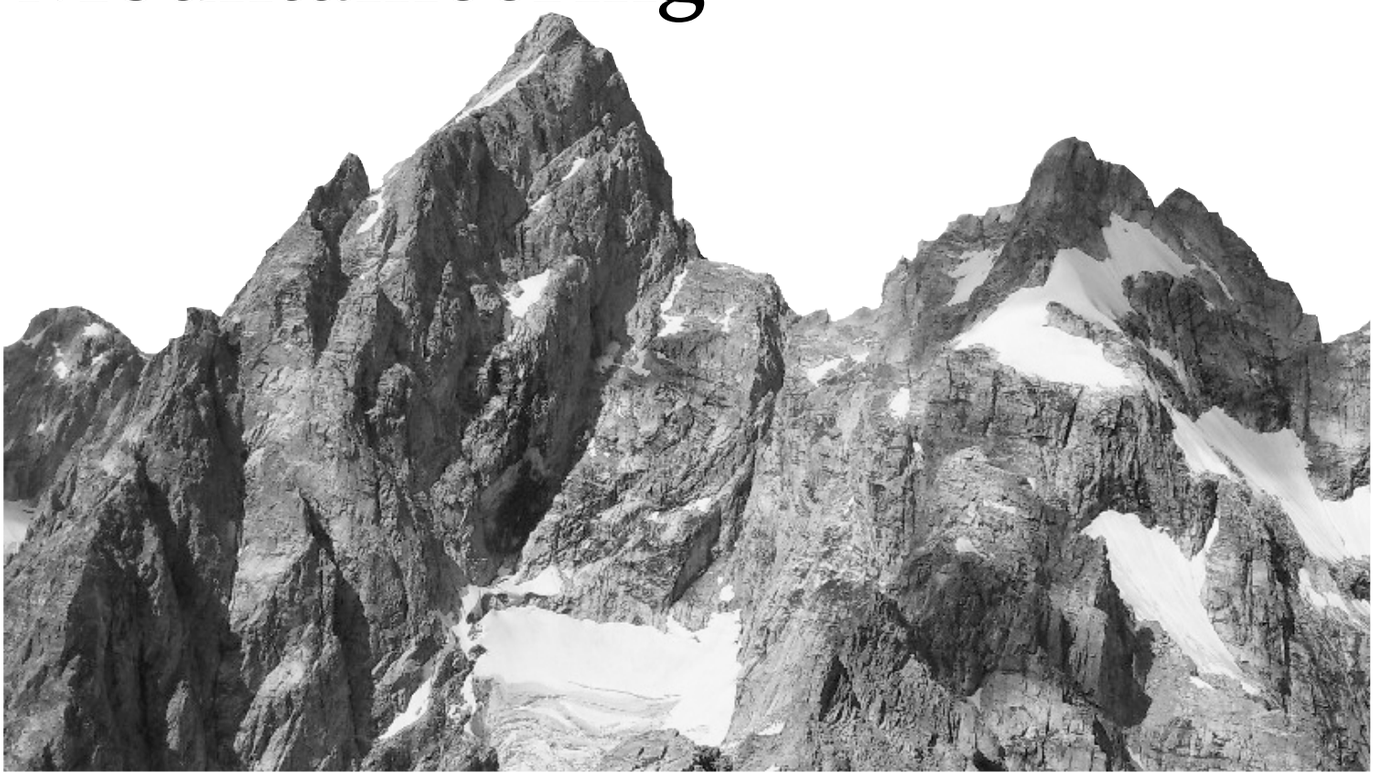
# Mountaineering



## General Information

The mountains in Grand Teton National Park offer some of the most accessible and diverse climbing in the country. A wide array of rock, snow and ice, and mixed routes are available that range from easy outings to very difficult undertakings. Nearly all of the peaks have been climbed in one day. The higher and more remote peaks and the longer and more difficult routes are usually climbed from a high camp or with a bivouac, however, and can take two or more days.

There are many inherent risks and hazards associated with climbing and mountain travel (hiking, skiing etc.). Risks include, but are not limited to: lightning, rockfall, avalanches, crevasses, and extreme weather conditions (even during the summer months). Falls on steep snow and the subsequent inability to use an ice axe to perform a self-arrest have been the number one cause of accidents and deaths over the years.

Any person pursuing these activities assumes all risks of and responsibility for any injury, including death, that may result. **Competent technique, experience, safety equipment, physical fitness and good judgment are essential** to preventing or minimizing the chances of an accident occurring.

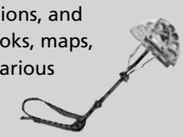
## Mountain Weather

Weather conditions are usually best from mid-July through August, although afternoon thundershowers are common during these months. At least one period of extended inclement weather with snowfall in the high country usually occurs in late August. In the fall, major storms can occur anytime after mid-August, producing snow and ice on most routes. Winter weather in the Teton Range can be severe with heavy snowfall, high winds, and extremely low temperatures.

During the period of heavy snow accumulation from December through May, avalanche danger is frequently high. Winter mountaineering trips should be undertaken only by well-equipped, self-sufficient parties with considerable experience. May and June are characterized by prolonged periods of heavy rain, some snow and sub-freezing temperatures. During these months, rockfall and wet-snow avalanche activity is a common occurrence.

### CLIMBING INFORMATION

The Jenny Lake Ranger Station is the center for climbing information from June to mid-September. Climbing rangers on duty provide current information on the nature and condition of climbing routes, equipment and experience considerations, and time factors. Guidebooks, maps, and photographs of various peaks and routes are available to assist in planning climbs.



## Registration

Registration is **not** required for climbing, mountaineering or day hiking. A free permit is required for all overnight use. The park does **not** check to see that you get safely out of the backcountry. **Make a friend or relative aware of where you are going and your itinerary.** It is your responsibility to have someone report your absence if you are overdue. If you do not have a friend or relative in the area with whom you can leave this information a voluntary registration system is available at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station.

## Accommodations

The Grand Teton Climbers' Ranch, a concession operated by the American Alpine Club, provides low-cost accommodations for registered climbers. For information contact the manager, Climbers' Ranch, Moose, WY 83012. Park campgrounds may be used as base camps, although each campground has a limit-of-stay. Off-trail campsites or bivouac sites are not reservable, but are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Equipment

Conventional mountaineering equipment is satisfactory for climbing in the Teton Range during the summer. An ice axe and expertise in its use is perhaps the single most important technique that one can possess for early season climbs. Climbing helmets are strongly recommended for technical climbs and for routes where rockfall could occur. Climbing equipment and food suitable for backpacking may be purchased in the area, and a limited selection of equipment may be rented.

# Rescue Guidelines

### *Self-Rescue*

In the event of an accident or other problem, **depend first and foremost on yourself, other party members, and your own efforts!** Enlist the aid of other climbers in the area. Practice **self-sufficiency** to the greatest extent possible; **do not** depend solely on the park rescue team. In the event of a known injury, the rescue team will make reasonable efforts to help you. Keep in mind, however, that the decision if, when or how to initiate a search or rescue is left to the discretion of Grand Teton National Park. Many factors, such as weather, daylight, and hazards to the rescue team may **delay** or indefinitely **postpone** any rescue effort by the park.

### *Grand Teton National Park Rescue Team*

The park's search and rescue team is fully staffed **only** during the summer months. If self-rescue is impossible, notify the park as quickly as possible.

### *What to Do When an Accident Occurs*

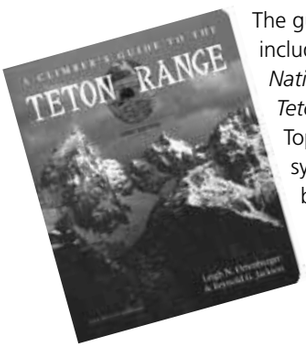
Do not leave an accident victim alone unless absolutely necessary. If it is necessary to leave an injured person alone, provide first aid, secure the injured person to prevent further injury, leave him/her as much food, water and warm clothes as possible and then go for help. Relay the following information: Name, age and weight of victim(s), exact location of the accident, nature of the injuries, time of the accident, equipment at the accident scene, number of persons remaining at the accident scene and their plan of action, if any.

### *Search & Rescue Funding*

All climbers should be aware that search and rescue operations are funded from the park operating accounts and large expenditures may result in the elimination of other services. Donations to support the rescue team are a welcome source of new rescue equipment. Send tax deductible contributions to: Mountain Rescue Fund, Grand Teton National Park, P.O. Drawer 170, Moose, WY 83012.

---

# References



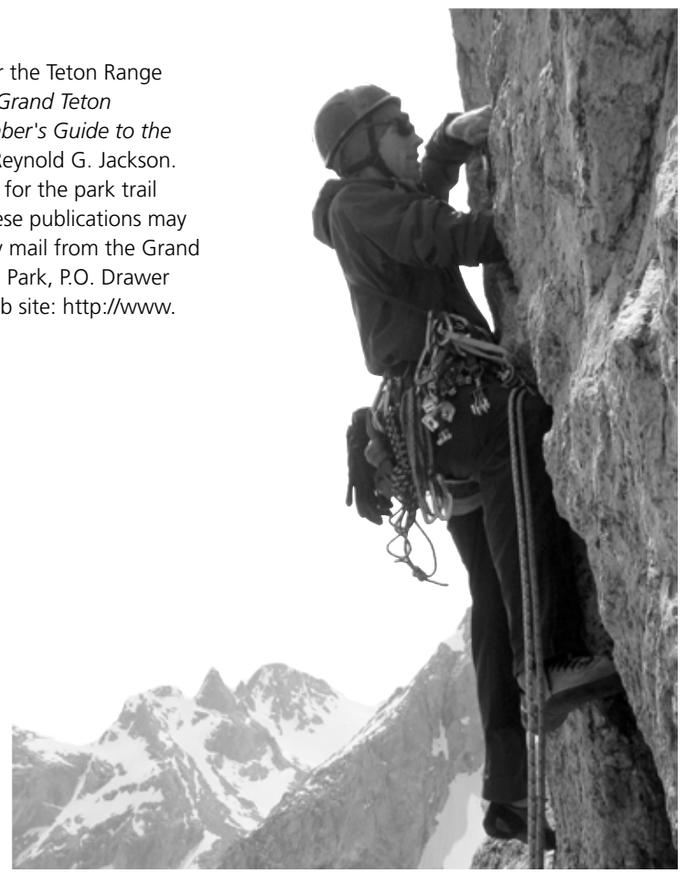

The guidebooks that are currently available for the Teton Range include *Teton Classics: 50 Selected Climbs in Grand Teton National Park* by Richard Rossiter and *A Climber's Guide to the Teton Range* by Leigh N. Ortenburger and Reynold G. Jackson. Topographic maps of the park and a guide for the park trail system, *Teton Trails*, are also available. These publications may be purchased at park visitor centers or by mail from the Grand Teton Association, Grand Teton National Park, P.O. Drawer 170, Moose, WY 83012 or on their Web site: http://www.grandtetonpark.org/.

## Guide Services

Mountaineering guide service and instruction may be obtained from:

- Exum Mountain Guides, Inc.
  P.O. Box 56
  Moose, WY 83012
  307.733.2297

- Jackson Hole Mountain Guides
  P.O. Box 7477
  Jackson, WY 83001
  307.733.4979



---

# Climbing Ethics—renew your commitment to leave no trace!

We are appealing to all climbers to accept personal responsibility for the care of fragile resources. Toward this goal, please adhere to the following code of ethics for minimum impact climbing:

■ Use existing access trails to approach climbs. Short-cutting trails causes plant damage and erosion and is prohibited.

■ During approach and descent where there are no trails, carefully choose routes to avoid the heavy impact of human feet. Step on rocks and non-vegetated surfaces where possible.

■ Know and respect environmentally sensitive areas. Be considerate of wildlife and other users. Keep a respectful distance from all animals to avoid disturbing their natural routines.

■ Leave the rock and its environs in its natural condition. Avoid placing permanent protection. Motorized drills are prohibited.

■ Plan your trip. Know and abide by all park regulations.

■ Accept responsibility for yourself and others. "Leave No Trace" depends more on attitude and awareness than on regulations.

■ Pack out all litter. Use toilets where available or bury human waste 200' from water and high use areas. Double bag toilet paper in ziplock bags and carry it out or use natural options such as stones, sticks or snow.

*Only by following a minimum impact climbing ethic can outstanding natural features be protected for future generations of climbers. The future of climbing is in your hands!*