

# mountain skills

"the best skills course in NZ"



**season**  
november to april  
2011-2012

**price**  
NZ\$2,300 per person

**access**  
fly in and fly/walk out  
depending on course  
location

**Bonus**  
includes flight in  
most technical gear  
provided  
free mountain skills  
handbook

**2011-2012**

**mssc#1** nov 6 - 12  
**mssc#2** nov 27 - dec 3  
**mssc#3** dec 11 - 17  
**mssc#4** dec 28 - jan 3  
**mssc#5** jan 8 - 14  
**mssc#6** jan 22 - 28  
**mssc#7** feb 12 - 18  
**mssc#8** mar 11 - 17  
**mssc#9** apr 5 - 11(easter)

The 7-day Mountain Skills Course (MSC) touches on those very skills essential to anyone moving in the mountains, no matter what degree of technicality. What you will learn in this course will be utilised by you in any/all future mountaineering trips.

*One minute you're down in the green pastures of terra firma, the next, you have been whisked into a tranquil environment of pristine whiteness, requiring quite different skills of movement...*

## course content

By participating in the Mountain Skills Course your guide can introduce you to and teach the following skills:

- ▲ snow and ice climbing
- ▲ belaying and rope skills
- ▲ glacier travel techniques
- ▲ route selection & navigation
- ▲ weather analysis and forecasting
- ▲ avalanche awareness
- ▲ camp management
- ▲ crevasse and alpine rescue
- ▲ alpine rock climbing and emergency shelters
- ▲ mountain first aid

We will also aim to climb a few peaks during this time, to consolidate those very skills.

## bonus extras

- ▲ Your technical equipment is included the price of your course, making the "extras" affordable. Other non-technical equipment can be rented from us.
- ▲ All accommodation during the course will be provided: hut, bivvy, tent or lodge (except the last night).
- ▲ A course certificate can be provided if you wish.
- ▲ Our own complimentary first class mountaineering handbook.



## sample itinerary

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day one	We meet at the Aspiring Guides office in Wanaka (99 Ardmore St) at 8:30am for introductions and course outline. Equipment is reviewed and allocated by your guide. Snow and weather conditions are discussed and once a decision has been made as to the venue for the course (West Coast, Mount Cook or Aspiring regions) we drive to the heli-staging area or airport. Weather permitting we fly into a mountain hut. Alternatively, if the weather is unsuitable for flying, we undertake activities such as rope work or ice-climbing instruction (if at the glaciers). Once we have flown in we set up camp using either a snowcave, tent or mountain hut. Snow craft skills and cramponing are taught and demonstrated by the guide and practiced until it becomes second nature. We go over the basic skills to ensure a consistency of technique before moving onto the more advanced skills.
day two	Crevasse travel skills are introduced and a walk out onto the glacier is followed by an introduction to glaciology and route finding by your guide. You can learn to identify the features of the mountains and associated nomenclature. Feel free at all times to ask questions. A hands-on lesson on rope care / management and prussiking. Several hours are devoted to learning cramponing and ice climbing techniques followed by crevasse rescue systems.
day three	An early start and the group goes off to climb a small peak along the way learning and practicing snow anchors as well as belaying and pitch climbing techniques. The group ascends a summit with views galore and time to eat a well earned lunch. The afternoon is spent alpine rock climbing and abseiling before returning to camp. A lesson on weather prediction after dinner at the camp ends the day.
day four	Up again at the crack of dawn and the group moves to a hut for breakfast before moving up to climb a nearby peak, combining the variety of techniques learned so far. A successful and tired group returns to the hut at 3 pm and rests in the sun outside the hut. The guide discusses alpine rescue scenarios and considerations. A radio call provides the latest weather forecast each evening.
day five	The weather still holds so the course members set off early to climb a nearby peak. Excellent views can be had from here so don't forget the camera. Abseil anchors are set up and everybody gets to practice this technique before descending from the peak.
day six	A decision is made to walk out across the glacier to a lower hut, or prioritise outstanding course topics yet to be covered. The group may elect to work further on skills and fly out from a higher hut. This decision is made with consideration to weather; group fitness, course content.
day seven	If time permits the group heads to some local crags for some rock climbing or the lower Fox glacier for a session on ice skills if we are in the region. Later the group arrives back in Wanaka (having already done a course debrief) and the rental equipment is returned. A much welcome shower and change of clothes is in order, then everyone swaps addresses and makes plans for the next adventure over dinner and a few drinks.



## logistics

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duration	7 days
price	NZ\$2,300
access	Fly in, fly out* (flight out extra & dependent on location)
season	November – April
guide-client ratio	1 guide : 4 clients maximum
prerequisites	Prior outdoor experience (tramping, etc). Good fitness.
accommodation	Hut or bivvy
bonus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Most technical climbing equipment is supplied</li> <li>▲ Complimentary mountaineering handbook</li> </ul>

The course price includes: qualified guide/instructor, permit fees, flight into the mountains, all trip related meals and energy foods, hut fees, technical equipment, instruction manual. Additional costs are for non-technical rental equipment and flight out of mountains. Our website has some shopping details if you are interested in purchasing gear at discounted prices.

## course dates

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## about aspiring guides

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- ▲ Since 1990... our website has details on our team.
- ▲ **We are about action.** We will spend as much time in the mountains as possible actually climbing peaks and developing skills. You don't gain judgment, skills and safe practices in the classroom.
- ▲ We are **specialists** in instruction courses. Attending one of these specialist courses will shortcut the road to mountaineering proficiency.
- ▲ Our trips offer the 'wilderness' approach to the mountains. We retain the option to stay in alpine huts ... with fine weather we will base ourselves from alpine camps (often combined with an overnight bivouac). This factor alone offers a greater perception and awareness of the mountain environment.
- ▲ Our **specialist** guides are NZMGA / IFMGA certified. They have impressive backgrounds with inspiring futures. They are friendly and personable; focused on delivering a safe, enjoyable and informative trips. In order to gain these qualifications guides must undergo rigorous training and assessment on climbing skills, instructional skills, avalanche training and assessment, wilderness first aid, rescue training and much more. The qualification takes many years (5-7) to attain and ensures you are receiving a professional service.
- ▲ We maintain a maximum guide to client ratio of 1:4 to reduce our impact on an area and give participants the best possible attention by the guide.



- ▲ Our activities are based in the Mount Aspiring, Westland, Cook, Fiordland National Parks, one of the most scenic and unspoilt alpine regions in the world. There are numerous peaks and routes of various difficulties making this an ideal training ground for any of the world's mountain ranges.
- ▲ The most important attributes in mountaineering are a solid climbing standard and mountain awareness; sound judgement of your own ability; good preparation and decision-making skills

## we care about you

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We want to maximise your chance of having a mountain experience that is successful and enjoyable. Our philosophy here at Aspiring Guides is such that we aim to cover all aspects of a mountaineering trip with you. This includes preparatory housekeeping matters too: let us know what you do/don't like eating, any allergies/medical conditions, and any special requests. We recognise that the world of mountaineering presents a challenge right from the start; namely; getting the detailed information, selecting the right option and having faith in the guiding company you decide to invest your time and money with.

## location and itinerary

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We will meet you in Wanaka at the scheduled appointment time, usually 8:30am on day one. The Aspiring Guides office is situated at 99 Ardmore Street, Wanaka on the main thoroughfare and only 50 metres from the shores of Lake Wanaka. Wanaka is the gateway to the Mount Aspiring National Park, and the Southern Alps. Our office staff can offer advice with accommodation and shuttle reservations, and of course, local attractions. Wanaka is very popular during the summer months. Please arrange your accommodation as early as possible.

## booking and cancellations

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NZ\$500 deposit per person confirms your booking. Full payment must be made 60 days before commencement date. If the balance is not received by the specified date, we reserve the right to cancel your booking and your deposit will be forfeited, unless a delay in your payment has been agreed by a director of Aspiring Guides Limited. Should you cancel your booking for any reason you will receive a full refund less a cancellation fee: more than 60 days NZ\$200 per person, between 60 and 30 days NZ\$500 per person, between 29 and 15 days 75% of the total course or trip fee. Cancellation less than 15 days or during your trip no refund will be given.

## weather

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In summer the general mountain climbing season runs from November through April with the warmest month being January with 16 hours of daylight on the longest day. Temperatures can remain high during this period by day and drop to - 5 degrees Celsius overnight.

In November and December we can expect more snow cover on the routes, and as temperatures warm up into the summer months of January and February, we traditionally experience more settled weather and mixed climbing conditions such as snow, rock and ice). March and April bring late summer conditions which are mainly a combination of rock and ice routes. Generally we experience our first alpine snowfall mid May onwards.

The mountains are immune to human plans and expectations. Be prepared for all conditions, it could be hot, cold, sunny and stormy within a 24 hour period. When the weather is bad in the mountains we will make a decision whether to attempt entering the mountains on each given day. Your guides are very experienced and will attempt to the best of their ability to make the best decision they can. In the unlikely event adverse weather prevents a trip from immediately moving into the mountains, you have



the opportunity to carry out sub alpine adventures and skill development activities until the conditions improve. This decision will be made by your guides to optimise and make valuable use of your time. Fortunately there is a lot which can be achieved during bad weather from Wanaka. Some of the best rockclimbing in New Zealand is 15 minutes drive from our office. These cliffs are set up with sport climbing routes as well as quality 'natural' lines providing an ideal venue for ropes skills training, developing rescue techniques, and even for working on your rock climbing skills. Alternative locations and activities will be reviewed with you.

In the unlikely event of a trip being held up longer than anticipated in the mountains, for any reason, AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF NZ\$450 PER GUIDE PER DAY IS CHARGED (this is a cost price and will be divided between the course participants). Your guide/s are working until you return to our offices at the trip finish.

## meals and snacks

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Energy snacks and nutritious meals are an essential ingredient in helping you perform to your highest standard. We provide excellent meals and plenty of it. We cater for your specific dietary requirements.

## maps and guidebooks

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We have maps and guide books available for purchase in our office. Alternatively, we can post these to you. A mountaineering handbook (included in your course) will be given to you when we meet you.

## valuables and luggage

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Additional luggage and valuables can be securely stored at our office during your trip.

## insurance

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We strongly recommend that all our clients carry travel insurance which covers you while travelling to and from NZ, luggage mishaps, and in case you have to cancel your trip. The New Zealand Accident Compensation System (ACC) will cover most of the expenses relating to an evacuation and/or medical treatment/rehabilitation in the unlikely event of an accident occurring. This service may not apply to evacuation costs for personal medical conditions. You are not entitled to bulk payments for compensation and you cannot claim damages for costs under the ACC act (no legal action can be made in NZ). Whilst our focus is on safety we will not be responsible for any evacuation or medical costs resulting from any accident. Likewise equipment damage or loss remain your responsibility. Some insurance companies can provide adventure activities' cover – if you wish to investigate this option further, please contact our office for information.

## communication and messages

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Our climbing trips and courses are in radio or satellite phone communications with our Operations/Safety base and the Department of Conservation local office who manages each National park area. We obtain weather information and coordinate helicopters through these channels. In some circumstances mountain radio links are available for the relay of any urgent messages.



## how hard will the course be?

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Initially the course will be structured around instruction of techniques whilst acclimatising you to the mountain environment. A few days into the course the climbing days will be longer and more challenging. During fine weather periods and course dependent, you could start as early as 3 am when embarking on the longer ascents. Most days will involve 8-10 hours of activity. Some aspects of the mountains may seem foreign at the outset, e.g. sleeping in a snow cave or open bivouac but your guide is there to help ease you through these new challenges.

## fitness & health

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To make the most of your learning experience it is advisable to be fit enough to partake in the activities with enough stamina to get the most participation and enjoyment. We have two editorials on our website (Online Magazine) on how to prepare for mountaineering. Your guide places special focus on fitness levels and will regulate the pace accordingly.

## how to book

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To register for a trip, you can book online through our excellent website. Your deposit of NZ\$500 may be paid by Visa or Mastercard, or bank transfer (NZ only). The forms required can be found on our website. Our booking terms and conditions are detailed on our online booking form on our website.

We will send an appointment email approximately 4 weeks before your trip is due to commence. We will provide final information and ask for more information from you, e.g. dietary requirement, trip objectives and/or concerns, height and weight, fitness and any equipment rental required.

Information on flights and transport to New Zealand and Wanaka is available on our website or you may contact the office at Aspiring Guides directly.

We look forward to sharing your aspirations...  
and the opportunity of climbing with you in the future

the team @ aspiring guides

