This site presents the images from the ebook *High: Advanced Multipitch Climbing*, by David Coley and Andy Kirkpatrick. In order to keep the cost of the book to a minimum most of these were not included in the book. Although they work best when used in conjunction with the book, most are self-explanatory.

Please use the following links to buy the book: Amazon USA (kindle) / Amazon UK (kindle) / itunes / kobo

Back to Other Chapters

Contents

In this chapter we look at using a buddy system to stay safe, how to check a Grigri, the three basic ways to climb multi-pitch, rope choice, introduce two ways in which multi-pitch belays might be a little different from what you are used to and show how multipitch routes are described in guidebooks.

1. Stay Safe

The first pitch might be more than half a rope length, so put a knot in the end of the rope in case you have to lower the leader back down in a hurry. You will probably have to put a knot in the rope at sometime in order to tie in, so do it at the start. ***Or just tie in together****.*

Use a buddy system throughout the day. Check knots, belay devices, anchors and attachments for each other, especially on raps. This can be done silently. You will make a mistake one day (we all do), so you need your partner to be checking.

*Test the Grigri each time you use it. The important thing is to reach for the rope **near the leader**, then slide back to the Grigri, and test with a couple of sharp pulls. If you don't start by taking the rope from near the leader, you won't know you are pulling her rope at the Grigri. This is a classic example of using a backup check or test that tries to get around the issue of people seeing what they want to see. Any check or backup needs to check or backup in a different way than the normal visual inspection or method you will have used anyhow. The second always tying in to start is another example of this. Yes, you could reply on keeping an eye on the end of the rope if you have to lower the leader back down quickly, but the second tying in provides the backup which uses a non-visual check and will ensure (unlike David) you never get dropped to the deck when the end of the rope passes thought the belay plate.*

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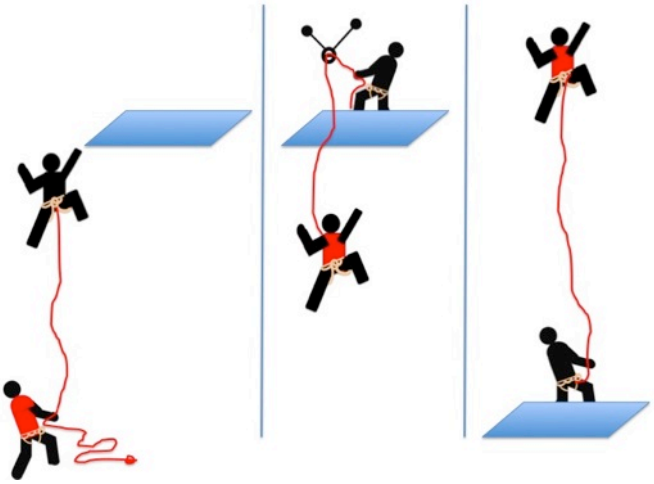
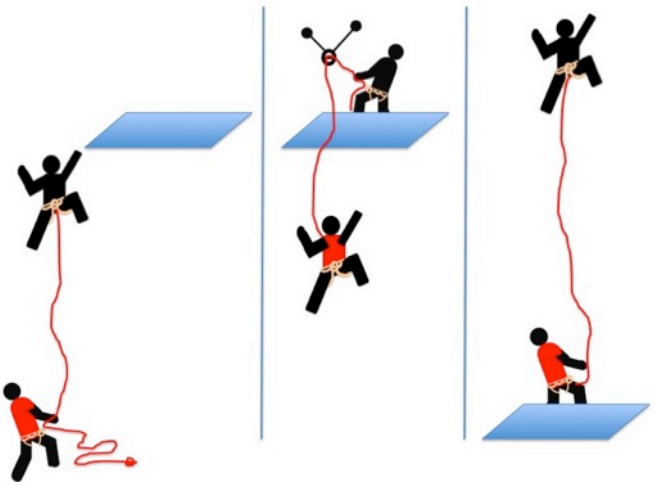
2. The Basic Method

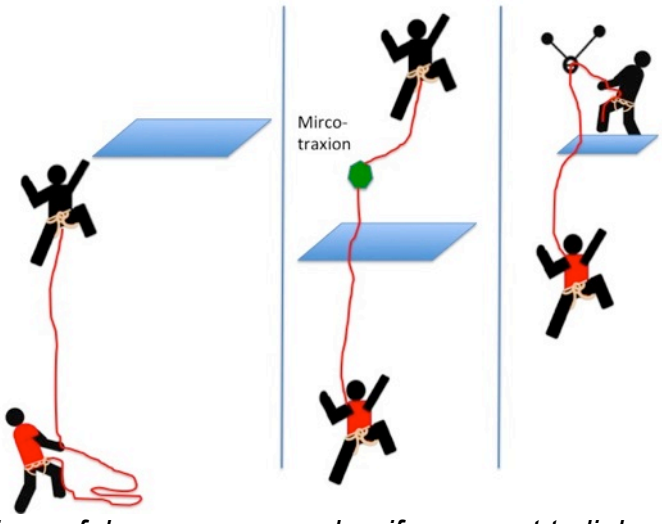
The following images show the three basic ways of climbing a multipitch route: leading through (i.e. swapping/swinging/alternating leads) leading in blocks and moving together.



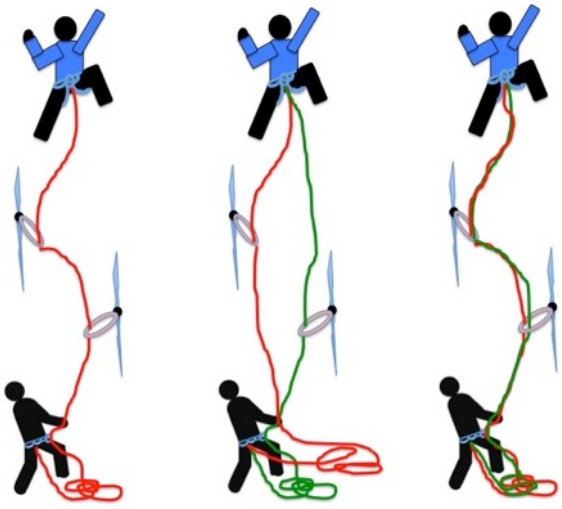
Swinging leads. Black leads first pitch; red the second; black the third……



Leading in blocks. Black leads the first n-pitches (or for m-hours); then red takes over. This can be useful if for example the first part of the climb is easy and the rest hard as the weaker climber leads the easy stuff and doesn't slow the team down higher on the route. If a block is defined as a period of time, then you can rig things so both climbers get to lead for the same amount of time, so the faster climber is less likely to become upset by Mr Slow.



Moving together. This is useful on easy ground or if you want to link pitches. The micro-traxion stops the second pulling the leader off the rock if he falls. This is an advanced technique for experienced teams only.



The three basic rope systems: left, single rope (this is fast); centre, double ropes, also known as

half ropes, (more complex, but less drag, makes it easier to protect the second and with the possibility of doing full-length abseils); and, twin ropes (simple, and with the possibly of doing full-length abseils).

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3. The Belay

*Multi-pitch belays need to be set not just to take the direction of the pull a falling second might apply, but also the direction needed to hold a flying leader if she falls on the next pitch. Here, the leader has headed off to the right, and because the main anchors are also on the right, a third piece (a **counter-piece**) has been placed off to the belayer's left.*

*On multi-pitch routes, particularly those with fixed anchors such as bolts it is common to attach the belay plate to the anchors and belay the second directly rather than off the harness. This is termed a **direct belay** and requires the use of the correct type of belay plate – here a Reverso is being used. Direct belays are only normally used to bring the second up, although there is a growing acceptance that they might under some circumstances (**when rigged in a different way**) be useful when belaying the leader (see for example: http://www.outdoorlink.org/research-papers/part-5-belaying-lowres.pdf or http://willgadd.com/anchor-clipping/).*

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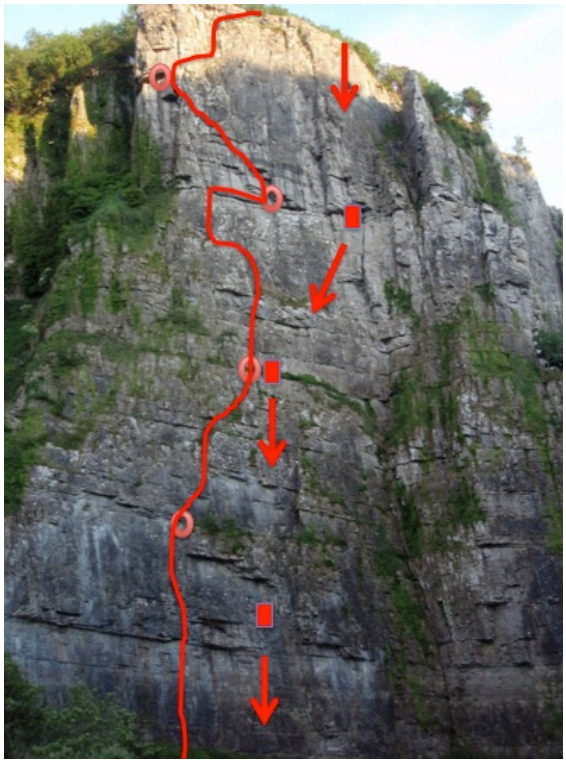
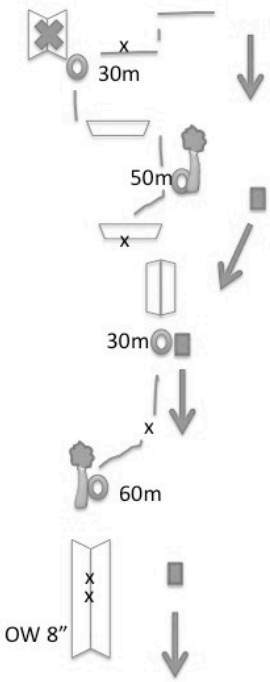
4. The Route

Guidebooks stop you getting lost. They can be in the form of photo topos, written descriptions or complex looking schematic drawings. Complex natural-looking line drawings seem to have dropped out of favour. In the following the same route is described in three different ways, each has its advantages and disadvantages and if you can find your route in more than one form it can sometimes help to take both. Climbing a big route smoothly is often about gathering as much data as you can before you set off. Walking to the base of the route and back the night

before often saves an hour of confusion at dawn the next day.





1. The Photo Topo

Pigs in Space. 200m (6a, 6c, 7a, 6a, 5c)

Advantages: You are unlikely to start up the wrong mountain with a photo topo. The route is clear and it is very easy to match what you see looking at the face with the photo. The location of the rap stations is particularly clear. Works very well in any language.

Disadvantages: The red line coves up many of the features, particularly cracks and corners. The length of each pitch is often not given, nor the location within a pitch of the crux. Can be surprisingly difficult to find the exact position of the start of a long route on a photo taken from several miles away, or workout the details of any of the features climbed.

2. Schematic

Pigs in Space. 200m (6a, 6c, 7a, 6a, 5c)

Advantages: Easy to see what the main features - like the big corner on the first pitch - are. Pitch lengths are clear. Obvious that two of the belays are at trees (which you might not be able to spot in a photo). Positions of key bolts marked as crosses. Clear indication of where not to go (the top corner) as well as where to go. Sometimes the crux move on the pitch will be indicated and the maximum size of protection to take. Works well in any language as long as you can read the key to the symbols.

Disadvantages: Much harder to see if you are on the right part of the cliff, or even the right mountain. Once you get off route you will be lost, as unlike a photo you don’t have information about the surrounding features. This can be a serious issue if you have to retreat. Harder to get inspired by a schematic glued to the fridge than a photo of the route.

3. Written description

Pigs in Space. 200m. FA: G.K.J.F. Smyth-Wilingson and J.H.U. Longstone, 1896.

Advantages: A good sense of history. Easy to get inspired by, or be put off. Gives a good idea of what you are up against. Clear statement of the feature the route starts up.

A truly brilliant but complex route. Climbs the damp overgrown face by the easiest line, but via lots of loose rock. Epics are common. A route ahead of its time in many ways. The opening offwidth is now harder as Smyth's original wooden posts are long gone.
Start at the base of the large corner with the graffiti "Say no to voles" in red paint.
1. 60m. 6a. Climb the corner, pulling over the small roof using holds on the right. Skirt the next overhang on the left to belay at the tree.
2. 30m. 6c. Trend rightwards over ledges to a small corner, which is climbed with difficulty to a band of loose rock. Trend rightwards once more over unstable blocks to belay on a mix of old threads and cams in suspect rock.
3. 50m. 7a. Swing over the small roof above the belay to enter the short corner. Exit left from the top of the corner and gather your strength under the roof. Critical Friend 1.5 or equivalent. Reach up right to a small pocket in the centre of a hand-sized white-coloured patch of rock and commit to the mono. Head left, up the crack then back right for 5m along the break to belay at the tree at Lunchtime Ledge. Leading this pitch Longstone was forced to gather her long woollen skirt up with the straps of Symth's backpack, forcing him in turn to carry the Champagne and lunch in his jacket pockets.
4. 30m. 6a. Follow the white streak up left across the buttress via various small but easy roofs to the arête. Belay in the back of the cave on a bed of bat droppings.
5. 30m. 5c. Follow ledges and corners to the top trying to avoid the unstable blocks.

Descent is via abseil from a series of decaying rap stations to the west.

Long description of crux moves, even details of key handholds, which could prove useful, or be considered too much beta. Gives you something to read on a rainy day when stuck in the tent. Clearly sets on the key features from the perspective of the climber's position with the detail they need to know when they need it.

Disadvantages: Can take a long time sitting at the base to match the description to the rock you see in front of you. Very easy to convince yourself what is written is what you see and start up the wrong cliff (maybe the graffiti washed off). Often the writer forgets to say how far, or in what direction (e.g. "traverse into the obvious corner", when there are corners to the right and left, and how far west the first rap station is). Once you get off route you will be lost, as unlike a photo you don't have information about the surrounding features. Only makes sense if you can read the language it is written in.

Back to Other Chapters