



# Outdoor

## Recreation on the rocks

By Adrienne McBride

Kick up your winter with Ontario's fastest growing winter sport: ice climbing. There's no better way to spend January and February than scaling rock cliffs covered in frozen waterfalls.

"It's an intense sport. You're smashing ice with axes, kicking the ice, clinging to the ice on two little metal points. It is pretty intense fun and a great stress reliever," says Tim Crichton, the 26-year-old president of K2 Custom Adventure Company.

Grant Parkin, a chair with the Alpine Club of Canada's Toronto chapter and avid ice climber for six years, recommends renting equipment for your first few climbs, to learn the ropes and find equipment that suits you. Equipment can be rented from major outdoor adventure retailers, such as Mountain Equipment Co-op. Their complete ice-climbing package costs about \$22 per day. Purchasing a full set of gear costs around \$2000.

A full kit includes rigid plastic boots, a set of metal crampons for the boots, a harness, two axes with an adze and hammer on the reverse sides, a dry rope and a helmet with visor or safety glasses.

Parkin says the right clothing is just as important as the equipment.

"You get really sweaty and then you stop to relax and enjoy the scenery for a bit and you get cold really quickly," says Parkin.

He says to build your climbing outfit in layers: an absorbent first layer, a warm fleece layer and a breathable, water resistant outer shell.

Muskoka offers some of the best ice climbing in Ontario, but the Hamilton area, Haliburton and the Elora Gorge near Guelph also have good ice climbing spots. Always understand the rules about climbing on different types of land and in different municipalities before you head. You'll find the information you need on the Ontario Parks website ([www.ontarioparks.com](http://www.ontarioparks.com)). For information about private land, contact the owner.

Parkin suggests you try out the sport with an introductory course. One Axe Pursuits ([oneaxepursuits.com](http://oneaxepursuits.com)) charges \$160/person for a full day of instruction and the use of their gear.

"The scenery you'll see is amazing. The sun on the ice makes you feel so close to nature. And it's an amazing thrill, knowing you've conquered nature when you get to the top of the icefall. You can't beat it," Parkin says.

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# Indoor

## The playground workout

By Michelle Ramsaran

Remember when you were a kid? When quality time with the jungle gym was too much fun to be exercise? A visit to Dynamic Conditioning Centre will bring you back there. It's not a gym. It's an adult playground.

Founders Lee Davy and Jared Postance met while working as personal trainers at Good Life Fitness. The typical gym atmosphere was a little too dull for them, so they set out to create a unique fitness centre. Unique because it's fun.

The DCC is like an outdoor playground, except the equipment is designed for people over three feet tall.

"The healthiest and happiest you ever were in your life is when you were a child playing on the playground," Postance says. "So as an adult, we don't want a workout to be a chore. We want people to want to come here and have fun because the rest of the day might be busy with deadlines or schedules."

Located near Yonge and Wellesley, the centre's open concept space is filled with innovative equipment like tires and wooden two-by-fours.

Astro turf runs most of the length of the conditioning centre. At the far end are cargo nets for climbing, as well as a sandbox and, yes, monkey bars. Davy and Postance also incorporate elements such as free weights, kettle bells, exercise balls, 10 pound sledge hammers and tractor tires into their clients' routines.

Don't be fooled by the simplicity of the equipment. The monkey bars are used for lateral pull-ups and training visual perception. Clients train for volleyball, running and jumping in the sandbox.

Davy says they design programs to meet the needs of individual clients, no matter what their fitness level.

"Anybody's more than welcome," Davy says. "We can train high performance athletes or we can train somebody that's the weekend warrior, the recreation type, or we can train somebody [who is] just starting."

DCC also has a sports nutritionist, a clinical dietician, a chiropractor, athletic therapists and a physiotherapist.

The Dynamic Conditioning Centre offers month-by-month memberships. Initial assessments and semi-private memberships are \$135 per month, while individual conditioning sessions cost between \$90 and \$100 per session. The conditioning centre also offers a weight loss program and nutritional consultations.

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