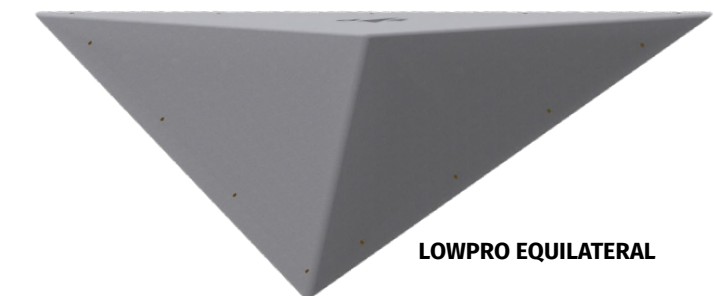
AMON



RAMSES



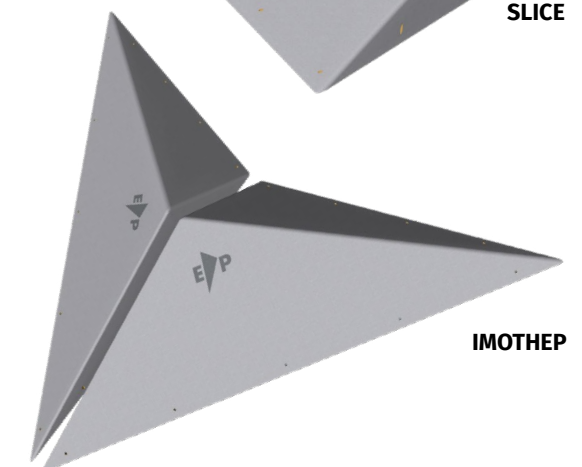
CLEOPATRA



LOWPRO EQUILATERAL



SLICE



IMOTHEP



ATAMI

Parisian duo, **Bleaujob** is route setting in all its facets. From competition to climbing gyms, they were keen to offer a range that would be accessible to as many people as possible. The shapes are more voluminous and allow 3D climbing, something to play with from beginner to expert. Atami (wave in Japanese), shopped under "la dent de Crolles", Rhône Alpes, offers a whole range of outstanding shapes.

Number of sets: 6

Total holds: 32

Material: Polyurethane

Size: XS / S / M / L / XL / XXL

Colours: Fluo Orange, Fluo Pink, Fluo green, Purple, Dark green, Blue, Red, Yellow, Black

UFO/ORB

Fiberglass, for a full ange of roundnesses

Used all together or separately, these positive-textured macros can be used for different levels of climbing. Use them to force placements, add extra moves, or steer directions. These 6 macros will give you infinite gripping possibilities depending on the angle of the wall. Let your imagination run wild!

Number of macros: 20

Material: Positive-textured fibreglass

Size: XL

Colours: Blue, Red, Yellow, Black, Grey

Alberto Gnerro, international route setter and EP collaborator:

"I have been working as a route setter for the World Cup in Briançon and have been opening climbing routes for the preparation camps for the Italian national team at Arco in Italy and for the French national team in Briançon. These volumes were very much appreciated. They offer very surprising route setting. These macros have a great texture and very successful shapes."



ATAMI FEET XS



ATAMI JUGS M



ORB 1

Ball shaped, Orb 1 stays shifty and **requires good placement skills** in order to be dominated.



ORB 2

Offers very good grip **suitable for all levels.** It can be oriented to **give direction for the move.**



ORB 3

Offers a **soft but fleeting grip, for intermediate levels.**



ORB 4

Round curves, to be used to **force placements** or **make a move more challenging.**



UFO 1

With its limited height, Ufo 1 allows all types of openings.



UFO 2

It's a quite commanding volume. Ufo 2 will be the **masterpiece of your route-setting.**

KIDS

Entre-Prises do not forget about the children! This year, the range has been expanded with more than twenty funny holds with a perfect grip for little hands. Kid's areas are never forgotten in climbing gyms and more and more schools are teaching their pupils from an early age. The next climbing generation is assured!

Number of sets: 5

Total holds: 23

Material: Polyurethane & Polyester

Size: L / XL / XXL

Colours: Fluo Orange, Fluo Pink, Fluo green, Purple, Dark green, Blue, Red, Yellow, Black, Grey



KID'S FACES SMILEY



KID'S FACES CHALLENGE



KID'S FACES JOYSTICK



DIATOM INCUTS

BY ROCK CANDY HOLDS

The Diatoms are a must-have addition to any setting team's arsenal given their comfort, directionality and value. The Incuts expansion puts a more positive spin on the classic edges, allowing them to be used for easier climbs or steeper terrain.

Born out of a love for climbing in 2006, Rock Candy remains a trusted industry partner for gyms, route setters and climbers around the globe.

Find new inspiration and the full product line at rockcandyholds.com.



DIATOM INCUTS FEATURE



DIATOM INCUTS 2XL



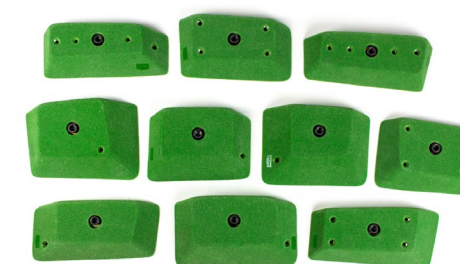
DIATOM INCUT RAILS 2XL



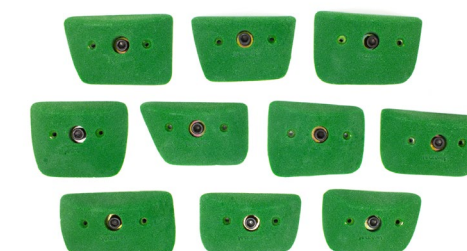
DIATOM INCUTS COLOSSAL



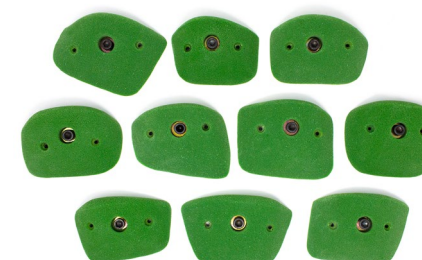
DIATOM INCUTS LG A



DIATOM INCUTS LG B



DIATOM SLOPERS MD



DIATOM INCUTS MD A



DIATOM INCUTS MD B



DIATOM INCUTS MD
Dual Texture





ALLHOLDS POLYURETHANE

Together the allHOLDS members created more than just a polyurethane material that meets all characteristics that are needed for a long-lasting climbing hold:

- » **SUSTAINABILITY**
More than 30% renewable raw materials and continue enhancing.
- » **ABRASION RESISTANCE**
allHOLDS polyurethane has a very high abrasion resistance and thus maximizes the lifetime of the handles on the climbing walls.
- » **ECONOMICAL**
Best quality at very good price-performance-ratio.

allHOLDS polyurethane can be cast by hand as well as by machine and is free from plasticizers. It is also suitable to produce holds that meet the DIN EN 12572-3:2017



© AllgäuHolds Allgäu Serie



© ebalta

BENEFITS BEING A MEMBER

Next to developing allHOLDS polyurethane itself, at allHOLDS network we discuss how to optimize production as well as new technologies to save waste and costs. Everyone has access to a wide range of silicones, colour pastes and additives including technical support from ebalta.

Interested? Drop us a message at info@allholds.com

“What matters about PU material? The lifetime of the final product. The most important characteristic of climbing holds is abrasion resistance. allHOLDS target is to deliver the best material in Europe and the latest development reach this target already. However, we want to continue with a development also for the future.”

VirginGrip



© VirginGrip dual surface

MORE THAN JUST MATERIAL

In 2017 the idea arose to create a network for independent climbing hold producers. Together with ebalta Kunststoff GmbH, a German leading manufacturer of polyurethane resins, the independent climbing hold producer VirginGrip asked to create a product that includes the characteristics of an optimal climbing hold.

Over time, the idea took on more and more shape. We built a website and went to Halls & Walls to invite interested climbing hold producers to our first meeting in January 2020.

Within the network we kept developing the product, as well as the common approaches. The six members of allHOLDS work closely together to reach the same target: to offer a wide variety of individual climbing holds made with a high-quality material.

THE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF ALLHOLDS



© blocz Jugs XXL

“At allHOLDS, requirements and wishes are taken seriously and the cooperation with various climbing hold manufacturers results in further synergies that have a positive effect on the development of an optimal climbing hold material.”

Blocz

“The allHOLDS polyurethane fits perfectly with our philosophy, our demands and wishes, in order to produce durable and resistant climbing holds. With up to 30% share of renewable raw materials and 100% plastic-free packaging, we can now offer our customers an increasingly sustainable product.”

holdingGrips



© holdingGrips



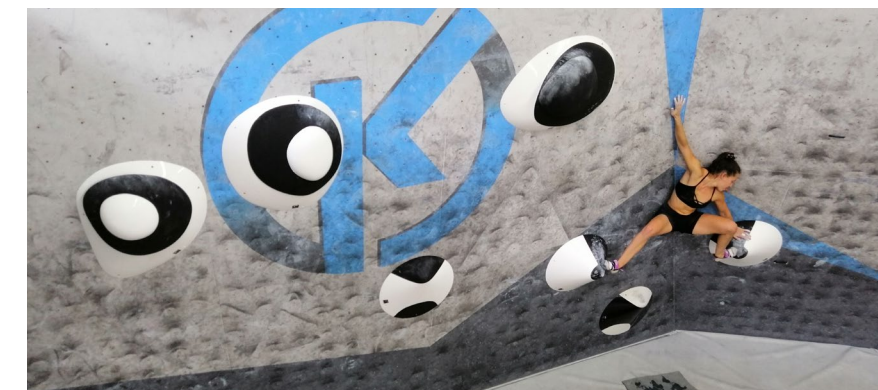
@Polyton Bats Series

“We see the allHOLDS material as promising with a special feel and the community as a great opportunity to optimise the process along the value chain. Through the exchange between manufacturers, suppliers, climbing halls and route setters, the climbing scene can be made more sustainable, efficient and safer together.”

Polyton



Illusion brand products consist of polyester resin and wood. The name of these eyecatchers itself testifies to their main features. Most of the macros are available in Dual Texture version, and together with Illusion's tricky holds they are perfect for route setting and creating unique climbing walls.



Climb1 brand represents a classic line of climbing wooden volumes. Climb1 volumes are not only designed to encourage creativity in route setting, but are also perfect for refurbishing your climbing walls.



CLIMBING GYM HEAVEN

Climbing Gym Heaven is a platform dedicated to all climbers, gym owners, gym managers, route setters and investors. We provide a wide range of products and services by building climbing walls for your climbing gyms, providing flooring solutions, carpenter products and specific training elements.

At Climbing Gym Heaven you will find a large variety of some of the best brands of climbing **holds, macros, volumes, training equipment, and other climbing accessories.**

We will provide you with **everything you will ever need** for making your projects a dream come true by equipping your gym with high-quality equipment or by simply refreshing your climbing walls. » any other custom-made climbing structures.

DO YOU NEED A PRODUCER?

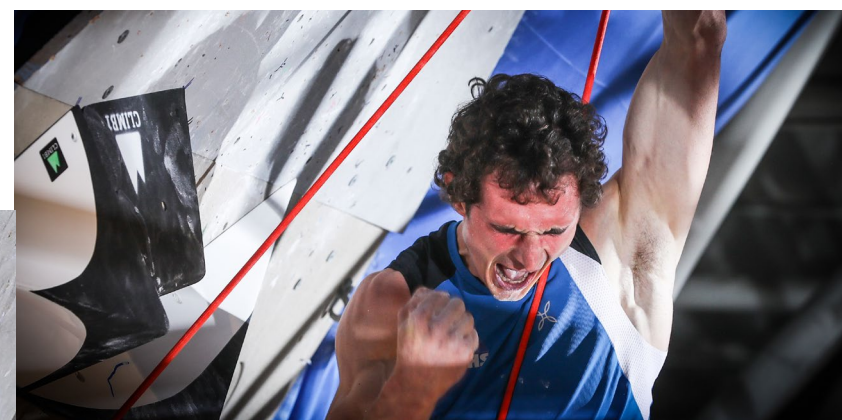
Climbing Gym Heaven is a brand that offers OEM production of climbing wall elements, playground equipment, climbing volumes and climbing pyramids.

For more information contact us at info@climbinggymheaven.com.

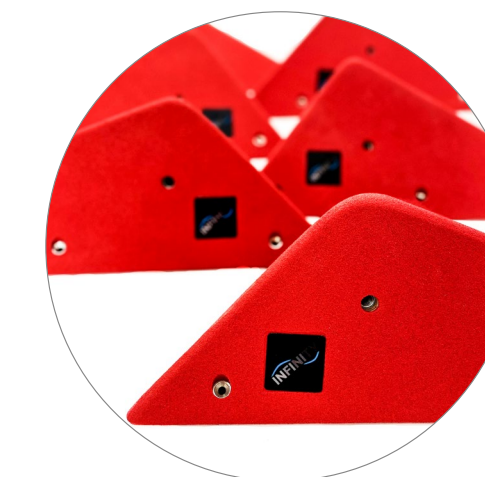
Coupon code:
RoutesetterMagazine2020

GET A 10% OFF DISCOUNT ON YOUR FIRST PURCHASE!

Visit us at www.climbinggymheaven.com.



Using simple geometrical facts, a line of mutually compatible plywood volumes has been developed. All the volume's compatible sides and surfaces enable limitless possibilities and creative combinations. Infinity line also supports modern route setting.





KILTER



Kilter Grips are shaped by Ian Powell and our Haptic Design Team of pro shapers, setters, and climbers including Jeremy Ho and Jimmy Webb. Urban Plastix are Peter Juhl's brand. Combined we offer over 6500 shapes.

In addition to our popular light-up adjustable Kilter Board, new this year is the new Kilter Home Board. Smaller and denser than the commercial Kilter Board, the home board is a great choice for users with space limitations. Check out the options on our website www.settercloset.com

Kilter Grips has been voted #1 Favorite Hold Brand six times in the setter-judged Climbing Business Journal Grip List and 2018, 2019, and 2020 All Time Favorite Brand. Selected for the IFSC T21 Catalogue.

Setter Closet shapes are produced at Aragon and Composite-X in only the best polyurethanes. Fiberglass are produced at Walltopia. Unique shapes at each manufacturer, hundreds of new shapes a year, all available worldwide.



NOAH

Simple and clean with organic curves. Smooth irregularities for varied grip positions. Classic Kaiju Huecos and Noah Ledges are must-haves. 677 holds by Ian Powell.



BRUSHED SANDSTONE & SANDSTONE

Classic and beautiful interpretations of geology. Rock inspired, artist designed for directional, technical, and fun setting. Brushed faces add a real-rock feel to the grabs. Bring the outdoors indoors. 978 holds by Ian Powell.



URBAN PLASTIX

For 2020 and 2021 Peter has added a new line of wavy seam slopers, pinches, and jugs called Stratos and he has expanded his popular Stealth dual-tex and Regs line with more pleasant, fun shapes. Some of the most unique yet useful grips on the market. 1242 shapes by Peter Juhl @urbanplastix



GRANITE AND GRANITE COMPLEX

Expanded Granite Complex with Ian's fine outdoor texture can be used individually or stacked together in different ways to allow micro-adjustments to the grip so you can get your perfect grade every time. 576 shapes by Will Anglin and Ian Powell.

JIMMY WEBB

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, crimps, and new Brushed Slots are styles all his own. 99 holds by Jimmy Webb.



FIBERGLASS

New Fiberglass made at Walltopia in classic Winter and Noah and new blocky Wingate Sandstone! Peter Juhl sets include UP Speed Bumps and a Flö Mega Hueco. Great middle-texture for fun climbing. Available in screw-on or bolt on. 61 shapes by Ian Powell and Peter Juhl.



LO RIDERS & DUNES

Sleek, low-profile Lo Riders look great on the wall and offer elegantly tapered, directional grips. New style Dunes rise off the wall and hide curvy, sand-dune-like grips that make you work for the good part. 88 holds by Jeremy Ho

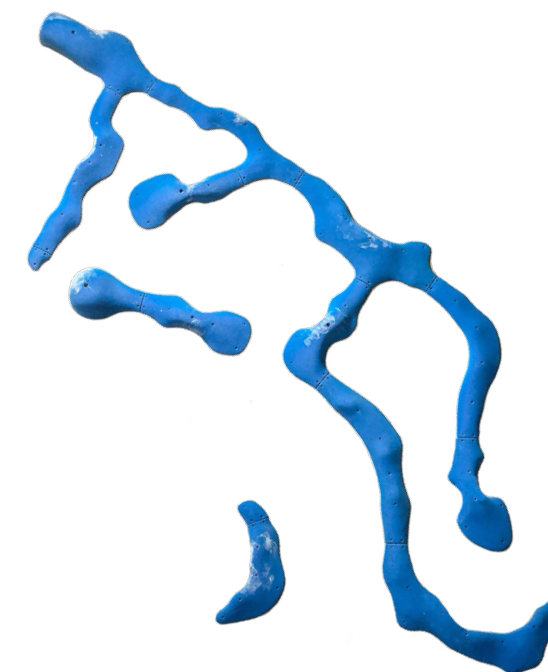


GEO COMPLEX

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 perfectly to dial in your hold size and positivity, making it easy to tweak difficulty, even between rounds. Futuristic. 221 holds by Peter Juhl.

SMOOTH TUFAS

Revolutionary modular organic tufa system with ends that match up allow for specific, directional, and aesthetic showpiece routes and problems. This system can be set as big features or entire connected lines. Works well alone or with companion sets like Winter, Noah, Lo Riders, and Brushed Sandstone. Appropriate for everything from new climbers to comp finals. Engage your customers from the moment they walk in the door. 123 pieces and counting by Ian Powell.





BLUEPILL – CLIMBING HOLDS, VOLUMES & EQUIPMENT



USA CLIMBING
HOLD & VOLUME
SUPPLIER

In search of the right solution for your own challenges. Bluepill will be at your side. From the very beginning we have worked together with route setters, climbers and gym operators. Together we have developed our love and passion for the sport. Our goal is to create an unforgettable experience for everyone.

To achieve this we have created a large and versatile range of products to help and support you in realizing your ideas and goals. Starting with wood volumes to redesign large areas, PU holds for the most versatile use, PE holds to achieve a good price performance and a big range of fiberglass volumes.

There are already several hundred unique shapes and every year there are coming more. Made in Germany and made in Europe, all products are easily and quickly available worldwide and accessible for everyone. We gladly manufacture individual wishes like holds or volumes with your logo or special color ideas. No matter what you want we will make it happen.

As “IFSC Authorised Macros Producer”, “USA Climbing” partner, German Alpine Club Partner (“DAV”) we are very happy to support this great climbing sport on small and big events.

We are proud and happy to be announced as one of the most favorite grip brands in the Climbing Business Journal Grip List.



FIBERGLASS VOLUMES

The fiberglass volumes with the guaranteed wow-effect. With the fiber impressions everybody has fun, no matter if beginner, occasional boulderer or professional climber. The holds conjure up a unique climbing-experience. You can choose the color as well as the texture. Do you want rainbow holds or volumes with crazy color and dual texture combinations. We manufacture as you like it.

DOWNCLIMB JUG - Let your ideas run free!

This holds offers innumerable possibilities of use. Besides the safe descent, the hold can also be used as advertising space by sponsors of your gym or for training with beginners and children. The downclimb jug is an ergonomic hold that offers enough space for both hands and is comfortable to grip even in steeper areas of your gym. The Downclimb Jug is also available without logo.

ORIGINALS

The originals are a masterpiece of its creator – Luke Brady. They are characterized by their soft and generous shapes, which can be used in many different ways. A unique line of fiberglass volume and various holds.



PU HOLDS

The Pu Holds captivate with their great variety and impressive quality with a high wear resistance of the material. Have an eye catcher at your next competition with the Competition line or awesome boulder with the holds of the Original line.



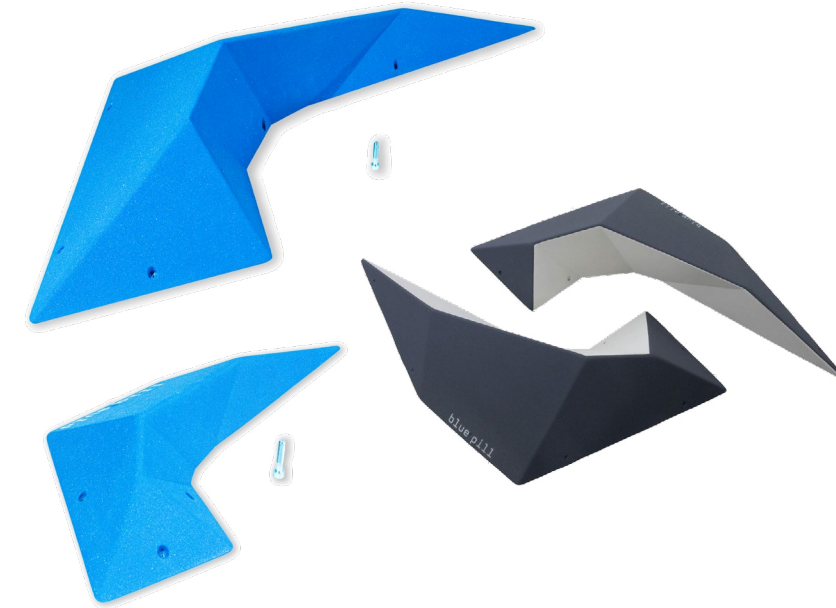
PE HOLDS

In addition to the interesting split grip line for exciting and sometimes nerve-wracking climbing experiences, our large number of bluepill PE holds also include the classic Straight Bloc line. The PE-holds offer an excellent price-performance ratio and are therefore not only of special interest for bouldergyms but also for climbinggyms. Furthermore, they enable their customers to enjoy a lasting pleasure due to their long lasting excellent quality and easy cleaning.



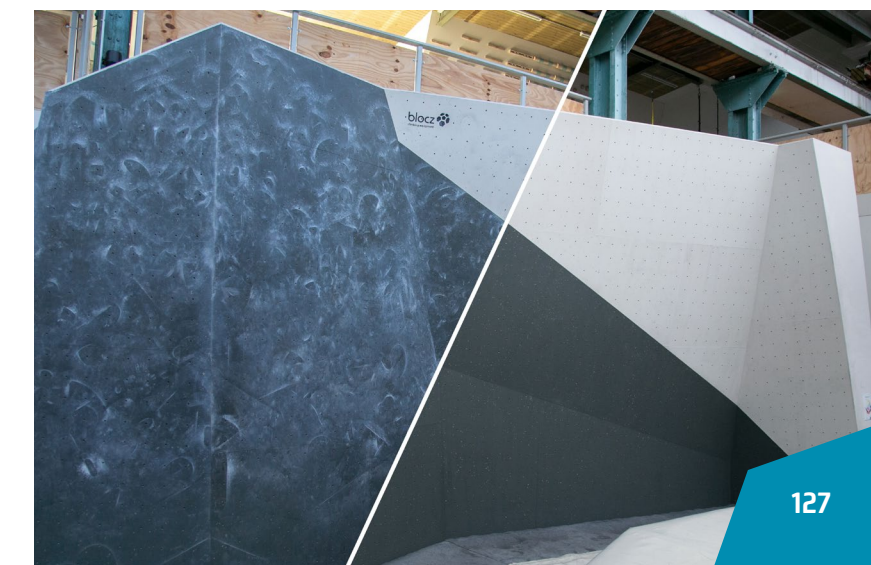
WOOD MADE VOLUMES

The great variety of volumes contains everything from simple squares, triangles to new, unique shapes, such as the Wings or Diamonds. By simply combining the volumes, creative works of art can be realized. The Wood made Volumes are available in different variations of texture, colors and fixing systems.



CLEANING PRODUCTS

Well-groomed lasts even longer – therefore we also care for your used and older holds. Because we are committed to the long-term use of our products we have also developed cleaning products and accessories. Therefore your holds, volumes, walls and mats can always shine in all their glory.



ORGANIZATION BOXES

For the storage and sorting of holds and volumes we have the matching boxes and shelves. Give your holds storage a clear structure and order.



SAFETY TOOLS

Work safety is everything. To protect your health and that of your employees, CCE offers you safety glasses, headphones and gloves. To secure your workplace on the wall, the Community Climbing Equipment range includes for example barrier tape and mat protection for your bouldering mat.

FIRST OFFICIAL COLOR SYSTEM FOR BOLTS

We are looking forward to our new bolt-color-system, which will simplify the use and sorting of bolts. The bolts, colored by length, can be purchased with the corresponding sorting boxes, which guarantees a clear division. An unbelievable simplification in route setting with maximum time saving.



COMMUNITY CLIMBING EQUIPMENT - CCE

Equipment made by the community, for the community. We are all part of the climbing community. Out of many ideas from different people in the climbing business the idea of this brand was born.

Therefore a large community of route setters, climbers, trainers and shapers develop, design and produce products for you.

Community Climbing Equipment offers equipment, tools and everything related to climbing.

The goal is to offer a complete package for routesetters, gym owners and gym managers to simplify processes efficiently and to guarantee ideal equipment. So there is more time for the real thing...route setting and climbing!

ROUTE SETTER EQUIPMENT

We have everything what the route setter heart needs - from equipment for the route setters, organizational aids to holds and much more.

ROUTE SETTER TOOLS

CCE offers not only screws and bolts but also all kinds of tools for machine or manual work. In order not to lose the bits, they can be stored on a bit holder with key ring, which can easily be attached to the tool bag of the route setter. So there is no more annoying searching for the small screwdriver attachments. For the relaxed collection of the screws and bolts we can offer a magnetic collecting broom which makes the work even easier.



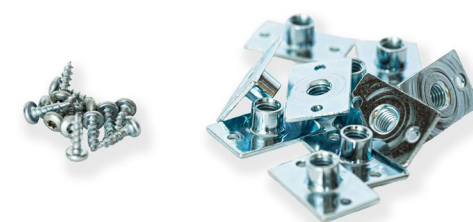
NEW HOLDS

The basic idea of Community Climbing Equipment is the hold design for the community by the community. There are grips for everyone and there will be a special emphasis on variety, very good grips for beginners and advanced climbers, but also for high-end equipment. The inventiveness of different people and the common cooperation in the development of new climbing equipment is one reason for the name and the cooperation with many well-known route setters, coaches and athletes, be it international, national or regional. They get the opportunity to realize their own ideas and design their own climbing line. All in the spirit of the community. Jacky Godoffe, Ingo Filzwieser, Julius Kerscher and others are already designing incomparable holds. 400 forms are in production and can be ordered soon". Be curious to see who will design handles for their own line in cooperation with Community Climbing Equipment. 400 molds are in production and can be ordered soon.



HOME WALL

The dream of your own boulder wall in the attic or in the garage can easily come true. We supply you with prefabricated wall panels, T-Nuts, Screws and everything else. For your home wall there are extra hold-sets which are perfectly designed especially for a small wall at home. Instructions and Ideas for your first own boulder setting are added.



TRAINING EQUIPMENT

To become even stronger CCE offers you stylish hangboards and campus bars for your training. Next will come soon.





kletterkultur
Service für Boulder- und Kletterhallen

KLETTERKULTUR – SERVICE FOR BOULDERING- & CLIMBING GYMS

The „Kletterkultur“ (climbing culture) is a motivated and climbing enthusiastic team which offers with all things around the climbing sport. Years of experience in the areas of climbing gym planning, route setting, sales of climbing gym products as well as knowledge transfer through workshops enable a perfect service for you as a gym operator or route setter.

From the beginning we offer qualified advice for the planning and operation of your boulder or climbing gym. Furthermore we help you with an expert project development and realization of your wall and mat wishes. According to your ideas we compile an offer for the initial equipment of holds and volumes. For this purpose we have 10 world-famous and unique brands in our distributor portfolio at our disposal. We also care about the heart of your facility - the boulder or

routes – with professional route setting or route setting workshops for every requirement. We would like to support you with all your requests around bouldering- and climbing gyms.

WALL CONSTRUCTION

In cooperation with Blocz we make your dreams come true with a unique and breathtaking boulder- or climbing gym. Together with you we create a room layout and unique design of the climbing walls. Blocz realizes all your wishes according to DIN 12572. A special feature of wall construction with Blocz is the precise workmanship without visible mounting points. Furthermore, only renewable raw materials are used for the substructure. High quality, made in Germany, has the highest priority at Blocz.



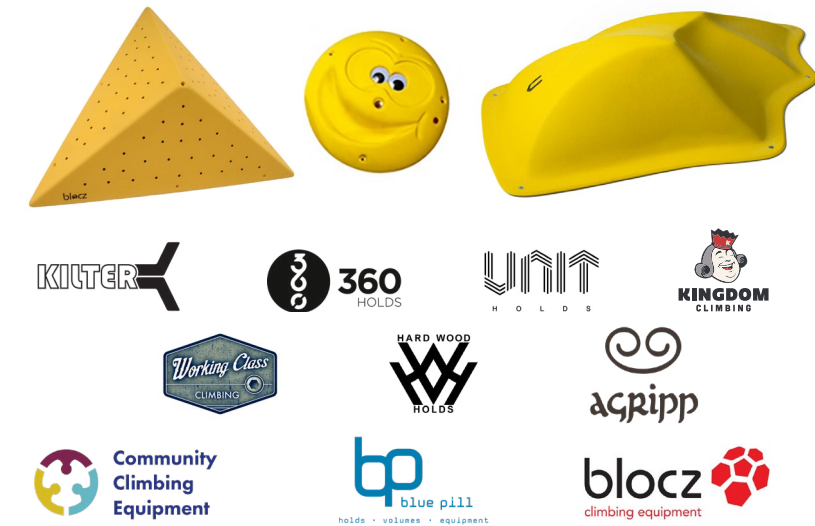
MAT CONSTRUCTION

Safe landing is guaranteed with the mat from Blocz. Just as in the construction of walls, the design and implementation of the mat is carried out with high quality and in accordance with standards. The matting system consists of several layers with an optimal pressure distribution. An all-round, harder edge strip increases durability and reduces the risk of injury. Blocz offers a wide range of PVC tarpaulin covers. Our customers can also choose for a full-carpet mat or a combination of PVC mat and carpet strips at the entrances. The “Kletterkultur” is happy to support you in choosing the right Blocz mat for your gym according to your needs.

HOLDS & VOLUMES

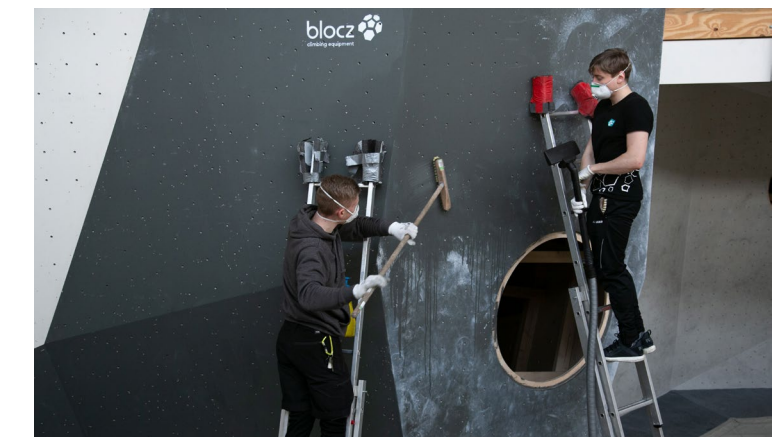
The “Kletterkultur” is exclusive distributor in Germany, Austria and Switzerland for several popular brands. Do you want new shapes from bluepill, extraordinary volumes of 360 or a Kilterboard from Kilter as an eye-catcher in your gym, then contact us. We will also be pleased to advise you on products from Blocz, Unit, Agripp, Kingdom Climbing, Working Class, Hard Wood Holds or Community Climbing Equipment. Inform yourself about our distribution countries.

For your new gym, we will be happy to put together a complete offer for the initial equipment. That means we deliver the holds, volumes and the whole equipment fitting to your bouldering and climbing facility. We combine your wishes with our experience in route planning and enable an effective and awesome combination of material for your gym. Contact us in person or check out our webshop: <https://climbing-culture.com>.



HOLDS AND VOLUMES CLEANING

Quick, intensive and efficient. Not only your walls, but also your holds and volumes should always look sparkling clean and new. The cleaning product from bluepill can be used universally for all brands and ensure a bright, clean hold or volume. Removes dirt, rubber, chalk and creates again the specific surface of the hold.



WALL CLEANING

Let your wall get shiny again. We offer a wood-gently and thorough cleaning of your climbing wall with low water use. For deep pore cleaning of the wooden wall we use the cleaning products from bluepill. The combination of bluewash and bluewash extreme removes any impurity.

CLEANING

Cleaning, additionally further cleaners for e.g. rental shoes and mats are offered to keep the hall always pleasantly clean for the visitors.



ROUTE SETTING + WORKSHOPS

If you are looking for awesome boulders for your next competition, support with commercial route setting or individual route setting workshops, we will be happy to help you and send an experienced and motivated route setter to your gym. We work according to the wishes and ideas of the customers and can assist in the organization of the route setting management. We also train route setters in workshops. The participants learn everything from boulder or route setting, new school style, old school style, aesthetic aspects and all the things you need to know of modern route setting. For the specific tools we work together with the brand “Community Climbing Equipment”, which offers everything for the route setters.

UPCYCLING

Give your holds and volumes a second chance. By upcycling, your used material gets a new surface und and looks again like new. Whether holds or fiberglass volumes we can renew almost everything. Not only does the new coating make your grips UV-resistant, it also contributes to sustainability. Let’s renew your holds and help the environment together.

WALL MAINTENANCE

Safety first. Always keep your climbing or bouldering equipment and walls up to date. According to DIN EN, a visual inspection of the substructure and the mounting points is carried out. In the climbing gyms, the securing points and deflection points are also checked. We also offer a test of personal protective equipment according to the manufacturer’s specifications for the safety of your team.



www.nutbrushes.com
www.instagram.com/nutbrushes

NUTBRUSHES

Our mission is to deliver the highest quality and most durable brushes with a never-ending attention to reduce the environmental impact of our manufacturing process and final products.

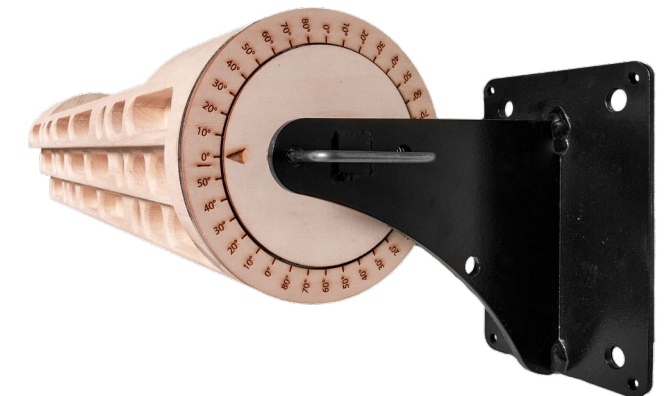
All our brushes are entirely handmade, starting from premium 100% boar bristles and a selection of the finest certified wood from all over the world



OWL

We wanted to channel all our ambition into our original products, unique on the market, both advantageous and innovative. Researched in every single detail, meticulously handcrafted, these products will offer several different training exercises, suitable for a wide public.

www.owlclimb.com
www.instagram.com/owlclimb



QUINTESENTIALLY ITALIAN

The devil is in the details, and the name +39 leaves little doubt as to where we are from and what we stand for.

edge of perfection, without losing sight of process optimization and sustainability.

Our symbol gathers four leading climbing companies, reinforcing and supporting each individual identity.

Come meet us and witness the passion, hard work and motivation that drive us to be better every day.

This ambitious project is based on a long-term view of collaboration, meant to share know-how, compete fairly and push our products to the

Our mantra is quality over quantity because as Artisans we work with our hearts, minds, and hands.



EMBER
 Ember Holds represents the highest quality in hold design and manufacturing in Italy. Founded in 2017, it strives to provide routesetters with the tools needed to realize their unique vision and push athletes in the never ending quest to self-perfection.

Ember Holds designing beautiful, safe and ergonomic shapes, using high quality plywood, fiberglass and polyurethane for production, assuring product quality control and constantly listening to the feedback our users share.

www.emberholds.com
www.instagram.com/emberholds

PLAY

Play Climbing Volumes is an idea, born about 3 years ago, of craftsmanship and a strong passion for climbing.

www.playclimbingvolumes.com
www.instagram.com/playclimbingvolumes

A combination of quality, elegance and innovation to which the two founding members aim to participate in the continuous growth of indoor climbing.





Citywall is a **global company** that provides an overall service in climbing walls production from a personalized idea to realization. We take care of everything from climbing gym design, engineering, logistics, assembly, flooring solutions, holds, volumes, maintenance, financing and business planning.

WHY ARE WE THE PERFECT PARTNER?

- » We are the fastest company in terms of project implementation, thanks to our own production and assembling team,
- » we offer a variety of materials to choose from,
- » we execute complex constructions and crazy ideas,
- » we use and implement only the best materials on the market,
- » all products are made in accordance with all prescribed safety standards and they have passed all the required tests, certificates and statements of compliance,
- » we are based in Slovenia, a country with the best alpinists and sport climbers in the world, so we have the opportunity to include in our team the experts that represent a new generation of climbing.

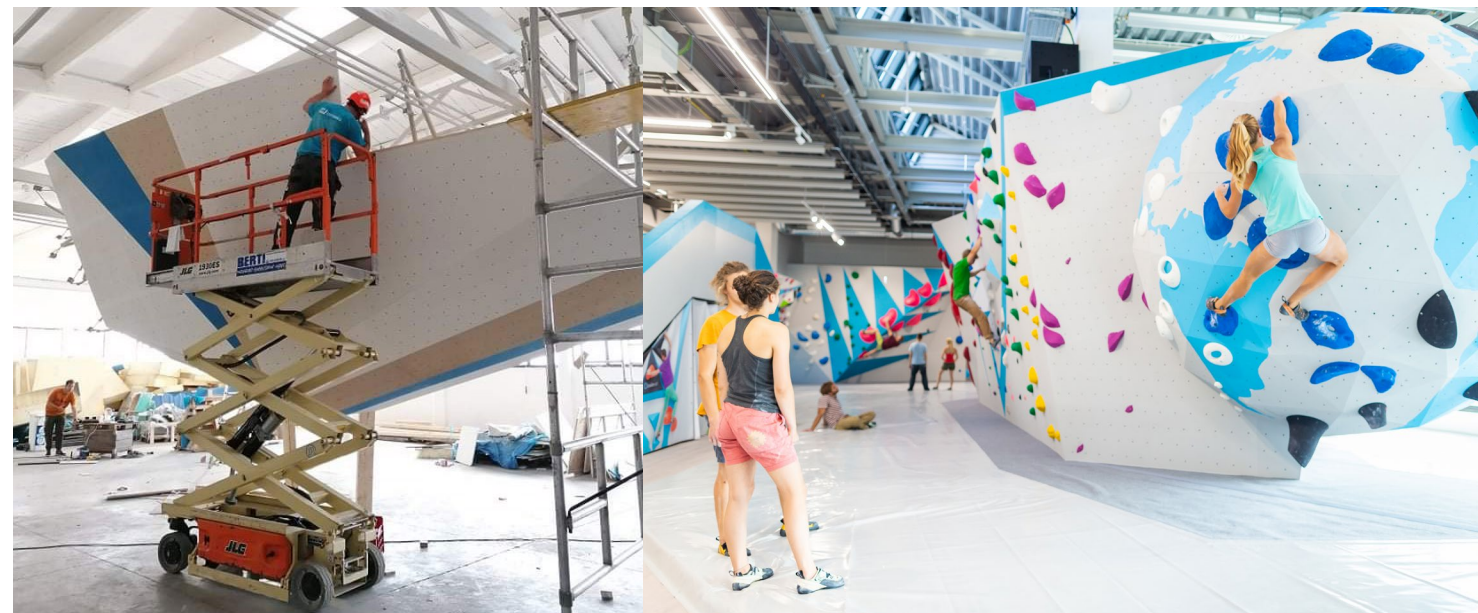
For more information contact us at info@citywall.eu.



CITYWALL CLIMBING WALLS

By living and breathing climbing walls, Citywall has been present in the climbing industry for more than 25 years. With already more than 35 completed projects in 2020, **we are a total-solution provider for:**

- » indoor and outdoor climbing walls,
- » boulder and rope climbing walls,
- » climbing walls for schools and kindergardens,
- » playground equipment,
- » self-standing climbing towers,
- » mobile towers and boulders on a trailer,
- » climbing walls for pools,
- » private home walls and
- » any other custom-made climbing structures.



As a **team of experienced climbers** we firmly believe that development is our driving force, as we are constantly introducing new solutions and continue to spearhead and develop new innovations.

For us, nothing is impossible, so we are proud to undertake any kind of project despite its complexity.





Steilheit Boulderwände

Steilheit Kletterwände

STEILHEIT – DIE WANDMACHER

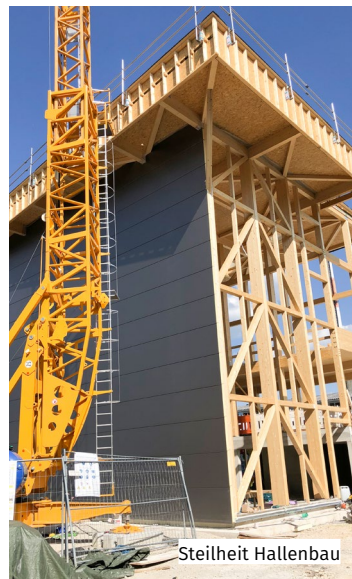
www.steilheit.com

Als Holzbau-Meisterbetrieb beschäftigen wir uns seit dem Jahr 2015 mit der **Beratung, Entwurf, Werkplanung, Produktion** und der **Montage** von **Boulder- und Kletterwänden, Kinderkletterbereichen** und naturnahen **Regenerationszonen**.

Auf Wunsch unserer Kunden, können zusätzlich zu den oben genannten, alle gängigen Holzbauarbeiten, wie zum Beispiel

- » der Bau von Gewerbe- und Wohnbauten
- » Treppen
- » Galerien
- » Um- und Zubauten
- » Aufstockungen
- » Fenster
- » Türen
- » Holzböden
- » Möbel

und vieles mehr angeboten werden.



Steilheit Hallenbau



Steilheit Aussenkletterwände

STARK SIND WIR:

- » **beim Zuhören:** Wir versuchen Ihre Ideen und Kletterträume zu verstehen und in einem Erstentwurf zu bündeln.
- » **beim Austausch von Erfahrungen:** Mehr als 40 Jahre Klettererfahrung und 25 Jahre Kletterwandbau haben ihre Spuren hinterlassen, die Ihnen bei der Planung ihrer Halle zugutekommen.
- » **bei der Beratung:** Unser Ziel wird immer sein, IHRE Kletter- oder Boulderhalle zu bauen, mit den uns zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln und Möglichkeiten.
- » **bei der Planung:** Vom finalen freigegebenen Entwurf als 3D-Modell, zur Werkplanung bei einem unserer Holzbau-Meister.
- » **mit unserem Angebot:** Versprochen, wir geben unser Bestes, ohne an der Qualität unserer Produkte und Mitarbeiter zu sparen.
- » **bei der Statik und Konzeption:** Hier spricht in unserem Haus der Ingenieur mit dem Dipl.-Ing. Dr. techn. wieder nur das Beste.

- » **bei der Werkplanung:** Bauanzeigeplan, Gewerbeplan, Baueingabe, Abbundpläne, Ausführungspläne, unsere Planungskompetenz kennt keine Grenzen.
- » **bei der Produktion:** 85 Jahre Erfahrung im Holzbau in enger Zusammenarbeit mit den Besten Lieferanten.
- » **auf der Baustelle:** Und das bei Wind und Wetter, das ganze Jahr über freuen wir uns Ihren Kletterraum zu verwirklichen.
- » **mit unserer Qualität:** Wir arbeiten ausschließlich mit den hochwertigsten-verfügbaren Materialien vom Brettschichtholz bis zur Massivholzplatte für den Möbelbau, veredelt mit den feinsten Hochleistungslacken.
- » **als Partner für Ihr nächstes Projekt:** Wir sind bereit und freuen uns auf Ihre Aufgaben.
- » **und mitten in Europa beheimatet:** Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Nachricht via E-Mail, Telefon oder Ihren Besuch bei uns in Ebbs, Tirol in Österreich, dem Herz der Steilheit!



Steilheit Aussenboulder



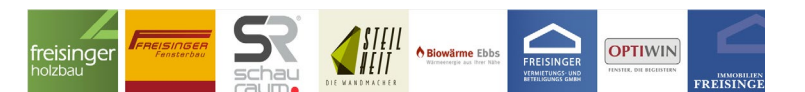
Steilheit Schulung & Kinderkletterbereich

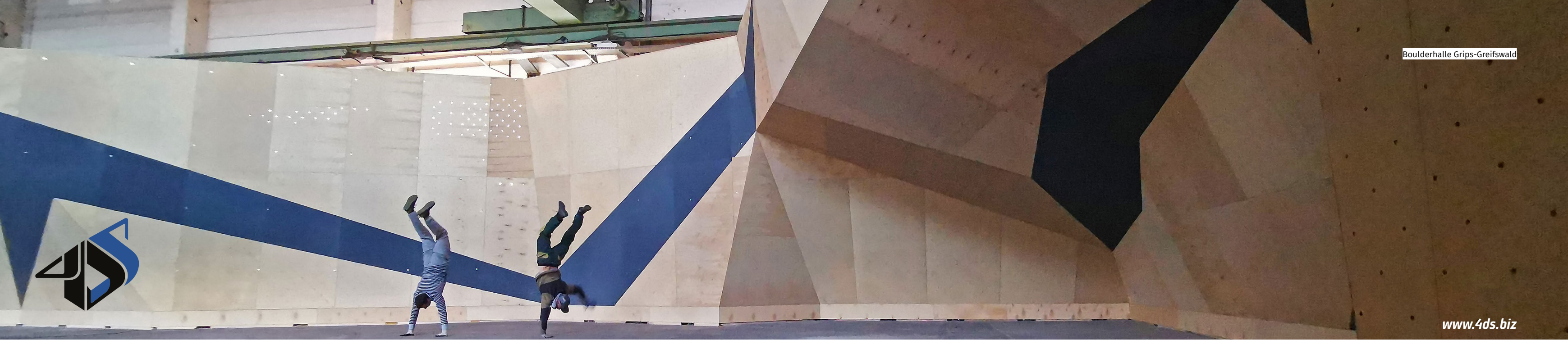


Steilheit Regeneration und Lebensräume

UNSER ANGEBOT

Wir garantieren für eine hochprofessionelle Planung und Umsetzung, den Einsatz der am Markt hochwertigsten Materialien und viele schöne Momente, Freude am Bauen gemeinsam mit unseren Kunden. Nachhaltig in Tirol geplant und produziert, auf ihrer Baustelle sozialverträglich montiert.



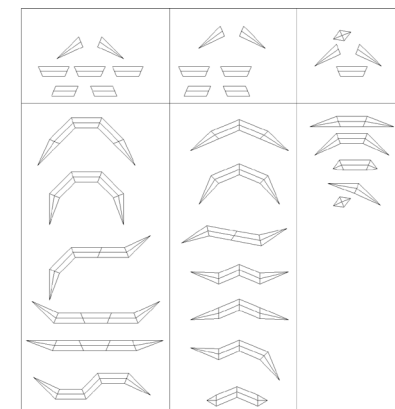


CLIMBING MEETS ENGINEERING

4DS offers the design, production and installation of climbing and bouldering walls. Although we started in 2007 as an engineering office designing buildings, bridges, rope parks and climbing walls – due to the rapid development of the climbing industry, today we concentrate our efforts fully on walls.

Since 2010, we have built some of the most popular boulder gyms in Germany, among them Ostbloc in Berlin or Blocschokolade in Trier.

Together with computer designer Alexander Dimitrov, we developed Flat Curves in 2017. With our software we calculate a spatially curved surface approximated in planes. This way, we achieve a smooth, curved look but at the same time flat surfaces onto which large volumes and holds can be placed.



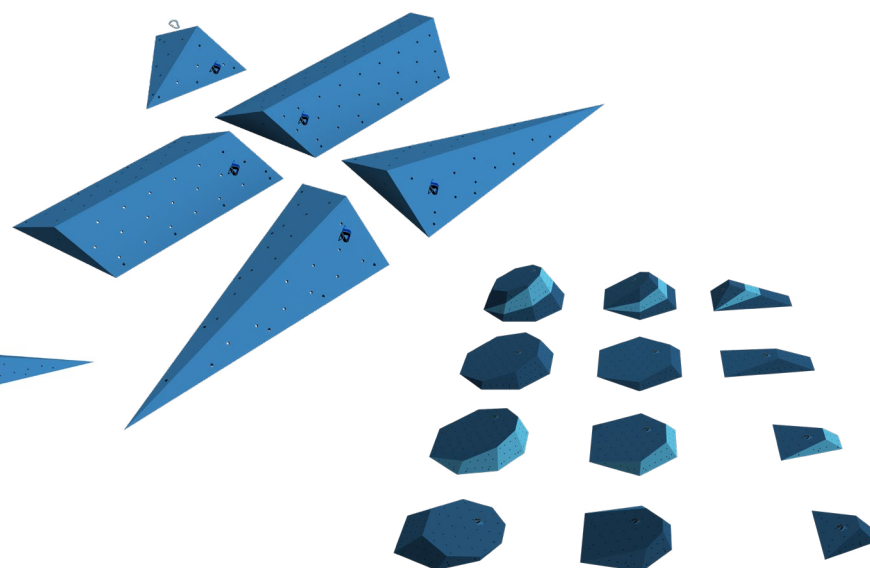
Snakes: with just five different volumes you can create more than 50 longitudinal combinations.

CLIMBING VOLUMES

We are producing more than 30 models of climbing volumes. Each one comes in 3 different sizes and most of them are available in a mirrored version. Our volumes are:

- » lightweight, made of 18mm birch plywood
- » strong, with a smooth grip
- » durable, both surface and body, special washer inserts
- » coloured, in almost any colour of the RAL chart

To increase the route setting variety, we have developed two types of combined volumes:



Slices: volumes perfectly fitted to each other in octagon, hexagon or pyramid shape, fixed with bolts – they can be used solo or combined – one slice volume makes four shapes.



IG-Kletterturm-Halle

CLIMBING WALLS AND TOWERS

If you are looking for a company to build your climbing walls or boulders in high quality, on time and at a reasonable price, then we are your partner.

There is no impossible design for our engineers. We work with wooden or steel construction.

We meet the biggest challenges head on – like self-standing structures with small bases or the placement of relatively heavy climbing walls in existing multi-storey buildings above the first floor.

Our wall design is distinguished by vision and functionality. Behind a successful climbing gym stands the successful design of the climbing surface and its placement in the space. The integration of the climbing walls in the building takes into account existing structures, lighting, ventilation, entrances and evacuation exits, training and comfort zones, storage and changing rooms.

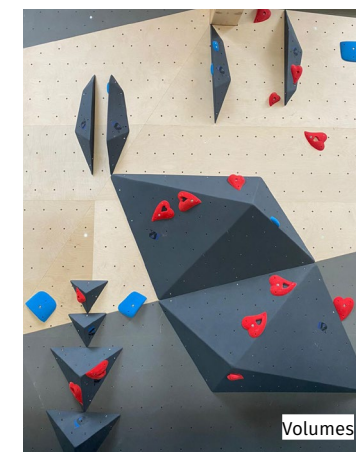
During our 16 years of experience in the design of artificial climbing walls, we have witnessed and participated in the evolution of climbing surfaces.

We have come a long way from walls that were designed only by changing the angles of rectangular surfaces or 3D Fiberglass Panels with permanent holds. With the development of the technology, the climbing surface has evolved to freely located planes in the space, smoothly bent plywood or fiberglass imitation of rocks and casts of real rocks.

To keep climbers interested, it is important to frequently change not only the routes but the whole appeal of the climbing wall. Surfaces of large plywood volumes that can change the appearance of a wall. To enable this, we created Flat Curves – a revolutionary climbing surface that combines vision and functionality.



New anchor bolt



Volumes



FROM 80's...

...TO THE NEW MILLENNIUM

DETAILS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

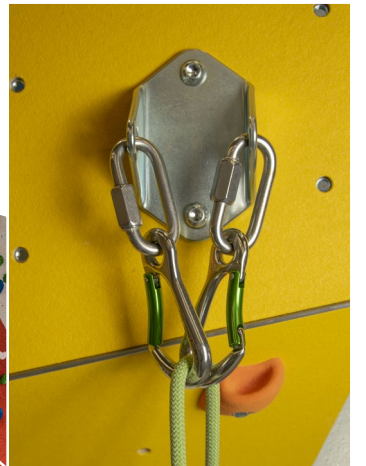
EDGE PROTECTION

- » low visual impact
- » safe & durable



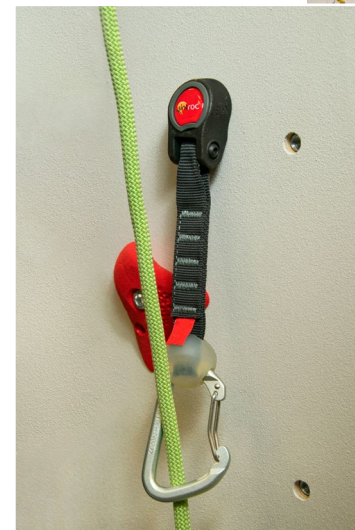
TOP BELAY POINT

- » steel plate
- » two independent belt points
- » two independent steel carabines
- » no chain



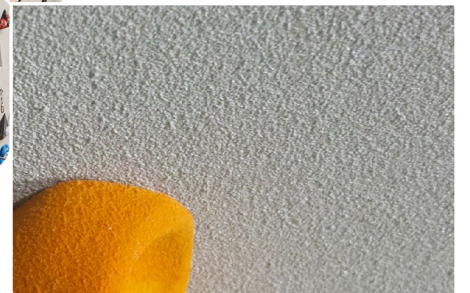
NEW INTERMEDIATE PROTECTION POINT

- » less noise
- » less sling & wall wear
- » no fingers trap risk



PANEL COATING

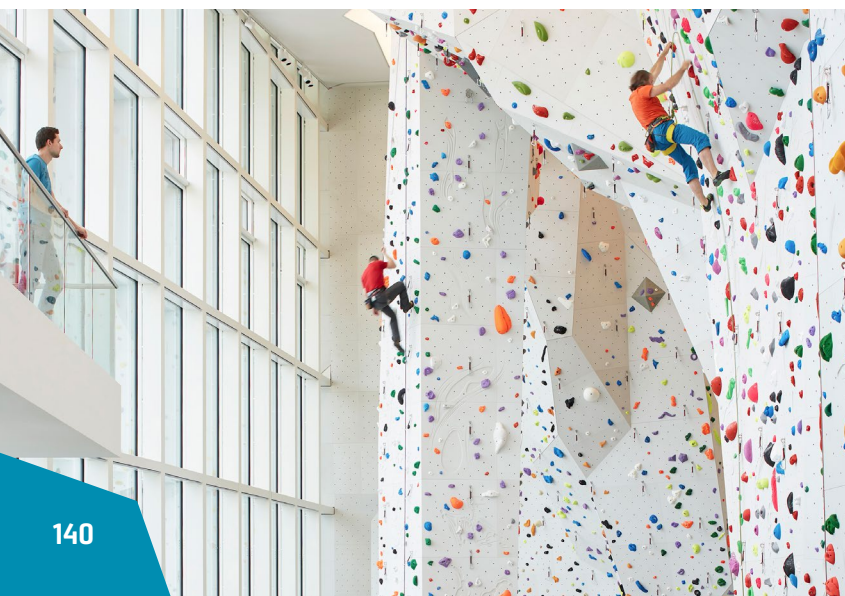
- » high resistance
- » excellent friction
- » easy cleaning
- » all RAL colours



SHAPING THE HISTORY

Sint Roc dates back to 1989 when we built the first, legendary Rock Master climbing wall at Arco, Italy. 30 years later we are still at the forefront, providing our clients with unparalleled expertise in designing, manufacturing and constructing climbing walls. We are proud to have contributed to the unprecedented growth of sport climbing and for having helped it become an Olympic sport. Some of the biggest developments in sport climbing were pioneered in our factory at Arco, such as the first climbing panels and holds used for Speed Climbing. Furthermore, since 2015 we are IFSC certified Speed Wall Manufacturer.

Our know-how is not limited to competition walls however. Over the last three decades we have built hundreds of climbing walls, from small school walls to enormous climbing gyms, all the while sharing our vast expertise with our extremely satisfied customers. After having worked closely with Gaswerk Kletterzentrum in Zurich for many years, this world-famous climbing center has once again entrusted Sint Roc to build what will be destined to become one of the biggest climbing walls in Europe, boasting more than 6000 square meters of climbing surface



HOLD INSERTS

- » large surface
- » high resistance thread



INTEGRATED ROUTE PLATE





einstein Boulderhalle Recklinghausen 2020



#ADIDASROCKSTARS

 Competition wall for adidas ROCKSTARS 2019
Picture: VZumr

BOULDERGYM DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

www.benkyclimbing.com


einstein Duisburg 2019

With the legacy and knowledge from over 50 years of family business in climbing sports, benky climbing develops and produces products for the climbing- and boulder gym industry. We supply everything to run a professional boulder- and climbing gym. Boulderwall design, development and construction. Bouldering mats. Carpet & PVC in highest EN standards. Climbing holds and volumes of major brands. Gymcare line for the maintenance of climbing holds and rental shoes.

DESIGN & 3-D VISUALISATION

We've been always passionate climbers. Bouldering all over the world and being active world-cup competitors, we have more than 25 years experience in the climbing industry. We have the knowledge and requirements to design your boulder-gym from the beginning.

CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION

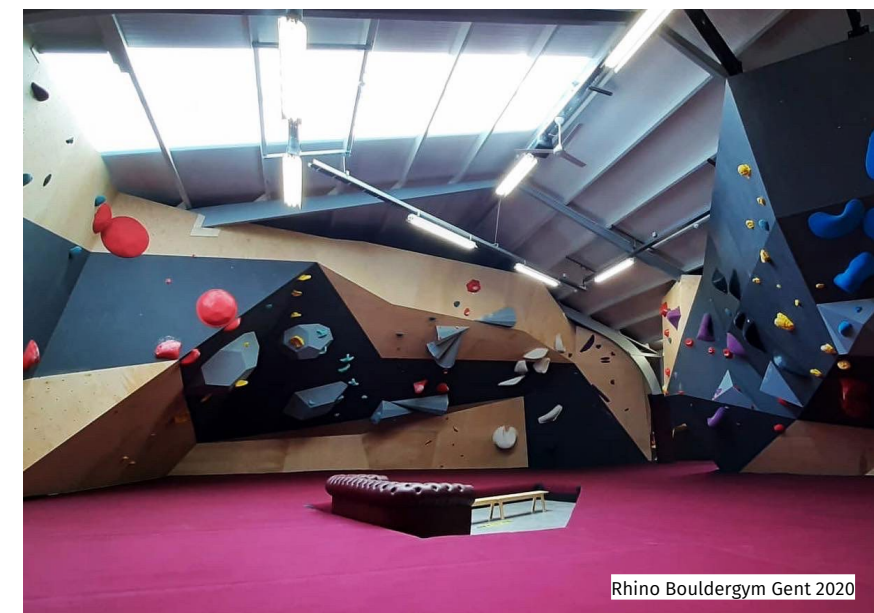
of climbing walls of any complexity. With a professional team of engineers and manufacturer we build your boulder-gym of any complexity according to the actual norm standards.

HIGH-END BOULDER-MATTING MADE IN GERMANY

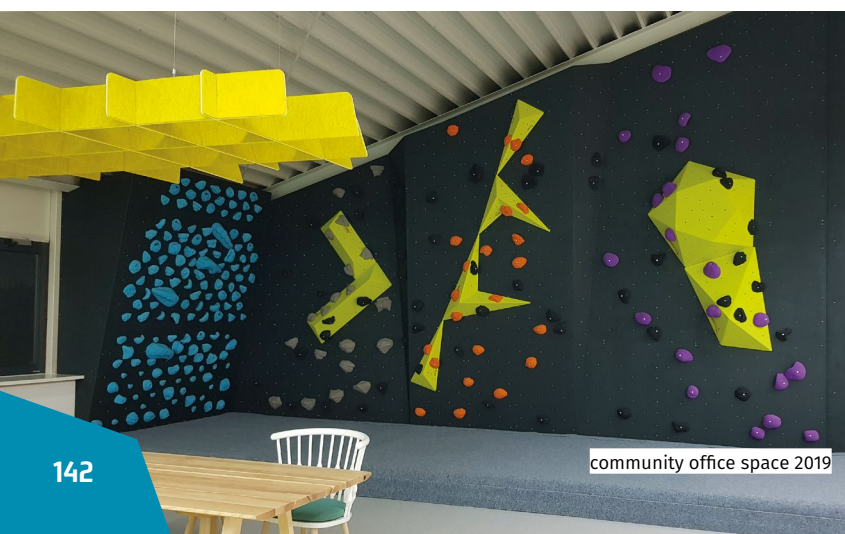
The non plus ultra in comfort and safety for boulder-gyms. Q-MAT is a modular and flexible system which will be customised especially for the personal needs of your gym. The sandwich construction guarantees the highest safety standards as well as the carpet surface will provide a less dusty and noise canceling environment.



Ispo Climbing Hup 2019



Rhino Boulder gym Gent 2020



community office space 2019



einstein Duisburg 2019



KBZ Bad Tölz 2020
Picture: Orgasport / Tom Lindinger



www.ropellessgear.com

ROPELESS PURE BOULDERING

We spend our days strolling through the woods searching for boulders. Driven by this passion for bouldering, ROPELESS was born quite simply by the curiosity of friends and entrepreneurs brought together by the sport. We made it our mission to bring well designed and sustainable equipment to the market.



Premium dry climbing chalk with a 100% plastic free packaging line.



Balm that helps to regenerate your skin after an intense sessions.



Skin-grinder to keep the skin even and remove scraps.



Keep the rocks clean... and celebrate your ascent.
Boulder-brush with bottle opener.



100% cotton tape in a neat reusable tinplate jar.



Photo: Thomas Lindinger

BENKY CLIMBING FRAMES

We are producing custom made frames for all your boards. Kilter, Moon, Tension, System walls, Spray walls, Therapeutic walls and more. Our frames can be wall mounted or free standing. We have 3 different price and quality categories. With high-end actuators you're able to adjust you walls from „0“ to „70“ degree. You will get a unique design and a perfect fitted mat for your frame from us.



Steilheit Edelboulderhalle
Steinblock Dornbirn



STEINBLOCK BOULDERHALLE DORNBIEN

Seit dem 01. August 2020 ist die Modernste und Wertigste Boulderhalle Österreichs und darüber hinaus in Betrieb. Aus den seit vielen Jahren lehrstehenden Hochregallagern der ehemaligen Firma FM Hämmerle wurde in einjähriger Bauzeit dieses Klettersportliche Vorzeigebauwerk geschaffen. Alle Beteiligten der Unternehmensgruppe Freisinger und Lieferanten sind stolz auf die in den letzten Monaten erbrachten handwerklichen Spitzenleistungen. Wir bedanken uns bei Herrn Guntram Mattle für den Auftrag und die langjährige tolle Zusammenarbeit!

LEISTUNGEN

- » 1000 Quadratmeter Zwischendecke aus Brettspertholz
- » 300 Quadratmeter Raumtrennwände aus Brettschichtholz, 3S-Ficht-enplatten und Gipskartonplatten
- » Fenster, Türen und Fixverglasungen
- » Treppen und Geländer
- » Sitzbänke, Regale, Möbel, Kästen
- » Trainingsgeräte: Campusboard, Pegboard, Kilterboard: Steuerung SIEMENS SIMATIC HMI, MoonBoard
- » Terrassenüberdachung aus Brettschichtholz und CLDPLUS-Platten
- » 1500 Quadratmeter Boulderflächen, Verkleidungen und Nutzflächen aus Holzwerkstoffen

FACT BOX

- » Bauzeit: Juni 2019 - Juli 2020
- » 5000 Arbeits- und Planungsstunden von Seiten der Unternehmensgruppe Freisinger
- » 422 Kubikmeter Brettschichtholz aus Osttirol/ Theurl Austrian Premium Timber
- » 2850 Quadratmeter Plattenwerkstoffe aus Massivholz
- » 2500 Kilogramm Stahl und Verbindungsmittel



Steilheit Trainingsbereiche



Steilheit Wohlfühlboulderhallen

WANDBAUER STEFAN FÜRST

INTERVIEW GEFÜHRT VON GUNTRAM MATTLE

www.steilheit.com



Stefan Fürst

Stefan du warst in deinen jungen Jahren einer der Kletterstars in Österreich 9-facher Österreichischer Meister einige internationale Platzierungen unter den Top 10. Warum bist du im Klettermainstream nicht sehr bekannt?

Stefan: Weil mein Fokus beim Training immer auf die Teilnahme an Wettkämpfen gerichtet war und das zu einer Zeit, wo es den Athleten und dem Sport an Wertschätzung in den eigenen Kreisen fehlte. Vielleicht ein Fehler, dass ich meine Trainingsrouten nicht entsprechend als Meilensteine vermarktet habe.

Es gibt Gerüchte dass du eine der Weltweit ersten 9a Route geklettert bist? (bzw. Österreichs erste?)

Stefan: Qui 9a+ und X-LARGE 8c+ wurden von Adam Ondra/ Roland Hemetzberger (Qui) wiederholt und zeitgemäß bewertet.

Warum baust du Kletterwände? Was begeistert dich dabei?

Stefan: Weil das Arbeiten mit Menschen die vom Klettern und Bouldern begeistert sind sehr oft Spaß macht und der Klettersport mein Leben über die Jahre geprägt hat.

Was sind die Vorteile eine Holzkonstruktion gegenüber Stahlbau?

Stefan: HOLZ ist anders als Stahl ein lebendiger Baustoff, der dem Menschen ein Gefühl von Geborgenheit und Wärme gibt.

Berichte mir über die Planungsphasen mit dem Team Steinblock?

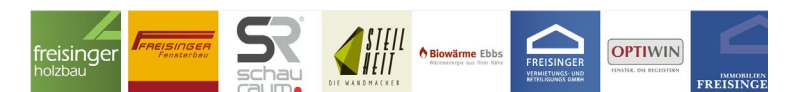
Stefan: Arbeiten mit dem Steinblock Team bedeutet für mich, dass man ständig auf der Suche nach dem noch nie Dagewesenen ist.

Was zeichnet die Steinblock Boulderhallen aus?

Stefan: Die Liebe zu den Menschen, Materialien, Formen und die unzähligen kleinen Details.

Deine Message an alle Leser lautet?

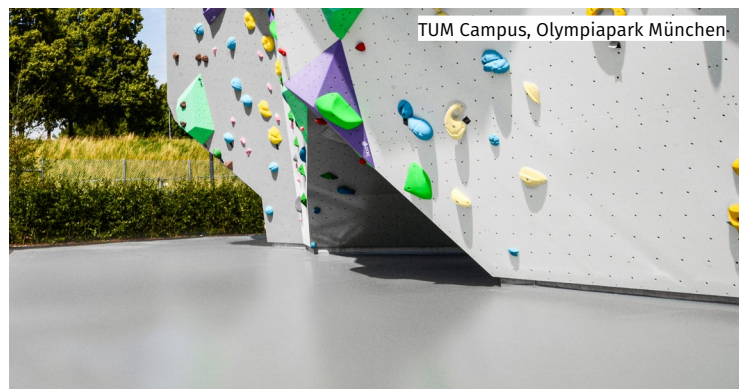
Stefan: Wer den Steinblock nicht kennt, hat die Zukunft des Boulder-Sports noch nicht gesehen und verstanden!



BÄNFER SPORTMANUFAKTUR

**INDOOR CARPET & OUTDOOR MATS
TAILORMADE IN GERMANY**

For many years we have been one of the leading partners in the Sport-project business. Well-known customers in the industry like Rockerei Stuttgart / DAV climbing and bouldering center, the TUM Campus at the Olympiapark or the Boulderwelt Ost 2.0 in Munich. From professional planning, design and final realization - we offer our service from a single source and doing everything in-house. With the help of our Project department with years of expertise and deep know-how, we support our project partners fully from the very first idea to the final implementation of the project. With all of this the minimization of the Risk of injury is always our top priority like for example at our three latest projects that we have build both with tailormade indoor carpet mats and outdoor pvc mats.



Smart and thought out down to the smallest detail - indoor fall protection mats with Needlefelt surface for the Rockerei Stuttgart / DAV climbing and bouldering center.

In the indoor bouldering area of the Rockerei Stuttgart / DAV climbing and In the bouldering center, we have equipped the entire floor with fall protection mats with consisting of a combi-core. The combi core with a solid distribution area made of composite foam, is solid glued on a softer PU foam and connected with our unique S-Connection-System, with which the cores are almost seamless connected together. The surface consists a special needle felt system that is exclusively available at Bänfer Sportmanufaktur, in which a profiled Needle felt is laminated on pvc. Through this system the advantages of both mate-

rials are combined - the carpet lengthens do not wear out, remains dimensionally stable and also offers a pleasant Surface. The needle felt sheets are 2m wide and are attached to the top of the cores and connected together with Velcro tape, so that individual elements can be exchanged quickly if necessary. To avoid gaps on the wall and also to enable a better step on the mat, the wall and the entry areas are additionally provided with a fixed Reinforced foam.

Strong and durable - outdoor fall protection mats for TUM campus Olympiapark and the Boulderwelt Ost 2.0 in Munich

For the outdoor area such as in the TUM Campus at the Olympiapark or the Boulderwelt Ost 2.0 roof terrace, we used a patented fall protection mat system with a high-quality PU-mono-foam with an RG35 core. At TUM Campus there is also a supportive substructure for the mats made of a plastic slatted frame that protects the mats from rodents and is additionally covered with a metal-grill. This supportive slatted frame is also resistant to insects, bacteria, fungal attack as well as acid and greases and protects the mat from moisture from the surface



below. The entry areas are made with a 300mm wide reinforced composite-foam, which makes the mats more durable. The Wall areas are additionally reinforced with solid-foam and a wall-flap made of 900g/qm PVC-tarpaulin as a further protection from moisture. The surface has a very smooth PVC-tarpaulin surface, is strong and durable, light-fast and UV-stable. All components of the mat construction are custom measured, tailored and adapted to the wall construction on site in a patented system. That's why we can offer an almost wrinkle-free and joint-free mat surface system.



Photo: Norbert-Freudenthaler.com

Venue of the Austrian National Championships in Innsbruck

IT'S ABOUT SAFETY

Since 1954, REGUPOL 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.

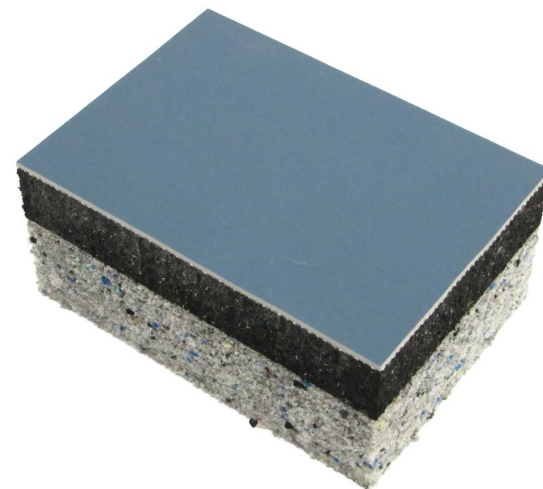
REGUPOL is one of the international market leaders in many product groups. REGUPOL developments and innovations are a result of systematic product and market research. The company operates on a global scale with eight production and distribution sites and around 700 employees worldwide.

Numerous climbing halls in Germany and abroad decided to go for the different REGUPOL special floorings for climbing.

REGUGYM® CLIMB 45/30 PU

There are many design options for this elastic safety flooring. Our huge colour range allows you to define safety zones, place logos or just create your individual flooring design. This elastic sports flooring ensures that the seriousness of injuries from falls can be minimised. With its seamless surface regugym climb is very easy to clean.

Burning behaviour: CfI-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 REGUPOL. The severity of the consequences suffered by climbers falling from critical heights is considerably reduced. Furthermore you can choose between 16 basic colours, 16 design colours and 15 line marking colours to individualize your flooring.

Burning behaviour: Bfl-s1 as per DIN EN 13501-1



REGUPOL® SAFETY TILE FX 110

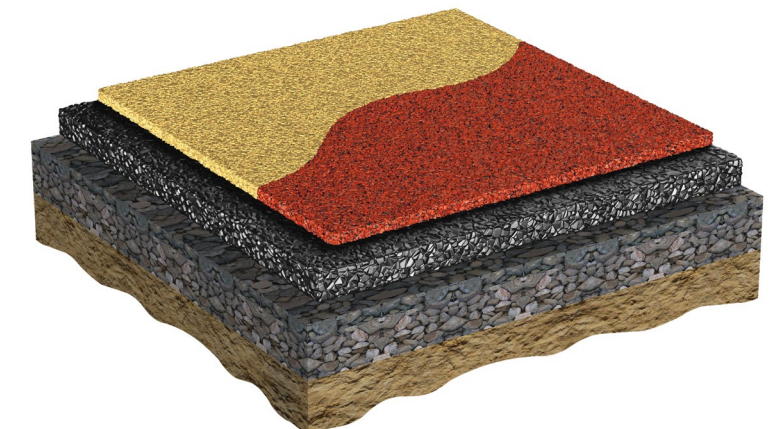
This outdoor flooring is permeable to water and dries quickly. It is used at outside climbing walls and protects them against pollution. You can select between different qualities and thicknesses. This elastic tile has been installed on children's playgrounds for decades. It warrants reliable protection 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 REGUPOL technicians.





WHAT CUSTOMERS SAY:

"THE AIR QUALITY IN OUR CLIMBING GYM HAS GREATLY IMPROVED BY THE SYSTEMS OF STATICAIR."

 Escaladrome
Germany

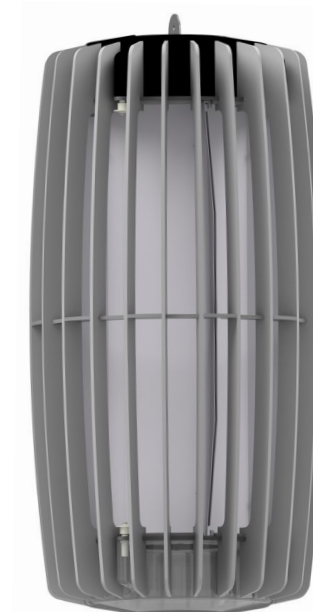
"WE'RE CONTINUALLY LOOKING FOR BETTER SOLUTIONS TO A PROBLEM THAT PLAGUES OUR INDUSTRY: CHALK DUST IN THE AIR. WE'RE TREMENDOUSLY EXCITED ABOUT STATICAIR'S PRODUCTS. THEY'RE HIGHLY ENERGY EFFICIENT, SILENT, AND STYLISH."

 Seattle Bouldering Project
United States



PMX
Length: 225 cm
Diameter: 65cm
Weight: 50 KG

PLUG & PLAY



PMXs
Length: 125 cm
Diameter: 65cm
Weight: 35 KG

**STATIC
AIR**
FINE DUST FREE

**YOUR FINE DUST FREE
CLIMBING EXPERIENCE STARTS HERE**
DRIVING INNOVATION FOR HEALTH

StaticAir's PMX manages to free your facility of (ultra-) fine chalk dust. Besides that, other invisible air pollution particles like molds, micro plastics, micro metals, bacteria etc. are captured. Meet your climber's

healthy lifestyle goals and offer them a healthier, more comfortable climbing experience. PMX helps to protect respiratory tract health for anyone moving around at your gym.

ACHIEVE BETTER PERFORMANCES, PROTECT YOUR HEALTH
"A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE STARTS WITH CLEAN AIR"



» >50% cleaner air
» Scalable solution



» Sustainable
» 18 watts power consumption

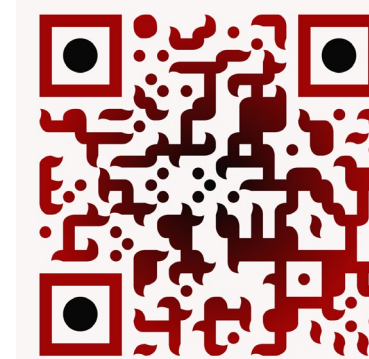


» Proven technology



» Noise free
» No sound impact on environment

**SEE VIDEO
SCAN QR-CODE**



FIND OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS





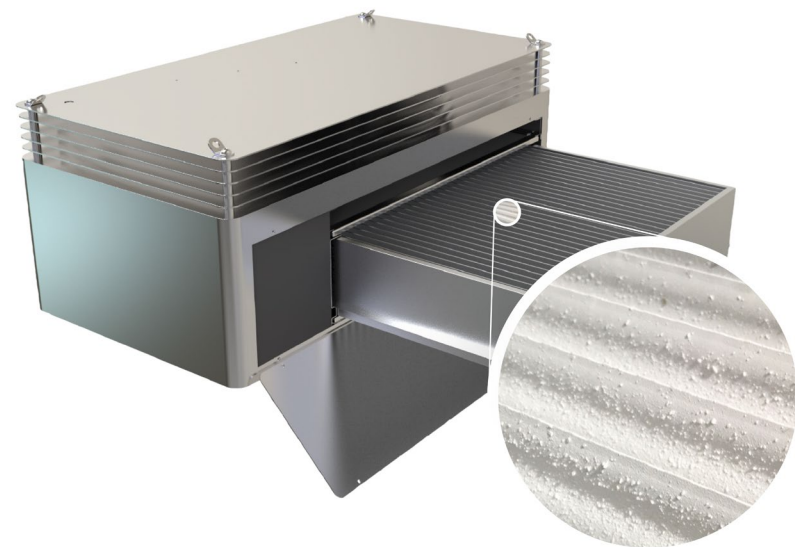
Bison Boulders, Copenhagen, DK

CLIMBLAB

CLIMB IN CLEAN AIR

"We feel a great responsibility to ensure clean and safe air for our everyday climbers, the national team and our staff. Having installed the Climblab filters our customers can see that we are serious about operating a state-of-the-art climbing gym. We have now significantly improved the air quality even at rush hour."

Mikkel Højgaard Larsen
Bison Boulders



A low noise fan (52dB) ensures the right airflow through the filter and in your gym.

The electrostatic air filter collects the dust inside the removable aluminium filter cassette.

The A+ rated product has a power consumption 3x lower than conventional filter units. No running costs for disposable filters.

Our aluminium filter cassette is designed to be washed and re-used more than 50 times.

The Climblab filter units are very compact and come in multiple sizes and installation options to give your gym the most efficient and discrete solution possible.



The ultrasonic cleaning process uses 20x less water than conventional pressure washing.



Clean up to 20 crates per hour or use it occasionally to clean holds in between other tasks.



Low operating cost ensures fast return on investment. Typically 1 - 2 years.



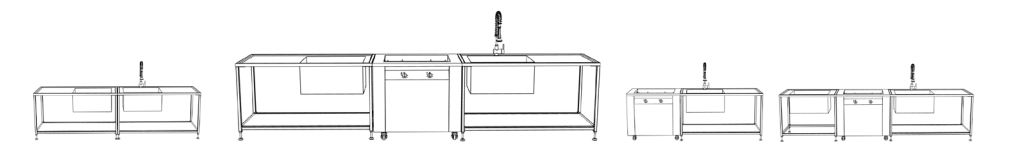
Our UltraGrip detergent is non-acidic and biodegradable. Harmless to use and approved for drain disposal.



Different configuration options give you the best possible cleaning setup within your available space and budget.



www.climblab.dk



Maxime Burghardt
Neoliet Boulderbar

CLIMB ON CLEAN HOLDS

"This new system is an efficient way to improve the workflow in our gym. Before, we always had to get an extra person to clean the holds using a pressure washer. Now our staff can do their normal job and if they got a minute, they operate the machine. Changing the crates only takes a few minutes, awesome new way of saving time! With the ultrasonic system dual texture holds also work perfectly and even macros are easy to clean. No more rubber marks and you get holds looking brand new, no matter what size."

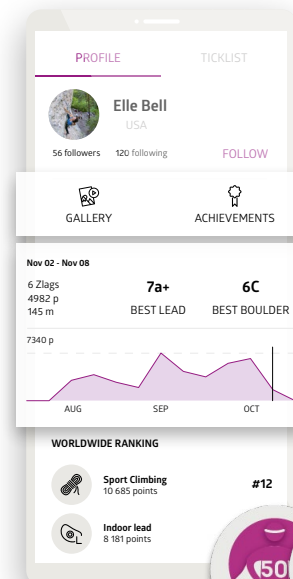


Neoliet Boulderbar, Gelsenkirchen, DE



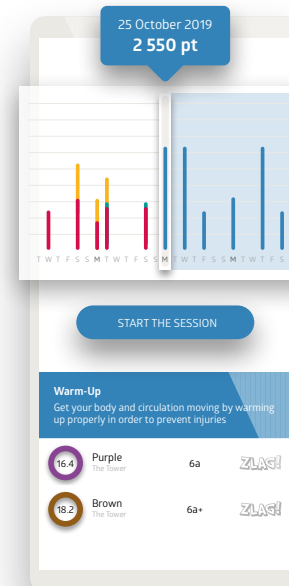
Vertical-Life

APP FEATURES



YOUR PROFILE

- » Personal logbook
- » Statistics and insights
- » Rankings
- » Follow your friends
- » New route notifications
- » Collect achievement badges



TRAINING

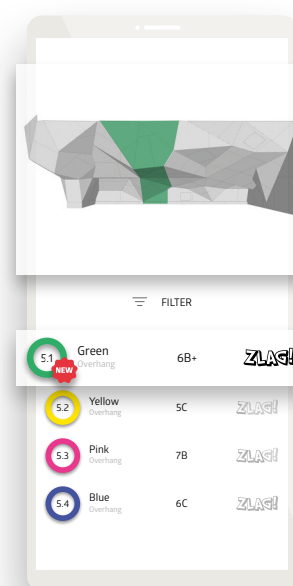
- » Custom to your gyms routes and boulders
- » Bespoke plans and workouts
- » Statistics and insights
- » Scheduling and alerts

VERTICAL-LIFE APP

FEATURES FOR CLIMBERS, MADE BY CLIMBERS.

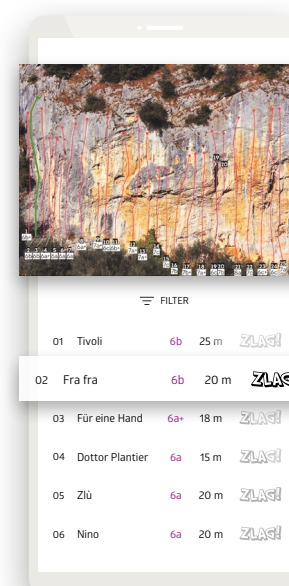
The Vertical-Life App is a digital climbing guide, social network and training log for outdoor and indoor climbers. Raise customer engagement and retention by connection your gym to the app! With full digital topos for 4800 crags and 321 gyms around the world the app is an essential resource for any climber.

It also provides a training feature for a fast growing number of participating climbing gyms. Monthly challenges, personal achievements and the training log add gamification and motivation to the users climbing routines.



GYM TOPOS

- » Full gym map
- » Sector overviews
- » Route and boulder details
- » Easily search and filter
- » Add routes to your logbook
- » Comment and leave feedback for routesetters



OUTDOOR TOPOS

- » Full digital topos
- » Routes lists and details
- » Access and description info
- » Sector overviews
- » Easily search and filter
- » Comment and share



2K+

GYMS
WORLDWIDE



1M+

ROUTES &
BOULDERS



8.8M+

ASCENTS



300K+

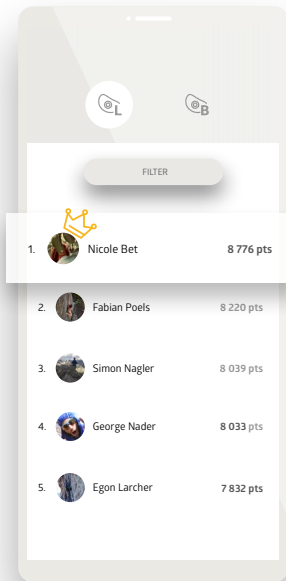
Vertical-Life
USERS

"The new route and other notifications that Vertical-Life sends me are not only a great way to stay informed on what the route setters are doing at my gym, but they also keep me motivated as I get notified when my friends that I follow send and zlag their routes!"

Anna K.
(Everyday Vertical-Life app user)

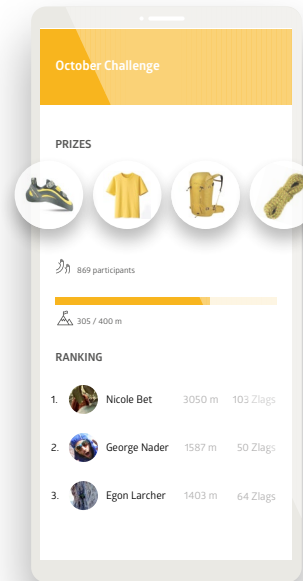
VIRTUAL LEAGUES

The latest updates to the app focuses on bringing your gyms community to life with features to help organise engaging, and COVID safe, events in your gym.



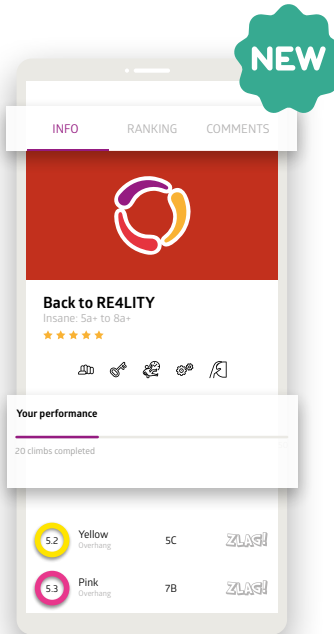
RANKING GAMES

- » Gym rankings
- » Worldwide ranking
- » Competition with friends



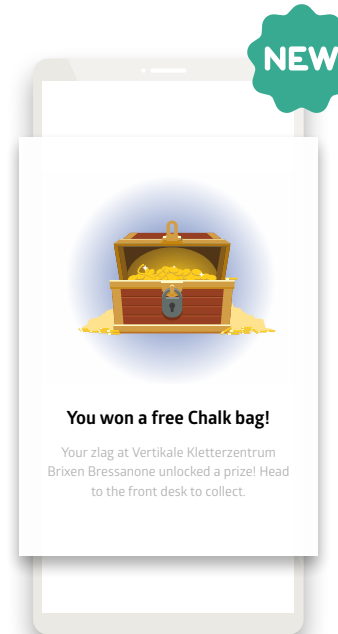
CHALLENGES

- » Global sponsored events
- » Win prizes
- » Achieve climbing milestones



CIRCUITS & COMPETITIONS

- » Create custom circuits from the routes and boulders in your gym
- » Add rankings and run competitions
- » Give away prizes
- » Track progress in the Smart Climbing gym



TREASURE HUNTS

- » Gym sponsored events
- » Hidden prizes in your gym
- » Zlag your routes for a chance to win

YOUR GYM IS NOW ON THE VERTICAL-LIFE APP!

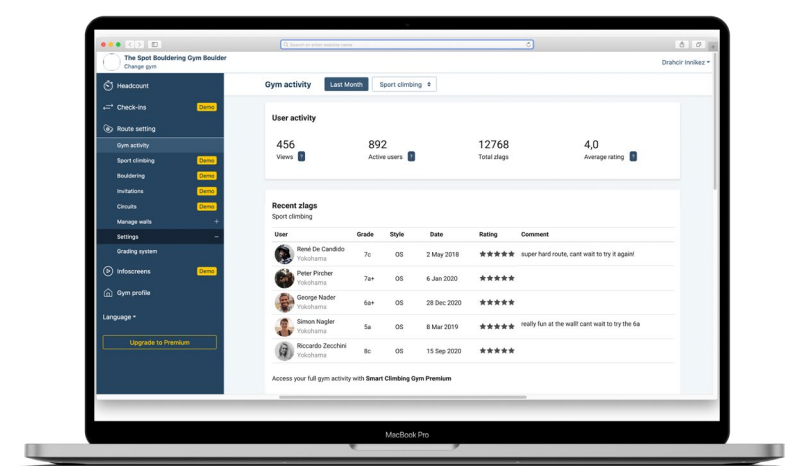


WE'VE PINNED GYMS ALL OVER THE WORLD

- » Tick routes and boulders in any gym
- » Find out opening hours, and basic gym info
- » Unlock the full potential of the Smart Climbing Gym



Manage a gym? Get in touch to claim your Free Gym Profile. Add info about your gym, grading settings and follow along with your gyms activity feed and discover the potential of upgrading to the Smart Climbing Gym.





UNDERSTAND YOUR CLIMBERS AND OPTIMIZE YOUR ROUTE SETTING



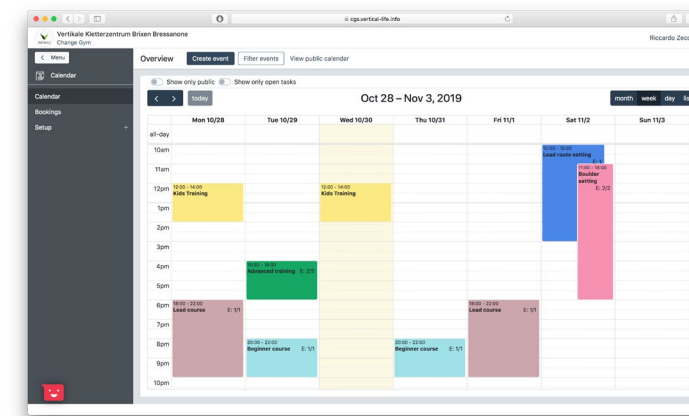
"Vertical-Life continuously improves their already solid product. One example of this is the new feature "Gym Activity". With this feature I get practical feedback for route setting in our gym which allows me to optimize planning and managing the routes and boulders problems we set."

Christoph Gabrysch
(Technical operations manager
DAV Alpinzentrum Kempten, Germany)



HASSLE FREE OPERATIONS THROUGH AUTOMATION

- » Provide notifications for new routes/boulders
- » Set expiration dates for routes & reminders for setters
- » Ready-to-print professional route card displays
- » Web widgets for your site and smart TVs



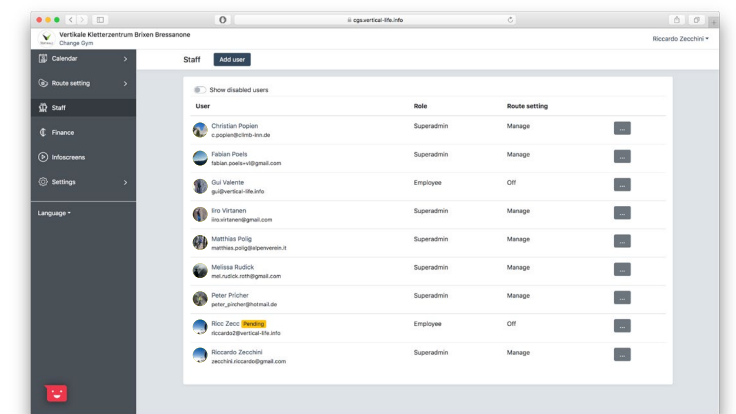
© Florian Murnig

"Vertical-Life allows me to have a good and complete overview of what there is and what would be needed for the clients of our gym from the route setting point of view. It gives us the tools to collect feedback and keep developing in the right direction"

Adam Pustelnik
(IFSC Chief Route Setter and Head Setter
Oslo Klatresenter, Norway)

ONE INTEGRATED AND CONNECTED SOLUTION FOR YOUR GYM

- » Route setting, course booking, staffing, and app, all in one package
- » Data-based management of processes
- » Industry leading data analysis and reporting
- » Scalability: one system for multiple locations and roles
- » Fast, cloud based solution suited for growing or high-volume gyms



"It was an easy choice for us to use Vertical-Life in our gym. It has so many useful features, both for the climber and the routesetter. Especially since our gym is so big, it's really nice to have a complete overview over all the routes and boulders."

Birgit Nesheim
(Head Route Setter,
Tromsø Klatreklubb, Norway)

SMART CLIMBING GYM

ROUTE SETTING AND GYM MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Nurture your gym's most valuable assets: Route setting, Courses, Staff, and of course, CLIMBERS. Vertical-Life's Smart Climbing Gym helps gyms all over the world plan, carry out, monitor and improve the lifeblood of their business. We are a digital platform (software & app) that provides your gym with state-of-the-art tools to manage route setting, staff and courses while offering the chance to directly connect to your climbers via the app.

FREE GYM PROFILE

NEW

- » Gym profile on Vertical-Life App
- » Headcount tracker

BOOKING MANAGEMENT SUITE

NEW

- » Check-in management system
- » Digital course booking tools
- » Customizable slot booking
- » Staff & task management
- » POS integration
- » Gym profile on Vertical-Life App
- » Headcount tracker

DIGITAL ROUTE SETTING SUITE

- » Route setting management tools
- » Custom digital topos
- » Infoscreens and web iframe
- » Analytics and insights
- » Staff & task management
- » POS integration
- » Gym profile on Vertical-Life App
- » Headcount tracker

CHECK-IN MANAGEMENT: **NEW** KEEP YOUR CLIMBERS AND STAFF SAFE WITH NEW CAPACITY CONTROLS

Your gym's entrance and the front desk will be crucial points when it comes to social distancing measures and will require a well-defined process to keep climbers and your staff safe.

Our Slot-booking and Check-in feature help you monitor and organize the visiting times of each individual climber and stagger their check-in and check-out times so that you can avoid large crowds and queues. Climbers can show up in intervals (e.g. every 15 minutes) with a pre-booked slot rather than all arriving at the same time.

The Check-in feature also integrates with your gyms capacity limits, not only giving your team peace of mind at the front desk managing checkins, but a real time view of capacity and head-count across the gym at any given moment.


500K+
SUCCESSFUL
BOOKINGS



"The new check-in system has become a really important tool, now more than ever, for keeping our gym safe and operating as smoothly as possible."

Satoru Onda
(Managing Director at B-Pum, Japan)



ROUTE CARD HOLDERS THE SIMPLE, LONG-LASTING AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR MANAGING YOUR ROUTE CARDS

The holder for climbing route cards represents a new, sustainable solution for displaying route information in climbing gyms. Gym customers can view route information on a clean, legible display. The functional design enables flexible mounting, the fast exchange of route cards and a clean uniform system.

Route cards can be printed directly from Vertical-Life's route management tool. The appropriate dimensions are already stored in the software as a template. Several routes/boulders can be displayed on one card.

INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

This cost-efficient, sustainable solution replaces hand-written, laminated sheets and stickers and is tailored to the specific needs of climbing gyms.

EASY MOUNTING

Mounting and handling is simple, fast and flexible. Lift-able edges allow for easy opening, and no hinges are needed thanks to the bendable material.

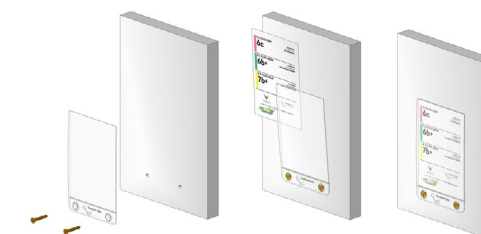
DESIGN AND MATERIAL

Form follows function. The focus lies on optimum visibility of the route information; the holder itself is almost invisible. The curved surface improves legibility when viewed from the side. The polycarbonate material is shock-resistant and robust, bendable, UV/ozone resistant and thus also suitable for outdoor areas.



"We just received our new route card holders. They're even better than expected and just what we needed. Thank you!!!"

Lee Browning
(Managing Director at
The Boardroom Climbing, UK)





SMART SCORECARD

SIMPLE AND HASSLE FREE CONTEST SCORING

Do you know that feeling of stress and anxiety, trying to get the correct results out to a waiting crowd at your event?

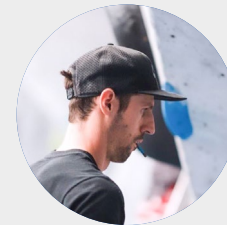
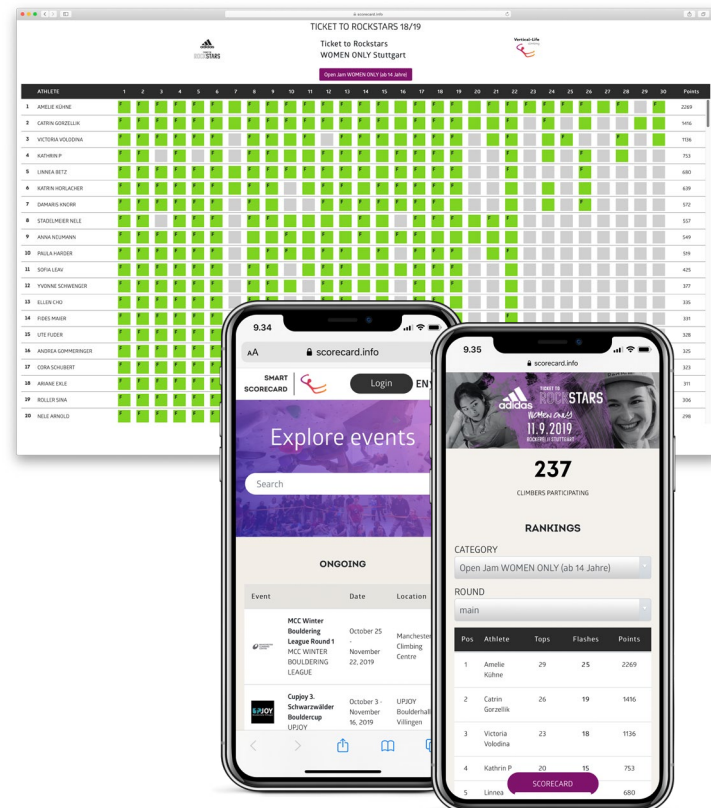
The Smart Scorecard by Vertical-Life puts an end to paper registration and scoring and offers a series of benefits for organizers and climbers.

BENEFITS FOR ORGANIZERS:

- » Real-time results
- » Flexible scoring formats
- » Multiple categories and rounds
- » Judge mode

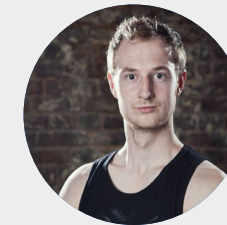
BENEFITS FOR CLIMBERS:

- » Quick online registration
- » Live rankings
- » Intuitive logging of scores on smartphones



"The Smart Scorecard from Vertical-Life has been a complete game-changer for us at The Climbing Hangar. Not only can customers feel more engaged with tension building live scoring, but the event runs so much smoother, there is no more waiting at the end of the night - it is instantaneous, exciting and brings real drama to the competition format. It's one of those things that has, in one step, made everything about competitions better."

Dan Knight
(Climbing Director,
The Climbing Hangar UK)



"We've been using the Scorecard for three years now. As an event organiser, it saves the team so much time and hassle. The Scorecard is a real life saver for us. Thanks to its automated scoring, it helps us pull off 12 categories in the qualification rounds and finals with more than 500 participants in one day! It's super easy for our participants to enter their scores and they love the added benefit of live results, which we display throughout the gym during the events. I can no longer imagine putting on a comp without it!"

Mike Langley
(Event organizer, Head Route Setter
at the Castle Climbing Centre UK and
IFSC commentator)



"The Vertical-Life Smart Scorecard is an integral element of our global adidas Ticket to Rockstars event series, because it enables us to run our all-inclusive grassroots bouldering jams with a user-friendly self-scoring system. Our T2R Smart Scorecard includes tailor-made functions that were specifically developed for us based on our needs, like a voucher system, participant certificates or a loyalty program. It helps us to create sustainable events with a long-lasting consumer experience."

Mike Hamel
(Event director Adidas Rockstars /
Ticket to Rockstars series)





boulder@do We make it POSSible.



READY . STEADY . GO BOULDERADO!

The Boulderado POS system is on the market since 2013 and is constantly evolving. It is optimized for all boulder and climbing gyms and more than 150 clients in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and Spain use our very fast windows based touch system at the front desk, shop, café and for general retail.

CHECKIN

Fast and easy you can use single entries, punch cards, subscriptions entries via credit and more.



CUSTOMER TERMINAL & FAST LANE

Speed up the registration process and use our Fast Lane for customer entries with punch cards, subscription or credit.



RETAIL & MEMBER MANAGEMENT

Manage your entries, punch cards, season tickets, specials and vouchers as well as managing your shop items, members, statistics and users.



SUBSCRIPTIONS

Organize your member subscriptions and debit all payments by a monthly export or any other payment period.



INVENTORY SYSTEM

Control your stock, categorize your products, scan with a barcode and assemble orders for missing stock.

REPORTING

A variety of statistics and evaluations are available for export to be analysed. On request we can realize the creation of individual statistics.

SYNC

Discounts, season tickets, punch cards and more can be synced between different locations using Boulderado. Groups of halls can share season tickets and discounts through a network, offering customers more variety.

SERVICE

With lot of experience in our field, our team will support you in all aspects regarding the configuration and usage.

HARDWARE

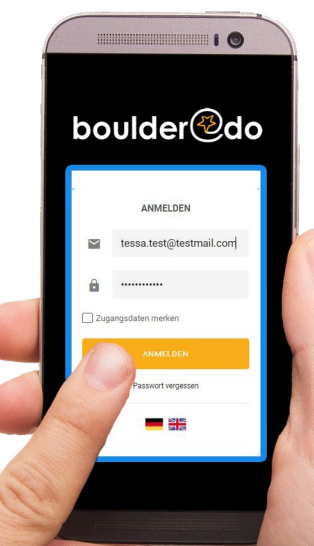
We offer a robust and reliable hardware systems including POS peripherals but we also advise on individual or existing hardware.

ACCESSORIES

Member passes, barcode & RFID cards - comfortable accessories are easily integrated.

INTERFACES

For course and staff planning, Boulderado works closely with Vertical Life. Mobile Checkin and mobile pay will soon be realized. Access controls such as turnstiles and cabinet systems of our partners can also be integrated.



ONLINE REGISTRATION

Your new customers can now register via QR Code on their smartphone or directly on your homepage including photo and electronic signatur.



NINJA TIMER

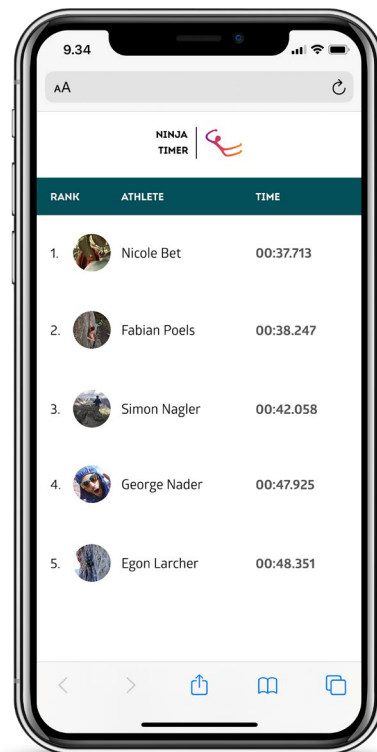
THE FIRST INTERACTIVE, CABLE-LESS TIMING SYSTEM DESIGNED FOR CLIMBING

If you are looking for an affordable and highly mobile way to put on speed competitions, speed training, and other fun timed challenges and events, look no further. The Ninja Timer brings more engagement and excitement to your gym.

The Ninja Timer is ready to meet the demand, be it your speed lanes, park-ours/ninja courses, kids' birthday games, or just about any other timed event or challenge you're looking to set up.

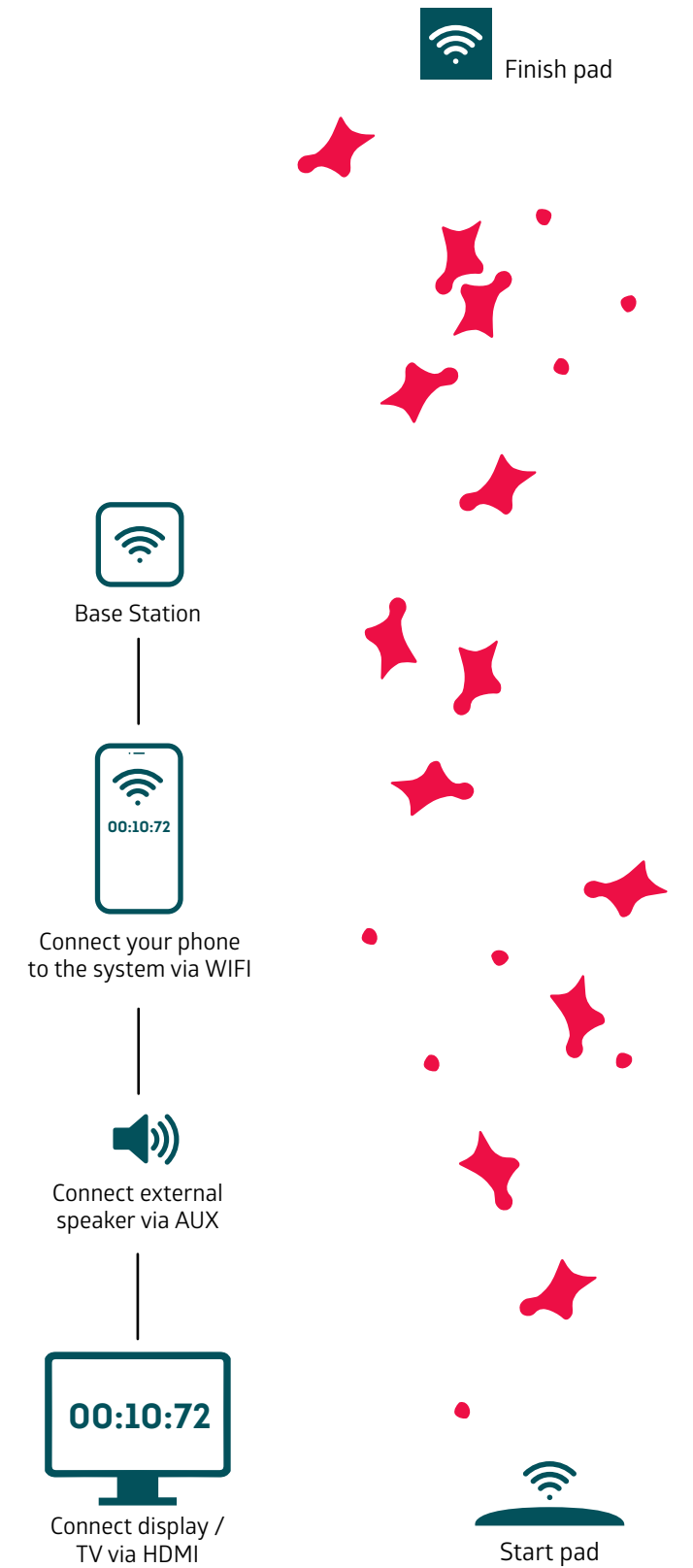
EFFICIENT TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS:

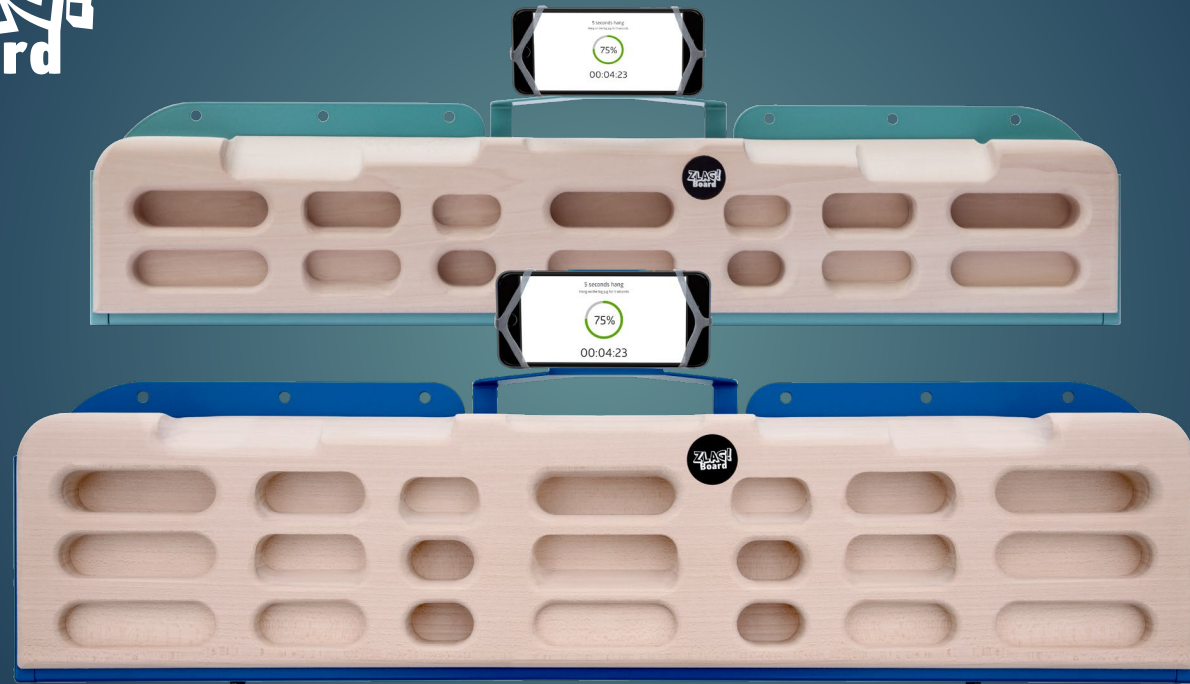
- » Coaches can set up speed sessions and monitor performances
- » Measures time to one-hundredth of a second and athletes' reaction time
- » IFSC compliant audio cue
- » Easy implementation of competitions & rankings



SIMPLE SETUP & OPERATION:

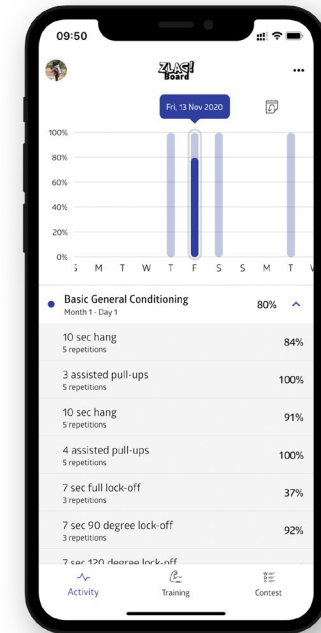
- » Portable, cable-less setup: assemble and disassemble in just a few minutes
- » Control via any smartphone, tablet or laptop
- » WIFI enabled, wireless timing system



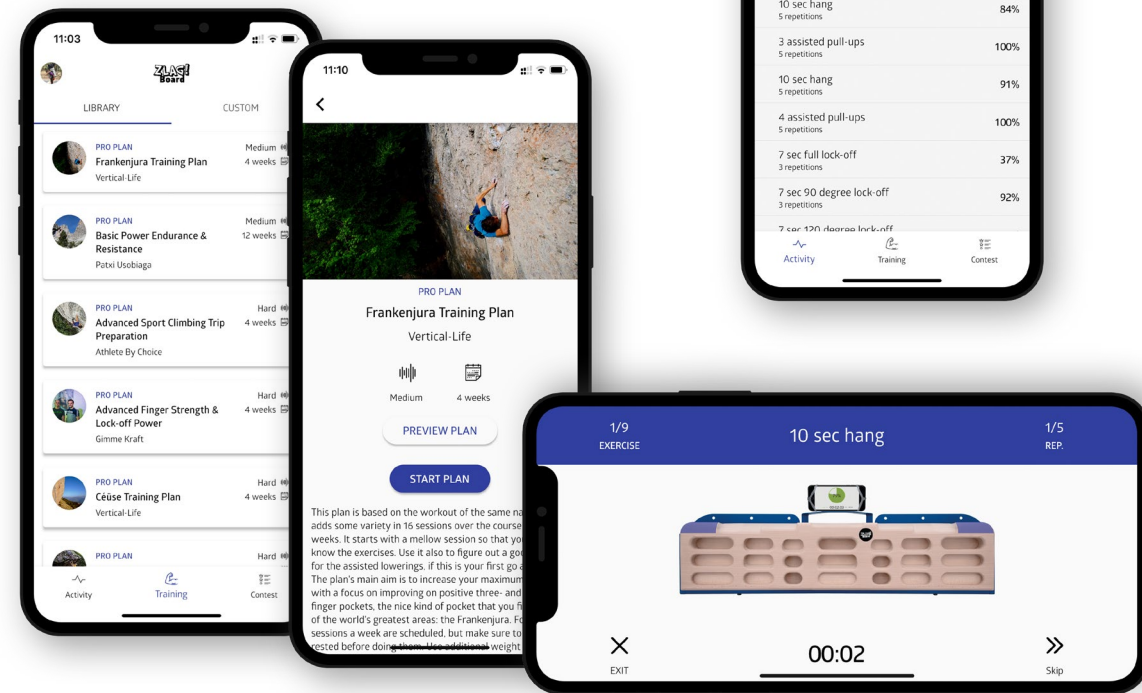


NEW ZLAGBOARD PLANS

The zlagboard brings cutting edge training knowledge right to your fingertips. Zlagboard teamed up with some of the best coaches to develop a hangboard training program. Now you can train for your next big adventure with tailored training plans specifically adapted for the routes and boulders of some of the most famous climbing destinations around the world. Train hard for your next trip to Frankenjura, Fontainebleau, Céüse.



TRACK YOUR IMPROVEMENTS
Performances (completion rates) are saved in the training log, allowing you to get detailed statistics.



ZLAGBOARD - TRAIN SMART, CLIMB HARD! THE ULTIMATE LOCKDOWN TRAINING TOOL

Paired with its app, the award winning (and patented) Zlagboard puts an end to hand-written notes, spreadsheets and stop-watches to estimate hangtimes. The Zlagboard system does the job for you, using a weight-triggered mechanism for smartphones to precisely track the duration of every hang/rest as well as number of pull-ups. The app structures a whole training cycle and every session for you, giving detailed instructions about the single exercises, repetitions and rest times.

100% MADE IN SOUTH TYROL

All Zlagboards are manufactured by craftsmen in our home region of South Tyrol in the heart of the Alps.

COMMUNITY STATISTICS



3 690 hours
hang-time

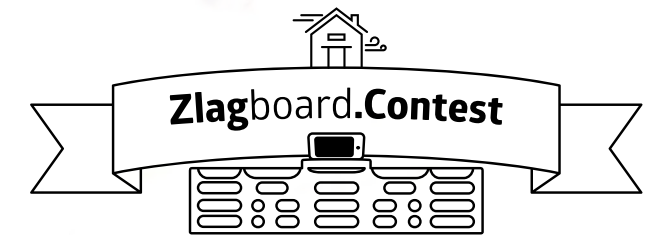


2 240 593
pull-ups



"Zlagboard is specifically designed to help with improvement, but also it's the best motivator. I used it during the lockdown and that was the only thing that helped to stay fit."

Farnaz Esmailzadeh
(Pro climber, coach and route setter, Iran)



ZLAGBOARD.CONTEST

YOUR FAVOURITE COMPETITION GOES VIRTUAL!
Now you can compete with friends and the pros from your own home or wherever you zlagboard! Create your own local contest, invite friends or take on the best of the best and join the global ranks!



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.



KRAXLBOARD TO GO

Minimally measured – extremely multifunctional.

The board offers a wide range of different rungs and jugs with various depths and angles. Thanks to the lateral handles of the board, already fatigued arms can be finished off to extremes. Our sophisticated suspension device allows to freely adjust the inclination by a simple hand movement. In other words: the board can satisfy the needs of climbers of all levels. Thanks to the rounded edges on the back of the board, the jugs can be gripped on both sides, which guarantees a still larger range of motion. The ring bolts, which are fixed onto the bottom of the Kraxlboard To Go, allow to expand the board with other training devices such as our training spheres or gymnastic rings. In this way, your training possibilities will be greatly enlarged.

KRAXLBOARD THE WALL

The multifunctional training wall with tiltable suspension.

With this new training board different degrees of difficulty are possible, thanks to the infinitely variable inclination adjustment of up to 24°. This detail turns the board into an absolute expert tool with an unbelievable variety of grips in different levels of difficulty. The wall bracket provides sufficient distance from the wall and thus ensures enough legroom during the training.





www.climbingwallservices.com

CLIMBING WALL SERVICES

UK & EU

One of the most experienced climbing wall service providers, CWS draw on over 20 years' experience in providing full-spectrum services for artificial climbing structures. Director Nathaniel McMullan is considered one of the leading experts in the indoor climbing industry.

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ROUTE SETTERS ON THE ROAD

Europe

The way of my life - routesetting, climbing, travelling and exploring. We are searching for gyms, which want some new routes from us. We are flexible in time, creative in mind and have wide experiences from many gyms in different countries. Let's bring some new style to your gym.

ABOUT OUR OFFER

- › Routes: 3 - 7c
- › Experiences: CZ, AT, BE, DE, FR, IT, LUX, PL, SK
- › Freelancers in EU, rope access, high platform
- › Positive feedback & Repeated cooperation
- › Male and female elements in route setting

ABOUT US

We are couple of professional route setters - Petra and Martin. We live in a van, like our job and enjoy our way with all its possibilities - climbing, hiking, canyoning and skydiving.

Contact: thewomyl@gmail.com, +420 608 049 692



Friction Addiction

www.frictionaddiction.com.au

TOMMY KRAUSS

Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

FREELANCE COMMERCIAL ROUTESETTER & AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL HEAD ROUTE SETTER BOULDERING

Freelance setter based out of Hobart, Tasmania, helping gyms create a professional product to deliver to their community. Services range from commercial and competition setting, head setting as well as clinics, consulting, mentoring and anything in between.

Contact: tommy@frictionaddiction.com.au

VERTICAL-LIFE

Brixen, Italy
www.vertical-life.info



Vertical-Life

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Are you passionate about climbing and technology? Do you believe that innovation can increase professionalism and quality in the indoor climbing industry? If you are well versed in your country's climbing scene, have an understanding of distribution channels, and are motivated to shape the future of climbing together with us, then become a Vertical-Life partner.

Contact: sales@vertical-life.info



CLASSIFIED ADS

Want to be featured in the November 2021 issue?
Contact: sales@vertical-life.info



www.steilheit.com

STEILHEIT GMBH

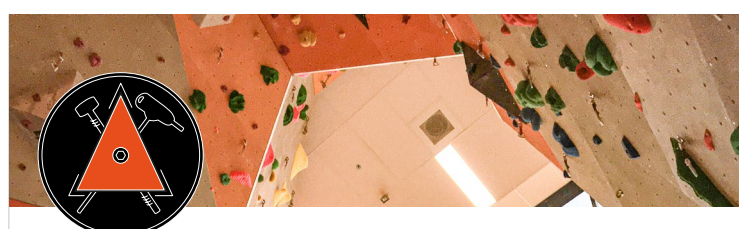
Die Wandmacher

Als Holzbau-Meisterbetrieb beschäftigen wir uns seit dem Jahr 2015 mit der **Beratung, Entwurf, Werkplanung, Produktion** und der **Montage** von **Boulder-** und **Kletterwänden, Kinderkletterbereichen** und naturnahen **Regenerationszonen**.

STARK SIND WIR

- › **beim Zuhören:** Wir versuchen Ihre Ideen und Kletterträume zu verstehen und in einem Erstentwurf zu bündeln.
- › **beim Austausch von Erfahrungen:** Mehr als 40 Jahre Klettererfahrung und 25 Jahre Kletterwandbau haben ihre Spuren hinterlassen, die Ihnen bei der Planung ihrer Halle zugutekommen.
- › **bei der Beratung:** Unser Ziel wird immer sein, IHRE Kletter- oder Boulderhalle zu bauen, mit den uns zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln und Möglichkeiten.
- › **bei der Planung:** Vom finalen freigegebenen Entwurf als 3D-Modell, zur Werkplanung bei einem unserer Holzbau-Meister.

Contact: servus@steilheit.com / + 43 (0) 5373 21233-0



GOD STIL RUTESSETTING

Ruteskruing og Kursverksemd innan Klatring

We are a Norwegian based company that provides indoor routesetting for the climbing industry.

We want to deliver high performance routesetting to all climbers. By choosing GSR as your routesetter you'll get efficiency, quality and professional assistance before, under and after every assignment.

Check out our social medias today and send us questions. We are looking forward to work with you.

Contact: godstilroutesetting@gmail.com
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VERTICAL PRO



PLATFORM
FOR VERTICAL
PROFESSIONALS

Nov 19 – 20, 2021

Messe Friedrichshafen

Sport und Arbeit in der Vertikalen – darum geht es bei der neuen Messe „VERTICAL PRO“.

Teil davon ist das renommierte Kletterhallentreffen „Halls & Walls“ des Deutschen Alpenvereins. Ob Kletter- oder Boulderhallenbetreiber, Routenbauer oder Bergführer, Seilzugangstechniker oder Höhenretter, Baumpfleger oder Hochseilgartenbetreiber: Friedrichshafen bietet den Rope Pro's und Höhenspezialisten eine neue Heimat.

Vertical sport and work is what it's all about at the new "VERTICAL PRO" show.

One part of it will be the prestigious climbing gym meeting "Halls & Walls" organised by the German Alpine Club. Whether you're a climbing or bouldering gym operator, a route setter or mountain guide, a rope access technician or a rope rescue specialist, an arborist or if you're running a rope course: Friedrichshafen is offering rope pros and altitude specialists a new home.

www.vertical-pro.com



Wohin mit der
Abenteuerlust?



Nach Südtirol

Freuen Sie sich auf grenzenloses Klettern in Südtirol. Unzählige Alpinrouten laden in die schönsten Berge der Welt ein: die Dolomiten. Vor dem Panorama spektakulärer Berggipfel erwarten Sie auch exzellente Sportklettermöglichkeiten und eine einmalige geologische Vielfalt. Und das zu jeder Jahreszeit – denn 300 Sonnentage machen Südtirol für alle Kletterbegeisterten zur Genussregion. Jetzt buchen auf suedtirol.info/klettern





MAKING YOUR WORK EASIER

When setting routes on a climbing wall, you need a lot of imagination to offer climbers a rich, pleasant, and demanding experience. It means having specific skills as well as the right equipment. Petzl places all of its expertise at the disposal of routesetters to provide them with the very best equipment, giving free rein to their creativity—as seen here with Florence Pinet working in the ClimbUp gym in Aix-en-Provence, France.



A climbing gym solution for routesetting that includes a STRATO VENT helmet, I'D S descender, ASTRO SIT FAST harness combined with the TOP CROLL S chest harness, and a PODIUM seat. www.petzl.com



Access the inaccessible®