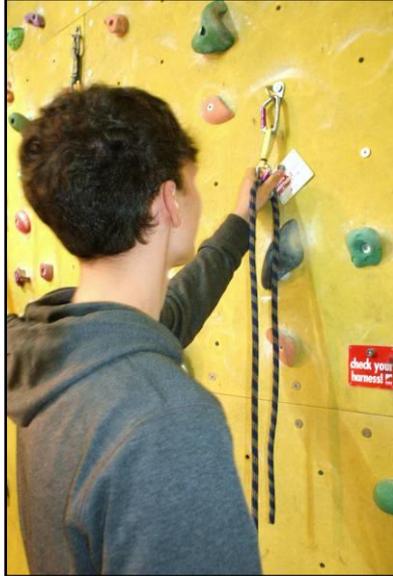


Teaching Leading Indoors



Teaching leading indoors has been a topic of conversation for years, and there have been many good site specific schemes developed but a couple of years ago MT devised the CWLA to create a National Platform for teaching this area of our sport.

So as an instructor there are many things to consider before putting someone on the sharp end.



There naturally needs to be some in-depth though into the progression, but here are some key points to consider.

Clipping

Clipping is an integral skill that once mastered could save a few fluttery moments on behalf of climber and instructor. Practice all variables on the ground, Right hand right clip, Right hand left clip, Left hand right clip, Left hand left clip. This can be repeated just off the ground or traversing to highlight a resting clipping position. Include Problem avoidance such as Back or Z clipping, poor rope position or missing a runner.

Climbing

Gradual progress is needed. Try Top Rope climbing whilst dragging a rope so the climber feels something below them, then Top Roping clipping the drag rope and finding clip holds, progress to Top Rope climbing whilst clipping with lead belayer to discuss communication, then Slack Top rope with lead belayer, then if they are ready Lead the easy route or rainbow it, discuss performance then consolidate.

Falling

Falling can be a big issue for some novices and to gain confidence, build it up. Try firstly Sitting on a Bolt, then falling with a Little slack, then if ready Above the Bolt. Finding the correct fall location is crucial, obviously avoid slabs, big holds or volumes. Demo Fall Distances (backed up on a top rope) and the importance of clip height in relation to the body, this should show roughly a head to belly position and not yarding it out.

Lead belaying

When teaching Lead Belaying point out the all the obvious differences from lead to top rope belaying ie paying out etc. Try a Pay out slack game on the floor, talk through Lead belay positioning in relation to the climber/route. Get a sense of paying out whilst belaying a climber whilst they down climb a route, get the climber to occasionally step back up to simulate taking in once clipped. Practice Lead Belaying whilst climber is on a top rope before progressing to Lead Belaying whilst being tailed by the instructor. Show the importance of Spotting until the first clip has been clipped. Then think about introducing Dynamic belaying and its advantages. Remember that no belayer can be deemed competent until they have held an unexpected fall, it may be worth setting this up.



Whilst all the above are important other considerations are the impact on the equipment used, rope recovery, and the climber/s confidence, knowledge etc.



Underlying these practical skills should be a depth of experience and a sound judgement of when someone is ready to make the transition from top roping to their first lead and beyond.

Don't forget a little coaching will help most proficient top ropers understand climbing efficiently and when and how to rest on route, these tweaks and understanding centre of gravity etc will make their first lead and your session more productive.

Good Luck



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All pictures are courtesy of Mark Garland

