

ESSENTIAL ALPINE SKILLS

This is a comprehensive, introductory level skills course suitable for beginners who have aspirations of climbing independently on alpine peaks and also those who want to progress their alpine skills for more technical guided alpine peaks in the future. The course covers all of the basic skills necessary to climb safely and independently in the Alps. It offers a full 5 days of training, while to making an ascents of classic peaks, potentially over 4000m

Who is the course suitable for?

It is suitable for people with a good general level of fitness. If you regularly do 2-3 hours of training or sport per week and are happy to do a 6 hour hill walk without being exhausted, then you will likely have appropriate fitness levels for this course.

Previous technical experience - This course is suitable for people with no technical mountaineering experience, however some experience of mountain walking is needed and previous experience scrambling, climbing or via

ferrata is recommended. Please feel free to call me if you want to check if this course is appropriate for your experience and ambitions.



When is the Course?

We meet in Chamonix on the evening of the 22nd September 7pm and we finish in Chamonix the evening of the 27th September.

The end of September is a great time for this course. The mountains are quieter after the main summer season, which can be nice when you're learning new skills. The temperature is also a little cooler than the mid summer and there is often some fresh snow which adds to the experience. One of the main reasons I like this time of year is that the mountain refuges have often just closed, which means instead of staying in the big catered refuge we use the small "winter rooms" which are more basic often with a wood fired stove. This really enhances the experience, adding to the adventure and remote feel of the mountains. It is often also cheaper to stay.

Where is the course based?

Chamonix in the French alps.

The course starts and finishes in Chamonix, easily accessible from Geneva airport. During the week we are flexible and we will travel to peaks in Switzerland and possibly also Italy.

Example Itinerary

Pre course briefing

22st September

For this evening meeting before the course starts, we will meet in Chamonix. This is an opportunity to meet and ask questions- we will have a briefing for the week, check equipment and chat about current weather and conditions.

Day 1: Rock Day- 23rd September

After a beautiful walk to a crag to spend time covering all of the basics for rock climbing and alpine rope work skills. This day is tailored to your previous experience, helping you gain input and progress with your rock climbing and ropework skills. This day produces a solid foundation for the alpine rope work and movement skills necessary during the rest of the week.



- Opportunity to achieve and progress climbing experience
- Tying on to the rope
- Belaying
- Rock Movement coaching
- Clipping and basic knots
- Safe abseiling techniques
- Tying chest coils and the beginnings of “short roping”
- Prusiking up a rope and the beginnings of self rescue
- Establish skills to sport climb in the future



Day 2: Ice Day and Hut Approach

Drive to Lac Moiry above Grimentz in Switzerland. Walk to the Cabine De Moiry a beautiful mountain hut. A 45min walk takes us on to Moiry glacier, where we will learn all the basic techniques for using ice axes and crampons safely. This dry glacial approach is a brilliant opportunity to practice and develop good technique in cramponing and use

of the mountaineering axe.

- Putting on crampons
- Different crampon techniques
- Movement skills on Ice, practice and coaching
- Holding and using ice axes
- Stowing ice axes efficiently
- Steeper ice climbing techniques
- Understanding glacial hazards
- Tactics for glacier travel
- Building ice anchors
- The foundations for glacier travel and crevasse rescue

Once we reach Cabane De Moiry, we can settle in. The Hut is usually closed at this time of year, which means we stay in the “Winter Room” so we will likely be lighting the log fire and melting snow for water while catering for ourselves. It's a fantastic place to stay and often, we are the only people there.



**Day 3: Glacier travel skills, short roping and crevasse rescue
(incorporated into the ascent of a
summit)**

Leaving the hut early and completing an ascent of one of the nearby peaks- possibly the mixed north ridge on the Pigne de La Le (graded PD Hight 3396m.)

This journey offers lots of opportunity for learning with a strong focus on:

- Short rope technique over mixed ground
- Building reliable snow anchors
- Full crevasse rescue of your partner
- Route choice in glacial terrain

- Mixed climbing up ridges
- Learning to become more efficient in the mountains
- Decision making and risk assessment.

This is a big day and we finish by descending to the valley where we will stay in local accommodation or return to Chamonix for the night.

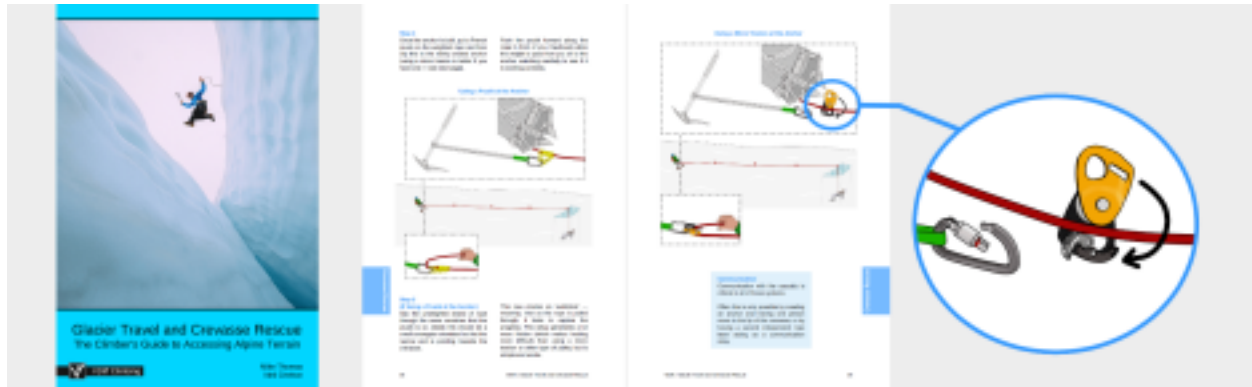
Day 4 and 5 Progression and Consolidation of Skills on an Alpine Summit

For the Final 2 days of the course, we pick an appropriate objective based on the weather and conditions. This is often the Gran Paradiso 4061m in Italy or the Bishorn 4153m in Switzerland. On the 4th day we will approach the appropriate mountain refuge and then on the final day, we make the big summit attempt. These final 2 days are a great opportunity for you to put the new skills into practice and start to become progressively-independent alpinists getting involved in the judgment and decisions, while making the ascent of a big alpine peak.



Course instructional book

I have written a core text that covers the main technical skills. This can be very helpful when consolidating your skills after the course. I can send you this as an ebook.



The Price

The price for the course is €1150 per person.

What's Included in the Price?

- 5 full days mountain guiding with an IFMGA Mountain Guide
- Evening briefing the day before the course starts
- All Fuel and Transport during the course starting and finishing in Chamonix. ● Personal technical equipment hire including (helmet, harness, crampons, Ice axe, belay plate, sling, carabiners, prussic loops.)
- Management of the trip / itinerary and booking of all mountain huts

What's Not Included?

- Chamonix accommodation. You can arrange the accommodation you want. Everything is available in Chamonix: Camping, hostels to Hotels.
- Mountain huts. Allow around 65 euros per person for your hut night (dinner, bed & breakfast) Less if we are using the "Winter rooms"
- Valley Accommodation during the course, if we choose to stay in the valley this is usually a similar cost to the mountain huts.
- Mountain lift passes: in some situations we may choose to use a mountain cable car during the week.
- Flights
- Lunches, extra drinks, snacks etc during the course
- Personal Mountaineering boots and Clothing, appropriate boots can easily be rented in Chamonix.
- Insurance, this is your responsibility to arrange and ensure that you are covered for

- alpine mountaineering in the European Alps
- Any other expenses

A little bit about me

I am a British IFMGA Mountain Guide, also a WMCI in the UK

instructional system and I have Degree in Outdoor Education. I

have worked and climbed all over the world in the last 20 years.

My work is a combination of guiding and teaching. I come from a strong teaching background having worked for the UK National

Mountain Center Plas Y Brenin for a number of years, with a

focus on delivering rock and mountain skills courses



My real passion is helping people develop their mountain skills and thus in some way helping them access this amazing world of mountains and adventure - and all that comes with it. This Climbing world has been such a valuable part of my own life. That is why I do the job I do and thoroughly enjoy passing these skills onto others.

For the "Essential Alpine Skills" course I only offer 1 or 2 of these per year and I will always deliver these myself.





If you have any questions, need some more information or you would like to book a place on this course, feel free to give me a call or a message +44(0)7804831990

Mike Thomas

IFMGA

Guide