



Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School

*Director Jon Tierney, internationally licensed IFMGA mountain guide
PCIA Accredited, AMGA Accredited since 1994*

Dear AMGA Course Participant,

Hello and thank you for your interest or registration in an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor course through Acadia Mountain Guides. This document contains course information the course:

Welcome to the course! This is your opportunity to learn and share best practices in climbing instruction. Attached is information for your course. Please read all the information in detail.

You are responsible for reading the information packet, studying the course manual, completing the AMGA pre-course on-line module, submitting your climbing resume and arriving ready to build on those foundations. Please come prepared, this is a professional level course.

If you need to reach me my cell is 207-461-4338.

Meeting Location: The first day of the course will meet at Acadia Mountain Guides, 228 Main St, Bar Harbor, ME at 0800. We will be traveling into Acadia National Park and you will need to have a park pass or an inter-agency pass.

Yours truly,

Jon Tierney

AMGA/IFMGA Internationally Licensed Mountain Guide
Owner, Acadia Mountain Guides, Inc.

climb@AcadiaMountainGuides.com

COURSE INFORMATION

Thank you for your registration in an AMGA Single Pitch Course run through Acadia Mountain Guides. This packet contains course information for the Single Pitch Instructor Course on Oct 7 – 9, 2023 in Acadia National Park.

Description:

The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) Single Pitch Instructor Course (SPI) is the first in the AMGA sequence of climbing instructor and guide training programs. The Single Pitch Instructor (SPI) Course is designed to help capable recreational climbers develop the skills required to professionally instruct single pitch climbing where access to anchors may be made either from the top or from leading the climb.

The SPI Program is a three day (27 hour) training course. Those seeking certification may sit for either the AMGA SPI exam (2 days) or PCIA SPI exam (1 day). Certification lasts for three years as long as the candidate maintains a current Membership and First Aid Certification. After three years current SPI's can re-take the SPI Assessment or take any higher level AMGA Program to maintain the SPI certification.

While not all students are fully prepared for the certification exam by the end of the course, every participant will have the training to practice and prepare for an exam in the future and will leave the course with many new ideas and skills.

All course participants receive a written evaluation at the end of the course and are granted a one-year associate membership in the AMGA. Benefits of membership include a subscription to the quarterly Mountain Bulletin guide's newsletter, discounts on the AMGA Guide's Manual, and opportunities to attend membership instructional clinics and membership meetings.

The Acadia Mountain Guides SPI (Single Pitch Instructor) course is instructed by IFMGA/AMGA Mountain Guide Jon Tierney. Jon is the creator of the original version of this program (Top Rope Site Manager) and contributed many of the techniques and concepts behind the course.

Who is it For:

The Single Pitch Instructor (SPI) course is intended for recreational climbers who are already proficient in both top-rope and lead climbing. It was designed to benefit those who wish to facilitate outdoor climbing programs for groups such as those offered by guide services, camps, schools, universities, therapeutic groups, churches and climbing gyms. Those who wish to teach climbing in the outdoors tend to have a much higher success rate in obtaining employment as climbing instructors with SPI training and certification. The AMGA strongly suggests this course as a precursor to those interested in pursuing Rock Guide training and certification.

The SPI Course is an instructor training course for current, proficient and active rock climbers that wish to gain the SPI Certification. The course teaches many instructor specific technical skills and provides participants an opportunity to do a "deeper dive" into their current technical skills. The course further addresses professionalism, teaching techniques, risk management, group site organization, climbing site conservation/LNT and assistance/rescue skills.

Pre-requisites:

- You are a Professional Member of the AMGA.
- You have a genuine interest in rock climbing and instructing novices on single pitch crags.
- You are at least 18 years old at the time of the course.
- You have at least 12 months prior climbing experience.
- You are an active climber with traditional lead climbing experience (leader placing pro).
- You have led a minimum of 15 traditional rock climbing routes (any grade).
- You are capable of comfortably climbing 5.8 while on a top rope.

Why you should take our course:

It matters who teaches your course!

All of our AMGA SPI (Single Pitch Instructor) courses are run by Jon Tierney. Jon is an IFMGA/AMGA Mountain Guide. More importantly, he was the principal author and proponent of the AMGA top rope site manager curriculum which became the AMGA Single Pitch Program in 2008 with the addition of lead climbing skills. He was lead trainer for AMGA train-the-trainer programs from 1998 - 2007 at which point he turned his energies toward the development of the PCIA

Top Rope Climbing Instructor and Single Pitch Instructor programs of which he was the PCIA Education Director. After a hiatus from the AMGA, Jon has now returned to offer the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor (SPI) course and share his extensive knowledge with future instructors. Jon is truly one of a small group of "subject matter experts" on single pitch instruction and, for what it's worth, has likely taught more of these types of courses than anyone else in the U.S. A good number of the current SPI providers took their original course(s) from Jon.

Where do we Go:

Courses in Acadia are taught on the granite cliffs lining the beautiful coast of Maine. The terrain in Acadia National is considered by many to be the best terrain in the country for developing single pitch climbing skills. Clean granite, an abundance of well protected climbs, great mix of both natural and artificial anchors, dozens of short climbs allowing quick rotations during course, and super short access to maximize learning time.

Jon is also available to run courses in any area where legal access can be obtained. Some of the areas he has run courses include:

North Conway, NH; central NH (Marlow / Lyme); Pawtuckaway State Park, NH; Joshua Tree, CA; Red Rock, NV; Tahoe, CA, Bishop/ Mammoth, CA; Shawangunks, NY; Little Falls, NY; Great Falls / Carderock, MD/VA; Crowder's Mountain, NC; Table Rock, NC; Sand Rock, AL; North Shore, MN; Blue Mounds, MN; Devils Lake, WI; Taylor's Falls, MN; Minnehaha, WA; Boulder, CO; Golden, CO; Grand Junction, CO; Ralph Stover State Park, PA; Smith Rock, OR; Mt. Lemmon, AZ; Fairbanks, AK; Enchanted Rocks, TX; Ogiwayama, Japan.

What Gear Do You Need:

Plan to be in the field for the entire course - rain or shine. Bring clothing and food/drink appropriate for both being active and not active regardless of weather.

Gear may be inspected on the first morning of the course and is expected to be in good condition. Mark all of your gear!

- Climbing Harness with belay loop
- UIAA/CE approved Climbing Helmet
- Climbing shoes in which you can climb up to 5.8
- One 60m single rope (9.5-10.5mm) suitable for leading and top roping
- One low stretch "static" rope 10mm x 30m+ (100') or so
- Standard lead climbing rack including stoppers/nuts, SLCD's, tri-cams, to 3 inches. If you have a #4, bring it.
- 6 - 8 single runners 24" (Alpine draws)
- 2 double runner 48"
- 15 or more carabiners - mostly straight gates to accommodate runners and a few extra
- 6-8 or more locking carabiners, 3 of which should be HMS/Pearbiner style for use with Italian (Munter) Hitch preferably with keylock gate
- Aperture style belay/rappel device, such as the BRD, Reverso, ATC, Pyramid, etc.
- MALD - Mechanically Assisted Locking Device such as Vergo, Lifeguard, Grigri
- 1- 2 Prusik loops (5 - 6mm accessory cord)
- 2 cordelettes (5m of 7mm nylon accessory cord or 5-6mm High Tenacity Cord)
- Appropriate sized pack to carry your gear and personal things
- Small first aid kit as you would carry instructing
- Sunscreen if needed
- Appropriate clothing to stay warm and dry, especially rain wear - we will stay out in the rain
- Personal finger food and drink
- Teaching tools - bag of tricks if you have any.
- Rite in the Rain type notebook / pencil

Participants receive the following discounts on any gear if needed:

- One time 30% off purchase of climbing equipment from Alpenglow Adventure Sports and AlpenglowGear.com.
- Lifetime 15% off purchase on any purchases from Alpenglow Adventure Sports and AlpenglowGear.com.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the Single Pitch Instructor course the student should be able to discuss the use of (benefits / problems), and demonstrate proficiency in the following:

- Risk Management - Tips to minimize edge time exposure, identifying critical moments in cycles of climbing activities.
- Equipment knowledge and care - Detailed information that instructors should know about regarding rope, webbing materials, carabiners, hardware, belay devices, etc.
- Leave No Trace - Develop professional expectations with respect to the environment and other users
- Teaching and Learning - Practice and role modeling of teaching climbing activities and skills that address major learning styles
- Use of Fundamental Knots, Hitches and Bends
- Placement of tapered wedges (Rocks, Stoppers), SLCD, Tri-cams and Hexes
- Natural anchor construction with low stretch rope
- Artificial anchor construction using both sequential (pre-equalized) and load distributing systems (Equatelette, multi-point Quad)
- Student use and backup of aperture and mechanical assisted locking devices in base managed climbs
- Instructor use of Munter Hitch and mechanical assisted locking devices in top managed systems
- Releasable rappel systems with instructor belay
- Use of 2:1, 3:1, and 3:1 + 1 hauling systems
- Belay takeovers on base managed climbs
- Counter-ascending and rappelling

Sample Itinerary:

Day 1

Session 1: SPI and AMGA Program Overview
Session 2: Professionalism
Session 3: Equipment
Session 4: Knots and Hitches
Session 5: Belaying
Session 6: Protection and Anchoring
Session 7: Teaching
End-of-Day Debriefs

Day 2

Session 8: The Climbing Site
Session 9: Site Organization and Group Management
Session 10: Base-Managed Sites
Session 11: Assistance Skills: Base-Managed Sites
Session 12: Programming and Risk Management
End-of-Day Debriefs

Day 3

Session 13: Demo Lead Climb / Movement
Session 14: Top-Managed Sites
Session 15: Lowering
Session 16: Assistance Skills: Top-Managed Sites
Session 17: Rappelling
Session 19: Review Sessions
Final Individual and Group Debriefs

Length and Difficulty:

Days will average 9-10 hours in length plus 2-3 hours of individual practice and study time in the evening. Please arrive rested and free of other responsibilities during the course. If you are traveling, it is best to plan to schedule departures on the day following the last day of the course or exam if possible.

Preparing for Your Course: 4 Steps

1. If you have not already become a member of the AMGA you must do so to participate in the SPI Course. You will also need to register for the correct course on the AMGA website (AMGA.COM) in addition to registering and paying on our website (AcadiaMountainGuides.com).
2. After logging in to your course on the AMGA website you must complete the following pre-course [E-Learning Modules](#) (Use the "SPI Course Offerings" link) prior to the start of the course:

- *AMGA Mission and Code of Conduct*,
- *SPI Program Overview*
- *SPI Equipment Overview*

You can expect a time commitment of approximately 2 hours to complete all three modules. Please be sure to send us your certificates of completion prior to the start of your course.

3. You should review the [AMGA SPI Program Handbook](#).
4. You should also purchase and read: Rock Climbing: The AMGA Single Pitch Manual.

Please email your traditional climbing resume well in advance of the course. This should include route name, difficulty, lead or follow, and number of pitches. You must include at least the minimum prerequisite of 15 traditional, gear-protected leads.

Knots, hitches and bends

Please master the following prior to your arrival. You should be prepared to teach any of the following on Day 1:

Figure Eight Family

Figure Eight Follow Through

Figure Eight on a Bight

2 Loop Figure Eight/Super Eight

Overhand Family

Double overhand stopper knot (Barrel Knot)

Overhand on a bight

BHK Big Honking Knot (Folded Back Overhand)

Bowline Family

Simple Bowline

Bowline tied on a bight

Bends

Double fisherman (Grapevine)

Figure Eight bend

Flat overhand bend

Rope Hitches

Clove Hitch

Munter Hitch w Mule Overhand (Blocked Munter)

Friction Hitches

3 Wrap Prusik

Klemheist

Autoblock

Anchor Construction

Use of a cordelette to tie a 2 - 4 point sequential (pre-equalized) anchor.

Use of a cordelette to tie a 2 - 4 point load distributing quad anchor.

Transportation to climbing sites: Provided by participants.

Meals & Lodging:

Acadia National Park surrounds the towns of Bar Harbor, ME on the east side and Southwest Harbor on the west side - all within a few minutes drive of course field sites. There is an abundance of lodging including private and NPS campgrounds, airbnbs, B&Bs, motels, and fancy resorts. Likewise there is a full range of food options.

Required Texts:

Rock Climbing: The AMGA Single Pitch Manual by Bob Gaines and Jason Martin serves as the textbook for participants of the AMGA SPI program.

SPI Information Addendum PDF. This will be sent a few days before the course to review.

Inclusions:

- One time 30% off purchase of climbing equipment from Alpenglow Adventure Sports and AlpenglowGear.com.
- Lifetime 15% off purchase on any purchases from Alpenglow Adventure Sports and AlpenglowGear.com.
- Free copy of *SPI Class Notes and Additional Readings* assembled by Jon Tierney
- One year Associate membership in the AMGA
- Subscription to the quarterly Mountain Bulletin
- Discount on the AMGA Guide's Manual
- opportunities to attend membership instructional clinics and membership meetings

Exclusions:

- Personal clothing/equipment
- Transportation to/from classroom venue
- Trailhead parking fees if any
- Transportation to/from trailheads
- Evening beverages/pub visits
- Lodging / Meals
- Instructor / Guide Gratuities

Risks:

YOU MAY BE EXPOSED TO SUBSTANTIAL PERSONAL RISK OR DEATH DURING THIS COURSE.

You are choosing to engage in an activity in which you may be injured and killed. While such accidents are rare, they may occur at any time and be out of our control. You will be working close to cliff edges and on steep, exposed ledges. You may be asked to construct anchors and to rappel and belay from them without direct supervision from the instructor. This is not an introductory-level program. You cannot abdicate responsibility for yourself and must take full responsibility for your own security. If, in the instructor's opinion, you do not display the skill and prudence necessary for the course, you may be asked to leave the course.

Please be sure that you are fully aware of such risks. It is our goal to interpret the environmental, situational, and group variables and to make educated decisions to minimize dangers to you while at the same time providing an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Your instructors draw upon extensive education and experience to manage significant hazards inherent to mountain travel. You are also expected to take an active part in risk management of yourself and the group. Some of the hazards that can lead to injury or death associated with this course include but are not limited to falls, being struck by falling objects, poor technique application by yourself or others, uneven terrain, anchor failure, equipment failure, extreme weather, demanding physical activity, and vehicle transportation. Again, please be sure that you are fully aware of such risks.

No one starts the day expecting to get hurt in an instructional climbing course. However, despite all we know and all we do, accidents can still happen. At AMG, we take your security seriously. Our goal is to interpret the environmental, situational, group and individual variables and make decisions to minimize risk while providing an educational, enjoyable and memorable experience.

Self-reliance in the face of adversity is expected on the part of the wilderness traveler entering the wilderness. Rescue is not automatic. Our party is often alone for all practical purposes and must depend upon our own resources for self-rescue and be equipped for an extended emergency. Cellular phones and radios should not be relied upon in an emergency.

Finally, this is a group program, and good expedition behavior is critical. Participants are also asked to stay with the group until everyone has safely exited the field.

Reservation and Payment:

A 100% deposit is required for registration.

Payment and reservations can be made at [Acadia Mountain Guides.com](http://AcadiaMountainGuides.com)

Cancellation Policy:

When you book a course with Acadia Mountain Guides, you agree to our cancellation policy. Please realize that if your travel does not go according to plan in any way and for any reason, we are unable to provide credits or refunds outside of what is described below. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip insurance to protect your activity purchase against unforeseeable circumstances, which include but are not limited to:

- The anticipation of Inclement Weather
- Flight and Travel Delays and Conditions
- Personal or work schedule changes
- Injury or illness of self or family member

If you cancel more than 21 days in advance, you may put the deposit toward a future course or receive a refund of 50% of your deposit. Cancellations made within twenty-one (21) days of the program forfeit the full tuition rate. Alternatively, if you find a replacement, you will receive a 100% refund. A full refund will be given if Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School must cancel the course.

Summit or Bust Policy:

The goals and objectives of this program are to learn instructional climbing skills. We will make every reasonable effort to maximize your learning. However, extreme weather, inadequate personal fitness, difficult terrain, or park weather/travel closures may make it impossible to achieve our desired objectives.

Tipping Your Instructor:

People often ask if it's appropriate to tip the instructor. Tipping is never expected but always greatly appreciated.

This is your course. The more you let your instructor know what your needs are, the more they can help you. If you don't understand, ask questions. If you have special interests, let your instructor know. If your instructor has provided you with a great experience and shared their knowledge and joy of the mountain world with you, a thank-you note or gratuity is always well received.

Minimum Registration Requirement:

A minimum of four (4) participants are needed to run this program and there is a maximum of twelve (12). The decision to run the program will be made three weeks prior to the start date. In the case of low registration, you will have the option of joining another course, receiving a refund, or possibly paying an additional amount to allow the program to run with low numbers.

Have a Group?

Are you part of a college organization, club, etc.? We are happy to schedule a customized course for organizations, and small groups.

Waiver and Health Form: Please complete these forms and bring with you to the first day of the course. Acadia Mountain Guides Health Statement and Waiver Forms are below.

Acadia Mountain Guides Difference:

Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School is accredited through the American Mountain Guide Association and the Professional Climbing Instructor Association. All instructors have been certified through both the AMGA and the PCIA for Single Pitch Instruction. Multi-pitch guides, alpine guides and ski guides meet or exceed the current standards of the AMGA Scope of Practice. Acadia Mountain Guides actively supports furthering their guide's development throughout their career. That means our guides are constantly taking steps to progress their skills and will provide you with an exceptional experience. AMG is also a proponent of helping clients reach their goals, whether its having an epic day in the mountains or gaining skills to get into other terrain, Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School can get you there!

Land Acknowledgement:

Acadia Mountain Guides recognizes that its guiding takes place on the homeland of the Wabanaki, or "People of the Dawnland" which includes the tribes of the Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot people.

Indigenous people have lived in close relationship with these lands and waters since time immemorial – in the face of many challenges and injustices – and continue to do so today.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Acadia Mountain Guides was founded on the principle of helping all people develop more enriching and healthier lives through outdoor activities. Our philosophy involves actively creating a culture of acceptance and inclusion while focused on personal growth and enriching group experiences.

While we hope that our school and camp program has always been equitable and welcoming, we acknowledge that historically we have had limited representation of people of color and that outdoor experience has predominantly been a white experience available only to those with privilege. We seek to change that.

Acadia Mountain Guides welcomes participants representing a diversity of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, military status, age, socioeconomic status, outdoor experience, and life experience. Explicit and implicit racism, bullying, or any kind of discrimination has no place in our community. Acadia Mountain Guides embraces change and will nurture a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion where each person feels seen, heard and supported now.

Our pledge to inclusion includes:

- Removing financial barriers for families wanting to attend camp by providing scholarship assistance
- Seeking out opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion in our programming and in partnerships with other organizations
- Fostering a culture of community, humility, and open communication among every individual in our program
- Providing training, professional development, and support to help staff with future professional and personal endeavors in the outdoors
- Listening to and serving members of the BIPOC and LGBTQ communities
Continuing to seek a more diverse community of campers and staff

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