

We've got an app for learning rock climbing basics. A father and his daughter are going to an indoor rock climbing gym for the first time. He's downloaded our app to get an overview before he goes to the gym, where they will take a more in depth class with an instructor. For this exercise, we'll focus on belaying.

We'd like you to write four steps to understanding the basics of belaying that we'll use inside the app. Each step will go on its own separate screen, accompanied by an illustration.

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## **1. The Brief.**

To figure out the optimal experience for users, user research/interviews/usability tests with various target audiences could be carried out, as well as interviews with some experts in rock climbing, or gym instructors, as well as competitive reviews of other similar apps (eg. tutorial apps, how to's, exercise guide apps, etc.) This will make sure that the app copy will be the right tone/language/content for the target user, to best guide them through the tutorial, and move them confidently from one screen step to the next.

I would also draw from reviews on similar apps on Google Play and iTunes, looking out for trends/complaints on usability/navigation etc. And I asked my colleague a few questions about rock climbing for this, she's an avid indoor climber! For anything UX related, I think it's really important to get out and talk to users and ask questions, and let their behaviours and wants inform both the copy and the design.

As well as the instruction copy, I thought there might be other areas on the app screen/page where copy might be present/needed. So I've also thought about the app as a whole, and listed out some other possible features and necessary copy, other than just the tutorial instructions.

## 2. App Case Study Overview

- *The User Problem:* Lack of knowledge about rock climbing, unaware of the basics. These basics could include rock climbing jargon/lingo/commands, techniques, the climbing environment, safety touchpoints, and ability to physically carry out simple moves.
- *The Product Solution:* Teach & provide an overview of the basics of rock climbing (both indoors and outdoors), using simple and sequential illustrated tutorials.
- *Target Users:*
  - Beginners, people who have never done any rock climbing before.
  - People who have maybe done it once or twice previously, but don't know the basic techniques, and are interested in learning from scratch.
  - People who want to start up rock climbing as a new hobby.
  - People who just want to try rock climbing as a fun once off day activity, and want to check out the basics beforehand, but not take it too seriously.

### 3. The Product.

As part of coming up with the right copy, I would probably do a discovery of the app product and brand itself. I would review any content style guides if any, for brand voice/content/language/style guidelines. Also I would check for any interactive/design features where copy might be incorporated, such as buttons/arrows/hovers/prompts/highlighted text capabilities/pop-ups. Knowing more about the design/wireframes will also show how much space is left on the screen for copy.

I've presumed the following features for this app:

Aimed specifically for beginners, basic tutorials for both indoor and outdoor climbing.

Users have two options:

They can either create an account, which lets you track which tutorials you have completed, and save/archive the ones they might want to reread, and also let them start back at a tutorial where they left off.

The other option, for those just wanting to use the app as a once off, lets the user browse/access the tutorials using a basic keyword search. However, when they click onto a tutorial, a section of copy will at first suggest they take possible requisite tutorials. Eg. for belaying, before the first instruction step appears, a pop up could suggest other important tutorials to consider doing first, with links to those tutorials. Pre-belaying tutorials could be: Basics safety points, names of the equipment, rock climbing communication commands, basic tutorials of important knots, etc. *This is useful context for the copy for the belaying tutorial instructions, because it tells us what relevant info we can leave out/don't need to include.*

## 4. User Persona & Context

### Father

- Age: 40
- Context: Fits into the last category of users (once off activity interest, day out activity). Has never rock climbed before, wants to take his daughter out on a fun day, wants her to have fun and be safe, wants to have a decent overview of what to expect so he doesn't seem totally in the blue in front of the instructor, and wants to be able to get involved and maybe belay his daughter as she climbs. Won't be interested in making an account to save tutorials just yet.
- Physical activity level: Goes to the gym occasionally, not unfit.
- Family: One daughter, 10 (who won't be using or looking at the app so don't really need a user persona for her).
- Level of tech ability/use: doesn't normally use apps, uses his iphone regularly though, especially for work.
- How he found the app: When he was signing up for the class on his gym website, they feature the app and recommend downloading it. He most likely won't be using this app regularly.

A useful guide and indicator for UX copy concepting, is the "User Emotion Journey" (or "emotion mapping" - emotions drive action!) (*note, just made this up, useful visual guide in my head!*)

How the user feels now  
(prior to using the product)



What copy/words can we use in the product,  
to guide them through various emotions, and  
get to them from one side of the emotion  
journey to the other

How the user should feel  
afterwards/how we want them to feel  
after using the product

## 5. The Product Content/Copy Guidelines.

Based on research/discovery/overview of the product and its users, the copy style needs to be:

- Clear, simple, like a guide; informative, easy to use and navigate through the tutorials, illustrative; shouldn't use rock climbing language/terms without explaining them; not overwhelming, should make the user feel at ease, build their confidence, make sure they don't feel nervous.
- Although the copy and design need to be simple and clear and geared towards beginners, neither should it be over-simplified, or approach the user condescendingly as if they were "stupid" or unintelligent/incapable. We are assuming they have some experience with sport and physical activities, however minimal, to be interested in downloading this app. Someone who is an elite soccer player, yet who hasn't done rock climbing before, will not appreciate an app which speaks to him as if he had zero physical acumen or understanding of sports. Also, we are assuming that this app doesn't cater for people with disabilities, so the tutorials and copy will be geared towards a user without injuries/sight issues/physical disabilities - for now, at least!
- Language needs to be fun, laid back, inviting, not serious.
- Rock climbing can be dangerous especially for beginners if they aren't on top of safety protocols or climbing with professional assistance. The app will need to incorporate some reminders about safety, but not in a didactic way.

## 6. Belaying: 4 step overview of basics.

(A good activity would be creating a belay mind map/spider diagram. And learning the basics of belaying/talking to instructors/climbers/users etc).

Note: These four steps presume that the user has already taken the prerequisite tutorials on Safety (such as harness set up) and Rock Climbing Equipment (which explains what a belay device is etc). Also, without getting into the design/wireframes, I'm presuming there will be space for a) the heading of the instruction, b) the explanation text, and c) a button (with space for text on it) to move the user onto the next page.

### 1. What is Belaying?

Belaying allows the climber to enjoy the climbing challenge without worrying about falling! The role of the belayer is to provide support to the climber using a belay device, which keeps them safe and secure at every stage of the ascent and descent. It involves simple rope techniques, close communication, trust, and confidence. The rope, which is anchored to safety gear at the top of the indoor wall, is attached to both the climber and the belayer. Let's take a look at the basics of a successful and safe belay experience.

### 2. The Figure 8 Knot *(image: collage of 4 different images, showing different stages of tying the knot, maybe some minor copy instructions)*

Rope tying may seem a bit overwhelming and complicated at first, but with practice and a good teacher, anyone can master the basics. For belaying, the Figure 8 Follow-Through Knot is the most widely used by climbers - a trusted, strong choice! Have an instructor take you through this knot technique step-by-step before trying it out for yourself.

### 3. Communication *(image: two smiling people enjoying themselves climbing, the climber looking comfortable and happy, the belayer looking confident and standing firmly)*

Before starting to belay the climber along the climbing wall, agree with your partner on some simple and clear communication commands, to avoid any panic along the way. Terms like "Slack!" "Off Belay!" "Tension!" "Brake!" or "Pause!" will make sure everything runs smoothly, even when the climber gets shaky and needs encouragement. The belayer should aim to stay confident and cool, so the climber is assured they are in good hands!

**4. Top Belay Tasks** *(two images side by side, one demonstrating pulling the climber up the wall, the other showing a close up of the hand movements of the belayer lowering the climber back down, maybe with some brief instructional copy/words)*

The three main tasks in belaying are to aid the climber up the wall, lower them back down, and brake their fall. Assisted-braking belays are easy to use, and have you covered if the climber lets go of the wall. To help the climber scale the wall, gradually wind the rope through the belay device. Allow the tautness of the rope and the climber's movements guide you. For the descent, slowly release the tension, holding the rope with firm hands. Once again, make sure you have an instructor to go through all these steps with you, before you offer to belay your climbing buddies!

## 6. Additional Copy

Other places on the page/app experience where copy could potentially appear:

- **Buttons** - “Next,” or the title of the next step, eg. “Top Belay Tasks” on an arrow/slider. Would move the user from one screen to the next, when they’re ready.
- **Illustration** - there could be copy on the actual tutorial image. E.g. first screen, “What is belaying?” with an image of someone climbing and another person controlling the rope, each tagged “Belayer” and “Climber” respectively, also “belay device” beside the belay device etc. There could be simple copy instruction on the knot-tying images also, which refer/tie back to the main text instructions.
- **Transition screens** - a pop up between each screen, with a “pro tip” or quote from a professional referencing the step before that. Eg. after the first screen, “What is belaying?” there could be a safety tip about being a belayer. “Safety first! As a belayer, your role is super important. Always remember to keep your wits about you, stay focused, and make sure you have a professional nearby for guidance,” or, “Make sure to keep your belay zone clear and spacious.” Then the user presses a “Continue” or “Got it!” button, and passes to the next screen.
- **Highlighted words** - some words (rock-climbing specific) may be highlighted or have some sort of hover/interactive around them to indicate that if the user taps them, a small pop up may appear with copy giving explaining what the word means. This text would need to be clear and concise, like a dictionary explanation. E.g. for “belay device,” small pop up could read, “A mechanical piece of climbing equipment used to control a rope during belaying. It improves belay safety and reduces physical effort for the belayer.”
- **Account/logged-in user copy** - If a user is logged in and tracking/saving their tutorials and progress, more copy would be needed to guide them and assure them that their place won’t be lost etc. E.g. “Great, you’ve completed another module!” “Rock on to the next level.” “Enough climbing? Save your progress and check in later - we’ll meet you at this spot!”