

February, 2017

Dear Preston High School Phys Ed student and parent:

Preston High School is very pleased to have a unique physical activity opportunity arrive to PHS during the week of February 27-March 2nd, 2017 (5 days). The Portable Rock Climbing Wall from the Guelph Grotto Rock Climbing Centre will be moving into our Single Gym and in each of our four blocks a group of our Junior and Intermediate (9-11) Phys. Ed. Students will be exposed to this fantastic physical activity over these 5 days. We think this is a great opportunity to introduce students to a non-traditional fitness and recreation activity for a manageable cost with NO transportation issues as *they come to us*. **Students will get 5 days of 60-75 minutes of activity for a cost of \$ 30.00 (= \$6/day). Cash or School Day Payment may be made to Preston High School (Due: Friday, February 24th) and please fill in the 3 areas on the waiver on the back of this sheet and return with payment.**

The website for the Grotto is: <http://guelphgrotto.com/> <http://guelphgrotto.com/portable-wall-program/> and here you will see a picture of what arrives at the schools when this group moves in and the types of activities that the students will be exposed to which include: *climbing and team belaying (communication and safety instruction taught and enforced), bouldering, balancing (tightrope type activities) and various ladder and rope climbs*. When this group has come in the past this has often proven to be one of the most memorable weeks in the lives of some of the students as the smiles, goals set and achieved, friendships formed, stress relief and physical fitness objectives all focussed on create fantastic PHS moments. *You will also see (if you follow the link) **that students can get a FREE 2-week membership** at the Guelph Grotto Indoor Climbing Gym) with their week of climbing at PHS.*

“The Students Learned The Fundamentals Of Rock Climbing, And A New Activity Was Introduced Everyday With Instruction At The Beginning Of Each Class, Keeping Everyone Engaged With Different Aspects Of Rock Climbing And Rope Works...”

What are the benefits of rock climbing?

Rock climbing is a fun and exciting sport and a great way to build strength, flexibility and promote an active, healthy lifestyle. Students will also benefit from the sport's inherent emphasis on teamwork, trust, problem solving, and personal achievement. Climbing is a unique activity and enriching experience that students will, without a doubt, grow to love. **(An additional list of benefits is available for parents if requested).**



What are some of the skills they will learn?

- How to properly put on a harness
- How to properly tie a double figure eight knot and double fisherman's knot
- How to belay properly using a Petzl Gri Gri
- How to properly ascend and descend

What does the program offer?

- Top-rope climbing: 12 roped climbs – 6 overhanging, 6 vertical – at a height of 20 feet!
- Bouldering: Four 9 foot tall free climbing faces!
- Ascending: 6-10 anchored ascending lines measuring up to 40 feet!
- Rope ladders: 4 exciting, large-scale rope ladders!

Additional Info:

- All equipment and instruction is offered in-school in an effort to eliminate any extra fees or additional requirements like transportation etc.
- Portable rock climbing walls engineered by Tacoma Engineering with third party inspection, insured with a \$5 million liability, covered under WSIB, instructor police checks provided.



Please call Preston High School (or email your teacher) to speak to your child's Phys Ed teacher if you have any questions.

(IF requested) Additional Information on the wide benefits of Rock Climbing:

1. PHYSICAL: Rock Climbing is one of the best total body workouts available. It's a unique sport in that boys and girls are equally capable. **A common misconception is that climbing requires an already strong upper body. This idea often discourages girls from participating.** An effective rock climber is one who understands that much of climbing is related to technique, balance and leg strength.

No matter how strong your upper body currently is, there is a grade you can start at and work from. The motion of climbing works every part of you. From your fingers and forearms as you grip the rock or climbing hold, your abs and core as you lift your legs into position then your whole body as you propel yourself up with your legs and pull up with on your arms. Climbing develops lean, endurance muscles (the same muscles used by marathon runners). It strengthens core muscles better than exercise routines designed to focus on that particular region. The core stabilizes the body, and leads to a stronger, less injury prone body. Climbing strengthens your hands and forearms, biceps, shoulders, neck, traps, upper back, lats, lower back, abs, glutes, thighs and calves. Your entire body, including cardiovascular systems, benefits from rock climbing.

Rock Climbing complements and boosts performance in other sports too. Climbing assists by further developing the primary muscles needed for the sport, as well as the secondary muscles which benefit it, but which are not adequately developed in the practice of it. Just a few examples of sports rock climbing will help with:

- Rugby – Hand strength for grip on the ball. Flexibility leads to less strain injuries.
- Racquet or bat sports like Tennis, Squash or Cricket – Hand strength for holding onto the bat. Arms for a mean smash. Agility.
- Soccer – Builds upper body and core. Agility.
- Running and Cycling – Build upper body, flexibility

Parents and PE teachers have commented that they've noticed many more instances of low muscle tone in kids nowadays than there used to be. This is because our lifestyle simply isn't what it used to be. Whether you blame technology, property developers or fear of crime, the fact remains that our kids are not as active as they should be. Humans learn to climb before we even walk, pulling ourselves up to get a higher view (of something they badly want on that table). Our natural human instinct is to climb anything we can hold onto. That is, until it's scolded out of us. This instinct ought to be heartily encouraged, instead of discouraged. The outlet of a climbing wall will benefit the kids in so many ways. Kids don't think about boring things like learning & exercising. They want to have FUN and release energy. In a controlled environment they'll learn how to productively channel their youthful energy.

2. MENTAL

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| ✓ Decision Making | ✓ Determination |
| ✓ Visualization | ✓ Self Confidence |
| ✓ Problem Solving | ✓ Stress Relief |
| ✓ Goal Setting | ✓ Sense of Achievement |
| ✓ Planning | ✓ Spatial awareness |
| ✓ Concentration | ✓ Motor Skills |

Each climbing route is like a puzzle, which takes patience and planning, forcing the climber to make decisions as one gets to a spot and strategizes where to go from there. Climbing requires for you to make spot decisions as you go, commit and follow through. Your ability to assess a problem, look for a solution, and then execute a plan is required. Climbing requires the climber and their team to work together using available hand and foot holds (also called Grips) creating a potential route. Each route has a difficulty rating usually attributed to the size of the holds and the complexity of the path. Once you've accomplished a route that's your highest grade level, the bar is automatically raised.

For many, one of the most beneficial aspects of climbing is **stress relief**. The climbing wall takes your all and in return, takes it all off your shoulders. When you're climbing, you're concentrating on your body movements, and the goal of getting to the top. Climbing releases positive hormones (endorphins) are peaked and you can get back to life with a clear head. A climbing training wall at home or work is perfect for those go getters with busy, stressful lifestyles that want to live a healthy life.

The sense of achievement gained by reaching the summit is second to none. Whether it's a route you've just on-sighted, or one you've been working, outdoor or indoor, you'll find yourself somewhat changed every time.

By achieving something which once seemed impossible, it forces the climber to realize their true abilities versus their perceived abilities, increasing confidence. When put into perspective of what has already been accomplished, anything seems possible.

3. SOCIAL

- ✓ Belong to a Community
- ✓ Networking and friendship
- ✓ Communication and listening skills
- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Leadership Skills
- ✓ Healthy
- ✓ Builds Character

Although the practice of Rock Climbing is essentially you vs. yourself, it can still be regarded as a team sport, because you're never alone. You'll either be climbing with a group of friends, school mates, colleagues or family. Learning to put your trust in the person holding your rope fosters relationships pretty quickly. Bouldering is shorter climbing without a rope, but still requires a spotter to guide the climber to the landing mat safely. The different roles one plays when climbing, build character and leadership skills. Every climber will get the chance to be the student and learn from others, then the teacher sharing that knowledge. One minute they'll be the climber being supported by others encouragement or advice, then they'll turn around and be the belayer or part of the encouraging group. The climbing community is one where every achievement is celebrated.

Communication between the climber and belayer is paramount to climbing safely. The safety system consists of a series of commands or statements and recognition statements, used to inform each other of one's status in relation to the rope and climb.(Eg. Climber to Belayer: "Slack" for more rope when climbing up, "Take" to pull rope tight and hold.) . Speaking clearly and listening attentively are paramount in this activity. Friendship has got to be one of the best, yet unexpected advantages of becoming part of the rock climbing community.

What if I'm scared of heights?

"It's natural to be scared of heights," says Tina Gardner of the BMC. "Instinct tells us that falling from a high place will hurt. Respecting that fear keeps you alive." She says reviewing all the precautions prior to climbing is a good way to reassure a nervous climber, for example, checking their knot is tied correctly. Gardner says the more you climb, the more confident in your own ability you will become. "You don't want to lose that fear completely," she says. "Over time, climbers simply learn to manage it."

What muscles are worked?

Climbing uses lots of muscle groups, both in the upper and lower body. Your back, abdominal and leg muscles all get exercised as well as your fingers, shoulders and arms. Regular climbing can improve stamina as well as muscle strength. In addition, all the reaching and stretching for holds improves flexibility and agility.

Who can do rock climbing?

Almost anyone can rock climb. At beginner level, it caters for people of all ages, fitness levels and abilities, including mental and physical impairments. There are courses for children as young as five and it's not unusual to see people climbing well into their 80s. Despite its image as an athletic sport, you don't need to be super-fit to rock climb. Good technique is more important than physical strength, although the more you climb the stronger and fitter you will become. Good footwork, body positioning and problem solving will get you up many more climbs than just brute strength. Many climbing centres have specialist instructors who have experience with rehabilitation and working with all kinds of physical and mental disabilities.

Additional Websites that support the benefits of Rock Climbing:

<http://www.climbingwalls.co.za/index.php/benefits-of-rock-climbing>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/rock-climbing-health-benefits.aspx>