

PREREQUISITES FOR SKI MOUNTAINEERING EXPEDITIONS

In order for students to start on the same page, it is imperative that all students on international expeditions with SIET come to the course ready to receive a brush-up on fundamental skills (listed below), and ready to focus on more intermediate and advanced skills. You must be 18 years of age or older to join any international expedition.

CAMPING SKILLS:

- Efficiently pack a well-balanced, compact backpack (everything inside) suitable for mountain travel
- Cook basic, nutritious meals on a camp stove with bulk/raw ingredients
- Efficiently set up multiple styles of tents so they are storm proof in all weather conditions
- Consistently demonstrate good self-care (hydration, care of blisters or other minor medical issues) in order to stay healthy while traveling in remote areas
- Adequately dress for the field and for temperatures -10-0° F (with wind chill well below -20°F)
- Understand water purification standards, field hygiene, and sanitization techniques

TECHNICAL MOUNTAIN SKILLS:

- Build basic anchors (2 & 3 piece anchors), and understand the fundamental principles of equalization, redundancy, angles, and efficiency
- Efficiently tie basic knots/hitches and understand the best application and limitation of each:
 - Figure eight follow-through, figure eight on a bight, figure eight bend
 - Overhand follow through, overhand on a bight, water knot (aka ring bend) and flat overhand (aka Euro death knot)
 - Clove hitch, Munter hitch, and mule knot
- Efficiently and effectively coil a climbing rope in a butterfly and mountaineers coil
- Ability to choose the best belay or rappel method
- Understanding of and ability to set up basic pulley systems (2:1 & 3:1)

SKI SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Comfortable climbing and skiing variable conditions up to 50° without a belay
- Understand fundamental techniques for avalanche companion rescue
- Firm understanding of touring gear, its limitations, and maintenance
- Have completed >10 ski tours in backcountry terrain (not 'side country')
- Ski black and double black diamond terrain comfortably all day long

MINIMUM PHYSICAL FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

- Easily run 10-minute miles on trail for 3 consecutive miles
- Hike/run uphill, on trail (without a pack) for 2,000 vertical feet in 60 minutes
- Carry a 65 lb backpack, off trail, in the mountains, for 5-7 hours, with 10 minute breaks every 60-90 minutes, with one longer (20-25min) break in the middle

If you are unsure whether or not you meet some of the prerequisites listed above, please contact us. In some cases, we can make exceptions. For example, if you are not sure that you meet the running standard but you have climbed Mount Rainer in 5 hours from Camp Muir to the summit, we can make an exception. If you're not sure about the 40-50° snow standard but you comfortably ski double black diamonds and have no doubt that you can walk up and down them with a large pack, we can make an exception. If you have little or no experience with snow/ice mountaineering but you have a strong rock climbing background (a common case on our courses), we can likely make an exception. If you are not familiar with a knot or two, we can point you to some resources and help you figure that out before the expedition.

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