



How to...

DID YOU KNOW?

Sport climbing was made an official Olympic event at the 2020 Games in Tokyo.



Try indoor rock climbing

This exciting sport can help you build strength and balance.

Indoor rock climbing is a sport that's growing in popularity every year, with approximately 6 million people in the US now participating. This adventurous activity involves ascending an imitation rock wall while secured in a harness and attached to a rope. It's a great way to build strength, coordination, mental focus, and problem-solving skills. And because it's an indoor sport, you can do it any time of year. Here's how to get started.

Understand the basics

Indoor rock climbing is typically done at a special rock climbing gym, though some local recreation centers and schools also have climbing programs. You'll climb up and across an imitation rock wall. Climbing walls may be between 30 and 60 feet high, with hand grips and footholds all the way up. You climb while attached to a rope, to keep you safe from falling. Many indoor climbing gyms also feature bouldering walls, which are shorter and don't require a rope, making them a good option for beginners.

Get into gear

If you've seen an indoor climbing gym in your area or have friends who go to a specific one, check it out. Or visit indoorklimbing.com, which offers a directory of climbing gyms in each state. Once you've found the gym you want to try, go to its website to find out how to sign up for an

initial orientation or class. This is when an instructor will teach you how to put on your harness, use the ropes, and most important, stay safe while you climb. The gym should offer you the helmet, harness, and climbing shoes, which have rubber soles that make them extra grippy. Wear comfortable athletic clothes.

Respect the rules

Some types of rock climbing, like free solo climbing where people scale real rocks with no ropes, can be dangerous. However, the indoor rock climbing that's good for kids is typically safe as long as you follow the rules. This is why it's important to start with an orientation, in which a trained instructor will teach you how to use the ropes and harness that protect you from falling, as well as climbing etiquette, like taking turns on the wall.

Head on up

Get your equipment on and have the instructor check your harness and rope. When the instructor gives you the OK to start climbing, grab the colorful grips with your hands and push yourself further up with your feet. Many gyms offer routes up the wall that are coded by color, from easy to hard. Ask the instructor what colors to follow on your first few climbs. You can work up to more challenging climbs. If you like climbing, the best way to get better at it is to practice!



Choose your route.

4 more adventure sports to check out

If you think indoor rock climbing sounds fun, you might also enjoy these exciting activities.

Surfing

This sport increases confidence and endurance as you stand on the board and ride ocean waves to shore. Many coastal vacation areas offer lessons for kids.



Mountain biking

Riding a mountain bike on dirt trails through the woods is an



exhilarating experience. See if there's a park in your area with easy dirt bike trails to try. If you like it, do another lap and work up to more technical trails.

Parkour

The goal of parkour is to get through an obstacle course as fast as you can. Expect to run, climb, and jump over obstacles to get to the finish.



Ninja obstacle courses

Similar to the TV show *American Ninja Warrior*, this athletic



challenge can be found at gyms that offer obstacle courses. You might have a chance to climb nets, walk a balance beam, and swing over foam pits.