

# Rocky Mountain Rock Climbing - Equipment List

**Welcome to NOLS!** It's important to choose the right equipment for any outdoor adventure. This list is designed to help you make smart decisions about the gear you take on your course.

We do not recommend that you go out and purchase a lot of expensive, specialized gear for your course. Instead, use this list to help guide your decisions. **If there are items you decide to rent or purchase from our Outfitting Department, you will submit a gear request via [Google Forms](#). Your request is due one week before your course start date; please contact your admission officer for any questions.** Your instructors will bring any items you request to the start of your course. The evening before your course begins, they will look through all the equipment you've brought and help you decide what to take on your course.

**Here are some thoughts to guide you as you pack:**

- **First, use gear you already own!** You'll be comfortable in tried-and-true clothing. Bring more layers than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options. You will be base camping on this course, so it is ok if you bring a little too much.
- **Second, rent key items from NOLS.** When it comes to gear, every adventurer has their own preferences. In the field, you'll have the opportunity to hone your preferred system. We recommend that you rent, rather than purchase, several "big ticket" items, such as a sleeping bag. While you are not obligated to rent gear from us, there are a couple of reasons why we suggest it. Our rental gear is high quality, chosen specifically for the heavy use it receives on courses. Rental prices are reasonable, so you can try out gear and make informed decisions on future adventures.
- **Third, purchase specific items from our Outfitting Department.** To make shopping simple, we offer basic kitchen utensils (mug, bowl with lid, spoon, 32-ounce water bottle), personal care items (lip balm, sunscreen), and camping sundries (headlamp, batteries, lighter). NOLS is a not-for-profit organization, and revenue from our Outfitting Department goes to serve the mission of the school.
- **Fourth, visit your local outdoor store.** Most gear shops, from REI and EMS to mom-and-pop outfits, are familiar with NOLS and its courses. They can advise you on purchases—but be wary of being "upsold" items you don't really need! We encourage you to keep the tags on all equipment and clothing (and the receipt) so that you may return any unneeded items.

## Equipment Fees

In addition to your course tuition, you will pay an equipment deposit. This deposit will be applied directly to the charges you incur for gear rentals and purchases. At the end of your course, you will be billed for any amount that exceeds your equipment deposit, or refunded any balance.

## Quality over Quantity

At NOLS, we fundamentally believe that you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the backcountry. By purchasing high-quality items and learning to care for them, you're making a lifetime investment. Spend money on the few items that really matter, and don't get lured into splurging on the trendiest fabrics or latest gadgets.

## Questions?

Please contact NOLS Admissions (800) 710-6657.

## How to Use This List

Items under the **Required** heading are items that you **must** either bring yourself or rent or purchase from NOLS as available. Items under the **Optional** heading are not required, and you may bring them from home, buy, or rent from NOLS as available. If you see an **X** in the price column, that means that an item is not available for rent or for purchase as indicated.

Upper Body Clothing			
We layer our clothing, combining different garments to achieve optimum insulation and protection from wind, rain, and snow. We use either synthetic or wool fibers, both of which insulate when wet; merino wool products are increasingly popular. It is common to need three insulating layers plus a rain layer.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Long underwear top (base layer)	X	\$30-70	Light- or mid-weight long-sleeve top, wool or synthetic. [Example: Patagonia Lightweight Crew]
Middle layer (fleece top)	X	\$50-170	Heavier than a base layer top, but lighter than an outer jacket. Aim for material that's fleece, wool or synthetic.[Example: Patagonia R1 Hoody, Sherpa Adventure Gear Zip Fleece]

Top layer ("puffy" jacket)	\$26.25 (synthetic)	\$170-325	A warm, synthetic or down-fill insulated "puffy" jacket that fits over your base layers. A hood is recommended. Please note that down requires extra care in wet conditions. [Examples: Montbell Thermawrap, Patagonia Nano Puff]
T-shirts (2-3)	X	\$20-70	Bring 2-3 cotton, wool or polyester t-shirts for your climbing days. Also consider a polyester-cotton blend button down dress shirt, inexpensive at a thrift store. If you want extra sun protection, look for clothing with a Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) rating.
Rain jacket	X	\$100-140	Durable, waterproof, non-insulated jacket with hood. Coated nylon or breathable fabrics (e.g., Gore-Tex, H2No, etc.) are both acceptable. It is very important that your rain jacket fits well over all your base and mid-layers. [Example: Marmot Precip Jacket]
Sports bras (1-2)	X	\$35-55	Should be wool or synthetic.

### Optional Items

Wind jacket	\$10.50	\$80-100	A lightweight, breathable, nylon wind shell either pullover or full zip style. Hooded wind jackets are recommended. Does not need to be waterproof. [Example: Cotopaxi Teca Windbreaker]
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Our advice? Despite its reputation, the desert can get very cold, especially at night and courses often encounter rain and snow. Temperatures get below freezing some nights. Bring the puffy jackets and other layers you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your course and the current weather conditions.

### Lower Body Clothing

You will need at least one insulating bottom layer plus a pair of climbing pants for this course.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Long underwear bottoms	X	\$45-60	Mid-weight synthetic or wool bottoms. Cotton and cotton blends are not acceptable. [Example: Patagonia Capilene Lightweight Bottoms]
Fleece pants or Insulated pants	\$10.50 (fleece)	\$150-200 (insulated)	Fleece pants or insulated "puffy" pants are both acceptable. We recommend pants with full side zips to have the ability to put on and take off over boots. Can also provide versatility for cold

			sleepers. [Examples: [Examples: Outdoor Research Neoplume]]
Climbing pants	\$10.50 (nylon)	\$70-90	Comfortable cotton, nylon, spandex or polyester pants to protect your legs while climbing. Make sure they allow you to move freely for climbing. NOLS rents only nylon wind pants. [Example: Patagonia Venga Rock Pants]
Underwear (2-4 pairs)	X	\$20-30	Briefs work best. Some students prefer to go without underwear and wear quick-drying shorts with liners. Briefs may be cotton, synthetic, wool, or silk.

### Optional Items

Climbing shorts (1-2 pairs)	X	\$42-55	Loose-fitting cotton or polyester athletic shorts for your climbing section. Make sure they are comfortable and allow you to move freely for climbing. Longer shorts are best to wear with a harness. If you want to climb just in pants, then these shorts can be optional. [Example: Prana Mojo shorts]
Rain pants	X	\$80-100	A durable, roomy, waterproof pant that can fit over other lower-body layers. [Example: Mountain Hardware Acadia]

Our advice? Bring the synthetic long underwear or pants you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your course.

### Head, Neck, and Hand Layers

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Baseball cap or wide-brim sun hat	X	\$15-32	A baseball hat or wide-brimmed sun hat to protect your face and ears from the sun.
Warm hat	X	\$16-34	Warm hat for cold weather that should cover your ears. We recommend wool or fleece.
<b>Optional Items</b>			
Neck Gaiter	X	\$20	Neck gaiters are synthetic pieces of multi-functional headwear (hat, bandana, neck warmer, etc.) that many folks use outdoors. Buff is a common brand.
Lightweight Gloves	X	\$9-23	Lightweight, synthetic, fleece or wool glove. [Example: Outdoor Research PL Base Gloves]

## Packs and Bags

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Large duffel bag	\$5.25	X	A large-sized zippered nylon duffel bag (4,000 - 8,000 cubic inches) is used for packing/storing all your gear at your base camp.
Small stuff sacks (1-2)	\$1	\$15-20	Small nylon or mesh sacks with drawstrings for organizing items in your large duffel bag.
Climbing day pack	\$21	X	Medium-sized (40 to 50-Liter capacity) backpack for carrying your daily personal items (e.g. water, food, clothing layers) and group climbing gear from your base camp to the crag each day. [Example: Black Diamond Stone 45 Pack]

## Sleeping Gear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Sleeping bag	\$31.50 (synthetic)	X	<b>Despite popular belief, it gets very cold in the Southwest at night, often below freezing.</b> For this course, we recommend a synthetic-fill or down-fill mummy bag with approximately 3 pounds of fill, rated anywhere from 0° to 30°F. Please note that down requires extra care in wet conditions. We rent 0° - 15° Mountain Hardwear Lamina synthetic bags.
Heavy duty trash bags (1-2)	X	\$1	One to two heavy-duty trash compactor bags (33 gallon) to help waterproof items in your base camp bag or climbing day pack.
Sleeping pad	\$5.25 (foam)	\$60(inflating)	Used for padding and insulation between your sleeping bag and the ground. Foam pads must be closed-cell and at least 3/8 inches thick. Inflatable pads are typically warmer and more comfortable, but can be vulnerable to getting holes. [Example: Therm-A-Rest ProLite]
<b>Optional Items</b>			
Compression sleeping bag stuff sack	\$6.50	X	A compression stuff sack for your sleeping bag. Since you are base-camping, this is an optional item, but might be most helpful when you are traveling to and from the course. [Example: Granite Gear Air Compressor Series]

Our advice? A sleeping bag is another major purchase. If you don't already own one, consider using one of ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision on your needs.

### Climbing Equipment

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Rock climbing shoes	\$26.25	X	Rock climbing specific shoes, tight-fitting with rubber sole and small toe box. We recommend not buying climbing shoes that force your toes to curl; they should be suitable for wearing and climbing all day and for multi-pitch climbs. [Example: La Sportiva Mythos]
Rock climbing harness	No charge	X	We have climbing harnesses for you to use at no charge, but if you own one that you'd like to use, bring it along. We will check it for wear at the start of the course.
Rock climbing helmet	No charge	X	We have climbing helmets for you to use at no charge, but if you own one that you would like to use, bring it along. We will check it for stability and wear at the start of the course.
<b>Optional Items</b>			
Chalk bag	X	\$18	Chalk bags hold chalk that is used to dry hands while climbing.
Loose Chalk	X	X	Climbing chalk to fill your chalk bag.
Belay Gloves	X	X	Allow dexterity while providing protection during climbing activities. Personal preference of some.

Our advice? If you own a harness, chalk bag and pair of climbing shoes, bring them along. If your instructors approve, you can use them. You must use the school's climbing protection, belay devices, slings, carabiners and ropes.

### Miscellaneous Items

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Insulated mug	X	\$7-30	12- to 20-oz. insulated mug with a lid. A 16-oz, screw-top Nalgene water bottle can also function as a mug.
Bowl	X	\$7.50	Durable and able to handle hot liquids. A screw-on or snap-on lid is useful.

Spoon	X	\$1	Light and durable.
Water bottles (2)	X	\$9-24	Bring durable plastic bottles. Bring enough bottles that you have at least 2-liters of capacity at minimum. Wide mouths are convenient.
Lip balm	X	\$3	Stick, cream, or tube type moisturizing balm with sun protection factor SPF 15 or greater.
Sunscreen	X	\$3-8	A 1- to 3-ounce tube with sun protection factor SPF 30 or greater.
Bandanas (1-2)	X	\$3	Useful for various purposes.
Sunglasses	X	\$15-50	Good-quality sunglasses with 100-percent UV protection; lenses should be dark. If you wear prescription lenses and have limited vision without them, bring your own prescription sunglasses or a pair of clip-on polarized shades.
Headlamp	X	\$30-50	Bring a durable and lightweight LED headlamp. Look for one between 200-300 lumens. Bring a set of spare batteries. [Examples: Black Diamond Spot or Cozmo, Petzl Tikka]
Batteries	X	\$1 each	We have individual AA and AAA batteries for sale.
Disposable lighter	X	\$2.39	Used for lighting your camp stove.
Toiletries	X	\$2-5	Toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, skin lotion, tampons, etc. Travel or trial sizes are enough. We sell soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes and shampoo.
Watch	X	\$20-55	A watch with an alarm is a necessary item.
Pencil / Pen	X	\$0.50	For journaling and taking notes during classes. Bring more than one.
Notepad or Notebook	X	\$4-10	A small, lightweight notepad or notebook works well. [Example: Moleskine notebooks]
Town clothes (2 sets)	X	X	Bring two sets of comfortable clothing that you can travel in—jeans, shorts, t-shirt, sweatshirt, etc. You can also bring these comfortable cotton clothes to wear in the evenings at your base-camp in the field. Avoid bringing excess clothing, as storage space is limited.
Towel	No charge	X	We will provide you with a towel for showering.

Instant hand sanitizer (2)	X	X	This is used for travel to and from your NOLS course. NOLS will supply hand sanitizer for you to use on course.
<b>Optional Items</b>			
Hydration system	X	\$9-40	Portable bag with drinking tube. We require having a backup water bottle in case the bag gets damaged in the backcountry. [Examples: Platypus or CamelBak]
Sunglass retainers	X	\$8	Chums or Croakies for keeping track of your glasses or sunglasses.
Pocket knife	X	X	A small, lightweight, knife. Simple and small Swiss Army knives and Leatherman are acceptable.
Book or e-reader (1-2)	X	X	A reading book or a black & white e-Reader without cellular connectivity. [Examples: Kindle Paperwhite or Nook eReaders]. Bring a protective case. Please note that tablets (ie. iPads, Kindle Fire) are not allowed on NOLS courses.
Camera	X	X	GoPros and lightweight digital or 35mm cameras are acceptable; bring a protective case. A waterproof container is recommended. Avoid elaborate lenses and heavy SLRs. (Please note: you may not bring your smartphone or tablet to use as a digital camera). Bring extra batteries and memory cards.
Camp chair	X	\$32	Crazy Creek chair or one with a Therm-A-Rest fitting.
Prescription glasses & contact lenses (1-2 pairs)	X	X	Bring at least one spare pair of glasses or lenses. Contact lens wearers should also bring a pair of glasses as backup. Prescription sunglasses are a nice item to have in reserve.
Coffee	X	\$1 per Starbucks VIA	Coffee is not in the NOLS ration, so we recommend bringing your own or buying from us if you want to drink coffee in the backcountry.
Coffee filter	X	X	Camping-style French press, single cup pour over filter, coffee sock, or other system to make coffee on your course.
Thermos	X	\$30	Great for keeping morning drinks warm at base camp.



Yoga mat	X	X	There may be time for optional morning yoga sessions during your course. If you already own a yoga mat and have space in your bags, feel free to bring it with you, otherwise you can improvise a mat with other items in the backcountry.
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Our advice? Keep the toiletries, pocket knife and camera gear to small sizes. Also, all of the items in the optional section are not necessary for you to have a successful course. Bring any that you may already own or feel like you might want during your time in the backcountry.

### Footwear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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#### Required Items

Trail hiking shoes / Approach shoes	X	X	You will need a sturdy pair of shoes to hike in and scramble to and from the cliff. Consider low top trail hiking shoes or running shoes [Example: Merrell Moab Ventilator or Brooks Cascadia]. If you already own a pair of approach shoes with sticky rubber, they can take the place of your hiking shoe [Example: 5.10 Guide Tennies or La Sportiva TX].
Camp shoes	X	\$30	A comfortable pair of running shoes or street shoes to wear around camp. Open-toed "river" or "mountain" sandals and slip on shoes with little tread are not acceptable. Your hiking/approach shoes listed above will also work for this purpose.
Wool or synthetic socks (2-3 pairs)	X	\$16-20	Mid to heavyweight. You may prefer socks of different thickness for different activities (ex. for travel during the day and wearing at night in your sleeping bag). Smartwool, Darn Tough and/or Wigwam are reputable brands.

### Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply

All items listed below are provided by NOLS and shared among all expedition members. Group equipment is included as part of the course tuition; however, students will be charged for any lost or damaged group equipment.

- Tents
- Binoculars
- Lanterns
- Stoves, fuel bottles, and fuel

Maps and climbing topos  
Base-camp toilets  
Repair kits  
Reference books  
Cooking gear/spice kits  
Soap and hand sanitizer  
Climbing ropes and hardware  
Climbing helmets and harnesses

**First Aid:**

Our instructors carry adequate first aid kits. There is no need to bring your own.