

Vertically Inclined Rock Gym – *Belay Check*

Goal: To ensure that all individuals using the top ropes at **Vertically Inclined Rock Gym** are doing so competently and safely.

Cost: \$5 dollars

Duration: approximately 10 min.

Introduction: During the *Belay Check* procedure, you will be asked to perform the roles of both climber and belayer. In order to pass the check, you must exhibit all skills to a high degree of competence. Before the check, you are free to practice tying in and belaying in our practice area. However, if you learn any of the required skills on the day of the check or the **VIRG** staff member conducting the check needs to provide you with information or assistance to help you perform the necessary skills, you will not be eligible to pass the check.. You may be accorded *conditional* belay status which will allow you to belay for the duration of the day.

Procedure: You (or your parents if under 18) must have signed a waiver in order to climb in this facility, if you have not please inform the front desk person that you still need to fill out a waiver. The **VIRG** staff person will then escort you to an easy climb. You will be asked if you have read this document and understand it. If two are taking the test, one person will be asked to tie in and the other to set up the belay. The climber will be asked to take two falls on the way up the climb. Before falling the first time, the climber will warn the belayer by saying “falling”. The second fall will be unexpected from above 12 feet during the climb. The belayer is expected to catch both falls. The climber should then continue up the wall and be lowered by the belayer. Climber and belayer will switch roles and repeat the procedure. If the check is being administered to a single climber a free staff member or a willing patron will climb. The *Belay Check* entails the following items:

- **Proper assemblage of their harness** including all buckles being doubled back (the staff may provide assistance if it is a rental harness and unfamiliar to the climbers). *Homemade harnesses are not permitted in this facility.*
- The client must **tie in through the proper points on the harness with a follow through figure eight knot**. Tying in with a knot on a bight attached to a locking gate carabiner is not acceptable.
- The client must be able to demonstrate the safety checks used to identify errors in the set up of both the climber’s and the belayer’s system.
- The client must show evidence of some sort of a **planned communication system** consisting of signals between climber and belayer (on belay...climbing...climb on...take...got you...down).
- The client must demonstrate a **proficient belay technique with a friction device** (tube or plate style such as ATC, airbrake, etc.) maintaining an appropriate amount of slack while keeping a solid hand on the brake at all times (**if you let go of the brake during the belay you will fail the check**). Although Grigri’s are allowed on the floor they are not permitted during the belay test. Figure eights are not allowed for belaying in this facility.
- All clients are required to **hold a top rope fall** during the test. They should be able to lock off the device with no hesitation.
- The client must lower the climber at a reasonable speed and in a safe manner.

Pass, Fail, or Conditional? Remember, the *Belay Check* is for your safety and ours and so is given in your best interest. It is up to the **VIRG** staff person to determine the extent to which you have performed the tasks required. If you do not pass, you may be accorded *conditional* belay status which allows you to belay for the remainder of the day, though you are required to take the check again the next day you climb (*no charge*). If you do not perform the *Belay Check* to the *conditional* standard, you will not be able to belay and you must retake the *Belay Check* at a later date when you feel you have sufficiently learned the skills. Customers who pass the check are required to come to the front desk to sign their user card so it is ready when leaving. All advice given as part of the check is completely free !

Thanks and Climb Safe!