

NZAC INSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

INTERMEDIATE SNOWCRAFT COURSE 2025

CANTERBURY & WESTLAND SECTION



NEW ZEALAND
ALPINE CLUB

8 - 10 AUGUST | 22 - 24 AUGUST 2025

LOCATION: SUITABLE LOCATION(S) NEAR TO ARTHURS PASS

ACCOMODATION: NZAC Arthurs Pass Lodge

COURSE FEES: \$560.00

Who is this course for?

The NZAC Intermediate Snowcraft course is designed for NZAC Novice Mountaineers (or those with an equivalent skill set) who are looking to gain additional skills to travel safely in alpine terrain where straightforward steep snow and ice is encountered, and where abseiling on descent could be required.

This is an alpine course suitable for NZAC Novice Mountaineers who have consolidated their skills through trips on grade 1+ alpine terrain. Please **ensure you meet the minimum requirements**.



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At a minimum, those wishing to register for the Intermediate Snowcraft Course must:

- Have experience in backcountry tramping
- Have undertaken personal trips on Mount Cook Grade 1+ terrain.
- Be competent in the course outcomes detailed in the [NZAC Basic Snowcraft Course Outline](#) &/or have attended a basic skills course the season before.
- Have the fitness to enjoy multiple full days in the mountain environment off track.
- Have some rock climbing and belaying experience. Also proficient at tying the following knots: figure eight (bight and re-thread), alpine butterfly, classic prussic hitch, Italian hitch & clove hitch.

Course Syllabus

Pre trip planning

- Clothing / equipment
- Trip planning resources (avalanche forecast / weather forecasts / guidebooks)
- Weather
- Navigation
- Physical Training

Moving in the alpine environment

- Use of two ice axes, for daggering and piolet traction on moderately steep snow.
- The use of crampons on steeper terrain.
- Multi-pitch climbing on moderate terrain.
- Single-pitch abseiling with the use of prussic (AKA 'Self protected Abseil')
- Route selection and planning
- Building basic snow anchors: "T" Slot, vertical mid clip snow stake, top-clip, ice axe belay, snow bollard, abseiling off rock bollards
- Use of basic climbing calls

Course Outcomes *

Pre-trip planning

- An ability to plan simple trips into the alpine environment
- An ability to locate and interpret a range of weather forecasts, avalanche forecasts, and other relevant information
- An ability to identify simple features on a map and a basic ability to relocate using the map and terrain features.
- An awareness of basic physical training principles applicable to the mountain environment

Moving in the alpine environment

- An ability to use both an ice axe and mountaineering boots as an effective tool for traveling in the alpine environment.
- An ability to use two ice axes and crampons to effectively ascend and descend moderately steep snow where pitching is not normally required including front-pointing and French Technique.
- Can demonstrate multiple crampon techniques appropriate to the snow type and gradient.
- Can build a basic snow or rock bollard anchor.
- The ability to demonstrate appropriate abseil technique.
- An ability to or understand the context of efficient travel techniques in the alpine environment with particular attention to avoiding avalanche terrain.
- Has an awareness of a variety of possible anchor types and can select an appropriate anchor for the situation.
- Understands the importance of and demonstrates clear communication when ropes are used .

Someone who has these skills is considered a **NZAC Intermediate Mountaineer** and is likely to have the skills and ability to travel on Mount Cook Grade 2+ Terrain (that has no glacial related complications)

*Course outcomes may vary depending on participant ability and course conditions. This is a guideline; individuals must assess their own ability after a course.

Instruction

The course will be run in a minimum 1:4 instructor to participant ratio. All participants must agree to follow the instructors' directions. The course has a maximum capacity of 8 participants. The instructors on this course hold formal qualifications.

Pre-Course meet up

On acceptance into the course, a pre-course meet will be arranged (in Christchurch) to arrange logistics and to address pre-course planning and equipment.

Course Location

The course will begin at the NZAC Arthurs Pass lodge at 7.30pm sharp on Friday night. You will be expected to have settled into the lodge, eaten and tidied the kitchen by then.

On Saturday morning you will walk to Temple Basin Ski Field or other suitable location depending on weather and snow conditions.

Course Schedule

Pre-course evening to be confirmed on acceptance on the course.

Friday 23rd August

From 5.30pm: Arrive at lodge, settle in, prepare meal & tidy up

7.30pm Course begins

Saturday 24th August

From 6.00am: Breakfast and tidy Lodge

7.30am: Depart for the location selected by the course instructors

Note there will be evening sessions to maximize use of time

Sunday 26th August

From 6.00am: Breakfast and tidy Lodge

7.30am: Depart for the location selected by the course instructors

Expect to depart from Arthurs Pass around 5pm

Course Fees

The course fees include professional instruction, accommodation for two nights, all meals from Saturday Breakfast to Sunday Lunch (note you will need to provide for your own Friday evening meal and snacks for both days), and provision of some technical gear if required. The course fees are \$560.00.

Please read our [refund policy](#).

Food

We will try to cater for your dietary requirements. Please note them on your application.

Accommodation:

Accommodation is in shared bunk rooms, you will need to bring your sleeping bag and a pillowcase and hut shoes, toiletries. The lodge has showers etc

Equipment List

- Mountaineering boots+ Snow Gaiters (Rigid leather or Plastic).
- Crampons with anti-balling plates.
- Climbing Helmet.
- Ice Axe (50-70cm).
- Ice Hammer
- Avalanche Transceiver (and spare batteries), Shovel, Probe.
- Snow Stake with wire stop \$\$
- 4 x locking carabiners.
- 4 x Snap gate carabiners.
- Belay device (not a gri gri) and a locking carabiner.
- Harness and Personal Safety Sling (120cm + SG Carabiner).
- 1 x 5 metre tape sling &/or 5m x 7mm Cordellette \$\$
- 2 x 120 cm tape slings \$\$
(*Sewn or tied*)
- 2 x Prussic cords

(1 metre and 1.75 metre) \$\$
- Pack + Pack liner
(*30-50 litres and straps that can take ice axes etc*)
- 2 x pair warm socks.
- Shell Jacket & Pants (Gore-Tex Etc.)
- Warm hat / balaclava
(*must be able to fit under helmet*)
- Shell Gloves
(*Storm proof warm Gloves*)
- Working Gloves
(*Leather 'Kinko'/'Ice Ninja')
- Thermal tops and leggings.
- Mid layer fleece top or jacket.

- Down or Synthetic jacket.
- Sun Hat/Cap.
- Sunglasses &/or ski goggles.
- Sun block.
- 1.5L Water Bottle(s)
(*Camel Backs can FREEZE!*)
- Day Snack food
(*bars / energy / scroggin*).
- Small personal first aid kit / medication (*BYO Blister Stuff!*)
- Sleeping bag
- Hut clothes, boots and toiletries & towel.

Group Kit List Gear 1:2 People

- 50 / 60 metre single climbing rope per pair of climbers
- Small Alpine rack – 5 x various size nuts, 2 x cams

Optional Stuff

- Compass, notebook and pen / pencil
- [Arthurs Pass Topo Map](#).
- Thermos for hot drinks
- Hip Flask (-:
- Cash for the Temple Basin Canteen/Bar
- Camera

Notes

\$\$: Can be purchased @ Bivouac Outdoors / Further Faster / Aspiring Safety Products
 *Can be purchased at Farmland Stores or Bunnings
 ^^ Can be purchased through [Aspiring Safety Products](#): :

Insurance

We recommend you take out travel insurance and/or personal insurance as part of your preparation for participating on NZAC Instruction courses.

Emergency Situations and Risk Disclosure

The Course Instructors will have Emergency Management Procedures in place and field communication devices to immediately contact rescue services in the case of an accident or emergency. You are welcome to take your own personal locator beacon if you own one.

The natural environment and climbing activities can involve risks. While recognising that the course organisers and instructors do their best to manage these risks, and agreeing to accept their direction whenever required, you must accept personal responsibility for your own actions and safety. You must also accept to follow all the instructions of the Course Leader and other instructors at all times.

All participants on the Course are expected to be as honest and transparent as possible about their experience and fitness as part of their application. If a participant's lack of fitness/ability severely affects the running of the course the participant(s) may be asked to not participate for certain activities. Arrangements may be made to evacuate the participant(s) at their own cost. The instructor is the final arbiter in these decisions.

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