

# **Climbing Tower Manual**

## **Edwards YMCA Camp**

The Edwards Climbing Tower is a 35-foot tower with two sides to climb on. Each side used for climbing has several different routes on them. The tower will typically have several routes in order to accommodate to different climbers' abilities. Also, this helps to let the kids progress on their climbing skills.

The tower is used as a personal challenge for the climber. Each climber will have the chance to pick a climb, set a goal, and attempt their goal. Campers are encouraged to push themselves to try new challenges and to overcome those challenges. The rest of the group is encouraged to cheer on the climber attempting the route and to help out if needed.

The Edwards Tower is designed for participants over the age of five years old. The tower is also made to be a challenge-by-choice activity; if any climber feels uncomfortable trying a route, they **will not** be forced to climb it. The instructor can try and talk them into it by making them feel comfortable but is not to pressure the climber to do so if they choose otherwise.

### **Climbing Tower Goals**

- To provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for all participants.
- To provide participants with the opportunity to learn, practice, and develop their climbing abilities.
- To help participants set and reach attainable goals for the session.
- To help participants to raise their skill level (even baby steps are progress).
- To help participants raise their self-esteem, self-image, and a sense of self-worth.
- To help participants to try out new obstacles and challenge themselves to do better.

### **Pre-Climb Orientation**

Before any group starts climbing at the tower, the head climbing instructor needs to give the group an orientation about the wall. At this time the instructor should go over the following topics:

- Basic Information
  - Welcome & introduce self and staff
  - Water available
  - 35 ft. tower
  - Two sides to climb
    - Easier routes
    - More challenging routes
- Safety Information
  - No open-toed shoes/sandals allowed while climbing
  - All climbers will be required to wear a helmet
  - Ropes are tested to 6,000 lbs (small Ford truck)
  - Do not put fingers in any cracks/holes

- Do not use the sides of the walls to help with climbing
- The rope is for the climber's safety not to help in climbing
- While on the wall there should be no gum, candy, rings, bracelets, earrings, necklaces, watches, hand grenades, etc.
- Keep head above waist while climbing (NO spider-man!)
- Stay out of the danger zone! (pg. 6)
- Rules of the climbing tower (pg. 4)
- Challenge-by-choice (pg. ?)
- Safety Equipment
  - Helmets
  - Harnesses
- Belay System (pg. 5)
- Belaying Commands (pg. 5)

### Set-up for Climbing at the Tower

*\*\* Give yourself at least 30 minutes \*\**

#### 1. **PRE-CLIMB CHECK**

The pre-climb check should be done each time the wall is set-up for climbing. The head climbing instructor should make sure everytime that the check was done properly and the course is ready for climbing.

- Check holds – should be tight and not turning
- Check ropes – should be free of debris and have no visible tears or cuts
- Check harnesses – all straps should have no tears or be worn down
- Check helmets – should be free of cracks or dents and should have working straps
- Check carabiners – if they are locking carabiners they should be able to lock, also there should be no wear and tear on the carabiners.
- Check belay cables (top of the tower) – cable is in good condition, connections are secure, carabiners for belay rope should screw down and gates should be opposite and opposing.
- Check belaying area (bottom)
  - Free of debris?
  - No protruding objects to land on (rocks, sticks, etc.)?
  - Does it look clean & professional?

#### 2. **SET-UP**

Set-up for the tower should only be done by a staff member who has been trained properly to set-up the tower for climbing. Set-up for climbing should only be performed after the pre-climb check has taken place.

- String belay ropes up through the carabiners on the belay cable by attaching it to the pea cord and pulling it up.
  - Carabiners should be screwed down and have gates opposing
- Set out the equipment logs to be filled out (pgs. )
- Tie a figure eight on a bight with a fisherman's knot (to hold up slack) on the climber's end of the rope

- Attach two locking carabiners to the loop and make sure the barrel nuts screw down and gates are opposing.
- Attach holds to the bottom of the wall. **DO NOT OVERTIGHTEN**, but make sure they are secure.
- Set out the equipment (helmets, harnesses) that will be used for that day.
- When group arrives, go over pre-climb orientation

### 3. **TEAR-DOWN**

- Take ropes down by stringing the pea cord back up and undo all knots before wrapping and putting away.
- Put carabiners in appropriate bins
- Put ATCs back in appropriate bins
- Undo all harnesses and hang in closet
- Put helmets back in closet
- Take down all holds below the black line and put back in closet
- **LOCK THE CLOSET**

## **Climbing Tower Rules**

- 1) **DO NOT STEP ON THE ROPE!!!**
- 2) No climbing without the supervision of a climbing instructor.
- 3) Campers must wear gloves when rappelling.
- 4) All helmets and harnesses must be fitted and checked by a climbing instructor before climbing.
- 5) Closed-toe shoes **MUST** be worn when climbing.
- 6) Campers must stay out of the “Danger Zones” while someone is climbing. Danger Zones are underneath the climber, their rope and around to the belayer.
- 7) Only give encouragement, praise, or instruction please. No negative talk will be permitted at the tower. Don’t steal climbs by giving away every hold.
- 8) Each camper must follow warm-up procedures before climbing.
- 9) Each climber must use the following commands properly each time.
  1. “On belay” (Camper)
  2. “Belay is on” (Staff)
  3. “Climbing” (Camper)
  4. “Climb on” (Staff)

## Belay System

The belay system we use at camp is a top-roping system. The kids will be hooked to the rope by attaching locking carabiners from the rope to their harness. The rope will go up the wall and through carabiners on the belay cable and back down the wall where the other end is strung through the belayer's ATC, which is attached to the belayer's harness by a locking carabiner. There should never be slack in the rope, so whenever the climber is going up the wall, the belayer should be pulling the rope through their ATC; this helps to ensure the climber's safety. Also, the belayer should NEVER take their hand off the brake line of the rope; this is also to secure the climber's safety. The belayer should watch the climber until they are safely lowered back to the ground.

### Belaying Commands

#### *Pre-Climb*

**Climber:** "On belay?"

**Belayer:** "Belay is on."

**Climber:** "Climbing?"

**Belayer:** "Climb on!"

#### *Post-Climb*

**Climber:** "Ready?"

**Belayer:** "I got you!"

*\*\*Once climber is seated in harness\*\**

**Belayer:** "Lowering!"