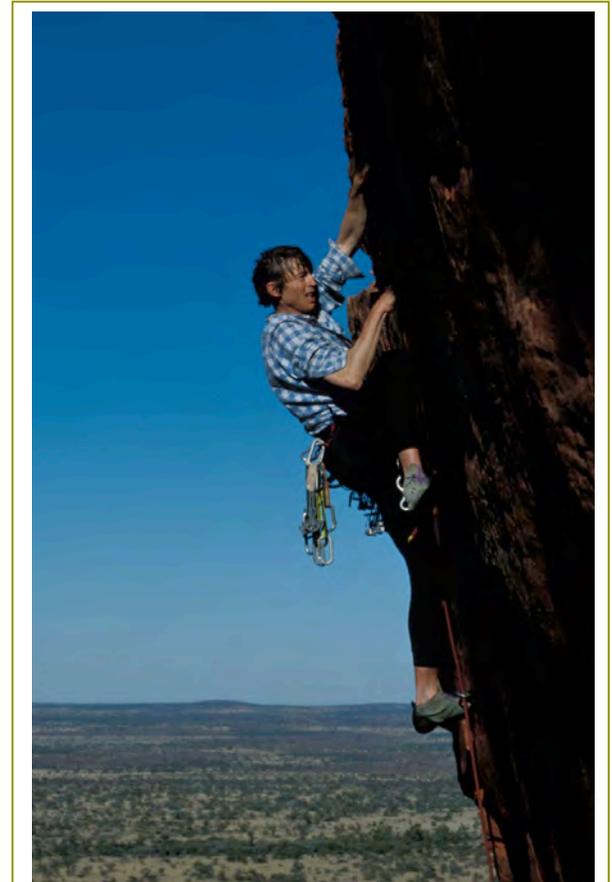




Green Guide to Climbing & Abseiling

LEAVE NO TRACE

www.lnt.org.au



LNTA Chairperson and Patron,
Tim Macartney – Snape, AM

*This guide promotes the seven principles of *LEAVE NO TRACE* ethics for minimal impact while climbing.

* This guide is intended to help recreational climbers; commercial climbing tour operators and their clients improve their own environmental management and reduce their environmental impact on and around climbing sites.

***IMPORTANCE: Minimal Impact techniques are not only important to environmental protection and future of the wilderness but also to the satisfaction and positive experience of the outdoor enthusiast.*

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Plan Ahead & Prepare

- Repackage Food. Plan your meals carefully to reduce waste and leftovers. Repackage food into reusable containers or plastic bags to reduce the amount of potential rubbish or litter you bring to the river.
- Carry Water. Water is an extremely precious resource. Practice water conservation and carry extra drinking water.
- Proper Equipment. Bringing proper and adequate equipment can help you *Leave No Trace*. Plan on using a camp stove to cook your meals. Bring all the necessary equipment for washing dishes, straining dishwater and carrying out rubbish.
- Safety. Take all necessary safety equipment such as helmets, first aid kits Satellite phones or Epirbs, warm clothes, torches etc..
- Knowledge of the Area. Be familiar with the weather and water conditions that you might encounter.
- Know the regulations. Check with Land managers or owners for information and special considerations. Obtain permits or permission if required. There may be a group number requirement.
- Before establishing a new climb, carefully evaluate the impact compared with the benefit and consult with land management authorities where appropriate
- Qualified Guides. Check that your guides have adequate skills in first aid, and safety, health and hygiene, and dealing with clients as well as technical climbing skills. Guides also need a basic field knowledge of ecology in order to explain how “minimal impact” practices work.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Climbing/Hiking.

- In unspoilt areas, take care not to create new track. Spread out and walk carefully to avoid trampling.
- When approaching a climb, try to walk only where obvious tracks already exist and single file as much as possible to avoid widening the track.
- Avoid disturbance to vegetation, including gardening and excessive brushing.
- Plant Species. Find out about local vegetation to learn about those that are fragile and those that are resilient.
- Avoid Marking. Write accurate descriptions instead of marking the starts of climbs, which is unsightly to non-climbers.
- Reduce Erosion. Use the minimal impact techniques mentioned previously when travelling around cliff tops and bases to reduce the denudation and erosion of these areas. Tread lightly and avoid sensitive vegetation such as mosses and bog plants at the base of the cliff and heath areas at the top.
- Unloading Gear. Try to unload your gear and take breaks on large flat rocks or other durable ground to avoid damaging vegetation.
- Where possible use "lower offs" to avoid trampling of cliff top vegetation.
- Avoid revegetation areas.

Rock Management.

- Avoid directly damaging the rock by manufacturing a hold. (E.g. trundling or hold chipping.)
- Never change the character of an existing climb by adding fixed protection. Avoid creating new climbs that require fixed protection.
- Use chalk sparingly as it creates a visual impact and kills the surface algae leaving bare rock.

- Fixed anchor points should be minimised and discreet. They should not be used at all in National Parks and other conservation areas.
- If trees are being used as belay points they must be adequately protected from girdling. There must be adequate padding between the belay point (sling, rope, etc.) and the tree.

Camping.

- If there is an established campsite, use it. Take care not to create new ones.
- Other wise camp on rock, sands, or gravel where impact is smallest. When these can't be found, then on areas with durable grasses or weeds.
- Avoid digging, landscaping and trenching around tents.
- When leaving a campsite, "naturalise it". Fluff up flattened grasses, brush away boot prints and replace any rocks that have been kicked or moved.
- Avoid damaging live shrubs, woody plants or branches.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Rubbish

- Minimise the amount of rubbish by planning ahead.
- Pack out all rubbish including organic kitchen waste.
- Do not burn rubbish.
- Remove all slings and pack out any small bits of climbing rubbish like finger tape.

Washing

- Pans, cutlery and crockery should never be washed directly in water bodies.
- Wash 100 m from the edge of rivers and lakes.
- Pour used wash water through a fine mesh strainer to remove small food scraps to be carried out. Then scatter grey water on bushes, leaf litter or grassy areas, or into a small pit well away from water bodies.

- Use biodegradable detergent or preferably, no detergent at all. Instead, try using really hot water alone.
- Never use shampoo or soap in a river or lake. Try going without detergent for bathing.
- If bathing is necessary, use buckets or bush showers at least 100m away from the water body.
- Hand washing for hygiene after toileting should also be done with biodegradable detergent at least 100 m away from water bodies. Hand sanitisers also work really well for this.

Toileting.

- Use toilets and other developed sites for human waste disposal where they're available.
- Most National Parks recommend the method of burial disposal in low use areas. In this case individuals should bring a trowel to dig a cat hole 10-15 cm deep and greater than 100 m from water each time and well away from climbing routes.
- If toilet paper use is necessary, use it sparingly and bury it deeply or preferably, carry it out.
- Natural toilet paper like smooth stones, grass, sticks or bits of bark can make it possible to avoid man-made toilet paper all together. Make sure plant material is dead and of the non-irritating variety. These can be buried in the cat-hole as well.
- Urinate on bare ground away from vegetation, climbing routes and tracks.

Leave What You Find

Respecting Culture.

- Avoid climbing close to Indigenous sites out of respect for the culture and to ensure their longevity. Land managers can advise you on these locations.

Preserve Nature.

- When we leave shells, feathers, flowers, fossils, artefacts and other objects of interest as we find them, we pass the gift of discovery on to those that follow.
- Educate by discovering the ecological niche role that these objects play.

- Avoid climbing at sites where rare and vulnerable plants or animals are found. Land managers can advise you of these locations.
- Retain the special qualities of every wilderness area for the long term.

Preserve the Past.

- It is illegal to excavate, disturb or remove archaeological, historical and cultural artefacts from any public or wilderness lands.

Introduced Species.

- Avoid Spreading Non-native plant and animal species that are generally impossible to eradicate once they are introduced.
- Avoid spreading diseases like Giardia or Cryptosporidium by properly disposing of human waste at least 100m from water.
- Do not transport flowers, weeds or aquatic plants into or out of the wilderness.
- Empty and clean out your packs, tents, pegs boots, boats, fishing equipment, vehicles and other gear after every trip. Water, mud and soil may contain harmful spores like Phytophthora Cinnamoni (dieback fungus) or tiny plants and animals, which can invade other environments.
- Use wash stations where provided.
- Help landowners and managers initiate control efforts by alerting them to infested areas.
- If a trip crosses areas known to contain pathogens, visit the un-infected area first.

Minimise the Impact of Fires

Impacts of Campfires

- Building campfires in many cases has compromised the natural appearance of the wilderness and the demand for firewood.
- Fire rings overflowing with ashes, half-burnt logs, food and trash are unsightly.
- Campfires can and do ignite bushfires.

Local Regulations

- Check with local landowners and managers as to whether fire building is permitted and in which season.

Cooking

- Preferably use a fuel stove first.
- Carry a light stove and enough fuel for cooking.
- Use a candle with drip catcher for light.

Heat

- Carry enough warm clothing so that fires for warmth are unnecessary.

Minimal Impact Fires

- If this is permitted and it is important to you, then build a minimal impact fire.
- Judge the wind, weather, location and wood availability.
- Choose small dead pieces of wood that are found on the ground. Do not break off branches from trees or bushes.
- Use pre-existing established fire rings. Dismantle and naturalise any extra fire rings.
- Where there are no fire rings build a mound fire. Lay down a large ground cloth or fire pan and collect sand, gravel or soil with a low organic content with a stuff sack and a trowel. Construct a pedestal approx. 25 cm thick by 75 cm in diameter on the ground cloth or fire pan.
- Burn all wood to ash and distinguish completely with water.
- Scatter cold ash widely and disperse the soil.

Respect Wildlife

Sensitivity

- Understand through education the role each species plays in each environment in order to realise the importance of its position within an ecosystem.
- Realise the impact we as visitors have when we visit their habitats.

- Avoid nesting sites of raptors during spring and summer. Watch the birds as they circle to identify crags to avoid.
- Observe animals from a distance so that they may go about their regular activities such as feeding, hunting or mating. Touching nests or young animals may cause their parents to abandon them.
- Never feed wild animals so that they do not develop a dependence or familiarity with humans and remain as wild as possible.
- Store food and rubbish securely and keep a clean camp.

Pets

- Wildlife and pets do not mix. Keep pets at home. All National Parks restrict pets so check for regulations first.
- Report any injured animals to the local land managers. Do not attempt to handle the animal.

Be Considerate of Your Hosts and Other Visitors

Respect your Hosts.

- Learn about the cultural history of the land. Recognise, acknowledge and respect local knowledge.

Outdoor Etiquette.

- We share the wilderness with other outdoor enthusiasts. Respect others' wilderness experience by examining our own behaviours to minimise any negative impacts.

Cooperative Spirit.

- Often we rely on others when mishaps occur. Our experiences often depend upon our treatment of others and their attitudes toward us.

Keep a Low Profile.

- Have rest breaks in discreet places to minimise impact on other groups. If possible camp out of sight and sound of other visitors. Try not to wear bright coloured cloths or use bright coloured tents that can cause disturbance to animals as well as other recreational users.

Let Nature's Sound Prevail.

- Keep noise to a reasonable level. Listen to nature.
- Avoid the use of bright lights, radios, electronic games, mobile phones and other intrusive urban devices.
- Talk quietly especially when in large groups. Set out reasons and expectations early in the trip.