



## Inner Peaks Climbing Gyms

# Youth Climbing Teams Parent Welcome Letter!

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### Welcome to Teams!

We're sure you have many questions about rock climbing and Team Inner Peaks, so we hope this can provide you with some additional information. If you have any further questions or thoughts, please reach out to the Team Coaches!

**In this document, you will find information on the following:**

- Information Regarding Specific Teams**
- Team Advancement**
- Structure of Practices**
- Team Dues and Monthly Membership Requirement**
- Practice Cancellations**
- Team Rules and Requirements**
- Gear Requirements**
- Attendance Requirements**
- USA Climbing and Local Competitions**

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## Types of Climbing

Bouldering – Dynamic, shorter, and more powerful style climbing that does not use ropes to catch falls. Climbers fall onto designated padded areas using appropriate falling techniques to mitigate injury. This is the first type of climbing that is taught on team.

Top Rope – The climber ties into a rope that is secured to an anchor at the top of the wall. A belayer attaches to the other end of the rope, pulling slack through a belay device (such as an ATC or Gri-Gri) so that the climber only falls a short distance if they do fall.

Lead – The climber ties into a rope that is on the ground and clips the rope into carabiners that are bolted to the wall as they climb. The belayer gives out slack as the climber goes up, and the last carabiner that the climber is clipped into functions as the anchor in the case of a fall. Falls are usually bigger than on top rope. This type of climbing and belaying requires a high level of awareness and attention to detail, and is only taught to climbers on Elements and Paragon.

Auto belays – The climber clips into a carabiner on the end of a tether on the auto belay device, which is anchored at the top of the wall. The tether is automatically retracted by the auto belay as the climber goes up. When the climber is finished climbing, they let go of the wall and the auto belay will quickly catch the climber and begin lowering them to the ground automatically.

\*Normally, climbers must be 14 years old to clip themselves in and out of auto belays at Inner Peaks. Climbers under 14 years old are also not allowed to be in the facility without adult supervision. *An exception to this age rule is made for team members who have been taught to clip themselves in and out of autobelays and appropriate bouldering etiquette by their coaches during practice.*

\*\*Normally, climbers must be 14 years old to take top rope and lead belaying proficiency tests at Inner Peaks. For team members, exceptions to this age minimum are made at the discretion of their coaches if the climber consistently demonstrates that they have the maturity, attentiveness, interest in learning, and gym etiquette/safety required to learn these skills. These exceptions may be made for any team member to learn how to top rope, any Elements or Paragon team member to learn how to lead climb, and Elements or Paragon team member aged 12 or older who has had their top rope proficiency for at least three months to learn how to lead belay. After learning the skills at team practice, a climber under the minimum age must pass three proficiency tests before they may top rope and lead at Inner Peaks.

We also encourage parents to learn to belay their climbers so that they may top rope and/or lead climb outside of practice! Classes to learn these skills are available at both Inner Peaks locations.

## Information on Specific Teams

### Discovery Team and Discovery + (Introductory/Recreational Level)

Discovery Team is our introductory team designed to teach each child the climbing skills they'll need to be successful and advance in our climbing program. Climbers will learn fundamental climbing skills and safety through climbing drills and instruction. This team is perfect for youth who are interested in climbing recreationally and building their foundational knowledge and climbing ability to advance to another team. Discovery Team members are NOT required to compete but are encouraged to attend local competitions and spectate at near by USA Climbing Events!

We have two options for Discovery Teams

-Discovery (all ages)

-Discovery + (ages 10+)

### Elements 1 (Recreational Level)

Our intermediate team for climbers who have a clear understanding of climbing movement and are ready to start competing at a local level. Each climber must know how to belay with an ATC and **must be recommended by a coach before joining this team and any other team beyond Elements 1.**

### Elements 2 (Rising Competitive Level)

Our Elements 2 Team is for advanced climbers who are interested in competing in Championship level events and rising to join our competitive team, Paragon. Participants on Elements 2 WILL be required to compete. Climber's on Elements 2 will gain valuable competition experience and . Elements 2 practice meets twice weekly for 2.5 hours each practice day. **Team participants must be recommended by a coach before joining this team and any other team beyond Elements 1.**

## Paragon (Competitive Level)

Our Paragon Team is reserved for elite climbers who are trained, both physically and mentally, to compete at the USA Climbing Nationals level and beyond. As the faces of Team Inner Peaks, climbers are expected to be excellent role models both in and out of practice. Climbers on Paragon aim to advance past the Regional level in hopes of qualifying for Divisional and National competitions.

## Team Advancement

We love to see climbers progress through the teams here at Inner Peaks, but please note, all teams are invite-only and do have limited capacity. **Any invitation to advance will be made at the discretion of both the climber's current coaches as well as the Head Coaches and Assistant Head Coaches.** If a climber appears ready to move up in teams and **has displayed the maturity, discipline, attitude, and coachability** that is expected of them on the next team, the climber's current coach will contact the Head Coaches and discuss their progression.

While we appreciate hearing parent feedback in regards to your climber's experience and desire to advance throughout our climbing team program at Inner Peaks, we urge you to trust coaches to make recommendations for team advancement in due time as coaches are consistently evaluating team members. **Team advancement is ultimately up to the available roster space and coach discretion.**

## Structure of Practices


Great! You've made it to Inner Peaks for practice, but now what do you do?

First thing first, scan in! If you have not already received a scan card as part of your membership onboarding process, please ask a member of the Front Counter staff to assist you in doing so.

**\*ALL climbers on ALL teams are REQUIRED to scan in at EVERY practice they attend as well as every time they climb outside of practice.\***

Now onto more specific practice procedures:

Warmups: After scanning in at the front counter, climbers must check in with their coaches, who will be out on the gym floor, and begin their warmups on boulders.



Discovery & Elements 1 – Climbers will start with easier climbs and slowly work their way up in difficulty, making sure to appropriately rest and hydrate. Warmups are fairly independent for these teams, but coaches will be around to monitor and assist climbers with warmups. Climbers will then participate in cardio exercises to finish off their warmup.

Elements 2 – Warmups vary in structure, length, and amount of rest, so checking in with the coaches is a necessity. Warmup is mostly independent with the expectation that climbers will follow the plan and notify coaches upon completion.

Paragon – Climbers either follow a warm up plan designed by the coaches or warm up independently.

Teams will then break off to work on climbing skill/strength drills. These drills will vary by team and are decided by the coaches before practice based on the skill level of the teams and may revolve around a relevant climbing theme or topic. Coaches often modify drills for individual climbers and their specific skill and strength levels.

All teams end practices with a workout and time to stretch. Workouts vary in length and intensity based on the team level, but are all designed to build strength and endurance for climbing. Coaches often provide modifications and ranges for these exercises, so it is up to the climbers to push themselves.

## Team Dues and Monthly Membership Requirement

All members of Team Inner Peaks must have an active membership prior to joining the team and throughout the duration of being a member of the team! Once their membership is active, their monthly team dues will be assigned and billed at the first of each month.

\*Please see website for updated pricing for monthly team dues

\*Understand that dues are subjected to increase along with company wide pricing increases (Parents will be notified at least 3 months prior to any price increases in regard to Inner Peaks Teams)

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We have an automatic billing system at Inner Peaks. On the first day of the month everyone is billed for Membership and Team fees.

If you need to freeze or terminate your child's membership, you must submit a form on the Inner Peaks website (<https://www.innerpeaks.com/membership-change-request/>) before the 25th of the month before you want to freeze/terminate. (For example, to freeze or terminate a membership starting in June, you must submit your request online by May 25th.)

There is a \$10/month fee to freeze memberships, and if you freeze for two months or less your child's spot in practice will be held. Due to the waitlist, any team child that freezes for more than **two months** will be removed from the team (with the exception of summer break) but the membership will not be canceled.

More information on the benefits of a membership can be found here:  
<https://www.innerpeaks.com/membership/>

## Practice Cancellations

Due to holidays, facility closures, and emergencies, we reserve the right to cancel practices and to notify parents as soon as possible. Our monthly team prices have been determined at a rate that considers holidays, inclement weather, and facility closures.

Due to our strict climber-to-coach ratio, we cannot guarantee making up missed practices but missed practices can be requested to be made up with a head coach but will not result in a prorated monthly due or refund.

## Team Rules and Requirements

Practice Rules, Requirements, and Expectations:

- Climbing is inherently dangerous. We expect each team member to stay focused and make good risk management decisions.
- Like any other sports team, each team member is required to follow directions during practice and is expected to work hard.
- Demonstrating maturity and interest is the only way we can begin to teach climbers more advanced concepts because these concepts often introduce a higher chance for risk and require attentiveness.
- Climbers are never forced to participate in any activity that they don't want to do, but they are expected to come to practice with a good attitude and willingness to listen

and learn so that coaches can help them excel and progress in climbing, especially if they are on an invite-only team.

- The best thing for new climbers is more time on the wall. The membership allows team members to climb at any time during operational hours outside of practice. So come climb!

Gym Rules, Requirements, and Expectations:

- No running in the gym whatsoever
- No walking on the boulder pads other than immediately before or after a climb. Because bouldering has no ropes, climbers will be falling all the way to the ground. Keeping the pads clear is essential to reducing the risk of a climber landing on someone.
- No walking under the archways unless a climb starts there. Falling climbers are also a risk when walking under an archway, so these areas should stay clear.
- No walking between a belayer and the wall. Even in rope climbing, there is a risk of a climber falling or being lowered onto someone walking between the belayer and the wall. This can also be a distraction for the belayer, which further increases risk.
- No touching the top ropes unless the required proficiency tests have been passed.
- No grabbing onto any metal on the walls without proper training (carabiners, bolts, anchors).
- Take turns climbing on the wall, especially with non-team climbers.
- No roughhousing will be tolerated, and climbers' hands must be kept to themselves.

\*Team members are expected to demonstrate appropriate etiquette and safety procedures both during and outside of practice\*

Parents, please understand that repeated offenses or climbers that consistently violate gym and team rules may be subjected to team suspension and potentially permanently removed from the team roster.

## Gear Requirements

What to bring to practice:

Discovery – Running shoes, water bottle, and chalk bag.

Elements 1 – Running shoes, water bottle, chalk bag, climbing shoes, and harness.

Elements 2 & Paragon – Water bottle, chalk bag, climbing shoes, harness, rope, and belay device if necessary.

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## Attendance Requirements

Unlike some sports, climbing teams practice year-round. If a practice gets canceled for holidays, etc., parents will be notified via email. Attendance is crucial for each child to get the most out of our team program and will help them develop a closer working relationship with their teammates and coaches. We also strongly encourage team members to climb outside of practice with their teammates. Climbers are expected and encouraged to attend all of their practices, but we understand that missing practices is going to happen. All of our teams operate near or at their maximum capacity, and our insurance policy does not allow us to exceed this number of climbers. If climbers miss a practice, they are NOT guaranteed the opportunity to attend another practice as a “make-up” practice. Due to our strict climber-to-coach ratio, we cannot guarantee making up missed practices but missed practices can be requested to be made up with a head coach but will not result in a prorated monthly due or refund. If more than one consecutive practice is going to be missed, please notify the appropriate coaches.

## USA Climbing and Local Competitions

Team Inner Peaks follows the competition climbing ‘seasons’ for all levels of Team.


This is to make the transition between teams easier for kids moving up in the program. Fall and Winter are considered bouldering season, and Spring and Summer are considered rope climbing season. We will periodically have practices where we focus on teaching Team kids how to belay. For the higher-level teams we will also have practices that focus on lead climbing. We train according to the competition season, but we still do a mix of both disciplines to avoid linear training.

This brings us to competition climbing! The governing body of rock climbing in the United States is USA Climbing (USAC – [usaclimbing.org](http://usaclimbing.org)).

The three disciplines in climbing are: Bouldering, Rope, and Speed. Rope and Speed seasons run concurrently in the Fall & Winter. Climbing competitions can be intimidating at first to new competitors, but they are all fairly similar depending on the discipline of climbing and the level of the event.

Qualification Events:





Participants have a few hours to climb and have multiple attempts per climb. USA Climbing provides volunteer judges and belayers. Each climb has an assigned judge to watch each competitor. For higher level competitions, the specific format varies depending on the discipline.

#### Regional Competitions & Beyond:

Climbers must qualify for these events. Bouldering competitors have 4 minutes to climb each boulder. Ropes competitors receive one attempt per climb. While climbers are waiting to compete, they wait in a closed off area of the gym called isolation ('iso' for short) so that they cannot see or hear about any of the climbs they will be attempting. Only certified coaches are allowed in iso to help athletes warm up and prepare to climb.

All Team Inner Peaks climbers are encouraged to compete in local and USA Climbing competitions, and Elements 2 and Paragon members are required to compete. It is recommended that climbers have close to a year of climbing experience and that they spectate a competition to ensure their comfort with climbing before diving into the competitive environment. Inner Peaks is in Region 72, so please visit the USAC Region 72 website for details on upcoming competitions:

<https://usaclimbing.org/compete/region-72/>

Inner Peaks also hosts a number of annual local competitions open to all members of the gym including the Queen City Boulder Bash in July, the Queens Cup in September, and Break the Nose in October. These are fantastic starting points for any climbers looking to get into competitions.

