

# Free Climbing

~as an educational program for visually impaired students : A pilot study.~

Koichiro Kobayashi, *NPO Monkey magic, Representative Director, Tokyo, Japan*

Mina Takanashi, *Kita-ku Health up center* Koichi Oda, *Tokyo Woman's Christian Univ., Prof.*

Corresponding author : [koba@monkeymagic.or.jp](mailto:koba@monkeymagic.or.jp) [www.monkeymagic.or.jp](http://www.monkeymagic.or.jp) (Japanese only)

## What is Free Climbing ?

Climbing is a part of Rock Climbing on rock and artificial wall. This sport doesn't use gears for climbing. It doesn't need compare speed, height, win-lose. This sport focus difficulty in individual.

## Why Free Climbing is good?

- #1 Wall and Rock are never moving. It doesn't need dynamic visual acuity.
- #2 No compete. Focus on Individual Ability.
- #3 Normal and visually impaired can try same problem same way.
- #4 Most of people with visual impairment assume that it's impossible to try free climbing. So, When they can try, they can gain greater confidence.

## So, what we focus on?

### 1. Partnership

- Risk management** : Through Students belay\* each other.  
**Communication** : They have to communicate each other.  
**Self-efficacy** : They improve self-efficacy.  
**Commitment** : They commit challenge of partner and own responsibility.

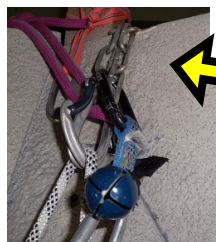
### 2. Self responsibility

Through Set up climbing system (belay system, knot climbing rope) at my risk.

### 3. Devise

Through don't tell them too much how to climb. They have to find out how to climb by themselves. They can get a great sense of accomplishment in their cost.

\*Belay : To secure your safety while rock or artificial wall climbing with rope, there is a way to control the rope so that a falling climber does not fall very far. It is called BELAY, and person to hold your rope is called BELAYER, It is important for the belayer to concentrate on the climber so any situation faced such as falling and resting (tension).



Sign of the top



3. Devise  
Find out how to climb by myself



1. Self responsibility  
Knot climbing rope



2. Partnership  
Belay



## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational effects of free climbing for people who have visually impaired students. We hypothesized that when students with visual impairment try free climbing (or sports climbing), they will not only expand opportunities of exercise but also become more positive for social life with improved self-efficacy. In order to foster students' positive attitude effectively, we attempted to practice an educational program which made the most of the characteristic of free climbing.

## Results

Students showed positive change in positivity and self-efficacy through interview survey after program.

### ◆From the interview---

- A : "Great to know I'll be able to enjoy sports more."  
B : "Have been negative with the progression of the disease, develop a positive what prompted."  
C : "I could do without recourse to anyone, my great sense of accomplishment."  
Teachers : "Surprised! Because they showed us very positive attitude of challenge in this program than in the other normal gymnastic program."

## Methods

We offered five college students (in age of 20-40 yrs, one female and four male, two totally blind and three low-vision) 3-days intensive free climbing program specifically tailored for them with 12m- height artificial wall.

Free climbing characteristic are physical and mental effect.

Apart from the general program to teach free climbing, we focused on mental effect more than physical effect, like improvement of climbing skills in this program.

We examined mental effect change by both survey in the self-efficacy

## Conclusion

Educational programs which make use of the free climbing's characteristics could be effective in fostering positive attitudes in students with disabilities, where we should reconsider the climbing being not a sport which focuses on individual skills. Free climbing as an educational program will be valuable in rehabilitation and educational settings.

## Who design it?

This program was designed by non-profit based company "Monkey magic" which teaches free climbing to people who have either total and partial visual impairments. The number of participants exceeded 1,100 in total over past 5 years in Japan.