

# American Alpine Institute<sup>Ltd.</sup>

## - Program Itinerary -

### **Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership - Part 1**

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**Meeting Location:** The offices of the American Alpine Institute in Bellingham, Washington.

**Meeting Time:** Unless an alternate meeting time has been arranged, you should plan on meeting your guide(s) and the equipment shop staff at AAI's office a few minutes before 7am on the first morning of your program. For climbers staying at the Best Western, we will pick you up at 6:40am. on the first morning of this course.

**Day 1** - After a brief meeting and introductions here at our office your instructor(s) and our support staff will take the first part of the morning to check over your equipment, finalize any rentals and purchases you may need for your program, and help you get packed up for the day.

-After the gear check, we drive to the trail head (3700') on the north side of Mt Baker (could be the north side in early season). The hike to base camp is between 4.5 and 5 miles depending on which camp site the group opts for and the elevation will be between 5400 and 6000 feet.

-After establishing camp, the remainder of this day can be spent discussing the concepts of glacier travel, glaciation, mountain weather, geology, and talking about the schedule for the following days.

**Day 2** - Snow school! The second day of this program will be a long day of skills on the snow. You can expect to practice the different positions for self arrest, learn ice axe and crampons techniques for climbing snow and ice of varying degrees of steepness, and to discuss the basics of rope team travel.

**Day 3** - Will be another long day of skills practice on the glacier. We will spend the day reviewing crevasse rescue. This will include setting up and practicing the hauling systems, building snow anchors, and prusiking up a rope.

**Days 4-5** - Summit day can fall on either day 4 or 5 of this program. It is usually on the 5th and final day on Mt. Baker, but occasionally the group can opt for an earlier attempt if the weather looks to be changing. Summit day will involve an alpine start (typically 1-3am) after which we head for the summit of Mt. Baker which is at 10,778'. Our goal is to reach the summit by day-break so we can utilize snow conditions during the night and early morning and be heading down by the time the sun warms the slopes. After our summit bid we descend to camp.

**Day 6** - We pack up camp on Mt. Baker and return to the trailhead and eventually town. We will stay in a campground near Bellingham this night and students will have a chance to shop for additional food, shower, and do laundry.

**Day 7** - The group will leave the camping area and travel a few hours to the next climbing area that we will be based out of for the next few days. Washington Pass. We spend the majority of this day doing some basic rock climbing and practicing our belaying and rappelling skills at a lowland climbing area. There are routes at all ability levels so we can choose climbs here based on each climber's experience and preference. We will stay at a campground this night.

**Days 8-9** - We try to climb an alpine rock route each of these days. The routes we most often climb are the South Arete of South Early Winter Spire (Grade III, 5.4) and the Beckey Route on Liberty Bell (Grade III, 5.6). Other possibilities for route choices would be about the same grade and difficulty.

**Days 10-12** - The students, with direction and feedback from the guide(s), plan and carry out a final ascent as the culmination of their training in the program thus far. This final route is often on Mt. Shuksan, but there are several other possibilities as well. Other peaks could include Silverstar, Glacier Peak, Ruth and Icy Mountains, and others.

-On the last day of this trip, our goal is to have climbers back to our office before 5pm. Your actual arrival time can vary based on how the last day of the trip goes.