

The Climbing Dictionary



Welcome to *The Climbing Dictionary* !!!

This dictionary gives definitions of American and English climbing terms and translations of those terms in other languages. If you have anything to contribute to this dictionary (remarks, comments, new or better definitions, corrections, other language ?), then [mail me](#) (in either English, French, German, or Dutch). Your help is gratefully [acknowledged](#) (even though it might take a while before I update the dictionary). !! If you intend to sue me, then read this [disclaimer](#) first. You can of course also add this page as a [link to your home page](#).

The terms in this list are sorted alphabetically in English. The translations are labeled as follows: (d) German, (f) French, (f-c) Canadian French, (nl) Dutch, (i) Italian, (e) Spanish, (s) Swedish and (pl) Polish. I do not have the terms in Japanese, but if you want to see them (you must have a server that supports those Japanese characters though), go to [the japanese version of the climbing dictionary](#). Any terms related the style of ascent ('Flash', 'Redpoint', etc.) are subject to different interpretations.

Some other interesting climbing information on this server:

- [Climbing in the Harz.](#)
- [Climbing ratings and grades.](#)



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



A

Abseil, to

Descending by sliding down a rope. Americans usually call this rappelling.

(d) Abseilen, (f) Descendre en rappel, (nl) Afdalen/abseilen, (i) Doppia, fare una doppia, (e) Rapelar / descenso en rappel, (s) fira, (pl) Zjazd na linie

Adze

The flat cutting end of the ice axe head.

(pl) Lpatka czekana

Aid climbing

Moving up a rock using fixed or placed protecting as a means of progression (and not just for protection). Also known in the US as sixth class climbing.

(d) Technisch klettern, (f) Escalade artificielle, (nl) Artificieel klimmen, (i) Arrampicata artificiale, (e) Escalada artificial, (s) Teknisk klättring / Artificiell klättring, (pl) Hakowka

Aider

Webbing ladder used for aid climbing. The word was probably coined by someone who couldn't spell the french word étrier.

(d) Die Leiter, (f) Étrier, (nl) Ladder, (i) Staffa, (e) Estribo, (s) Stegar, (pl) Laweczka podciagowa

Aid route

Route that can only be ascended using aid climbing techniques

(d) Die Techno-route, (f) Voie d'artif, (i) Via in artificiale, (e) Ruta artificial

Alcove

A belay ledge that is surrounded by vertical rock on all sides.

(pl) Nyza

Alpine butterfly

[Butterfly knot](#).

AMS

Acute mountain sickness. (Ask your medical doctor.)

(pl) Ostra choroba gorska

Anchor

Point where the rope is fixed to the rock.

(d) Fixpunkt/Verankerung, (f) Point d'assurage, (f-c) Point d'ancrage, (nl) Zekeringspunt, (i) Ancoraggio, (e) Anclaje / Punto de seguro, (s) Ankare / Förankring, (pl) Punkt asekuracyjny

Arete

A narrow (more or less - but often more less than more - horizontal) ridge.

(d) Grat, (f) Arête, (nl) graat, (i) Cresta, (e) Cresta/Cuchilla, (pl) Grzebien

Ascenders

Devices (e.g. Jumars) to ascend a rope.

(d) Steigklemmen, (f) Jumars / Poignées ascensionnelles, (nl) Stijgklemmen, (i) Maniglie/Ascensori, (e) Ascensores / Jumars, (s) Repklämmor, (pl) Zacisk

ATC

'Air Traffic Controller', belaying device made by Black Diamond.

Avalanche

Lots of snow or ice sliding down a mountain.

(d) Lawine, (f) Avalanche, (nl) Lawine, (i) Valanga, (e) Avalancha, (s) Lavin, (pl) Lawina

B

Bail, to

To give up on a rock climb or a summit attempt because of bad weather coming in.

Barn door, to

To lose the foot and hand holds on one side of the body. Usually causes the climber to swing like a barn door.

Base camp

The lowest and largest fixed camp on a major ascent (or multiple ascents in the same area).

(d) Basislager, (f) Camp de base, (nl) Basiskamp, (i) Campo base, (e) Campamento base, (s) Basläger, (pl) Obozowisko

Beer

Liquid consumed in large quantities after climbing.

(d) Bier, (f) Bière/mousse, (f-c) Broue, (nl) Bier/Pintje, (i) Birra, (e) Cerveza, (s) Öl, (pl) Piwo

Belay, to

To secure a climber.

(d) Sichern, (f) Assurer, (nl) Zekeren, (i) Assicurare, (e) Asegurar / Dar seguridad, (s) Säkra, (pl) Ubezpieczac

Belay Betty and Belay Bob

The girl or boyfriend of an addictive rock climber.

Belay station

A safe stance consisting of an anchor, a rope, and a belayer (aka "the belay")

(d) Standplatz, (f) Relais, (nl) Standplaats, (i) Sosta, (e) Punto de encuentro, Reunión, (s) Standplats, (pl) Stanowisko

Belayer

The person at the belay station securing the climber.

(d) Sicherungsmann/frau, (f) Assureur, (nl) Zekeraar, (i) Assicuratore/trice, (e) Asegurador, (s) Säkringsman, (pl) Asekurant

"Belay on"

When the belayer is ready to belay the climber up, he yells "Belay on". (At least in the US, "belay on" would only confuse the hell out of a British climber who prefers to hear "Climb when ready").

(d) "Nachkommen", (f) "Quand tu veux", (f-c) "Assuré", (nl) "Nakomen", (i) "Puoi venire", (e) "Sube" / "Vienes", (s) "Säkring klar", (pl) "Asekuracja gotowa"

"Below"

Used in Britain to warn for impending impact with objects coming from above (e.g. falling rock). "Rock" in the US.

(d) "Stein", (f) "Caillou" ("Pierre" is a common French name and might cause confusion with those individuals that respond to that name), (f-c) "Roche", (i) "Sasso", (e) "Piedra", (s) "Sten"

Bent gate karibiner

Karibiner with the gate bent to accept the rope more easily. Not uncontroversial.

(d) Bananenkarabiner, (f) Mousqueton à doigt incurvé, (i) Moschettone a barra ricurva, (e) Mosquetón express, (s) Karbin med böjd grind, (pl) Karabinek z lekko otwierającym się zamkiem

(d) "Berg Heil !"

A German greeting at the summit.

Bergschrund

Or just 'schrund'. The top crevasse in a glacier or snowfield that is formed when the glacier/snowfield tears away from the remaining patch of snow that is stable on the mountainside.

(d) Bergschrund, (f) Rimaye

Beta

Insider information about a climb. Running or auto beta is someone telling you how to do the moves as you go (as in "can you please shut up with that running beta, I want to find out myself").

(d) Informationen vor dem Start, (f) Description de la voie, (i) Informazioni

Beta flash

Leading a climb with no falling or dogging, but with a piece of previous knowledge hints on how to do those crux moves. Even seeing someone do the climb already classifies as 'previous knowledge'.

(d) Flash mit Ansage, (f) Flash

Big wall

Rock climb that is so long and sustained that a normal ascent lasts several days.

(d) Big Wall, (f) Grande paroi / grande falaise, (f-c) Grand mur, (e) Gran Pared, (s) Storögg / Bigwall

Biner

Short for [Karabiner](#)

(d) Kara, (f) Mousquif, (e) Mosquete / Mosquetón, (s) Karbin, (pl) Karabinek

Birdbeak

A tiny hooked piton manufactured by A5. It is similar to the old Chouinard "Crack'n up", except that it only has a single side and that it is intended to be hammered in if necessary.

(pl) Rodzaj skajhuka

Bivouac

Or short, bivi. An uncomfortable sleeping place in the middle of a route.

(d) Biwak, (f) Bivouac, (nl) Bivak, (i) Bivacco, (e) Bivac, (s) Bivack, (pl) Biwak

Black ice

Old ice that was exposed to extremely cold temperatures, scree, and snowfall. Usually found deep in shady couloirs, or on steep north faces. Very hard and dense ice that is difficult to climb.

(f) Glace noire, (pl) Czarny lod

Blast, to

To begin a big wall, after the line fixing is done. "We're gonna blast on Tuesday morning after we get the first three pitches fixed".

(f) Bleausard

Someone who frequents 'Bleau (or Fontainebleau, the site of some excellent bouldering near Paris).

Blue ice

Very dense ice with a watery hue and few air bubbles.

Bolt



(d) Bohrhaken, (f) Scellement / goujon, (i) Spit, (e) Spits/Bolt, (s) Bult, (pl) Spit

Bolt, expansion

(d) Bohrhaken, (f) Cheville à expansion, (nl) Boorhaak, (i) Caviglie da espansione, (e) Piton de expansion, parabolt, (s)

Borrbutt

Bomber

Used to indicate that something is exceptionally solid, e.g. an anchor, a hold. See also bombproof.

(e) Firme, (s) Kanon

Bombproof

The illusion that an anchor is infallible

(d) Bomben sicher, (f) béton (i) A prova di bomba, (e) A prueba de bomba, (s) Bombsäker

Bong

An almost extinct species of extra wide pitons. Now, large chocks are usually used instead.

(f) "Bonne Grimpe !"

A greeting to climbers when they start the climb.

(e) "¡Buena suerte!"

Bootie

Gear (nuts, cams, etc.) that was left behind on a climb by the previous party.

Boulder, to

Climbing unroped on boulders or at the foot of climbs to a height where it is still safe to jump off.

(d) Bouldern (f) Faire du bloc, (nl) Boulderen, (i) Arrampicare su masso, (e) Boulder / Cascarear

Bounce

To crater from an extreme height. Usually lethal.

(d) Todessturz, (pl) Obdijac sie skokami przy zjezdzie

Bowline

Sailing knot (not to be used for climbing, unless backed up with a second knot)

(d) Bulinknoten/Palstek, (f) Noeud de chaise, (nl) Paalsteek, (i) (Nodo) bulino, (e) Bulín, (s) Pålstek, (pl) Wezel tatrzański



Brain bucket

Aka helmet. That all important hard shelled thing that covers our (second?) most valuable asset.

Bucket

A large hold (Aka "jug", esp. in UK)

(d) Henkel, (f) Bac/baquet, (nl) bak, (i) Fibbia / Vasca, (e) Asa / gasa, (s) Brevlåda

Buildering

To climb buildings

(d) Fassadenklettern, (f-c) Escalade de ville, (nl) Geveltoerisme, (e) Escalada urbana, (s) Fasadklättring, (pl) Wspinanie po murach

Butterfly knot

Interesting but rarely used climbing knot. [Alpine butterfly](#)

(f-c) Noeud papillon / les oreilles du Micky ??, (e) Nudo de mariposa, (pl) Motylek

Buttress

The part of the mountain or rock that stands in front of the main mountainface.

(d) Vorbau / Pfeiler, (f) Pillier, (i) Pilastro, (e) Espolón, (s) Pelare, (pl) Pochyly filar

C

Cam

Generic reference to the family of spring loaded camming devices (SLCD) such as friends, camalots, aliens, TCUs, etc. Also referred to as springs

(d) Friends, (f) Friends, (e) Levas, (pl) Krzywka

Campus

A dyno executed using the arms only. Comes from the campus board where the people who do this move get the muscle to do it.

(d) Frei hängend

Campus board

A wooden training board with finger ledges that is used for training dynos and finger power.

(d) Hangelbrett, (f) Planche d'entraînement, (e) Tabla de entrenamiento

Caribiner

The alternative American spelling of the word [Karibiner](#).

Cat, dead

Contact Greg Opland for this one...

(d) Tote Katze, (f) Chat mort, (nl) Dode kat, (i) Gatto morte, (lat) Felis oplandis, (s) Död katt, (pl) Zdechly kot

Chalk

Magic powder that makes the hands stick to even the smoothest rock.

(d) Chalk/Magnesia, (f) Magnésie, (nl) Magnesiumpoeder, (i) Magnesia, (e) Magnesio, (s) Krita, (pl) Magnezja

Chausey

Poor rock conditions. Also spelled [chossy](#).

Cheese grater, to

To slide down a slab while scraping the knees, hands, and face.

Chest harness

Bra-like looking harness (to be used with waist harness)

(d) Brustklettergurt, (f) Harnais, (nl) Borstgordel, (i) Cinghia pettorale, (e) Arnés de pecho, (s) Bröstsele, (pl) upzraz piersiowa

Chickenhead

Sometimes phallic shaped, protruding lumps that make excellent hand or footholds on granite, etc.

(d) Zacke / Felsköpfel, (f-c) Banane, (e) Chile / cuerno, (pl) Duży, owalny występ skalny

Chimed

Exhausted. "This climb has got me chimed."

Chimney

A wide crack that accomodates (most of) the body of the climber.

(d)Kamin, (f) Cheminée, (nl) Schoorsteen, (i) Camino, (e) Chimenea, (s) Kamin, (pl) Komin

Chimney, to

A climbing technique used to conquer chimneys. Usually requires the use of the back and feet, arms, head and other body parts.

(pl) Zapierac sie w kominie

Chipped hold

A hold created with a hamer and chisel by a moron incapable of doing the climb as it is.

(d) Geschlagener Griff, (f) Prise taillée, (i) Presa scavata, (s) Chippade grepp, (pl) Chwyt 'rzezbiony' dlutem

Chock

Generic reference to the family of passive wired protection devices, also called nuts, stoppers, wires, and rocks.

(e) Nueces

Chockstone

A stone wedged between a crack, a chimney, etc.

(f) Bloc coincé, (s) Kilsten, (pl) Kamien yaklinowany w rysie

Choss

In Australia, this means poor rock (you can take all the holds home...). In the UK, choss is dirt and vegetation found in cracks (or [Munge](#) in the US).

Chute

A very steep gully. The word *chute* is french for *fall* and refers to the rockfall that is very common in a chute.

(pl) Zleb

Cirque

A deep and steep-walled basin on a mountain usually forming the blunt end of a valley. From the French word for circus.

Class

A number designating the overall technical level of a route. The first number in the YDS designates the class of the climb. [Here's the different classes...](#)

(e) Clase

Clean

Climbing without falling or dogging.

(f) Enchaicirc;ner (une voie), (e) Escalada limpia

Clean

Aid climbing without hammering.

(e) Limpiar

Clean, to

To remove the pro from a route. Usually done by the follower.

(d) Abbauen / Ausräumen, (pl) Sciagnac asecuracje

Cliff

A vertical piece of rock good for climbing (see also Crag).

(d) Fels, (f) Falaise, (nl) Rots, (i) Falesia, (e) Risco, (s) Klippa, (pl) Skala

Cliffhanger

Not just a silly film with Wolfgang Güllich and Ron Kauk, but also the name for a small hooking device used to aid climb up small ledges and pockets.

Climb, to

(d) Klettern, (f) Grimper, (nl) Klimmen, (i) Arrampicare/scalare, (e) Escalar, (s) Klättra, (pl) Wspinac sie

Climb, a

(d) Kletterei, (f) Escalade, (nl) Klim, (i) Arrampicata , (e) Escalada, (s) Led/Tur

"Climbing"

What the climber shouts after the belayer screams "Belay on".

(d) "Komme", (f) "Départ", (nl) "Ik kom", (i) "parto"/"vengo", (e) "Voy", (s) "Jag klättrar", (pl) "Ide"

Climbing gym

The second best thing to real rock (Aka "[wall](#)" in the UK).

(d) Kletterhalle, (f) Mur d'escalade / Salle d'escalade, (nl) Klimzaal/Klimhal, (i) Palestra, (e) Muro artificial de escalada, (s) Inomhusvägg

Climbing shoes

Shoes made of sticky rubber that would have fit you comfortably when you were ten.

(d) Kletterschuhe, (f) Chaussons d'escalade, (nl) Klimschoenen, (i) Scarpe da roccia / scarpette / pedule, (e) Pies de gato / tenis de escalada, (e-argentina) pedulas / zapatillas de escalada, (s) Klätterskor, (pl) Pantofle / buty wspinaczkowe

Climbing wall

The British word for a [climbing gym](#).

"Climb when ready"

The British equivalent of "Belay on".

(e) "Cuando estás listo", (e-argentina) "veni", (pl) "Mozesz isc"

Clip, to

The reassuring action of putting the rope through a karabiner (that is attached to a piece of pro).

(d) Einhängen, (f) Mousquetonner, (pl) wpiac sie

Clove hitch

A useful, easily adjustable climbing knot usually used to tie the rope into a karabiner.

(d) Mastwurf, (f) Noeud de cabestan, (i) Nodo barcaiole, (e) Cola de cochino, (s) Dubbelt halvslag, (pl) Wyblinka



Col

A steep, high mountain pass.

(f) Col, (pl) Siodło

Cord

Thin static rope (5, 5.5 or 6 mm)

(d) Reepschnur, (f) Cordelette, (nl) Prusiktouw, (i) Cordino, (e) Cordino / cordeleta, (s) Repsnöre, (pl) Repsznur

Corner

Inside corner (see [dihedral](#)) or outside corner. In the UK, a corner is always an inside one.

(f) Dièdre, (i) Diedro, (e) Esquina, (s) Hörn, (pl) Zaciecie

Corn snow

Unconsolidated granular snow that has gone through a short freeze-and-thaw process. This type of snow is prevalent throughout the High Sierra in April and May.

(pl) Śnieg kukurydziany

Couloir

A steep gully which may have snow or ice.

(f) Couloir, (pl) Kular

Crab

Short for [Karibiner](#).

Crack, in rock

A gap or fissure in the rock varying in width from nail to bodywidth.

(d) Riß, (f) Fissure, (nl) (Rots)-spleet, (i) Fessura, (e) Grieta, (s) Spricka, (pl) Rysa

Crag

Name for a (small) climbing area.

(d) Klettergarten, (f) Falaise, (i) Falesia, (s) Klippa, (pl) Skala

Crampons

Very pointy footwear use to walk glaciers or climb ice.

(d) Steigeisen, (f) Crampons, (nl) Stijgijzers, (i) Ramponi, (e) Crampones, (s) Stegjärn, (pl) Raki

Crank, to

To pull on a hold as hard as you can, and then some.

(d) Durchziehen, (pl) Wspinac sie w rysach

Crater, to

To fall and hit the ground, as in "I almost cratered".

(f) Se gauffer/se vautrer/se planter/dévisser, se viander, (s) Kratra, (pl) glebowac

Crest

The very top of a ridge or arete.

(pl) Ostrze grzbietu

Crevasse

A crack in the surface of a glacier.

(d) (Gletscher-)spalte, (f) Crevasse, (nl) (Gletscher-)spleet, (i) Crepaccio, (e) Grieta, (s) Glaciärspricka, (pl) szczelina

Crimper

A very small hold that accepts only the finger tips. In the UK, this is just called a crimp.

(d) Kratzer / Pinchi, (f) Gratton, (i) Tacca, (e) Grieta de dedos

Crux

The hard bit.

(d) Crux/Schlueßelstelle, (f) **Le** pas/Crux/passage clé, (nl) Sleutelpassage, (i) Passo chiave, (e) Paso clave, (s) Krux, (pl) Najtrudniejszy przechwyt, wyciąg na drodze

cwm

The Welsh word for [cirque](#).

D

Daisy chain

A sling sewn (or tied) with numerous loops, used as an adjustable sling in aid climbing.

Deadpoint

A dynamic move where the next hold is grabbed at the very top of the motion (if you lunge upwards, that is just before you start falling again). By grabbing a hold in its 'deadpoint', you place the smallest possible loads on the holds.

(d) Greifen im toten Punkt, (f) Jeté, (pl) Wspinanie dynamiczne

Death wobbles

The eery sensation of jittery legs. Aka [to Elvis](#) or the [sewing machine](#).

Deck

The usually unfriendly surface that welcomes you at the end of a grounder.

Descender

Device used for rappeling.

(d) Abseiler, (f) Descendeur, (i) Discensore, (e) Descensor, (s) Firningsbroms, (pl) Przyjazd zjazdowy

Dihedral

The US term for an inside [corner](#) (Aka "open book").

(d) Verschneidung, (f) Dièdre, (nl) Versnijding/hoek, (i) Diedro, (e) Diedro, (s) (Inner-) hörn / Dieder

"Dirt me"

US slang which means as much as 'Lower me'.

(d) "Ablassen" / "Nach"

Dog (to dog a move)

Climbing, lowering, climbing again till a certain move is made (the usual mode of ascent...).

(d) Ausbouldern, (nl) Jo-jo

Double fisherman's knot

Solid knot used to tie two ropes or pieces of webbing together (Aka grapevine knot).

(d) Doppelter Spierenstich, (f) Double noeud de pêcheur, (nl) Dubbele visserssteek, (i) Nodo a contrasto doppio/nodo doppio inglese, (e) Nudo de pescador doble, (s) Dubbel fiskarknop

Double rope

Same as a half rope. Also the technique using two half ropes.

(d) Doppelseil, (f) Corde à double, (i) Corda doppia, (e) Cuerda doble, (s) Dubbelrep

Downclimbing

Descending the difficult way.

(d) Abklettern, (f) Désescalader, (nl) Afklimmen, (i) disarrampicare / Arrampicare in discesa, (e) Destrepar / Desescalar, (s) Nedetklättring

Dry tool, to

To ascend a section of rock using ice tools - very common in mixed climbing.

Dude

Generic name for a climber (in the US).

Dynamic belay

A belay method in which some rope is allowed to slip during severe falls. A dynamic belay can severely reduce the

impact force from a serious fall, but can also severely kill you if not done properly.

(d) Dynamische Sicherung, (f) Assurage dynamique, (i) Sicura dinamica / assicurazione dinamica, (e) Seguro dinámico, (s) Dynamisk säkring

Dyno

Dynamic movement towards a distant hold.

(d) Dynamo, (f) Jeté, (nl) Dynamo, (i) Lancio, (e) Movimiento dinámico, (s) Dynamisk move

E

EB

A legendary brand of sport climbing shoes - started the free climbing revolution.

Edge

A sharp edge on a rock face.

(d) Kante, (f) Graton, (i) Spigolo / lama, (e) Orilla, (s) Kant, (pl) Kant

Edging

Foot technique where one uses the edge of the climbing shoe to stand on small footholds. The opposite of smearing.

(d) Kanten, (f) Grattonner, (e) cantear

Elvis, to

To have a [sewing machine](#) leg. Named after "Elvis, the King", who suffered from this this problem when singing before a crowd of screaming women.

(d) Nähmaschine, (e) motoneta, (pl) telegrafowac

Epic

The story of a well planned climb that turned into a grueling adventure that turned out well in the end. As these stories are told over and over again - and they always are - the details get stretched to supernatural proportions for dramatic effect.

(d) Eine Geschichte, (f) Epopée (e) Historia épica

Etrier

(Pronounce with a french accent). Webbing ladder used for aid climbing. Also known as 'aider'.

(d) Leiter, (f) Étrier, (nl) Ladder, (i) Staffa, (e) Estribo, (s) Stegar

F

Face climbing

Not crack climbing.

(d) Wandklettern / Plattenklettern, (nl) Wandklimmen, (f) Grimper en dalle, (i) Arrampicata su parete/Arrampicata in placca, (e) Escalada exterior, (s) Vägglättring, (pl) wspinaczka po plycie

Fall, to

A dynamic retreat from a climb (free-solo rappel). Note that it is never the fall that kills, it's the landing.

(d) Stuerzen, (f) Prendre un plomb / Voler / Tomber, (nl) Vallen, (i) Cadere / Volare, (e) Caer / volar, (s) Ramla, Falla, (pl) odpasc

"Falling"

Yelled when a climber is (about to) fall.

(d) "Ich stürze", (f) "Bloque" (eqv. to ['tension'](#)), (nl) "Ik val", (i) "Volo", (e) "Caigo"

Fall factor

The length of the fall divided by the amount of rope paid out.

(d) Sturzfaktor, (f) Facteur de chute, (i) Fattore di caduta, (e) Factor de caída, (s) Fallfaktor

FecoFile

A PVC tube used to store solid human waste on big walls. Aka the Shit Tube.

Feet

Footholds.

Fifi hook

An open hook used to allow easy clipping during aid climbing. Usually found on aiders, daisy chains, etc.

(d) Fifihaken, (f) Fifi, (i) Gancio fiffi, (e) Fifi, (s) Fiffikrok

Figure 8

Metal rappelling/belaying device shaped like an 8.

(d) Achter/Abseilachter, (f) Descendeur en huit (Huit), (nl) Acht, (i) L'otto (il discensore), (e) Ocho, (s) Ātta, (pl) Osemka

Figure of eight

Very popular and solid tie-in knot.

(d) Achtknoten, (f) Noeud en huit (Huit), (nl) Acht/achtknoop, (i) Nodo a otto / Savoia inseguito, (e) Nudo de ocho, (s) Āttaknut, (pl) Osemka



Fingerlock

Masochistic technique to twist and wedge the fingers into a crack.

(d) Fingerklemmtechnik in Rissen, (f) Verrou (de doigt), (nl) Vingerverklemming, (i) Incastro di dita, (e) Encuñadura de dedos, (s) Fingerjam

Firn

Old, well consolidated snow. Often a left-over from the previous season. Closer to ice than snow in density, it may require the use of crampons.

Fisherman's knot

Simple knot to tie two ropes together. The double fisherman knot, however, is more popular.

(d) Spierenstich, (f) Noeud de pêcheur, (nl) Visserssteek, (i) Nodo a contrasto semplice, (e) Pescador, (s) Fiskarknop

Fixed pro

Bolts, rings, pitons, stuck nuts and cams and other piece of unremovable pro that may be found on a climb. Use at your own risk.

Flail, to

To become very unsure and sketchy. When the flailing goes into frantic grabbing for holds, a fall is not far away.

Flake

A thin bit of rock that is detached from the main face.

(d) Schuppe, (f) Écaille, (i) Scaglia, (e) Laja, (s) flak, (pl) Pletwa

Flapper

A piece of skin torn off your hand that creates a bloody wound. Usually happend when holding on too hard when gravity is winning.

Flared

A crack or chimney with sides that are not parallel, but instead form two converging planes of rock.

Flash, to

To lead a climb with no falls or dogging and with no previous attempts on the climb. Two variations exist: the onsight flash (where the climber has never seen the climb before) and the beta flash (where the climber has studied the climb before or has seen someone do the climb). See there.

(f) Enchaîner en tête

Following

Not leading a climb.

(d) Nachsteigen, (f) Grimper en second / Grimper en moulinette, (nl) Naklimmen, (i) Seguire (andare da secondo), (e) Segundear / escalar de segundo, (s) Följa, (pl) Chodzic na drugiego

Free climbing

Moving up a rock using only hands, feet, and natural holds. Ropes and pro are only used for protection of the climber and not for progression.

(d) Frei klettern, (f) Escalade libre, (nl) Vrijklimmen, (i) Scalata/arrampicata libera, (e) Escalada libre, (s) Friklättring

Free solo

Free climbing while using no ropes for protection. You fall - you die.

(d) Free solo klettern, (f) Solo intégral, (nl) Solo, (i) Arrampicata in solitaria, (e) Escalada solitaria / Superlibre, (s) Frisololo

Friend

Trade name for the original camming devices, now also available as Camalots, TCU's, Quads, Aliens, Big Dudes, etc.

G**Gas**

The stuff your car and muscles run on. If you run out of gas....

Gate

The part of the karibiner that opens.

(d) Schnapper, (f) Doigt, (nl) Snapper, (i) Leva, (e) Pestillo, (e-argentina) leva, (s) Grind, (pl) Zamek karabinka

Gerry rail

A hold large enough for the most senior climbers.

Glacier

A slowly moving permanent mass of ice.

(d) Gletscher, (f) Glacier, (nl) Gletscher, (i) Ghiacciaio, (e) Glaciar, (s) Glaciär, (pl) Lodowiec

God-save-me

The type of hold one lunges for hoping it will be the perfect bucket.

"Got me?"

A wake up call for the belayer, used to warn her that you are about to put some weight on the rope.

Grade

A number denoting the seriousness of a route (not to be confused with the rating of climb, which describes the technical difficulty). In Britain, however, the word grade means both grade and rating. [Look here for the different grades...](#)

(d) Ernsthaftigkeitsgrad, (f) Engagement, (e) Grado, (pl) Wycena

Grapevine knot

[Fisherman's knot](#).

Gravical

The adrenaline high felt with a lot of air between you and groundlevel. 'This is gravical, dude'.

Grease, to

Not being able to hold on to a particularly slick hold, due to the presence of sweat, lactic acid or sand. Not uncommon in overused crags

Grodle

Climbing English for awesome or cool.

Grounder

A fall where the kinetic energy is not absorbed by the rope and pro, but rather by mother earth itself. Can hurt badly.

(d) Bodensturz, (f) Chute au sol

Grigri

Nifty but somewhat controversial belaying device made by Petzl.

Gripped

Paralyzed with fear and utterly confused.

Gully

A wide, shallow ravine on a mountainside.

Gumbie

Also spelled Gumby. An inexperienced or new rock climber.

H

HACE

High Altitude Cerebral Edema. Liquid in the brain as a result of high altitude exposure. Few people live to tell what it is like.

(f) Oedème du cerveau

Half rope

A rope of 9 or 8.5 mm that has to be used together with a second rope when leading a climb.

(d) Halbseil, (f) Corde de rappel, (nl) Half touw, (i) Mezza corda, (e) Media cuerda, (s) Halvrep, (pl) Lina polowka

Handjam

Slightly masochistic technique where the hand is wedged into a crack.

(d) Handklemmer, (f) Verrou (de main), (nl) Handklem, (i) Incastro di mani, (e) Encuñadura de mano / -de palmas, (e-argentina) Empotrar la mano

Handle

Big banana-shaped hold often found in indoor gyms. Great for waving hello to admiring bystanders. It may sound bizarre, but I've never seen one of those outdoors...

(d) Henkel, (f) Poignée / baquet / poignée de métró (Parisians only) (nl) Handvat, (pl) Klama

Hangdog, to

See Dog.

HAPE

High Altitude Pulmonary Edema. Liquid in the lungs as a result of high altitude exposure. Pretty serious condition that can quickly lead to HACE if a descent to lower altitudes is not made immediately. See also HACE.

(f) Oedème du poumon

Harness

Piece of clothing that identifies you as a climber. The coolness factor can be significantly enhanced by hanging things from the harness that go cling.

(d) Klettergurt, (f) Baudrier/Baudard, (f-c) Baudrier/Cuissard, (nl) Klimgordel, (i) Imbragatura, (e) Arnés, (s) Klättersele, (pl) Uprzaz

Haul bag

Large and robust bag used to haul food, water, climbing gear, sleeping bag, television, satellite dish, and other essential equipment that is required, up a big wall. Also know as "the pig".

(d) Materialsack / Nachziehsack, (f) Sac, (i) Sacco da recupero, (e) Petate / Costal de escalada, (s) Hissack

Headwall

Where the face of a mountain steepens dramatically.

"Help"

The vocal alternative to 6 signals a minute. In far away countries, try S.O.S. -- [it doesn't mean anything](#) but is understood by most.

(d) "Hilfe", (f) "Au secours", (nl) "Help", (i) "Aiuto", (e) socorro/ayuda, (s) "Hjälp"

Helmet

Solid plastic device that can sometimes protect the head from falling stones or impact (Aka a brainbucket).

(d) Helm, (f) Casque, (nl) Helm, (i) Casco, (e) Casco, (s) Hjälms, (pl) Kask

Herbish

The opposite of [grodle](#). Not all that awesome.

Hex

Short for Hexentrix. A type of nut with an excentric hexadiagonal shape. Works for wedging (as a nut) but also for camming.

Hueco

A beautifully shaped pocket with a positive lip named after these increabile features found at the Hueco Tanks bouldering area in Texas.

HMS

Karabiner with one wide side used for belaying with a munter hitch (aka pearabiner). From the German term for munter hitch belay: 'Halbmastwurfsicherung'.

(d) HMS, (i) Moschettone a pera, (s) HMS-knut, (pl) HMS (karabinek gruszkowaty)

Hold

Anything that can be held on to.

(d) Griff, (f) Prise, (nl) Greep, (i) Appiglio / Presa, (e) Presa / agarre, (e-argentina) Toma, (s) Grepp, (pl) Chwył

Horn

Spike of rock that can be for a great hold or not so great protection. The same as a chickenhead.

Hurtin unit

That member of the climbing team that is suffering from severe exposure to alcoholic beverages the night before.

I**Ice axe**

Device used for ice climbing, glacier crossing, or scaring away burglars.

(d) Eispickel / Eisbeil, (f) Piolet, (nl) IJsbijl, (i) Piccozza, (e) Piolet, (s) Isyxa, (pl) Czekan

Ice screw

A protection device for ice climbing. Looks like a large bolt that can be screwed in hard ice.

(d) Eisschraube, (f) Broche à glace, (i) Vite da ghiaccio, (e) Tornillo para hielo, (s) Isskruv

Italian hitch

Munter hitch knot or HMS knot

(pl) Polwyblinka

J**Jam, to**

Wedging body parts in a crack.

(d) Klemmen, (f) Faire un verrou / Faire un coincement / Coincer, (i) Incastrarsi, (e) Encuñar, (e-argentina) Empotrar, (s) Jamma, (pl) Klinowac

Jug

Very large hold (short for jug handle) (Aka "bucket" in the US).

(d) Henkel / Kelle, (f) Poignée, (nl) bak, (i) Vasca / Fibbia, (e-argentina) Manija, (s) Brevlāda, (pl) Klama

Jugs

Big wall lingo for Jumars or any other type of ascenders.

Jug, to

To jumar up a line (big wall lingo).

Jumar

A type of rope ascending device.

Jumar, to

To ascend a rope using ascenders.

(d) Jumaren, (f) Monter au jumar, (e) Jumarear, (s) Jumarera

K**Karabiner**

Metal connecting device, sometimes spelled with a 'c' in the US. This most essential climbing device is also known as a "biner" in the US and as "crab" or "krab" (mostly) in the UK.

(d) Karabiner, (f) Mousqueton, (nl) Karabiner/mousqueton, (i) Moschettone, (e) Mosquetón / Mosquete, (s) Karbin / Karbinhake, (pl) Karabinek

Kernmantle rope

Modern climbing rope consisting of bundles of continuous nylon filaments (Kern) surrounded by a braided protective

sheath (Mantle).
(d) Kernmantelseil

kN

Kilonewton. An abbreviation usually found on karabiners and other climbing gear. For those of you who are not engineers, one kilonewton is about 100 kg or about 220 lbs. (And for those of you who are, don't bother lecturing me).

Knotted cord

Piece of cord with a knot tied into the end that is used for protection (pretty much like a nut). The traditional method of protecting climbs, and still used in the Elbsandsteingebirge in Eastern Germany.

(d) Knotenschlinge, (f) Corde nouée, (i) Cordino annodato

Krab

Short for [Karbiner](#).

L

Largo start

A climb or bouldering problem where the first move starts with a jump for high holds. Named after John Long (or 'Largo').

Layback/Lieback

Somewhat clumsy looking climbing technique where hands and feet work in opposition.

(d) Piazen/hangeln, (f) Dülfer / opposition, (i) Dulfer (Opposizione), (e) Dülfer, (s) Layback

Leader

Person who leads a climb.

(d) Vorsteiger, (f) Premier (de cordée), (nl) Voorklimmer, (i) Primo, (e) Primero / puntero, (s) Försteman, (pl) Prowadzacy

Prowadzacy

Lead, to

To ascend a climb from the bottom up, placing protection (or clipping protection) as you go.

(d) Vorsteigen, (f) Grimper en tête, (nl) Voorklimmen, (i) Andare da capocardata, andare da primo, (e) Puntear / guiar,

(s) Leda, (pl) Prowadzic

Ledge

Flat bit on a rock (can be miniature or gigantic).

(d) Leiste (small) / Absatz (large), (f) Réglette/vire ("vire" is somewhere between a microledge and a party ledge), (nl)

Rand(je), (i) Cengia, (e) Repisa, (s) Hylla, (pl) Polka

Limestone

Type of rock found in abundance in southern France (usually white and full of pockets and holds).

(d) Kalkstein, (f) Calcaire, (nl) Kalksteen, (i) Calcare, (e) Roca calcárea, (s) Kalksten, (pl) Wapein

Locking biner

Karabiner that can be locked (in the UK, a [screwgate](#) or [twistlock](#)).

(d) Verschlusskarabiner / Schrauber, (f) Mousqueton à vis, (nl) Schroefkarabiner, (i) Moschettone a ghiera, (e) Mosquetón de seguro, (s) Låskarbin / Skruvkarbin

Lock-off

To hold on to the rock with one bent arm while using the other arm to reach up for the next hold or to place or clip protection. Lockoffs on small holds will get you pumped in a hurry.

(d) Blockieren / Fixieren, (f) Bloquer, (nl) Blokkeren, (i) Bloccaggio, (e) Bloquear, (s) Lesa / Binda av

Lowering

To descend something or somebody.

(d) Ablassen, (f) Descendre en moulinette / mouliner, (nl) Zakken/naar beneden laten, (i) Calare, (e) Bajar / descender a alguien, (s) Fira ner

M

Manky

Term used to describe a fixed bolt that looks like it was placed before the last ice age. Use these bolts at your own

discretion

(d) Rosthaken, (f) Clou pourri/clou rouillé

Mantle

Difficult balancing move useful to get up on ledges.

(d) (Durch)-stützbewegung, (f) Rétablissement, (i) Ristabilimento, (s) Mantla

Mixed climbing

Climbing with a combination of different methods of ascent. e.g mixed free and aid climbing, mixed rock and ice climbing, etc.

(f) Escalade mixte

Moat

The gap between snow and ice on a rock wall. Has posed problems ever since the middle ages.

Mountain rescue

The people who put their life on the line when you screw up badly.

(d) Bergrettung, (f) Secours en montagne, (i) Soccorso alpino, (e) Rescate de montaña, (s) Bergräddning

Munge

The dirt and vegetation that can sometimes be found in cracks. In the UK: [Choss](#).

Multi pitch climb

Climb that consists of more than a single pitch.

(d) Mehrseillaengentour, (f) Voie de plusieurs longueurs, (nl) Klim van meerdere touwlengtes, (i) Via da piu' tiri, (e) Ruta de varios largos, (s) Tur med flera replängder(?), (pl) Droga kilku wyciagowa

Munter hitch

Knot used for belaying (Aka italian hitch or friction hitch). The Germans love this knot (see HMS).

(d) Halbmastwurf, (f) Demi-cabestan, (nl) Halve mastworp, (i) Mezzo barcaiolo, (e-argentina) Nudo dinamico, (s)

Munterknot

**N****Nailing**

An ancient term used to describe direct-aid climbing with pitons.

Needle

Rock with a characteristic pointed shape. Also known as pinnacle, aiguille, gendarme, etc.

(d) Nadel / Spitze, (f) Aiguille / Gendarme, (i) Guglia / Pinnacolo, (e) Aguja, (s) Pinnakel, (pl) Igla

Névé

Consolidated granular snow formed by repeated freeze-and-thaw cycles. Also used to indicate permanent snowfields.

(f) Névé

Notch

A small col.

(f) Brèche

Nut

Metal wedge used for protection in cracks.

(d) Klemmkeil, (f) Coinceur, (nl) Nut, (i) Dado, (e) Nuez, (s) Kil, (pl) Kosc

Nut key

The piece of metal that americans call a [nut tool](#).

Nut tool

Piece of metal that can be used to remove stuck nuts or cams. In the UK: [nut key](#).

(d) Keilenentferner, (f) Décoinceur/sardine, (i) Cavadadi, (e) Sacanueces, (s) Kilpetare

O

"Off Belay"

Yelled when the climber no longer requires a belay (e.g. because she/he has reached a stance). Once the belayer hears "off belay", he/she removes the rope from the belay device and yells "belay off". In UK, Australia and New Zealand: "Safe".

(d) "Stand" ("Aussicher"), (f) "Relais, vaché!", (nl) "Stand", (i) "Posto" / "Molla", (e) "Libre", (e-argentina) "autoasegurado", (s) "Lägg av", (pl) "Mam auto"

Off width

A climb too wide to jam, too small to chimney. And then I've heard of people who actually like this kind of climbing.

(d) Schulterriß, (f) Offwidth, (e) Off width, (pl) Rysa szersza niz piesc

"On Belay ???"

Query to verify if the belayer is ready to secure the climber (US only).

(d) "Kann ich kommen?", (f) "Tu me prends ???", (i) "Sei pronto ???", (e) "?Subo?" / "?estás listo?", (s) "Sakring klar ???"

On-sight flash

Leading a climb with no falls and no dogging and without any prior attempts, watching someone do it or beta on how to do the moves.

(f) Enchaîner en tête à vue, (i) A vista, (e) A vista

Open book

Same as a dihedral or inside corner. Two panes of rock join in an acute or obtuse corner that faces left or right.

Outside corner

Also known as pillar or arete.

(d) Kante, (f) Pilier, (nl) Pijler, (i) Pilastro

Over-cam, to

Compressing a cam to its absolute minimum size during placement, effectively eliminating the possibility of extraction.

Overhand knot

A simple (but solid) knot in a double rope.

(d) Sackstich, (i) Nodo delle guide, (e) Nudo simple, (s) överhandsknut, (pl) Kluczka



Overhand loop

The simplest type of knot possible.

(d) Kreuzschlag, (f) Queue de vache, (e) Gasa, (pl) Kluczka z uchem

Overhang

Rock (or ice) that is "more than vertical".

(d) Ueberhang, (f) Surplomb(=strong overhang) or dévers (=slight overhang), (nl) overhang, (i) Strapiombo, (e) Desplome / Extraplomo, (s) Överhäng, (pl) Przewieszenie

Over-kilned

A boiler plate or flaky rock

P

Pass

The lowest passage between two mountains. The french - but not just the french - know this as a col. The mathematicians would call this the saddle point.

(d) Pass, (f) Col, (i) Sella / Colle / Passo / Valico, (e) Collado / puerto, (s) Pass, (pl) Przelecz

Party ledge

A somewhat larger ledge used to rest (and party !) during a particularly hard or long climb. Sometimes used to refer to the belay station on a multipitch climb.

(f) Terrasse ("vire" is a somewhat narrower ledge), (i) Terrazza, (nl) Plateau, (e) Repisa

Pendulum

A swing on the rope, either intentional to gain a distant anchor on big wall climbs or unintentional when falling during a traverse with not enough pro in place.

(d) Pendeln / Pendelquergang, (f) Pendule, (i) (Traversata a) pendolo, (e) Péndulo, (s) Pendeltravers / Pendla, (pl) Wahadlo

Pig

The haul bag.

(d) Sau

Pillar

Outside corner

(d) Pfeiler, (f) Pilier, (nl) Pijler, (i) Pilastro, (e) Pilar, (s) Pelare, (pl) Igla

Pimp, to

To do a short semi-dynamic stab. It's not quite a dynamic move, but it's also not quite static. It's the happy median.

Pink point

To red-point a climb where the pro and runners have been pre-placed.

(d) Rotpunkt mit eingehängte Schlingen (Rotkreuz ???)

Pitch

A section of climb between two belays and no longer than the length of one rope (this used to mean 45m, nowadays pitches can also be 50 or even 60m long -- check your topo).

(d) Seillaenge, (f) Longueur, (nl) Touwlengte, (i) Tiro, (e) Largo (de cuerda), (s) Replängd, (pl) Wyciag

Piton

Metal spike hammered into a crack (has come in disuse for all but some special applications) (Aka "peg" in the UK).

(d) Haken, (f) Piton, (nl) (Mep)haak, (i) Chiodo, (e) Pitón / clavo

Pocket

A hold formed by a (small) depression in the rock.

(d) Loch/Fingerloch, (f) Trou à doigt, (nl) Gat/vingergat, (i) Buca da dito, (s) Ficka, (pl) Dziurka

Portaledge

A hanging tent with built in bed used on big walls (and big trees).

Pro, Protection

anchors placed during the climb to protect the leader. Beware: even properly placed pro does not prevent pregnancy or the transmission of STDs.

(d) Sicherungsmittel, (f) Protection, (nl) Zekering, (i) Protezione, (e) Protección / anclaje, (s) Säkring, (pl) Asekuracja

Prusik

The sliding knot or the method to ascend a rope (named after its inventor Dr. Karl Prusik).

(d) Prusik, (f) Prusik, (nl) Prusik, (i) Prusik, (e) Prusik, (s) Prusik

Pumped

The feeling of overworked muscles. Most climbers are familiar with the forearm pump: too much finger work causes the forearms to swell and the strength to disappear. With a serious forearm pump, even holding a glass of beer can become a serious challenge.

(d) Dicke arme (or any other body part), (f) Avoir les bouteilles/Daubé, (nl) Verzuurd, (i) Acciaiato, (s) Pumpad

Pumpy

Describes a climb that will leave you pumped.

Q**Quickdraw, quick**

Short sling with karabiners on either side.

(d) Expreßschlinge, (f) Dégaîne, (nl) setje, (i) Rinvio / Preparato / sveltina, (e) cintas express, (s) Expresslinga / Kortslinga, (pl) Expres

R**Rack**

The climbing gear carried during an ascent.

(d) Materialsortiment, (f) Matériel / matos, (i) Equipaggiamento / Assortimento di materiale, (e) Bandolera / bandola, (s) Racka / Utrustning, (pl) Spej

Rack, to

To sort the rack before engaging on the next climb or pitch.

Rad

Not trad. Slang for sport climbing.

Rally, to

To climb exceptionally well, especially on normally difficult climbs.

(f) Randonner

Ramp

An ascending ledge

Rappel, to

Also: to rap. Descending by sliding down a rope. Known in Britain (and Germany) as abseiling.

(d) Abseilen, (f) Descendre en rappel, (nl) Afdalen/abseilen (i) Calare (in corda doppia), (e) Rapelear, (s) Fira, (pl) Zjezdzac

Rating

A number denoting the technical difficulty of the climb. [See here for more on ratings and grades.](#)

(d) Schwierigkeitsgrad, (f) Cotation

R.D.S.

Rapid Deceleration Syndrome. Military term for the very sudden illness that happens at the end of a long fall.

Redpoint

To lead a climb without falling or dogging after a number of attempts. This is different from onsight, where the climb is lead without falling or dogging on its first attempt.

(d) Rotpunkt, (f) Enchaîner, (i) Arrampicare in libera, (pl) RP

Resin

An alternative to chalk. Resin (or "pine tree resin" to use its full name) is made from the yucky stuff that sticks to your hands when you touch a pine tree. Because resin is mostly colorless, it is preferred to chalk in some areas. But caution: Don't let the color fool you. Resin can do permanent damage to the rock and in fact is not allowed anywhere in the US for that reason.

(d) Pof, (f) Pof, (i) Resina, (e) Resina, (s) Harts

Resident protection

[Fixed pro.](#)

Rib

A slender buttress. Something between a buttress and an outside corner.

Ridge

The high divide extending out from a peak.

(f) Crête (small) or chaîne (large)

Ring

A large (2 inch diameter) ring that is cemented in the rock as a bolt. Rings are very common in Germany and France and are excellent for rappelling and hanging belays.

(d) Ring, (f) Scellement, (nl) Ring, (i) Anello da calata, (s) Ringbult, (pl) Ring

"Rock"

Scream let out to warn people down below that a piece of rock has been overcome by gravity. The loudness, number of repetitions, and/or panic in voice with which this word is uttered is often an indication of the seriousness of the rock. In the UK, you're more likely to hear "Below", beware!

(d) "Stein", (f) "Pierre" / "Caillou", (i) "Sasso", (e) "Piedra", (s) "Sten", (pl) "Kamien"

Roof

Seriously overhanging part in a climb (more or less horizontal).

(d) Dach, (f) Toit/Plafond, (nl) Dak, (i) Tetto, (e) Techo, (s) tak, (pl) Dach

Rope

Long and round nylon fabrication. Climbing ropes are generally between 10 and 11 mm in diameter (with the exception of "half ropes" which are between 8.5 and 9mm in diameter).

(d) Seil, (f) Corde, (nl) Touw, (i) Corda, (e) Cuerda, (s) Rep, (pl) Lina

"Rope"

Should be yelled when a rope is about to be thrown to the base of the crag (though most of the time it seems like "rope" is shouted about 1-2 seconds *after* the rope is thrown). In the UK, shout "Rope below".

(d) "Seil", (f) "Corde", (nl) "Touw", (i) "Corda", (e) "Cuerda", (e-argentina) "va cuerda", (s) "Rep", (pl) "Uwaga lina"

Route

A certain path up a rock or mountain.

(d) Tour, (f) Voie, (nl) Route, (i) Via, (e) Ruta, (s) Led, (pl) Droga

Runner

A loop of tape or webbing either sewn or tied (Aka sling, especially in the UK). In the UK, a 'runner' is a running belay.

(d) Schlinge, (f) Sangle, (i) Anello, (e) Anilla, (s) Slinga, (pl) Talma ?, (pl) Petla

Runner

A runner threaded or looped around chockstones, flakes, horns or chickenheads for protection.

(d) Zackenschlinge

Runout

Distance between two elements of pro. A route is "runout" when the distance between those two elements of pro becomes uncomfortably long.

(d) Abstand zwischen 2 Sicherungspunkten, (f) (Une voie est) Engagée, (i) Via protetta lunga, (e) Ruta poco protegida, (pl) Odleglosc miedzy punktami asekuracji

S

Saddle

A high pass that looks somewhat like the horsewear. Not quite as steep as a col.

"Safe"

The British equivalent of "Off Belay".

(d) "Stand", (f) "Relais" / "Vâché", (nl) "Stand", (i) "Posto" / "Molla", (e) "Libre", (s) "Lägg av", (pl) "Mam auto"

Schwag

Terrible rock conditions.

Scrambling

Easy climbing, usually unroped.

(d) Kraxeln, (f) Escalade facile, (e) Trepar, (s) Lätt Klättring

Screamer

A very, very long fall.

(f) Méga-plomb, (i) Mina / Randa, (pl) Dlugi lot

Screamer

Special piece of equipment meant to reduce the impact of a screamer (the fall) on the belay system.

(i) Dissipatore

Scree

Loose rocks and stones that cover the slope below a cliff. With every step, scree slides under your feet.

(f) Éboulis / caillasse

Screwgate

The type of karabiner that can be locked with a screw. See also twistlock. In the US this is usually called a '[locking biner](#)'.

Second

The climber who follows the leader. See also following.

(d) Nachsteiger, (f) Second, (i) Secondo, (e) Segundo, (pl) Drugi na linie

Send, to

To climb a route with ease. "I'm gonna send this route, dude!"

Serac

A block or tower of ice on a steep glacier or in an ice fall. Since seracs are created by the force of gravity working on the glacier or ice fall, they can come down at any moment.

Sewing-machine leg or arm

A leg (or arm) under tension that suddenly starts jerking up and down like a sewing machine. Stretch the muscle, take a deep breath, and don't think of falling... (see also: to [Elvis](#) or the [death wobbles](#)).

(d) Nähmaschine, (s) Symaskin, (pl) Telegraf

Sewn-up

When so much gear is on a trad route that it looks like it has been sewn shut.

Sharp end

The end of the rope to which the leader is attached.

SH** !

Often heard during a fall... (Well educated climbers in the UK sometimes say "sugar" - but only if they're not in too much trouble).

(d) Scheisse !, (f) Merdel!, (f-c) "Chite!", (nl) Shit!, (i) "Merda!", (e) Mierda!, (s) Djävlar!, (pl) Cholera / Kurcze / Kurde

Short roping

Technique where both climbers are tied close together into the middle of the rope. The rest of the rope is then carried over the shoulders in a coil. Frequently used for simul-climbing. The term (and technique?) is used frequently in the Canadian Rockies.

(f) Faire des anneaux de corde, les anneaux á la main.

Short roping

Belaying technique where the belayer keeps the leader under tension in an attempt reduce the length of a fall. Tony Bubb will gladly give you an exposé on the dangers of this technique - or refer you to [this site](#).

Side pull

A hand hold that needs to be held with a horizontal (sideways) pull.

(d) Piazz-Griff / Seitgriff, (f) Prise verticale, (i) Maniglia rovescia, (s) Sidotag / Sidogrepp, (pl) Odciag

Sit start

To start a bouldering problem from a sitting position. See also '[Yabo Start](#)'.

Sierra wave

A lenticular cloud found mostly in the Sierras, but known to be forebode of bad weather in the Mont Blanc area.

(f) Âne

Sketch pad

A cushion used for bouldering.

Skyhook

A particular type of hook used for aid climbing

(f) Crochet à goutte d'eau

Slab

Flat and seemingly featureless, not quite vertical piece of rock.

(d) Platte, (f) Dalle, (nl) Plaat, (i) Lastra / Lastrone / Placca, (e) Laja, (s) Sva / Platta, (pl) pologa plyta

"Slack"

Yelled when the climber needs more rope (e.g. to clip into protection).

(d) "Seil", (f) "Du mou", (nl) "Touw", (i) "Corda" ("Lasco"), (e) "Cuerda", (s) "Slacka", (pl) "Luz"

Sling

What the Americans call a [runner](#).

Slingshot

A toprope setup where the belayer belays on the ground (where the climber starts climbing) and the rope is pre-clipped through the anchor at the top of the climb. In the UK, top-roping or bottom-roping (depends where the belayer stands).

Sloper

Pathetic downward slanting hold. (Usually look like buckets from below.)

(d) (Abschüssiger) Aufleger, (f) Prise fuyante, (i) Appiglio spiovente

Smearing

Foot technique where a big part of the climbing shoe is used to generate as much friction as possible. The opposite of edging.

(d) Auf reibung stehen, (f) Grimper en adhérence, (i) Aderenza, (e) Fricción, (s) Smeara, (pl) Wspinanie na tarcie

Snaplink

A truly British word for a [karibiner](#).

Soloing

Climbing alone, though not necessarily without the protection of a rope (unless you're in the UK, where a solo is always a [free solo](#)).

(d) Solo klettern, (f) Soloer, (e) Escalar en solitario

Sport climbing

Climbing routes of (extreme ?) gymnastic difficulty while protection oneself by clipping copiously numbered and generously spaced preplaced free protection.

(d) Sportklettern, (f) Escalade sportive, (nl) Sportklimmen, (i) Arrempicata sportiva, (e) Escalada deportiva (s) Sportklättring, (pl) Wspinaczka sportowa

Spray, to

To brag or gloat.

Stem, to

Bridging with the feet between two holds (US only).

(d) Stemmen, (f) Se mettre en opposition, (i) Opposizione, (e) Oposición, (s) Stämma / Sprajsja

"Stick it"

American slang meaning "hold on" or "go for it".

(f) "Allez !", (e) "Asegura"

Sticht plate

A belay device consisting of a plate with two slots in it. An original creation by Franz Sticht.

(d) Sticht Bremse, (f) Plaque d'assurage, (f-c) Plaque-frein, (i) Piastrina sticht, (e) Placa Sticht, (s) Stichtbroms

Summit

The top of a mountain or rock.

(d) Gipfel, (f) Sommet, (nl) Top, (i) Cima, (e) Cima / cumbre, (s) Topp, (pl) Szczyt

Summit, to

To reach the summit.

(d) Gipfeln, (e) Encumbrar, (pl) Wejsc na wierzcholek

T

"Take"

American monosyllable for "[Up Rope](#)". Also used by top-ropers and sports-climbers to indicate that they have reached the top and want to be lowered.

(d) "Seil ein" / "Zu", (f) "Avale", (e) "Recupera", (pl) "Wybierz"

"Take in"

The British equivalent of "[Up Rope](#)".

(d) "Seil ein"/("Zieh an"), (f) "Avale", (i) Recupera, (s) "Tag hem", (pl) "Wybierz"

"Taking in"

Heard often in British crags, meaning the climber is "off belay" and about to pull up the slack between him and the belayer.

(f) "J'avale"

Talus

Large blocks of rock. A coarse variation of scree.

Tape knot

Or [threaded overhand](#) knot in the US.

Tarn

A small lake.

10essentials

That part of your climbing gear you don't want to leave at home.

"Tension!"

Yelled out to the belayer to make sure he really takes in the slack. Usually "tension" is used by a climber that is ready to pop off. The progression of severity usually goes "[up rope](#)", "tight rope", "tension!".

(f) "Bloque"

"That's me"

Part of the climbing dialogue. Courteous call to the belayer to indicate that the slack in the rope is all taken up and that further pulling is pointless.

(d) "Seil aus", (f) "Bout de corde", (pl) "Koniec luzo na linie"

Threaded overhand

Solid but not failproof knot also known as water knot or tape knot (UK), or ring bend when used on webbing.

(d) Sackstich in Ringform, (e) Nudo encontrado

Thrutchy

Requiring a whole lot of strength (and enthusiasm in a way). Used in Australia - where all the climbing is upside down.

Tick marks

Little smears of chalk used to locate holds when bouldering.

"Tight rope"

Or just "Tight". Urgent request to the belayer to take the slack out of the system. Somewhat stronger than "[up rope](#)".

(f) "Sec", (f-c) "a sec", (e) "Tensa"

Toe

The bottom of a buttress.

Topo

A short drawing of the route. Good topos will allow you to spot the line right away, show the placement of bolts and belay stances, indicate where the crux is and what rating it has.

(f) Topo, (i) Topo, (e) Topo

Top-rope

Free climbing a route that has the safety rope attached to the top of the climb (usually one walks to the top to set up the top-rope belay).

(d) Toprope / Seil von oben, (f) Moulinette, (nl) Toprope, (i) Corda dall'alto, (e) Yoyo, (s) Topprep, (pl) Wedka

Trad

Traditional climbing, characterized by the placing of protection (cams, nuts, etc.) in cracks and pockets. Trad also

includes multi-pitch routes often with long runouts..

(d) Traditionelles, Alpines Klettern, (f) Classique, (nl) Alpijns klimmen, (i) Tradizionale, (e) Escalada tradicional /clásica

Trad fall

A fall during a trad climb, sometimes accompanied by the popping sound of protection succumbing to the temptations of gravity. See also 'crater' and 'screamer'.

(f) Devissage

Traverse

Horizontal climb.

(d) Quergang, (f) Traversée, (nl) Traverse, (i) Traverso, (e) Travesiacute;a, (s) Travers, (pl) Trawers

Trucker

Synonym for 'Bomber'. A trustworthy piece of pro.

Tunnel

A tunnel through or hourglass shape in the rock that allows a runner or cord to be fed through for protection.

(d) Sanduhr, (f) Lunule, (i) Clessidra, (nl) Zandloper, (e) Túnel

Twistlock

A locking karabiner where the gate is locked with a spring-loaded clip.

U

Undercling

A hold that would be a perfect bucket if gravity were upside down. As it is, underclings are usually awkward holds that require lieback type moves.

(d) Untergriff, (f) Inversée, (nl) Ondergreep, (i) Presa rovescia, (e) Undercling, (e-argentina) Toma invertida, (pl) podchwyt

"Up Rope"

Yelled by the leader or the follower when she/he wants a tighter belay. (In UK: "Take in" or "Tight" or even "Watch me").

(d) "Seil ein", (f) "Sec" / "Avale", (nl) "Blok", (i) "Recupera", (e) "Tensa", (s) "Ta hem", (pl) "Wybierz"

V

Verglas

Thin water ice on rock.

(f) Verglas, (pl) Oblodzenie

Vôgen

Great, super. "Everything's vôgen."

W

"Watch me"

Call to indicate the climber is about to do something stupid -- like fall.

(d) "Pass auf", (f) "Fais gaffe", (nl) "Let op", (i) "Occhio" / "Guardami bene" / "Tiemmi tirato", (e) "Cuídame", (s) "Beredd?", (pl)

Water ice

Ice formed directly from frozen water. Water ice is clear and brittle and contains few air bubbles. Sometimes water is even flowing around the ice. Can be found in the couloirs of the High Sierra in autumn (and in many other places).

Water knot

See tape knot.

(d) Bandschlingenknoten, (e) Nudo encontrado, (s) Vattenknop, (pl) Wezel wodny

Webbing (tubular)

Flat and strong strip of nylon, that is hollow in the inside.

(d) Schlauchband, (f) Sangle (tubulaire), (nl) Schlinges, (i) Fetuccia tubolare, (e) Cinta tubular, (s) Tubband, (pl) Tasma rurowa

Webbing (loop of)

A runner made of webbing.

(d) Bandschlinge, (f) Sangle (anneau de), (i) Anello di cordin / Anello di fettucia, (e) Anilla, (s) Slinga

Weighting

The delicate test of placing weight on a piece of pro after placing it. Usually with aid climbing.

Whipper

A very long fall.

White ice

Ice with lots of air bubbles that forms from melted-and-frozen snow. Good climbing stuff.

(f) Glace blanche

Wombing

Doing a no-hands-rest.

Woodie

A homemade climbing wall.

(f) Pan

X

Y

Yabo

As in 'yabo start'. A 'sit start'. Named after John Yablonski a stud southern california climber, who was nicknamed Yabo.

YDS

Yosemite Decimal System. The North-American [rating system](#).

Z

Zawn

A deep and narrow fold or inlet in a sea cliff. British.

Zipper

A fall where the protection pulls out one after the other as the leader succumbs to gravity. Often ends with a grounder (or a cardiac arrest).

(d) Rei&germandbls;verschlu&germandbls;sturz, (f) Déboutonner (verb), (pl) Suwak

Z-Pulley System

Complicated rope setup that allows you to hoist heavy weights with relatively little force. Excellent for recueing or hauling bags.

(d) Flaschenzug, (f) Moufflage



Some URLs that have links to this page (this list isn't even near complete):

To [The Climbing Archive!](#)

To [the DAV and JDAV \(German Alpine Club and its Youth section\) in Leipzig.](#)

To [ClimbOn](#)

To [Climbing Guide to Varsova \(Greece\)](#)

To [Tunbridge Wells Mountaineering Club](#)

To [Climbing in Caroux \(France\)](#)



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