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United States Department of Agriculture



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## **ROCK CLIMBING**

Rock climbing in the Aspen area is limited to one major area due to the loose rock in the region. The major climbs are toward Independence Pass. There are over 1,000 routes on over 30 cliffs scattered along a twenty mile stretch of road. The types of routes range from 2 pitch classics to dirty scrambles up vegetation gullies.

This guide cannot begin to list all these climbs. It will identify the major rock faces as you head east of town on Highway 82. If you desire more information, please check in the mountaineering stores of Aspen. There have been local guide books printed.

Your standards of the Aspen area are the same as those in other popular areas such as Eldorado in Boulder or Yosemite. Clean climbing with nuts and runners is the rule. As standard, a rack of nuts to three inches can solve most of your problems. Many sling runners should be carried because many of the climbs have fixed protection. When you climb up Independence Pass, please don't lower the standards as there are many routes for every ability.

The routes are rated in the Yosemite decimal system. The Pass has everything from 5.6 to 5.11. Welcome to some very fine climbing and thank you for maintaining the standards!

There are many small cliffs along the highway starting at Difficult Campground and extending to Lost Man Campground.

The main climbing areas are:

**GROTTO WALL-** Three cliffs with varied routes of 5.6 to 5.11. The rock is good and the protection is fairly obvious. To reach the Grotto Wall, drive approximately 5.4 miles from the Difficult Campground turnoff- 3.5 miles east of Aspen. Parking is limited to a few cars but you can park up the road and walk back.

**LINCOLN CREEK CLIFF-** This is another good wall that protects well. There are many fine, established routes and some that are waiting to be found. A walk of approximately ½ mile is involved to reach the wall, but it is well worth it. To get there, drive 9.5 miles east of Aspen on Highway 82 to Lincoln Creek Road. Turn right and drive down to the switchback and park. You should be able to look up to your left and see the wall. The routes here range from 5.8 to 5.11.

**WELLER SLAB-** Here you'll find many routes with good protection and good views. To reach them, drive east of Aspen on Highway 82 approximately 8 miles to Weller Campground. The slab is ¾ mile north and up from the campground. The routes range from 5.7 to 5.10.