

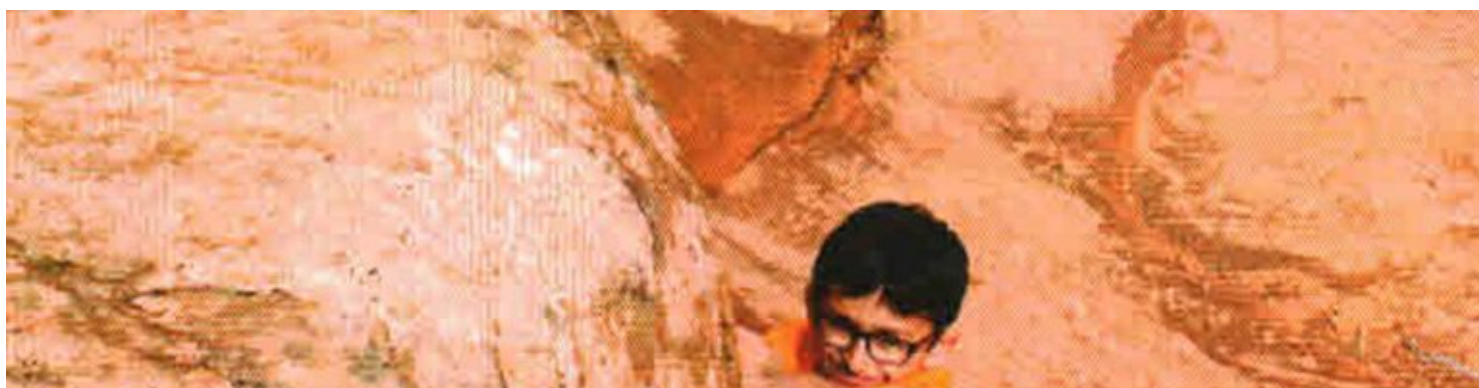
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## Rock climbing requires practice and technique



MENU



Kidsday reporter Tej Parekh went rock climbing in Utah. Photo Credit: Parekh family

**By Tej Parekh**

Kidsday Reporter

*Updated July 21, 2017 1:24 PM*

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Sports are loved and enjoyed by millions of people. Whether it's watching the game or playing the game, people can have a great time. My favorite of these is rock climbing.

The sport's objective is as simple as it sounds. If it's outdoors, you can climb cliffs. And if it's indoors, you climb walls. There are two main types of climbing, top roping and bouldering. Top roping is climbing high with a rope to save you if you fall, and bouldering is climbing lower without a rope.

Though it sounds pretty simple, like any sport, rock climbing requires technique, and it's not all about strength. Some of the most important moves are the heel hook, mantle and the toe hook. The mantle is the simplest of the three. When you mantle, you push yourself up on the rock instead of pulling. This is commonly used on big rocks. The toe and heel hooks are very alike. For the heel hook, you put your heel behind a rock and pull with the leg. This helps use the strength of your leg to the best of your abilities. The toe hook is the same but you put your toe behind the rock.

When you start rock climbing, it is hard in both physical and mental aspects. The hardest for most people are the mental challenges. Though rock climbing is pretty safe, many think it is extraordinarily dangerous. I mean, how could it not be dangerous climbing 10 to 100 feet with only one knot to save your life if you fall? Despite this fact, when you just start and you're up on the wall for the first time, you get into a dilemma. Part of you wants to finish the climb, but the other part thinks that is very unwise. The more you climb, the less this happens to you. After about a week, it feels completely normal to climb.

Once you do get a climb done, it feels great. It feels even better when you have been stuck on it for a while. The experience after you finish the climb is like nothing else routinely done in sports. If you ever see a rock gym, I suggest that you try it out.

I like practicing my technique at Island Rock in Plainview, where I like to go two or three times a week. I have actually scaled a real rock wall when I was in Utah.

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