



Intro Winter Climbing (Fort William)

This introductory course is aimed at those who have some experience of summer climbing/mountaineering and wish to make the transition to climbing in Scotland in winter. This course aims to get you climbing confidently while teaching the essential skills of rope work, belaying, movement on snow, ice and mixed ground. Based in Fort William some of the best climbing is readily accessible including Aonach Mor, Creag Meagaidh, Glen Coe and the world famous Ben Nevis

Learning Objectives

Over the period of your course you will learn how to make progress on graded winter climbs. We will also cover route selection in winter, how to assess avalanche conditions to enable you to move safely around the mountains. In most cases we will endeavour to “teach on the hoof” making the most of the shorter day light climbing hours.

- Introduction to the course
- BMC participation statement & safety briefing
- Winter equipment kit check
- Crampon and ice axe use on graded ground
- Winter belays and protection
- Coaching on steeper ground
- Avalanche assessment
- Route choice

Course Format

The course will run over two days from 0800 to 1700. On the first day we will meet at a location agreed e.g. your accommodation or a local café. Following this we will make arrangements with you in discussion potentially allowing us to meet at the appropriate venue.

Venues Used

We will aim to pick venues that are appropriate for the learning objectives of the day and the prevailing weather and avalanche conditions. James Thacker Mountaineering instructors are experts at finding the best locations, despite the weather. In all cases we will endeavour to discuss these choices with you

so that you are aware of our thought processes and we can try a choose places you are keen to visit.

The Fort William area is a very popular winter training and climbing venue. This is partly due to the usually favourable snow and ice conditions combined with the relative accessibility from the road.

Please note that we sometimes use the Aonach Mor gondola to access the mountain and save on the walking. There is an additional charge, current prices being found at <http://www.nevisrange.co.uk>

What do I need to bring?

The weather can be fairly wild in Scotland in winter; as such you will need to have good quality shell clothing and associated warm layers. In addition you will also need an ice axe and crampons. These can be hired locally, or loaned from us on a first come first served basis. Please contact us at the first available opportunity if you need to borrow equipment, as we do have a limited number of sets.

You will need to provide suitable 4 season mountaineering boots, please contact us if you have any queries regarding suitability.

If you wish to purchase personal mountaineering equipment we are always more than happy to make time/advise during the period of your course. We understand that selecting appropriate equipment can be challenging in itself, given the vast array on the market.

Please note that all participants on James Thacker Mountaineering courses receive a 15% discount at the welovemountains webshop.
<http://www.welovemountains.com>

A full kit list for all courses can be downloaded from
<http://www.jamesthacker.co.uk/internetkitlist.pdf>

Specifically, we would suggest that you bring the following:

- Warm clothing
- Warm hat (that will fit under a helmet) and gloves
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Rucksack (somewhere between 40 and 50 litres capacity)
- Water bottle or flask
- Packed Lunch
- Crampons (optional)
- Ice Axe (optional)

Accommodation

Please note that accommodation is not provided to allow flexibility with tastes and budgets. We are more than happy to assist with finding you the right

accommodation and we have no hesitation in recommending the following:

Inchree Centre <http://www.inchreecentre.co.uk>

Hotel Alexandra, The Parade, Fort William, Inverness-shire, PH33 6AZ
<http://www.easyhotel.com>

Bank Street Lodge, Bank Street, Fort William, Highland, PH33 6AY
<http://www.bankstreetlodge.co.uk/>

Other hostels <http://www.hostel-scotland.co.uk/>

How fit do I need to be?

Please note that all our Scottish winter courses require summer hillwalking experience and a good level of fitness. Mountain days in Scotland can be a long but worthwhile experience. Most venues require steep walking for approximately an hour carrying a rucksack of climbing equipment. For most active walkers and climbers a few autumn walks will be suitable preparation. Please feel free to contact us if you require further information.

What happens now?

We will look forward to meeting you on the first day of your course. However, in the mean time if you have any queries or require further advice please feel free to contact us.

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