

# ELEVATION

## THE ROPES (rulebook)

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## THE GEAR (game contents)

### 61 Mountain cards

4 suits with values 1-14

Avalanches with values 1-5

Alps (green) \_\_\_\_\_

Rockies (red) \_\_\_\_\_

Andes (blue) \_\_\_\_\_

Himalayas (purple) \_\_\_\_\_

Avalanches (white) \_\_\_\_\_

35 Approach cards \_\_\_\_\_

1 Rulebook

1 Score Pad

2 Free Solo cards &  
1 Pass Direction card \_\_\_\_\_



## OBJECTIVE (the goal)

Compete over three days (rounds) for the highest elevation gain in four mountain ranges around the world.

After each day of climbing, score elevation points for the difference between your lowest and highest number for each mountain range.

The climber (player) with the most points after three days of climbing wins.

## TRAINING (setup)

### Shuffle approach cards

Place them face-down in a pile.

### Select a 1st climber

Using only what's on the table (cards, napkins, snacks), climbers must build a tiny "tent". First to make a standing structure goes first. Or just pick randomly. We won't tell.

### The Guide

The 1st climber chosen during setup also permanently becomes *The Guide*. For the rest of the game (all three days), they have the extra task of making sure:

#### Before each day:

- Cards are passed in the correct direction
- Climbers pass cards

#### After each trick:

- Climbers draw a card
- A card is flipped (if there is one)

These rules are explained in **Start of Day** and **The Ascent**.



### 1 & 2 climber games

See **Free Solo** for additional setup and rules.

# START OF DAY (round start)

## 1. Shuffle and deal mountain cards to each climber.

**1-3 climbers**

10 each

**4-5 climbers**

8 each

**6 climbers**

6 each

Place the rest of the mountain cards in a face-down pile.

Flip the top mountain card and place it beside the face-down pile in a new face-up pile.



## 2. Draw and read approach cards.

**Day 1**

Draw 1

**Day 2**

Draw 2

**Day 3**

Draw 3

Approach cards apply to all players and override any applicable normal rules for this day. All other rules still apply.

Some approach cards can be interpreted in more than one way. If this happens, choose the option all climbers agree to.

See the **appendix** for more info on a particular approach card.

There are select approach cards that have rules specific to **Free Solo**. They will be marked with  when their rules differ.

Approach cards are drawn as a **group**.  
Not individually.



### Adjust the difficulty

**Too hard?** Draw fewer approach cards (or don't draw any).

**Too easy?** Draw more approach cards.

## 3. Pass mountain cards.

**Day 1**

Pass left

**Day 2**

Pass right

**Day 3**

Pass left



Rotate this each day, *The Guide*

According to the day's pass direction, pass 2 mountain cards from your hand face-down to the climber next to you.

You must pass your lowest card in a mountain range and your highest card in a range, but they don't need to be from the same range.

If you only have 1 card in a mountain range, you can use it as the highest or the lowest.

**Avalanches can't be passed.** They are mountain cards, but they aren't part of a mountain range.

### Remember

You don't need to pass your absolute highest / lowest cards as long as the cards you pass are the highest / lowest you have in their respective mountain range(s).

### See example below.

can't be passed



4 could be lowest



11 could be highest

1 could be lowest  
14 could be highest



3 could be lowest  
OR highest

With the above hand, an example of valid cards could be:

**Alps 3 as highest and Himalayas 1 as lowest**

(green)

(purple)

# THE ASCENT (gameplay)

## Elevation follows basic trick-taking rules

The 1st climber plays any mountain card. Its mountain range becomes the 'lead mountain range' for the trick.

Going clockwise, each climber must play a card in the lead mountain range if they have one – unless it's an Avalanche (see **Avalanches** below).

If you don't have a card in that range, then you may play any card.

The highest card in the lead mountain range wins the trick – unless an Avalanche is played.

The winner places all cards from the trick in front of them.

## Avalanches

Avalanches aren't part of a mountain range and can be played on any mountain range, even if you have a card in the lead range.

If an Avalanche is led, any card may be played by other climbers.

You never have to play an Avalanche if you have one (unless it's your only remaining card).

The highest Avalanche played always wins the trick.

Avalanches aren't part of a mountain range and don't contribute to scoring. See **End of Day - Scoring**.

### What's a trick?

One card played by each climber

### Can I look at the cards I've previously won?

You can review the cards you've won at any time. (Climbers use maps, after all.)



Avalanches follow the North American Public Avalanche Danger Scale (1-5, Low-Extreme)

## After each trick

If there aren't enough mountain cards in the face-up & face-down piles combined for each climber to draw 1 card, skip this step and play the next trick.

*The Guide*, here's your chance to shine!

The winner of the trick chooses to draw the top card from either the face-up or the face-down pile. You cannot look at the face-down card before deciding which pile to draw from.

Going clockwise from the winner of the trick, all remaining climbers each take 1 card from the face-down pile (switching to the face-up pile when the face-down pile is empty).

After everyone has drawn, flip the top card from the face-down pile to the face-up pile.



### Example:

The winner of the trick can take the Rockies 1 or a blind draw from the face-down pile. Going clockwise, all other climbers then take a blind draw from the face-down pile.

The winner of the trick becomes the new 1st climber and starts the next trick by playing any mountain card from their hand.

The 1st climber can change from trick to trick. *The Guide* is a permanent position that doesn't change.

## END OF DAY (round end)

The day is complete when all cards from climbers' hands have been played.

Usually there will be 1 remaining card in the face-up pile.

### Scoring

Your elevation points for each day are the difference between your highest card and lowest card in each mountain range.

Sort all the mountain cards that you won into the four mountain ranges. Each mountain range is scored once for the day – not for each individual trick.

Avalanches aren't part of a range and don't count towards scoring.

**Example:** If you end the round with 5 Andes cards (3, 5, 6, 7, 11), your score for Andes is 8 points (11 - 3 = 8).

Add up and write down your total score for each mountain range and applicable approach cards.

If you have a single card in a mountain range, your score for that range is zero.

The score pad can help tally scores for each mountain range and any approach card bonuses.

ELEVATION								
		Alps	Andes	Himalayas	Rockies	Approach	DAY	TOTAL
Cliff Hangier	DAY 1	1	8	0	12	4	25	
	DAY 2	0	3	5	0	10	18	43
	DAY 3							
	SUMMIT (3-day total)							
Ava Lanche	DAY 1	11	0	2	0	4	17	
	DAY 2	13	7	0	1	0	21	38
	DAY 3							
	SUMMIT (3-day total)							
Val Lee	DAY 1	4	10	10	0	0	24	
	DAY 2	1	2	0	9	6	18	42
	DAY 3							
	SUMMIT (3-day total)							
NAME	DAY 1							

## THE NEXT DAY (next round)

Discard the previous day's approach card(s).

The 1st climber for the start of the next day is the climber with the lowest total points.

Follow **Start of Day** instructions on page 4.

## SUMMIT (end of game)

If you have the highest three-day total of elevation points, you win!

If tied, the climber with the highest single-scoring day wins.

If still tied, compete for first place with an epic yodel-off.

## ON BELAY! (have fun!)

A typical exchange between a climber and belayer to make sure both are ready is:

“On belay!”

“Belay on!”

“Climbing!”

“Climb on!”

# FREE SOLO (1 & 2 climber variants)

## ADD AUTO-ASCENDERS

Add auto-ascenders (AI players) based on the number of climbers.

### 1 climber

Add 2 auto-ascenders

### 2 climbers

Add 1 auto-ascender

We call the auto-ascenders 'Edmund Hillary' and 'Tenzing Norgay'. They're credited as the First Ascensionists of Mt. Everest – the first to climb to its summit.

## Set up each auto-ascender

Deal 20 mountain cards and organize the cards by mountain range into four piles. If they have any Avalanches, keep them separate but face-up.

Shuffle each pile and place it face-down. Turn the top card in each pile face-up.

When you pass two cards at the start of the day, only pass them between human climbers (if applicable).



example auto-ascender setup

## GAMEPLAY (Climbers)

Human climbers play according to standard rules.

If an approach card has rules specific to Free Solo, it will be marked with  to call out any rule changes. If the card cannot be played with Free Solo, discard that card and draw a new one.

## GAMEPLAY (Auto-Ascenders)

When selecting what the auto-ascenders will play, always choose from their face-up cards:

- ▶ **If the auto-ascender does not start the trick:**
  1. If a 14 or Avalanche is played and they can beat it, play their highest Avalanche.
  2. Play their card that follows the lead mountain range.
  3. If they can't follow the lead range, play their lowest card (including Avalanches).
  4. If there's a tie for lowest, play their leftmost lowest card.



- ▶ **If the auto-ascender does start the trick:**

They lead the trick with their highest strength card (Avalanche counts). If tied, play their leftmost card.

## After each trick

Make sure the top card of each mountain range is face-up. Do not draw more cards for the auto-ascender.

## END OF DAY

### For 2 climber games:

The auto-ascender doesn't keep score in 2 climber games. They can't win, but they'll keep it interesting as you compete against the other human climber.

Auto-ascenders **are not** affected by score-related approach cards.

### For 1 climber games:

Score auto-ascenders by adding up all numbers in the range where they won the most cards.

**1 climber example:** Edmund Hillary's cards at end of day:

Himalayas	-	0 cards	-
Andes	14, 11, 9, 8, 5	<b>5 cards</b>	47 points
Rockies	11, 9, 7	3 cards	-
Alps	13, 12, 4, 1	4 cards	-

Andes had the most cards. Edmund Hillary scores 47 points.

Auto-ascenders **are** affected by score-related approach cards. Use all cards won by the auto-ascender (not just the range where they won the most cards) to resolve approach cards.

## STARTING THE NEXT DAY

Discard previous approach card(s). The 1st climber for the next day is the **human climber** with the lowest total points.

## SUMMIT

At the end of three days of climbing, add up each climber's scores. If you have the most points, you win!

**Remember:** Auto-ascenders only score in 1 climber games.



## APPROACH CARDS

The wording here is intentionally different than on the cards - this is to better explain what each card does. Some can be interpreted in more than one way. Choose the option all climbers agree to.

**ACCLIMATING** Use your second highest card instead of your highest for scoring. This means you need at least 3 cards in a range to score.

**ALPACA WOOL** Draw a new card if Andes Mints, Rocky Road Ice Cream, or Himalayan Salt have already been drawn for this day. Any Alps (green) card will win a trick against any other card except Avalanches. Normal playing rules still apply. You can't play an Alps card on another lead range unless you're out of that range.

**ANCHOR**  
 Not Free Solo compatible.

The highest/lowest mountain cards you get passed at the start of the day become part of your end of day scoring pile and don't go into your hand. Draw 2 more face-down cards into your hand.

**ANDES MINTS** Draw a new card if Alpaca Wool, Rocky Road Ice Cream, or Himalayan Salt has already been drawn for this day. Any Andes (blue) card will win a trick against any other card except Avalanches. Normal playing rules still apply. You can't play an Andes card on another lead range unless you're out of that range.

**AVALANCHE DESTRUCTION** Each Avalanche you win can count towards a single range of your choosing when scoring.

**BELAY PARTNER** You don't want to win any cards today. Whatever the player to your right wins will be used for your score today.

**BOULDERING** Use your second lowest card instead of your lowest for scoring. This means you need at least 3 cards in a range to score.

**BURIED IN AN AVALANCHE** Avalanches work normally in gameplay, but each Avalanche is -5 points during scoring.

## CREVASSE RESCUE

You don't want to win any cards today. You subtract what you win instead of adding it.

## DESCENT

The lower the number, the stronger the card (for gameplay - scoring doesn't change).

## EQUIPMENT SWAP

 Not Free Solo compatible.

After a trick with an Avalanche is finished, pass your hand to the climber on your left. Multiple Avalanches in the same trick do not affect the number of times you pass.

## FIGURE 8

Each 8 you win gives you another 3 points (12 points if you win all 4).

## FREE CLIMBING

There's a fake climber that puts random cards in for each trick after every other climber has played their card. If the fake climber win any cards, they go to the climber who wins the fewest tricks that day.

## GENTLE INCLINE

If you won a card with 12,000ft elevation or less, get 5 points. The 5 points are only added once - not for every card under 12,000ft.

## HARNES

If you have the fewest tricks at the end of the day, add 5 extra points. If there's a tie, all tied climbers get 5 extra points.

## HIMALAYAN SALT

Draw a new card if Alpaca Wool, Andes Mints, or Rocky Road Ice Cream has already been drawn for this day.

Any Himalayas (purple) card will win a trick against any other card except Avalanches. Normal playing rules still apply. You can't play a Himalayas card on another lead range unless you're out of that range.

## ICE AXE

You can use a 7 as the highest card, but only for gameplay - not for scoring.

## KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

 Not Free Solo compatible.

The face-up card will always be drawn at the end of a trick. The winner can pick anyone (including themselves).

**LEAD CLIMBER** If you win a trick, the climber to your left starts the next one.

**LOST IN THE SNOW** If you win a trick with an Avalanche, set all cards in it aside. You can't use those cards for scoring.

**LOW VISIBILITY**  
⚠ Not Free Solo compatible. The first climber leads with a face-up card. Everyone else plays face-down cards, then all cards are shown and the trick is resolved.

**OFF COURSE** When the last face-down card is flipped or drawn, draw another approach card.

**OXYGEN BOOST** If you won a card with 22,000ft elevation or more, get 5 points. The 5 points are only added once – not for every card over 22,000ft.

**PACKING LIGHT** Get 5 points for EACH range where you won NO cards (1-14). This is 20 possible points if you didn't win anything at all.

**PRECIPICE** Play one trick after the face-down pile is gone. Discard your remaining hand.

**RAPID ASCENT** Play 1 card as normal, then play another card in turn order. Resolve the trick using all cards played. Then draw 2 cards in turn order.

**ROCKY ROAD ICE CREAM**  
Draw a new card if Alpaca Wool, Andes Mints, or Himalayan Salt has already been drawn for this day. Any Rockies (red) card will win a trick against any other card except Avalanches. Normal playing rules still apply. You can't play a Rockies card on another lead range unless you're out of that range.

**ROUTE FINDING**  
⚠ Not Free Solo compatible.

Commonly known as 'card drafting'. Keep 2 cards in a separate stack in front of you and pass the rest to the left. Repeat until you're back to the right number of cards. Climbers still pass 2 cards after this.

**SCREE** Get 5 points for each range where you won the 1, 2, and 3 (20 points if you get all 1s, 2s, and 3s).

**SECONDING** Before you score, pass the range where you won the fewest cards to the left. You must pass a range (if you have one).

**STUCK AT BASECAMP** You want at least 2 cards in each mountain range. You lose 5 points for each range with 1 or no cards.

**SUPPLY CACHE** After everyone has their cards, draw climber count + 1 cards and place them face-up to the side. Whoever wins the last trick that day gets those cards.

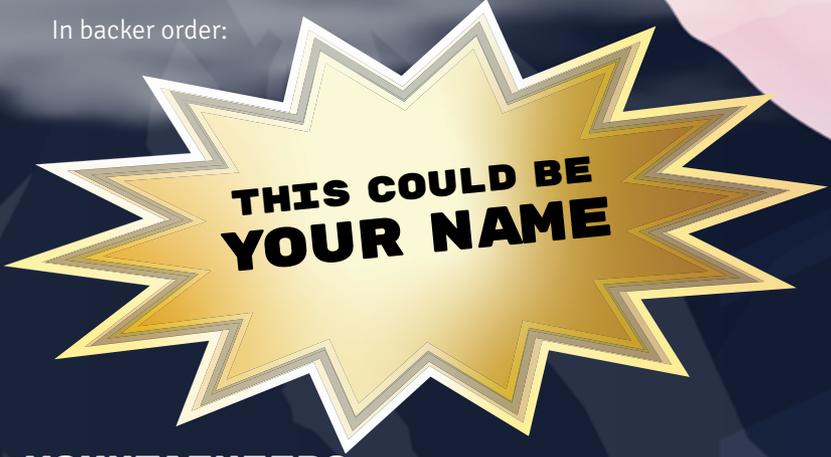
**WORLD RENOWNED CLIMBER** If you win at least 1 card in each mountain range, get 7 points. The 7 points are only added once.

# LEGENDS OF ELEVATION

Without the generous support of these climbers,  
Elevation would not exist. We are immensely grateful.

## FIRST ASCENSIONISTS

In backer order:



**THIS COULD BE  
YOUR NAME**

## MOUNTAINEERS

In backer order:

The term for the first successful climb of a new route or peak is First Ascent. The climber who does it on record is the First Ascensionist.



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