

These are the things to bring along for both winter climbing and winter walking in Scotland between December and early April. All technical winter equipment is provided (including axes, crampons, harness and helmet if you don't have your own). Feel free to get in touch if you'd like more detailed advice on gear or clothing.

- waterproof jacket** - breathable but not lightweight (e.g. not gortex paclite) and with a hood big enough to fit over a helmet.
- waterproof trousers** - breathable but not lightweight with side zips long enough so they can be put on over boots. There's need for salopettes or bibs, they can be too hot on the move.
- boots** - stiff soled winter or insulated summer alpine boots capable of taking a Grivel G12 crampon (C2). Modern leather / Gortex lined boots are far superior to plastic (although Scarpa Omegas are okay for climbing), avoid the GSB system. If you are unsure about any particular model, just call or email for advice.
- gloves** - 1 pair of warm waterproof gloves (ski gloves are okay)
- 1 or 2 pairs of thin liner gloves
- 1 spare pair, ideally dextrous and windproof
- hat** - fleece or woollen and able to fit under a helmet
- a fleece neck gaiter is handy and doubles as a spare hat
- clothing layers** - a wicking base layer consisting of a long sleeve top and leggings (e.g. merino wool, Capilene, Polartec, etc)
- 2 mid layers, consisting of a thin long sleeved fleece plus one other top that can be layered over (e.g. a gillet, a larger fleece or even a wool jumper).
- a final large sized, warm layer *see notes below
- hill/mountain trousers made from an outdoor fabric not cotton (e.g. Schoeller, fleece or Powerstretch leggings, windstopper, or any soft shell or quick dry material).
- gaiters** - conventional alpine/walking style are best
- rucksack** - must have side compression straps for carrying an axe(s), not just axe attachment loops on the rear. Minimum 45 litres for climbing or 35+ litres for walking.

rucksack liner	- a waterproof liner to keep your gear dry. A tough bin liner or rubble bag is a good cheap option.
goggles	- good quality ski goggles are essential, preferably with a double lens to prevent them misting up.
water bottle	- 1 litre water bottle <u>not</u> a camelback or hydration pack.
headtorch	- multi LED or LED/halogen combo models are best.
personal emergency stuff	- any medication you are taking - sun cream / block - a blister kit (e.g. compede or plasters / tape) - a plastic whistle - mobile phone

The following gear is optional;

compass	- if improving your navigation is on the agenda, bring a 'type 4' Silva compass (or comparable model).
thermos flask	- a luxury on the hill. A cylindrical shaped 0.75 – 1 litre is best but it must be stainless steel or all plastic.
trekking poles	- only bring if you're familiar with using them. They need to be telescopic/collapsible so they can be stowed in your rucksack or in the side compression straps.
small transparent dry bag	- extremely useful for keeping mobile, map and all your other valuable stuff together and dry (an Ortlieb clear A5 or A4 document case is the best available).
sunglasses	- surprisingly useful judging from recent winters. Get hold of a rigid case to keep them in one piece.

The following is the personal technical equipment you'll need. If you'd like to borrow any of these items free of charge, please get in touch in advance;

helmet	- a climbing helmet big enough to go over a hat. Essential for winter walkers as well as climbers.
harness	- for winter climbing and traditional winter mountaineering, any modern climbing harness with adjustable leg loops will be okay (the ideal lightweight, minimalist models are the Black Diamond Bod or Alpine Bod and the DMM Super Couloir).

crampons and crampon bag

- 12 point mountaineering crampons (C2) with anti-balling plates (e.g. Grivel G12, Charlet/Petzl Vasak, DMM Aiguille). Models with front plastic bails are by far the most versatile and easy to put on in foul conditions. Avoid the GSM attachment system for use in Scotland. If you'd like to borrow a pair of crampons, you'll get to use Grivel G12 Neumatics (C2). If they don't fit your boots, old style 'strap-on' crampons (C1) can be hired cheaply in Aviemore on a daily basis.

walking / mountain axe

- for basic winter skills training, winter walking and traditional winter mountaineering, your axe needs to have a straight shaft, 55 - 60 cm long with a forged head and a wide adze (e.g. DMM Cirque, Petzl Cosmique, Grivel Air Tech).

climbing axes

- General climbing axes such as the original or new Petzl Quarks or Black Diamond Vipers are the most versatile for both mixed and ice climbing. Specialist climbing tools with 'handled' shafts, such as DMM anarchist or Petzl Nomics are okay but somewhat limited when digging out belays. It's best to avoid them initially. If you'd like to borrow axes for the duration of your course, you're welcome to try a pair of either the first generation or the new Quarks.

Notes

Everyone in winter needs to be carrying a large, warm, spare clothing layer of some description. Big enough so that it can be pulled on over your other clothing if you stop walking for a while, or if you're belaying on a cold stance, or more importantly if there's an emergency. The ideal solution is a synthetic down jacket, especially if it has an insulated hood. Other good options include a large fleece, a lined soft shell top (a very versatile option), a thick woollen jumper or even an 'old school' Buffalo shirt. Natural down filled jackets aren't recommended for Scottish hill conditions. They 'wet out' too easily and lose all insulation properties. I have a few spare large synthetic down jackets which are available to borrow.