



# Chamonix course info book

This booklet is designed to answer your queries before your course in Chamonix. It is an exciting time for you, looking forward to your course, and we really hope that this booklet gives you the best advice possible. Let us know if we can help you with any pre-course advice; call +44 (0)1539 44 22 17, e-mail [info@icicle.co.uk](mailto:info@icicle.co.uk), or message us on socials. You can also arrange an in person or virtual meeting (Zoom call) with us in the Icicle office in Windermere

# 2024

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# Welcome to Icicle Mountaineering



## Sarah

My climbing has taken me from Siberia to the Moroccan Atlas, Tanzania to the Andes. I've run the Mont Blanc marathon and UTMB MCC races, and love snowshoeing and ski touring. Happiest mixing a mountain day with a visit to a mountain hut to get some coffee and cake! In the UK office, I lead all the logistics and operations, so you will probably already be in e-mail contact! Home is in the Lake District, but for a few months each year in peak season, I head out to Chamonix, to help with the course logistics for guides and guests.

Qualifications: UIMLA (aspirant), LiRF & CA England Athletics, charity trustee

## Safety & training

We are proactive with all aspects of your mountain safety, and a key focus is to ensure you leave our care better educated on what to do if an accident occurs, to keep yourself safe and how to safely help others.



**Alpine mountain rescue** - save all the relevant numbers into your phone today!

**EchoSOS app** - install this app to share your location to emergency services.

Mountain range	Web	Telephone
PGHM Chamonix	<a href="#">link</a>	+33 4 50 53 16 89
PGHM Annecy	<a href="#">link</a>	+33 4 50 09 47 47
PGHM Bourg	<a href="#">link</a>	+33 4 79 07 01 10
Swiss rescue	<a href="#">link</a>	144
Swiss helicopter	<a href="#">link</a>	1414
Italy Val d'Aosta	<a href="#">link</a>	118 or +390165 238
Austria	<a href="#">link</a>	140 or 112

If alerting rescue, be prepared to share all of the information below, to the best of your abilities...

- ✔ **Where** - location of casualty & you / team
- ✔ **Who** - name, details, group size, number(s)
- ✔ **Why** - injuries and condition of casualty
- ✔ **Weather** - current conditions for helicopter
- ✔ **What** - plan to stay put, if safe at location

If needing rescue, you can also contact our local host emergency number 2477, and we can immediately assist in multiple local languages.



## Logistics basecamp

Our base is in Windermere, in the Lake District National Park, as the hub for both our groups on the fells enjoying UK mountain adventures, and the organisational base for our trips further afield. It's across the road from Orrest Head, which was the first fell climbed by Alfred Wainwright, the Lakeland guidebook author. Public transport links via Windermere train and bus station.

## Kingsley

Icicle Mountaineering celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2025. It's a big milestone, that is built on the strength of the guide team, which are selected from top climbers and instructors, many of whom are fellow active mountain rescuers. My role is an eclectic mix of guiding, juggling hut bookings, adapting plans to mountain weather and avalanche forecasts, and adjusting itineraries to help give you the best summiting chances. My climbing includes the North Faces of the Matterhorn and Eiger. I've written 4 guidebooks, and ran the UTMB & Tor des Geants.

Qualifications: UIMLA guiding, RROI rope rescue instructor, SRT swiftwater rescue technician, PPE inspector, RRMT remote rescue medical technician





# History and background



## Lake District

Established back in 2000 in the UK Lake District, where our office & shop is based. Everyone in the team is passionate about the mountains and highly trained to advise you.



## Global trips

Although your course is Chamonix based, we also offer many trips in other Alpine regions, and we operate global trips such as Mt Toubkal, Iceland, Kilimanjaro & Aconcagua.



## Guiding team

In the Alps our guiding team are all qualified as IFMGA or UIMLA guides, a legal requirement for working in Switzerland, France and Italy. We are proud of our guide team.



## Icicle ethos

What really sets us apart, as you'll have noticed on our website, and also in this booklet, is the quality & quantity of information, to help you best prepare and train for your course.



## Connect socially

Now you have booked, it is normal to have even more questions. Connect with us via social media, so you can ask queries in a method that suits you, even while commuting!



## Pre-trip training

All the training planners here and on the website have been produced by personal trainers. It is a USP of ours that we help prepare you for your trip better than anyone else.



## Mountain safety

Many of our guiding team also are mountain rescue in the Alps / UK. We brief all our clients on best practice such as downloading the EchoSOS app to location share with rescue teams.



## Reports & articles

We've had a huge range of reports and articles written about our trips, which have featured in the press. Read all about them by visiting the press and media website page.



## Company awards

Our office walls display a selection of business and tour operator awards we have won over the years. In addition you can view our ATOL and TTA travel bonding certificates too.



## Coffee & chat

As a real company, rather than a virtual entity, we invite you to arrange to come in and chat through your course plans over a coffee in our Lakes shop, with expert trip advisers.





# Next steps & insurance

## Next steps now you have booked

✓ **Flights** – Now you are confirmed, you can book your flights to the Alps. Once you have done this, see the next page for airport transfers that can be booked (e.g. Oui Bus, EasyBus).



✓ **Balance** – Your course balance is due 56 days before departure. This is exactly 8 weeks before your trip.

- The payment due date is shown on your invoice, which is sent to you with your e-confirmation at the time of booking, with this Course Info Booklet, so if you are reading this, you have your invoice already.
- For booking balance payments, we will send you a separate payment link when your balance is due.
- The online booking system e-mails you payment chasers in the days before the balance is owed.
- You can pay the balance with a card of your choice (0% fee for Visa or MasterCard debit / credit card).
- We do not accept cheques, cash or bank transfers for any payments, in line with our travel bonding.

✓ **Equipment** – Details of any equipment that is loaned free of charge will be on your course itinerary page of the website. If you need to hire any equipment, then please visit page 7 of this booklet for full details. Please note that you are required to provide all the items appearing on the course specific kit list that was sent with your e-confirmation.

✓ **Instruction Booklet** – Print this off from; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/pack.html>

✓ **Paperwork** – Ensure your passports and any visas (if required) are all in date for your trip.

✓ **WhatsApp** – Download / update this free app for all in-resort communications while in the Alps.

For free messaging communications when you are in the Alps, we will provide you an Icicle resort host WhatsApp number a few days before you travel. This is used to communicate messages about guiding / meetings / logistics whilst in Chamonix. Ensure you have an up to date version of this app; [iPhone](#), [Android](#), [Windows](#). No smart phone? Go to the briefings!



## Activities insurance

It is a condition of booking that you get travel and activities insurance as soon as you have booked the course, and ensure that it covers you for cancellation, illness, injury, mountain rescue, and all of the activities of your course itinerary. Note that if you arrive on the course without insurance, you will not be able to start any guiding, as it is not possible to arrange in resort once you have travelled. A key feature to check your activities insurance provides is helicopter mountain rescue cover, and in most regions of the Alps, this service is privately operated, and it is very expensive.

No bank or general travel insurance we have seen to date covers you for this. Specialist insurance for the activities you will undertake is available from the BMC, Snowcard or other providers.

For more details and advice of providers, please visit this link on our website;

<http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/insurance.html>



# Travel to Chamonix

## Travelling to Chamonix and airport transfers

The meeting time for week long courses is 17:00 local time on Sundays. The accommodation check-in is from 16:00 onwards on the arrival day, and the check-out is by 10:00 on the day of departure. As with hotels, we cannot get you in to your room before 16:00 as it is being cleaned. Please note that there is no baggage storage before the check in, but if you've arrived early there are lots of good cafes and restaurants within a two minute walk. If you are getting a flight that gets in to Geneva before 14:00, note that if you get an airport transfer immediately, you will arrive in Chamonix before the accommodation check in, and have nowhere to store your bags.

The nearest airport to Chamonix is Geneva Airport in Switzerland. The diagram shows the airlines that fly to Geneva from all the UK regional airports. Flights take approximately 90 minutes. The cheapest fares are generally found as soon as they are released, around eleven months before the departure date. Once in Geneva, the airport transfer to Chamonix takes about an hour and a quarter. You can book airport transfers directly yourself. Our preferred airport transfers partner between Geneva and Chamonix is Mountain Dropoffs. We work with them for their professionalism, service and reliability. Client discount booking code; **ICICHX**, must be applied at time of booking; <http://www.mountaindropoffs.com/?advertlink=0ggnqicic>. Alternative airport transfers; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/travel.html>.



All the transfer companies listed above are fully licensed, and the majority drop you off and collect you directly from near the course meeting point. Just select to be dropped off / collected from the Aiguille du Midi cable car station, as this is the entrance to the Cham Sud pedestrian square, in which the meeting point is situated. Scheduled transfers such as Oibus, Alpybus and EasyBus, use the Chamonix Sud bus stop, just a 3 minute walk from the course meeting point.

## Lost / delayed baggage? What do I do if you bags are lost or delayed at Geneva airport.

Call the driver to alert them to the issue immediately. Then report your baggage to the tracing services. Give them your personal mobile phone number for the baggage delivery, and the Aiguille du Midi cable car as a delivery point as it is easy for the delivery driver to find, and close to all the accommodation we use. It's address is 491 Rue du Lyret, 74400 Chamonix. This occurs only once or twice a year, but generally delayed baggage arrives within 24 hours. In the meantime, your insurance should cover any extra essentials.

## What alternatives to flying are there? Drive your car, take the train or catch the bus.

If you drive, allow 8 hours from the Channel Ports using the autoroutes (toll motorways). The fastest route from Calais goes via Reims, Dijon, Bourg-en-Bresse via the A39 and then the A40 to Chamonix. The tolls cost about £75 each way. This is a cheap option for a group, or a good option if you are extending your stay for sightseeing. The speed limit is 130km/h. If you prefer the train, the best overnight route is the Eurostar to Paris (Gare du Nord), sleeper (Gare du Austerlitz) to Le Fayet, and local train to Chamonix (c. £140 return). Travel during the day is Eurostar to Paris, then TGV to Bellegarde (from Gare du Lyon), then train to Chamonix (c. £120 return). Eurostar now offer a service to Geneva via Lille. Travel can be booked (as one ticket) at the Eurostar office (St Pancras station), or online. There are regular coach services with Eurolines from London Victoria to Chamonix, via Lyon (c. 16 hours travel time) – from £60 return. Generally this is the cheapest travel option, especially in peak season, and does take you 'door to door' without connections.



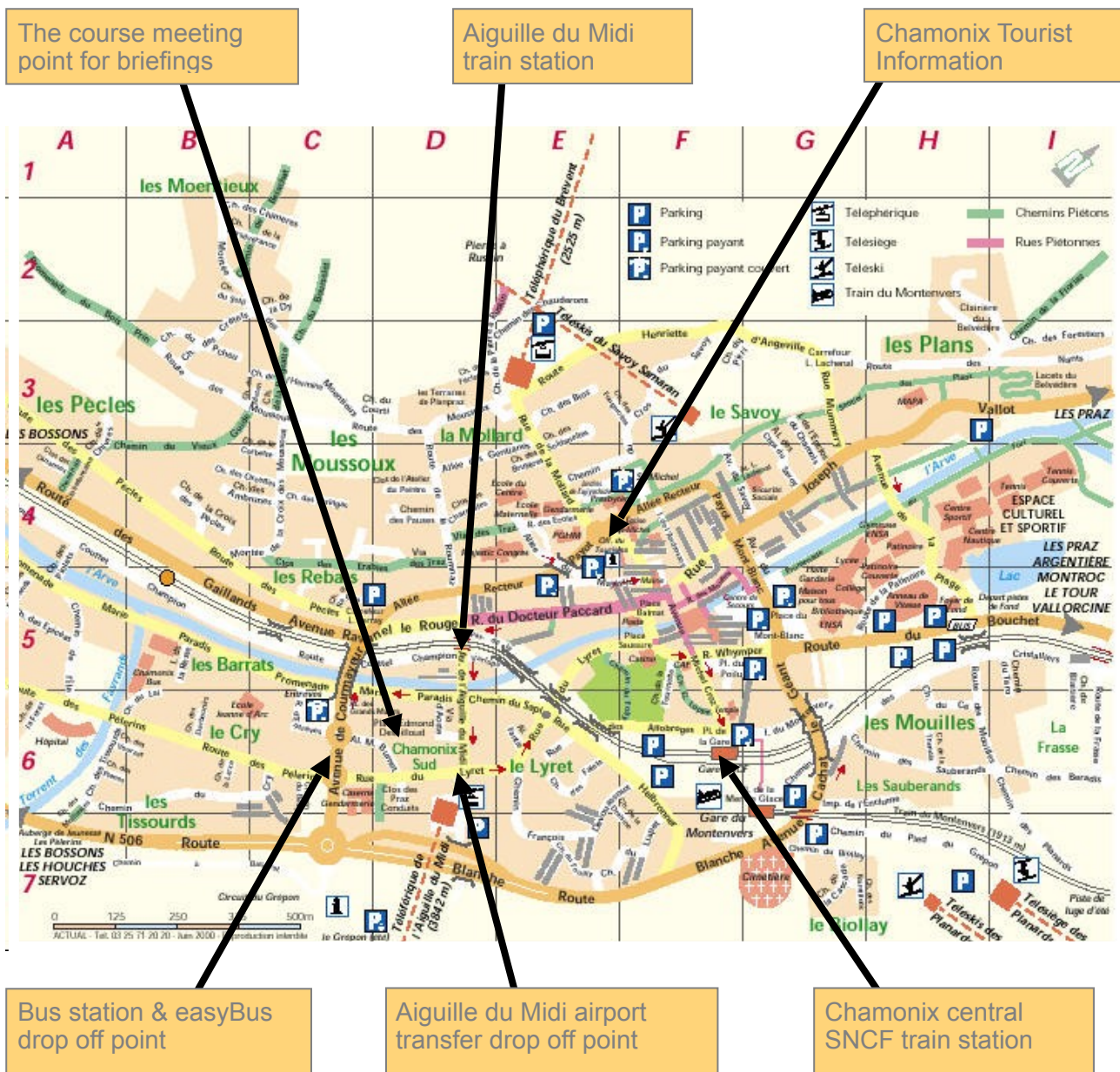
# Chamonix town map

## Transportation and airport transfer drop off points

The map below shows the large scale of the town centre of Chamonix, and where the transport hubs and drop off points are for those travelling by airport transfer, train or car. The following page has a close up of where to find the course meeting point, next to the course accommodation.

When you are travelling, if you have any issues at all such as late arrival or you are lost, then please call / WhatsApp our in-resort emergency number, which will be e-mailed to you a couple of days before you depart. Before your trip, only call the Windermere office on 01539 44 22 17.

If you plan to arrive late and miss the course briefing, you should inform us of this in advance to pre-book an online briefing. Note that guiding cannot commence until you have been briefed.



Please note that most course accommodation is situated within a pedestrian area, so any airport transfers cannot be to the door. There's a 50m walk from the Aiguille du Midi, to the meeting point in the pedestrian area. If you need to give a drop off address for airport transfers or any paperwork, please use; Telepherique Aiguille du Midi, Rue du Lyret, 74400 Chamonix, France.

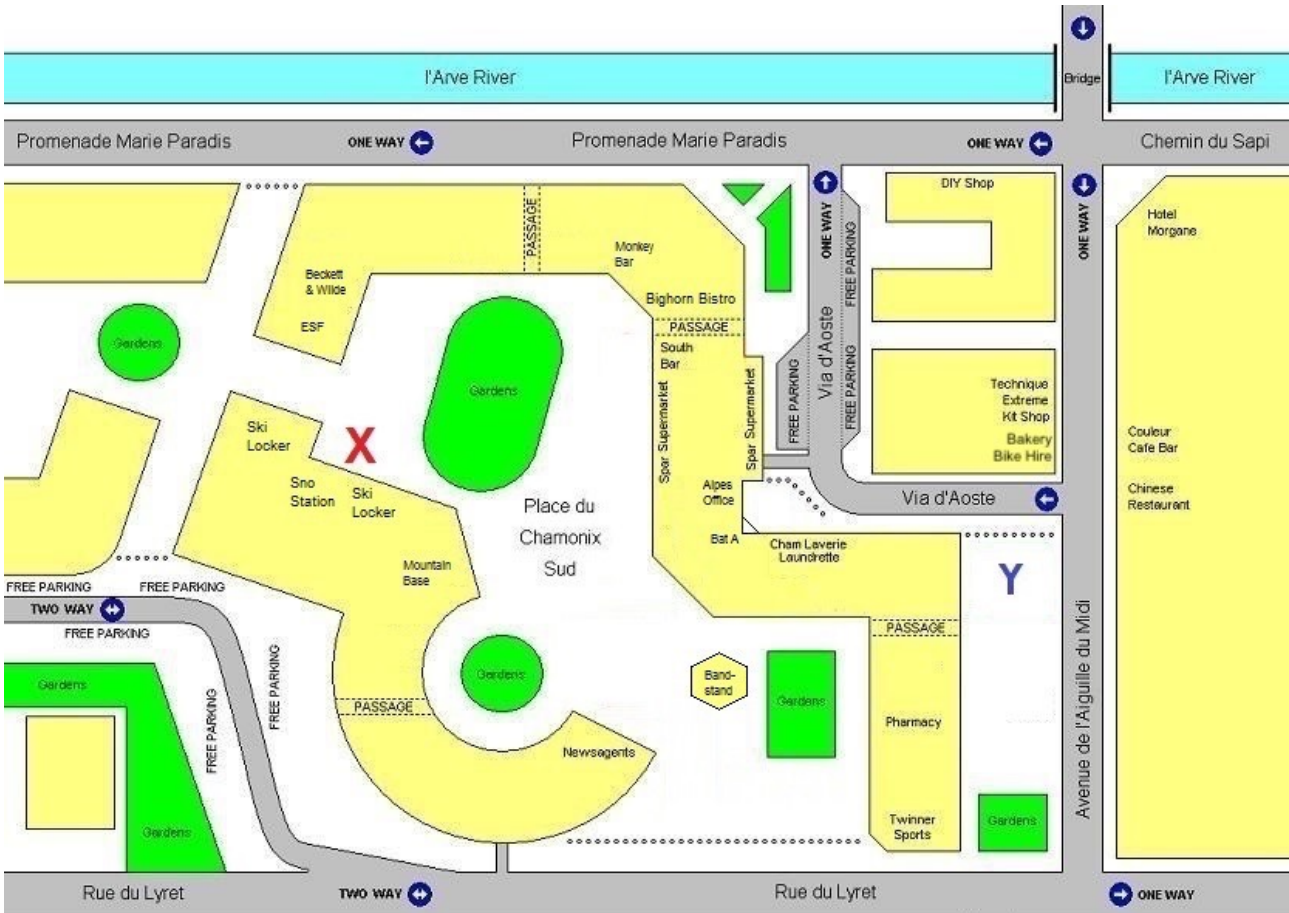


# Meeting and check-in

## Meeting point in Chamonix and the check in

**16:00** - At this time on the course arrival afternoon (usually Sunday), you will be sent self-check details via WhatsApp. Get in contact with us if you haven't received these by 16:15 at latest.

**17:00** - Course briefing is with an Icicle host who will meet you on the benches outside the Ski Locker office, in Cham Sud square (see **red X** on map). The briefing is either outside in good weather, or in a nearby meeting room, which the host will show you to once everyone has arrived.



### Map of Chamonix Sud

SCALE 0 m 50 m 100 m

Info Desk

Aiguille du Midi Cable Car

### Meeting points explained

- X** Course Briefing Point - on the benches in the Cham Sud square outside the Ski Locker offices.
- Y** Morning Meeting Point - for meeting guides for the daily guided activities.






To navigate using your mobile phone instead of a map, here's the pin drop location of the course meeting point in Google Maps; [link to the course meeting point](#), or in What3Words; <https://w3w.co/bobbles.lightless.fixates>

You will meet an Icicle rep on the benches outside the Ski Locker offices, not inside the office, so as not to disturb co-workers in the office space.



# Hire kit & bundles

A stock of hire kit is transported to the Alps from our Windermere shop from **23 June - 7 Sept '24**. It is possible to pre-book and pay in advance of travel by card, to use our hire equipment at preferential rates. Icicle provided hire equipment is for use in guided times only, but externally hired equipment can be reserved to be collected before the course to use in your own time. Full details of all the kit we can hire is on the website at; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/hire.html>

Rental Item	Examples
<b>Alpine bundle</b> (Summer & Winter) = £100 / week	Harness, helmet, classic mountaineering ice axe, 12 point crampons, B3 boots, 1x sling, 1x prussic, 1x belay device, 2x karabiners. 
<b>Avalanche kit</b> (December to May) = £50 / week	Avalanche Transceiver, Shovel, Probe. 
<b>Tech safety kit</b> (Throughout the year) = £10 / week	1 x Sling, 2 x Karabiners, 1 x Prussic Loop, 1 x Belay Device. 
<b>Separate item</b> See course kit list for all the required obligatory items.	Harness £15, Helmet £15, 12 Point crampons £30, Icefall crampons £30, Classic Ice Axe £15, Tech Pair Ice Axes £30, B3 Boots £30, Trekking poles £15, Avalanche transceiver £30, Shovel £15, Avalanche Probe £15.

If you wish to hire any kit, the prices we offer are by the week, and the Alpine kit bundles are the best budget option for those who need to hire all the kit. To benefit from our prices, that are far cheaper than the daily rates charged by local shops, it is imperative that you do the following...

- i) Once you have paid your trip balance, please e-mail [climb@icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk](mailto:climb@icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk), with a list of your exact kit requirements (including your normal training shoes size if renting boots), up to a minimum of 14 days (i.e. two weeks) before you travel.
- ii) You will be e-mailed an itemised receipt, which you should take with you to the course, to show the reps to be issued your hire equipment.

Note that we cannot provide any hire equipment in resort, which has not been pre-booked and paid for, and you will have to hire from more expensive local shops. We cannot waiver on this point.

## Windermere shop hire equipment terms

1. Items are hired on a first come, first served basis.
2. Kit hired is exclusively for use on guided days.
3. Payments in £GBP paid by card in / to our UK shop.
4. No refunds for use for parts of days / weeks.
5. Damaged / lost kit must be replaced immediately on a new for old basis, of the identical model.
6. Crampons are only rented for use on B2 boots or ideally for B3 boots.
7. You are responsible for consequences of kit failure if mis-used or re-adjusted.
8. To reserve hire kit, please e-mail our office.
9. We only stock boot sizes UK sizes 4 to 13.
10. Once you have paid for hire kit, no cancellation or refund is possible for all or part of the order.
11. Rental organised (date of payment) less than 7 days before a trip has a £20 surcharge.





# Icicle website resources

When you were looking for a course, you will have seen that the website is way more than an online brochure, and there are lots of mountaineering, trekking and skiing resources as well. Here we direct you to a few pages to prepare you better for your course. Here's some key links to help...

## **What am I doing each day of the course?**

Before the course you are strongly advised to read and print off a copy of your course itinerary, as we have spent a lot of time providing you with lots of detail about what you should expect each day. You can find your course itinerary by clicking on the dropdown menus on the website, then selecting the type, then name of your course and then click on it.

## **What Alpine ropework do I need to know?**

On basic level climbing and mountaineering courses we assume that you arrive knowing no knots at all, and that is fine, but for all other courses you should ensure you look at the "Knots & Ropework" page to check that you know the knots listed. If some are new to you, we will teach them in resort. <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/skills.html>

## **What conditions should I expect?**

The website has lots of sections to help you learn about the conditions. Just before the course you can look at the avalanche and weather forecasts, which you can access from icons on the top right hand side of the Icicle website. In addition you can read specific conditions reports on the monthly newsletters.

## **What kit do I carry for different routes?**

Your course specific kit list is sent to you in the same e-mail confirmation, as this booklet. Unless briefed otherwise, you should carry all the items (apart from specific valley clothing) on your course specific kit list on every day of your course. The list includes all safety kit and technical equipment required.

## **Can I read any training information before?**

You can print off the Course Instruction Book before your trip. This is a free 36 page booklet which is a PDF linked from: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/pack.html>, which has been written by our logistics and guiding team specifically for Alpine trips. Maybe take a copy with you, on which to take notes in any of the course evening instruction sessions.

## **What training do I need to do for the trip?**

Probably this is the most important point, as no amount of new shiny kit will make you a good mountaineer. If you are as fit as possible, you will get a huge amount more out of your course. See the training pages of this booklet. For the Mont Blanc we recommend at least half marathon fitness. As the infamous saying goes, "you get out what you put in", and this could not be truer for any of our courses. We are famed for throwing loads of information at you during the week, but unless you have done your preparation, you cannot expect to remember all of it. You have been warned! All our courses are a physical effort.

## **What qualifications do instructors hold?**

During your course you will be led by people who hold the highest Alpine qualifications. To find out about this look at the "Selecting a Guide" page, and to learn about the Icicle staff, look at the "Guides & Reps" page. You will learn about the legal restrictions for guiding in the Alps, and also gain an appreciation for the high qualifications and experience level of team who run the courses.

## **What equipment can I purchase from you?**

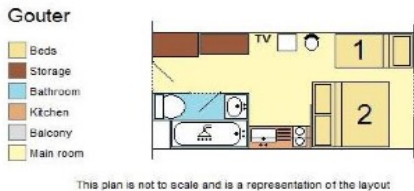
As a course client, you are entitled to a 15% discount off all clothing and equipment from our Windermere mountain store in the Lake District. This offer is not open to anyone else, and is exclusively for our clients. Visit page 16 or; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/index.php>

**Annual photo competition:** As you will have seen from our website, we use many hundreds of photos each year, and so we are in constant need of new images. We invite all clients to enter our annual photo competition by e-mailing us their photos or a link, or by tagging is in any social media of their course photos. Every entrant has a selection of their best photos put on the website. Look at the "Photos" or our Facebook / Instagram / Twitter pages to see past entrants & winners.



# Course accommodation

You are usually based in an apartment in the centre of Chamonix, except during very busy periods, when all our flats are full, where some clients may be based in nearby Chamonix centre hotels. All accommodation is on a room only basis (all bedding and tourist taxes are included). Towels are provided as standard. You can check into your flat between 16:00 & 17:00 on the first day of the course (usually Sunday), and must check out by 10:00 on the departure day (usually Saturday). Sorry there are no early (pre 16:00) check-in options. See a later page for detail of any extra nights



(we can't accommodate any extra nights of accommodation apart from the Saturday before your course). The diagrams to the left show floor plans of two very typical Chamonix flats. For more photos of the flats; <http://www.icicle-mountaineeing.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>. Wherever possible clients are put in flats of rooms with two people sharing, but on very busy weeks flats of three people may be required. Please note that all our flats are single sex sharing, and the majority of beds are singles, so if you are a couple requiring a double then please let us know. If you don't wish to share, you must consider an upgrade. As you can see from the plans, the apartments are open plan, ski flats. They each have mountain views (usually with a balcony), a bathroom (with shower over a bath), storage facilities, and a self-catering kitchenette as well as a fridge.

On several itineraries a specified number of nights in mountain huts are detailed. On some courses these are included in the price, and on others they are excluded. Check the website course page for the inclusions and exclusions. The majority of huts used are on a half board basis (3 course evening meal, and continental breakfast) supplied by the hut guardian. Clients share rooms, which sleep up to twenty people on two tiered bunk platforms. Take some ear plugs! Each person is allocated a mattress with its own pillow and blankets. You must pay for any extras you order, such as bottled water, beer or wine, batteries, chocolate, or packed lunches. If you are on a course where a specified number of nights in a hut are involved, and you opt for / need, any extra nights in a hut, you are responsible for paying the extra half board basis night(s) for you and your guide.

## Accommodation upgrades

See website for details of all accommodation upgrades. These are subject to availability, and must be booked before arrival. The upgrade runs from Sunday at 17:00 to the following Saturday at 10:00. Please note that for all upgrades these are in addition to the full course price. If you wish to provide your own accommodation, please let us know at the time of booking the course, and a discount will be applied to your balance.

## WiFi internet access

Most accommodation has free WiFi broadband access, for those who bring their own laptops or internet phones. There are also several local bars that provide free WiFi too. Phones / Blackberries must always be switched off when using avalanche transceiver units on winter courses.

## Arriving late?

Pre-arranged late check-ins are generally possible, and you are normally sent key collection details on the day of travel via WhatsApp. Please note that unarranged late check-ins are often not possible, and if you turn up late unannounced, you will be advised to stay a local hotel at your own cost.



# Equipment advice & tips

A key concern of our clients is what equipment they should bring on a course. As we run courses covering everything from ice climbing to Mont Blanc to ski mountaineering or trail running, and so the equipment used on the courses is different. **You are sent a course specific kit list with your invoice.** These next two pages are general advice for climbing courses, to be used in conjunction with the specific list, to assist you to plan what you should need, and also how to save money.

For general advice and equipment lists for each of our Alpine course types, select an option below.



Mountaineering: <https://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop%2BKIT%2BMTR.html>

Technical climbs: <https://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop%2BKIT%2BTEC.html>

Rock climbing: <https://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop%2BKIT%2BROC.html>

Via Ferrata: <https://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop%2BKIT%2BVIA.html>

## Key variables...

**SEASONS:** The summer Alpine season includes all courses running from the end of May to the end of September. The winter Alpine season runs between December and March, and the coldest months are December and January when the days are shortest.

**INDIVIDUALS:** In identical conditions some people will be comfortable in a waterproof shell with a fleece layer underneath, whilst others may overheat. Only you know how you react to heat, cold, wind and wet, so adapt the kit list to how you normally dress.

**TEMPERATURE:** In summer it may be 35° in the valley and -25° on Mont Blanc, so you have to take into account a 60° change in temperature. In winter the valley is -10°.

## Layering...

The key to selecting your clothing is a layering system to allow for the wide temperature range. The layering system should be applied to the hands, feet and legs as well as your torso. We warn against any cotton material.

## Save money...

Unless you plan to visit the Alps several times a year, it may not be cost effective to buy all the equipment. Items such as harnesses, helmets, and ice axes can be hired from us from £10 per item per week. If you are planning to buy any kit, we offer highly generous client equipment discounts from our Windermere shop. If you are unsure, hire.

## Flight luggage allowance...

The luggage allowance on flights is usually 20kg per person (including equipment). **This is always sufficient for all our courses** (including all of our ski mountaineering and

expeditions), and if you need to pay excess you are definitely taking too much. Many airlines allow 10kg of sports equipment in addition (if packed in a separate bag). Check the exact details with the airline before booking your tickets. Keep all your important and valuable items (such as your passport), and documents in the hand luggage, and take photocopies of them.

## Top tips for kit for climbing courses...

- 1) Climbers can never take enough gloves. Take a variety, that can be layered over each other if it is very cold, or if wet.
- 2) Trekking poles are essential equipment for an Alpine mountaineer, for using on the approaches to mountain huts, and also on easy snow climbs, e.g. Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa and Gran Paradiso.
- 3) Always try and select lighter coloured base layers and clothing, to help keep you cool on sunny days, as dark colours absorb the heat, and could cause dehydration.
- 4) Carry a blister kit in your rucksack at all times, and treat any before they become an issue, at the hot spot stage (or before).
- 5) All items (apart from poles and ice axes) should be packed inside your bag, as anything else on the outside could fall off.
- 6) All winter climbing courses will need an avalanche transceiver, shovel & probe.

## Course specific equipment list...

Note that these following pages are for your general information, and that it is your course specific equipment list which you should follow for your exact packing list and equipment requirements. This list is sent as a separate attachment, with this book when you booked.



# Climbing courses kit

The equipment list below contains all the obligatory kit required for all our mountaineering courses. If you have anything on this list then BRING IT due to changing conditions or for use in spare time or extensions (e.g. rock shoes for optional evening indoor climbing, even if on an ice climbing course). Asterisked items are available to hire from Icicle to use on your course (see page 7). A course specific kit list is sent in the same confirmation e-mail as this booklet.



## General equipment

- a) Mountain Boots\*: crampon compatible (B3) leather boots, e.g. Sportiva Nepal Extreme, or
- b) Technical Mountain Boots (B2) - Sportiva Aequilibrium / Trango, or Scarpa Ribelle
- Approach Shoes - Training climb approaches; Sportiva TX4, or Scarpa Zodiac GTX
- Rock Shoes - Bring for training routes and multi-pitch climbs, and for use in own time
- Climbing Rucksack (40L max): compact rucksack for day climbs & high altitude ascents
- Head Torch & Batteries: a halogen or LED bulb head torch with new spare batteries
- Sunhat / Cap & Fleece / Wool Hat: When hot to hide from glare / when cold to keep warm
- Goggles & UV Sunglasses: for all courses, and for altitude itineraries (e.g. Mont Blanc)
- Trekking Poles (Pair): these are now obligatory kit and help to minimise knee damage
- Water Bottle & Hot Drink Flask (1L+): drinking tubes freeze at altitude or in winter

## Technical kit

- Mountaineering Crampons\*: of a 12 point design e.g. Grivel G12 or BD Sabretooth
- Mountaineering Ice Axe\*: classical style axe (max 60cm) e.g. Camp Neve or BD Raven
- Alpine / Rock Harness\*: comfortable & adjustable, e.g. Black Diamond Alpine Bod
- Safety Helmet\*: essential for all our courses, e.g. BD Half Dome or Camp Rock Star
- Slings\* x2 (long eg. 120cm length): essential personal kit for safety and rescues
- Screw Gate Karabiners\* x3: large size to use when wearing gloves, & taking thick ropes
- Belay Device\* or Figure of 8\*: heat-dissipating devices such as the ATC or Petzl Reverso
- Prussic Loops\* x2: each loop should be made with 2 metres of 6mm or 7mm climbing cord

## Thermal layers

- Fleece Jacket: this is the most important part of your versatile layering system
- Base layer thermals x2: the tops should be long sleeved to protect your arms in a fall
- Duvet Jacket / Vest (optional): useful as light, especially bivouacs, Alpine starts, & winter
- Windstopper Gloves: excellent for thermal capabilities even when windy, & for ropework

## Waterproof layer

- Goretex Jacket: a breathable windproof jacket e.g. The North Face Mountain Jacket
- Waterproof Trousers / Salopettes: for climbing & when breaking trail in snow, or if it rains
- Gaiters: well fitting, quality, breathable gaiters e.g. Mountain Hardwear Ventigaiters
- Waterproof Gloves (not mitts): in addition to fleece gloves, and must be waterproof

## Survival and medical

- First Aid Kit: blister kit, dressings, bandages, plasters, aspirin, paracetamol, ibuprofen
- UV Sunscreen & Sunblock: high factor sunscreen is needed as you burn easily in snow

**Sleeping bags...** Sleeping bags and mats are not required on any course. All nights in mountain huts provide bedding. Take a lightweight sleeping bag liner for hygiene and comfort.

**Ice climbing / extreme level courses...** On these courses you require technical Ice Axes\* & Crampons\*. Mountaineering crampons & ice axes can be hired only if needed.

**Winter climbing courses...** Everyone on any of our Alpine winter climbing courses requires an avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe. You need to hire these if you do not have your own.



# Physical preparation

## General principles...

One of the most ignored aspects of climbing, is the training required for the sports. Many people try to judge the difficulty of an ascent by looking on a map to see the height gain on a summit day, and for Mont Blanc it is 1300m. People then equate this to walking up Ben Nevis (same height gain), and blame any problems on a lack of acclimatisation. All of our courses have been designed by professionals to maximise your acclimatisation, and if you struggle it is usually your lack of training that is at fault. A fitter person acclimatises easier, and their body is better prepared to work at maximum outputs for a long time, or where there is less oxygen. Added to this most clients are unused to daily height gains of c.1000m, let alone in snow carrying a rucksack. There are also the long descents to prepare for, as for example there is 2.5km vertical descent from Mont Blanc. This page outlines some ideas of how to prepare yourself, as fitness and summit success are linked!



All our training plans have been devised by a Personal Trainer, and there are plans to suit all starting levels at; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/training.html>

## Muscle groups and aerobic efficiency...

The most efficient exercise for mountain sports, are the actual sports themselves, or at least types of exercise that develop the key muscle groups and aerobic fitness at a similar level. Except on very difficult routes, the main muscle group that will be used are in the thigh (quadriceps), and the oxygen demand by this muscle group is high, requiring a good level of aerobic efficiency. For this reason weight training in a gym is far less effective than running, as your muscle capacity can only grow if the aerobic output can meet the demand. Where there is a shortfall, lactic acid is produced and you will feel what athletes call the 'burn'.

## Recommendations...

The level of training that we recommend for our courses differs from course to course, so look at the course itinerary, and click on the skills and fitness links below the course title for further details. As a general idea, for most of the courses you should be running for 45 minutes at least three times a week for at least two months before the course. Many people try using the excuse that their joints get sore with running. Here are a couple of options for you to consider trying: 1) Run on soft surfaces such as grass, 2) Go cycling but ensure there are lots of hills, 3) Try using a knee support / brace while exercising, 4) Try to increase your 'strength to weight' ratio by dieting. When you are truthful to yourself you probably know that currently you are not training enough. Excuses such as 'not enough time for training', are due to bad time management and a lack of prioritisation.

## Diet and hydration...

Carbohydrates are foods that release energy easily, and should only be eaten before exercise (not after, or before bed). If you eat lots of carbohydrates without exercising you will put on weight. The food you eat must provide you with the energy levels you require, as well as sufficient levels of protein and fats. It is imperative that you keep hydrated during your training, or your performance level will drop significantly. Monitor this on your course, as you will be exercising hard at altitude.

## Climbing specific training...

There are three key aspects to consider in your preparations; 1) your aerobic training regime, 2) strength training, and 3) your core strength. In addition most people find stretching and yoga an integral part of their routine, which helps protect you against injury during your preparations. For most people, the most important element of the training program is the aerobic element, and to help avoid injury, a wide range of aerobic training sports are required, including running, cycling, swimming and gym circuit training. Try not to be dependent on one sport, but do a range, to build up different muscle groups, and improve your aerobic thresholds in all of these disciplines. To help keep your motivation, variation of types and locations for your exercise is essential. The best climbers aren't always the strongest, but generally the lightest and fittest.



# Personal training plans

The best way to view training is to take a holistic approach to your preparation, and it is with this attention to detail that you should continue to care for yourself during the course, with sufficient food and hydration to keep you going. However we have heard of laughable ideas, believed to be worthwhile training, such as taking the batteries out of a TV remote control to make you get up more often, or ten minutes on an exercise bike. A holistic approach is many complimentary actions.

## Types of exercise to consider...

- RUNNING – good for aerobic & anaerobic fitness though take care with your joints.
- SWIMMING – excellent aerobic workout that does not put major stress on joints.
- CYCLING – good for strength & endurance, and useful throughout training schedules.
- ROWING – very good for aerobic endurance, stamina, and for muscle capacity building.
- AEROBICS – dependant on type of exercises, this is useful for flexibility & stamina.
- WALKING – only useful as a warm down exercise, as it gives a low level of fitness.

## General principles of training...

- 1) Flexibility exercises are important so no muscle damage occurs during exercise.
- 2) The effect of aerobic exercise is optimised in training periods of over 30 minutes.
- 3) Psychology is important in training, and you must enjoy the exercise you are doing.
- 4) Varying the exercise can be beneficial as different muscle groups are exercised.
- 5) Monitor your heart rate and try to keep it within the suggested boundaries.
- 6) Warm down periods prevent cramps and enable the exercised muscles to cool.
- 7) Diet is a factor that can assist the training and provide the energy when needed.
- 8) Doing the sport you are training for, can be part of your training programme.



A few people each season contact us saying "It's ten weeks to my course, and I haven't done any training yet. What do you recommend I do?". Ignoring the urge to say, "Put the phone down, don't go to McDonalds, get your running kit on, and get outside", below is one sample of the three ten weeks training planners for you to see the level of detail we provide. The training section of the website offers several alternative programs for different fitness levels and courses, devised by qualified personal trainers with a focus on mountain fitness. If you really have done no training before this, then we advise you to get medical advice before.

W	Phase	Days of the week						
		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	Build Up Phase	20 mins running	20 mins running	REST	30 mins running	REST	30 mins running	Yoga / gym / stretching
2	Strength / Power	30 mins running	REST	30 mins running	Cross Country	REST	30 mins running	Yoga / gym / stretching
3	Strength / Power	Cross Country	30 mins running	REST	Cross Country	REST	30 mins running	Yoga / gym / stretching
4	Transition Phase	30 mins running	REST	45 mins running	Cross Country	REST	45 mins running	Yoga / gym / stretching
5	Stamina Phase	REST	Cross Country	Cross Country	45 mins running	REST	Cross Country	Yoga / gym / stretching
6	Stamina Phase	Cross Country	REST DAY	60 mins running	45 mins running	REST	Cross Country	Yoga / gym / stretching
7	Transition Phase	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST DAY	Cross Country	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST	Cross Country	Yoga / gym / stretching
8	Power / Endurance	REST	45min run / 2hr cycle	Cross Country	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST	45min run / 2hr cycle	Yoga / gym / stretching
9	Power / Endurance	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST	Cross Country	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST	45min run / 2hr cycle	Yoga / gym / stretching
10	Warm Down	REST	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST DAY	Cross Country	REST	45min run / 2hr cycle	REST
11	COURSE	COURSE	COURSE	COURSE	COURSE	COURSE	REST	REST



# Guided pre-trip training

If you can't wait until your course in the Alps, we offer UK courses, to help you prepare and train...



### Alpine Preparation Weekend

The aim of these Lake District based weekends is to help you prepare people better for your trip to the Alps. They involve two full hill days, so good hill fitness is important, and you are led over high mountainous terrain, with the aim of coaching you on steep ground, developing hill fitness, and advising on training and kit. After the first day, there is a Alpine Q&A session in a local pub, to allow you to ask any queries you have about your forthcoming Alpine trip. The instructor will bring along a decent range of kit, to help answer any queries.



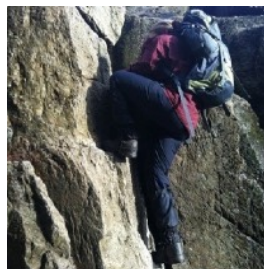
### Scottish Winter Skills – Weekend or Full Week

Learn or refresh your ice axe and crampon skills, over a weekend or week. Practice ice axe arrest and learn how to move efficiently on snow. Our Scottish winter courses are all based in the mountains of Ben Nevis and Glencoe, as these provide some of the most reliable snow and winter climbing conditions of anywhere in the UK. The mountains here also offer a wide range of route options at all grades, so are a perfect training ground for these courses. These trips offer excellent preparation for those on Alpine climbing courses.



### Wild Camping

Two great hill days on a weekend, with a wild camp on the night in a remote region on the highest fells of the Lake District. Learn skills and sleep under the stars!



### Rock Climbing

Spend a day in the Lake District rock climbing or scrambling, to develop or fine tune your skills for an Alpine trip. You can also use the day for a roped scrambling route.



### Personal Trainer

Book one of our qualified personal trainers for a mountain fitness test, over two or three hours. This is Lakes based, and we also offer a Virtual Personal Trainer service.



### Avalanche Safety

Essential safety course pre winter to refresh your avalanche awareness and for you to practice using transceivers in various avalanche safety and recovery scenarios.



### Navigation Skills

Never get lost in the hills and mountains again. In the day, you will learn to use the compass and various scales of maps & interpreting the contours, and making route plans.



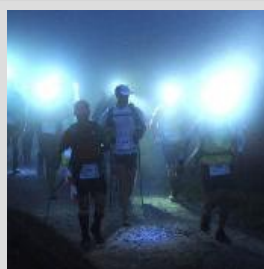
### Intro Fell Running

If you've never run off road before, and want to try this amazing sport, it's a weekend course with two days coaching. You'll develop descent skills and pacing techniques.



### Lakes Trail Week

Spend a full week trail running in the Lakes, and explore different regions each day. Select from a wide mixture of fell top routes, single tracks, & woodland trails.



### 1st time Ultra-Trail

If planning to run in your first ultra, learn runners navigation, night running, pacing and techniques, and run a mock event. A two day weekend course in the Lake District.



# Last minute questions

## **What activities insurance do I need?**

See page 3 for full details. Proof will be required in Chamonix before activities can commence. For UK residents, you could consider Snowcard or the BMC policies. For those travelling from outside the UK, e.g. USA try Travelex. Do not arrive in Chamonix without insurance, as you will not be able to participate in any guiding at all. Full details of what insurance is required for any of our courses, for climbing, trekking, skiing or running are online; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/insurance.html>

## **I'm arriving before 4pm. Can I store bags?**

There are no baggage storage facilities at all in Chamonix, though there are in Geneva airport, so travel as light as possible, and aim to get flights that arrive close to the check in time. If you arrive early, bars often store bags if you ask them nicely and buy a drink or lunch there.

## **Where can I leave stuff while on my course?**

On most courses your accommodation is yours all week, even on the nights you are in a hut, so you can leave all your luggage there all week.

## **What is the address of my accommodation?**

Most of the course accommodation is in shared flats in the Chamonix Sud area of town close to the Aiguille du Midi cable car. Accommodation self-check in details are provided by WhatsApp.

## **Who will my guide be?**

Guides too are allocated on a weekly basis, to allow for changes in weather, or their physical preferences. You are told who will be guiding you at the course briefing at 17:00 on Sunday.

## **How many others are on my course?**

This figure changes all the time, as we accept bookings 24/7. Look at the course itinerary page of your trip, to see how many spaces are remaining. The maximum guide ratio (e.g. 1:6), minus the remaining spaces (e.g. 2), will let you know how many are on your trip (e.g. 4 people).

## **How will altitude affect me?**

Altitude sickness affects people in different ways. You will notice the air is thinner, though most of the feelings of nausea are due to the effort of the ascents. Most people sleep very lightly at altitude, so we try to arrange for only essential nights to be spent in huts when Alpine

starts are needed the next morning. At all other times, we abide by the principle of 'climb high, sleep low'. You can minimise the impact by keeping hydrated, and being very fit.

## **How fit do I really need to be for my course?**

It is a sad truth that the majority of clients are not as fit as they (or we) would wish to be for their course, and this impacts on their course. Our booking form asks you to self-declare your skills and fitness, and if either of these are below the stated level, we reserve the right to ask you to leave the course. For example on a Mont Blanc (or similar physically demanding) week we suggest that you half marathon fitness, and run this distance is a reasonable time, such as below 1 hour 45 minutes.

## **How much will my rucksack weigh?**

This is a trick question. When you are on a summit, you are wearing all your clothes, so technically not carrying them. You weighed the same at the bottom of the mountain when all the kit was in your pack. The main principle is to keep your pack as small as possible. We recommend a 40 L bag as a maximum, but if you are efficient you can cope with a 30 to 35 litre bag. The course hosts and Guides will advise on the kit and clothing to carry each day.

## **Can I drink the water?**

The water from the taps in Chamonix is safe and is fresher and less chemical laden than the supply in the UK. In mountain huts there is rarely running water, but bottled water can be bought for from c. £5 a 1.5 litre bottle. In terms of glacial meltwater, the main minerals in the granite rocks of the massif are iron and magnesium which have diarrhetic effects, which are picked up and dissolved into the meltwater as it filters through glacial moraines.

## **What should I tip the guide?**

Guides don't expect tips, but if you have had a good time, a financial tip is always hard to gauge, so we suggest you get them a nice bottle of wine or a small case of beer, as it's a nice touch, and always appreciated by them!

## **All other queries?**

Get in touch with us! Tel (UK): 01539 44 22 17. E-mail: [info@icicle.co.uk](mailto:info@icicle.co.uk)





# Client equipment offers

## Icicle Windermere store

Course clients are eligible for a **15% OFF** all items from our Lake District shop. Your course specific equipment list will detail some offers specific to your course, and here we list the Alpine top sellers. The discount applies to all purchases in store or online, and there's free postage to a UK address for all orders over £30. Use client discount code **ICLWMSLD** at the checkout;



**ONLINE STORE** - <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk>



Black Diamond Sabretooth crampons  
**NOW £114.75**  
(RRP £135.00)



Sleeping bag liner is obligatory in huts  
**NOW £10.19**  
(RRP £11.99)



Ortovoz Piz Bianco synthetic jacket  
**NOW £169.15**  
(RRP £199.00)



Karrimor Hot Rock rucksack 40 litres  
**NOW £59.50**  
(RRP £70.00)



Camp Neve Ice Axe  
Sizes: 50, 57, 65cm  
**NOW £46.75**  
(RRP £55.00)



Extremities Sticky Thick fleece glove  
**NOW £20.40**  
(RRP £24.00)



Leki Voyager poles Superlock (pair)  
**NOW £42.50**  
(RRP £50.00)



Grivel Ares safety harness  
**NOW £59.50**  
(RRP £70.00)



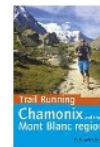
Black Diamond Cosmo 70 lumens headtorch  
**NOW £25.49**  
(RRP £29.99)



Ortovox Patroller 3 antenna digital ARVA  
**NOW £160.65**  
(RRP £189.00)



Black Diamond Express icescrew 16cm  
**NOW £42.49**  
(RRP £49.99)



Chamonix Trail Running Guidebook, Cicerone  
**NOW £12.71**  
(RRP £14.95)



Black Diamond Couloir harness. Sizes: M,L,XL  
**NOW £38.24**  
(RRP £44.99)



TSL 325 Escape snowshoes (pair)  
**NOW £114.74**  
(RRP £134.99)



Black Diamond Viper Ice axe (hammer)  
**NOW £148.75**  
(RRP £175.00)



Black Diamond Half Dome helmet  
**NOW £42.49**  
(RRP £49.99)



Chamonix 1:25000 IGN map, with GPS grid  
**NOW £10.16**  
(RRP £11.95)



Grivel G12 Newmatic 12 point crampons  
**NOW £127.50**  
(RRP £150.00)