

Introduction

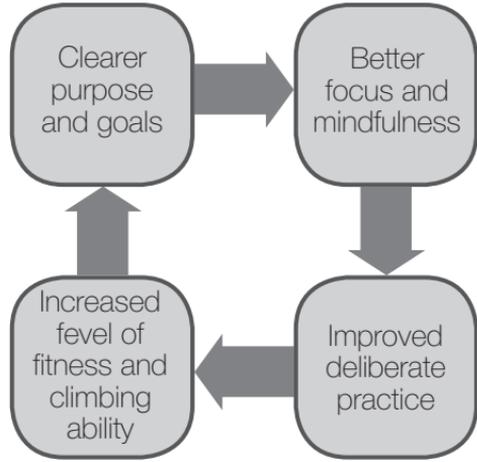
Have you been climbing for a couple years and your improvement has started to plateau? Is your technique continuing to evolve? Are you getting continuously stronger? How can you keep getting better? Can you train without it seeming like work? What is training for climbing, actually? What does good training look like? How do you start training?

If any of these questions hit home, this book is for you. It is a quick start guide for training based on the latest research on climbing, learning, expertise, and performance psychology.

Training is
climbing
with
purpose

Training is simply problem solving. Or put another way, training is *climbing with purpose*. It is not some other work activity designed to get you to the fun of climbing. It is climbing combined with deeper awareness

of the reason you are climbing and for this particular climb. The goal of this guide and the included sample plan is to provide a training method that distills the wide range of available information about



training for climbing and allows you to start immediately. It provides an amalgamation of existing best practices in a well-tested format to start you on the road to high impact training in support of your climbing adventures. This guide walks you through a series of climbing workouts and supplemental exercises. Use it to jump-start your training through deliberate action, mindfulness, and simple metrics. This will lead to more enjoyable and effective climbing through steady improvement in your technique, fitness, and mental focus. Most importantly, this guide will provide the principles on which to develop your own individualized training formula and unlock your potential as a climber.

You can think of the following pages as an executive memo to supplement the one-page training plan. It is short and *action* oriented. The point is to boot-strap your own *deliberate practice* in climbing. Then, once you are fully involved in quality training, there are a variety of resources that may become valuable to you. I recommend a list of

great books in the reference section at the end of this guide. Each will provide you with knowledge and skills not covered here, but that information only becomes truly useful once you have started a deliberate practice and know specifically what you are looking for.

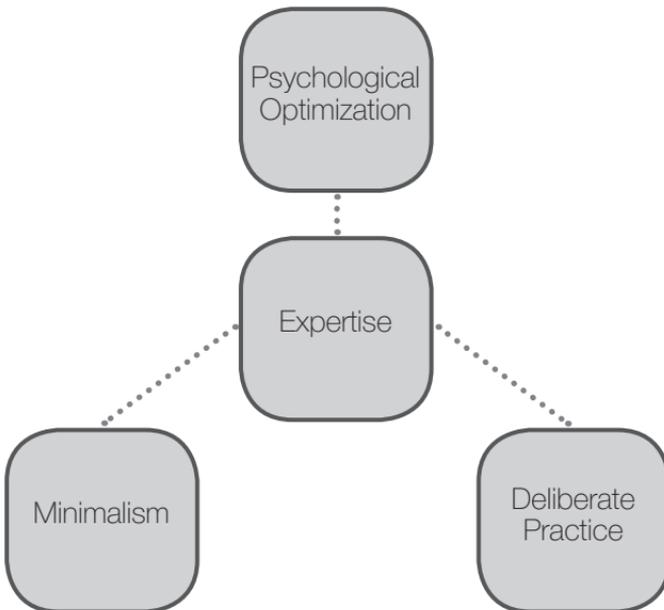
The sample plan was initially designed for climbers with a minimum of two years experience who want to become fully rounded climbers ready to pursue big alpine objectives. It will provide you with a means to achieve the climbing ability and fitness necessary to take on adventurous, big wall, multi-pitch climbs. But it will also be useful to any climber interested in improving the effectiveness of their training for any objective.

Use the sample plan to see the training principles in action. Then create your own plan.

A well-rounded climber requires physiological adaptations in their technique, power, power endurance, strength, and endurance, as well as mental adaptation for increased focus, stress reduction, fear management, and emotional regulation. In terms of climbing fitness, the required adaptations are mostly localized to the upper body, core and grip

musculature, but also include hip and leg flexibility, mobility, and aerobic hiking capacity. The sample plan focuses on steadily improving each of these elements on a weekly basis. The particular approach of conjugate periodization, i.e. placing the focus on a particular aspect of your fitness (power, endurance, or power endurance) each week is a method to provide more significant gains in one aspect of your training while maintaining the others.

This guide will help you individualize your own training. Such training is never static. It should change over time to reflect your changing needs and aspirations. Thus, you have embarked on a lifelong process of changing and improving the exercises, timing, and metrics for each your workouts, always with your purpose and



goals in mind. This process itself will be the long-term benefit of learning the material in this guide and is applicable to any endeavor where you aim to increase your expertise. For most of us who climb, climbing at our limit is a wonderful metaphor for other challenges in life, and getting good at climbing can offer deep insights into how to overcome those challenges.

This guide also includes a brief discussion of eating well, as diet is so central to high-level performance in athletics, and climbing in particular. Given that climbing is about defying gravity, your strength to weight ratio is a key factor to your improvement as is the increased caloric requirements needed to power your climbing and subsequent recovery. The core principles applied to eating are the same as those for climbing: minimalism, psychological optimization, and deliberate practice.

To summarize, there is a *what*, a *why* and a *how* of effective training. This guide shows you *what* to train so that you can start immediately. It also gives you a blank training plan so you can modify your training to meet your particular needs and time constraints.

Then, in the following pages, I suggest you spend time considering the *why*, your unique purpose or purposes for climbing. "Because it's fun!" is an awesome reason, and if it is your only reason, just knowing that can let you ignore other pressures and get even more enjoyment out of your climbing. Connecting with your purpose will clarify your goals, and doing so regularly will supply you

with the emotional energy necessary to train hard to achieve your goals. Lastly, this guide supplies the *how*, by teaching you about deliberate practice, psychological optimization, minimalism, and the other principles that apply to climbing.

Progress is a combination of growth in skill, mental fortitude, willpower, and fitness, and is but one of the joys of climbing—but for many people it's a significant one. At the core of progress is the continuing and healthy mental and physical adaptation to increasing stressors, i.e. learning. Unlocking the ability to learn efficiently and effectively while having fun is a fundamental life practice. My hope is that this book opens you to a mindful, deliberate practice when climbing that in turn will improve both your climbing and your appreciation of climbing and its vibrant community.

And I hope to meet you out there in the hills—exploring, investigating, learning, and having a blast!

Ben,

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