

Rock climbing – good for the body and mind

By Abigail Wise, Huffington Post

Ascending a cliff, boulder or even an indoor rock wall requires a large amount of physical strength and endurance. Some conquer climbs through nutritious meals and campus board pull-ups. Meanwhile, for some diehard climbers, that endurance was historically powered by canned beans and a wide variety of snacks from the Tioga Gas Mart outside of Yosemite.

But with or without the gas station nibbles, there's no doubt that climbers know a thing or two about a healthy lifestyle. Here's how rock climbing helps you lead a happier, healthier life.

Contrary to what many beginners may believe, climbing requires much more than upper-body strength. The success of sending – or completing – a route relies heavily on a long list of physical factors, including intricate footwork, lower body strength and lean muscle mass. Although not often thought of as a common form of cardio, ascending walls is a sure way to get your heart pumping, similar to the way climbing stairs or jogging does. A one-hour climb session can burn well over 700 calories. Plus, tricky maneuvers and lengthy reaches often require developing flexibility that wasn't there before. To increase bendability, more and more rock gyms are incorporating yoga studios into their facilities.

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