

Personal Skills Rescue Workshop INFO



“The PSRW is a week on rope!”

See [Current RTR Open Schedule](#) for Dates & Location

“An Excursion into the Vertical Realm”

Seven full days of on rope climbing, rescue and rope access skills where you will come away with confidence in your ability in personal rigging.

The Personal Skills Rescue Workshop is considered by many past students as our most enjoyable, interactive and physically demanding. There is no shortage of “on-rope” time at this workshop! The PSRW, and the [Team Skills Rescue Workshop](#) are the courses which fulfill the 90% solution on most rope rescues within industry and wilderness locations. It is designed for the serious rope rescue practitioner wishing to improve their personal rigging skill and capability. This workshop is sometimes mistakenly perceived as a beginning program due to the personal nature of many of the evolutions. In fact, it is for those that never seem to get enough on rope experience or time over the edge. The PSRW begins with valuable, yet simple definitions for belays, self belays, conditional belays and conditional self belays and how these differ in their engineering. It goes into important orientation on personally carried gear such as ascenders and descenders, self belay devices, Purcell prusiks, the all valuable AZTEK kit and other items essential to safety in the vertical realm and then moves into practical and fun-filled days where multiple one-on-one rope stations keep the practitioner busy throughout the day.

Students in the PSRW practice their skills and learn to work together as a team in successful retrieval of this patient in a non-threatening environment. These are found in the Seven Minimalist Rescue Archetypes (7MRA) that lay a groundwork for understanding how solo versus semi-solo rescues vary in their risk to the rescuer. The PSRW goes well into often overlooked personal skills that are taken for granted on most rescue teams.

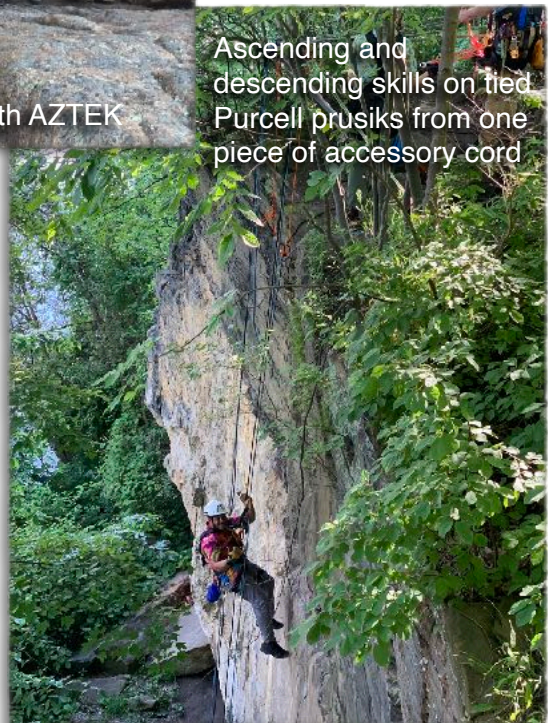
There is also considerable time spent on rope learning to climb/descend rope by multiple methods (even improvised if you drop your friction appliance). Passing knots, deviations, re-anchors, rope-to-rope transfers, aid climbing and problem solving are all part of the PSRW. Proficiency through repetition to mastery are encouraged. There is a very very strong emphasis on advanced knotcraft in this workshop! Students are tested throughout the program for proficiency and the ability to tie under pressure. All in fun, of course!



Pitch Toe solo rescue with AZTEK



Minimalist Rescue
Archetype #4



Ascending and
descending skills on tied
Purcell prusiks from one
piece of accessory cord

PROGRAM LIAISON: (INFO, Location / Meeting Place / and Logistics)

The liaison for each RTR program varies according to location and RTR instructor. See the [Open Enrollment Schedule](#) for these details on the PSRW you are signing up for.

PSRW KEY POINTS -

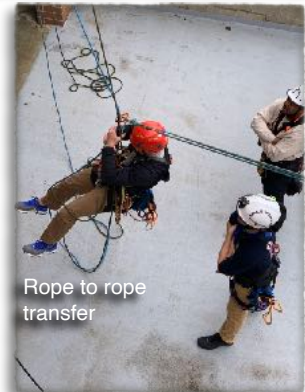
- Ideal for rope access technicians (those that work at elevation)
- Strong emphasis on personal skills
- Harness organization for working in vertical realm
- Anchor building using rock pro (active and passive)
- Anchor building using piton family (if available)
- Backtying and opposition (front ties) and general rigging for anchoring
- Critical analysis of multi-point anchoring systems (understanding physics)
- Rope coiling methods
- Rope management to eliminate snarls and frustration
- Improvisation and minimalism "What do you do if the gadget does not show up?"
- Knotcraft to the extreme (There is a strong emphasis on knot skills)
- Introduction to pulley systems (partial lecture)
- Multiple methods of descending on rope (including improvised)
- Multiple methods of ascending on handled ascenders
- Passing knots on ascent and descent
- Rope-to-rope transfers on ascent and descent
- Passing re-belays on ascent and descent
- Passing standard deviations against wall on ascent and descent
- Passing "flying" deviations (no wall) on ascent and descent
- Horizontal aid climbing (if available)
- True belays and self belays
- Self rescue techniques / Buddy rescue techniques
- AZTEK kit orientation for personal and team operations:
 - First 8 uses of AZTEK:
 - ▶ Single and double part hasty rappels (5 & 6)
 - ▶ Belays and self belays (3 & 4)
 - ▶ Dynamic fixed and traveling brakes
 - ▶ Ascending with AZTEK in 2 parts (7)
 - ▶ Personal travel restrict (1 & 2)
 - ▶ Set of four pulley system (8)
- Solo rescue: Complete Seven Minimalist Rescue Archetypes (7MRA)
 - ▶ Solo rescuer pick off ("gecko" and hanging)
 - ▶ Semi-solo rescuer pick offs ("gecko" and hanging)
- Solo one-on-one rescues: (see detailed description below)
 - ▶ Pitch head rescue (breaking into lines on top with AZTEK and bringing casualty up from bottom)
 - ▶ Pitch toe rescue (descending to bottom and attaching to casualty with AZTEK and ascending with them to top)
 - ▶ Counter balance rescue (if time permits) (Using your own weight to advance someone up a cliff or drop)
- Lead climbing (optional)
- Down climbing techniques
- Sound anchoring principles: simple through advanced system anchors
- Rigging plates and pods using AZ Vortex, focused floating anchors made "bombproof" for over edge rope work
- Manual and auto stop friction appliances
- Slack backups vs tensioned backties

TOP-DOWN RESCUE:

Students in the PSRW practice their personal rescue skills and learn to work together as a semi-team (one or two rescuers) in successful retrieval of this patient in a non-threatening environment. These are found in the predominantly top-down Seven Minimalist Rescue Archetypes (7 MRA) that lay a groundwork for understanding how solo versus semi-solo rescues vary in their risk to the rescuer. Top-down rescue is easier as it relies on friction which is helpful at times. The PSRW goes well into often overlooked personal skills that are taken for granted on most rescue teams. The 7 MRA are therefore well suited for industrial and wilderness rescue team members. Some of these skills are repeated in the Mountain Rescue Workshop as well.



Counterbalance solo rescue



Rope to rope transfer



Building rigging pods for working over edge



Extensive rock pro

BOTTOM-UP RESCUE:

There are three differing bottom-up rescue techniques that we offer to PSRW students. They are a bit esoteric, but they are valuable "personal" skills which most past students seem to especially appreciate. They totally rely, once again, on the AZTEK kit and also the hand tied Purcell prusiks (tied from one 10 meter piece of 6mm supple accessory cord). Also, unlike the top-down rescue techniques of the 7 MRA, here you are fighting friction. Therefore these are more difficult and require perseverance. Again, some of these skills are repeated in the Mountain Rescue Workshop as well. Example being the Juneau, Alaska MRW in 2022.

1) **PITCH HEAD RESCUE:** RTR took the well-known rope access "pitch head rescue" where the rescuer at the TOP or "head" of the pitch breaks into the line the victim is hanging on with their AZTEK set of fours, and establishes a progress capture in that line to bring the victim to the top of the pitch. They must also monitor the belay line up as well so the victim is on two solid points for the raising. If the victim is down 50', the rescue will need to do this several times with the AZTEK until the victim reaches the top.

2) **PITCH TOE RESCUE:** RTR Lead Instructor, Keith Thorne came up with the name for the "pitch toe rescue". It is the grand finale of the PSRW and the student really feels a sense of accomplishment when they finally complete it. The rescue (victim and rescuer) starts at the bottom, or "toe" of the pitch. The rescuer ascends the rope either in full ascent (Croll and handled ascender), or in half and half mode (half ascender and half descender with or without added pulley on handled ascender — which we jokingly call the "fat boy technique") stretching out their AZTEK SO4s as they go with the orange ratchet engaged only. So, they are able to ascend upwards of about 12' as that is all a SO4s will allow. The orange AZTEK pulley is attached to the top of the handled ascender. The blue AZTEK pulley goes to the victim. To ascend and not fight the prusik ratchet you must first pull all available rope through the top orange ratchet and let it dangle or pile it on the victims lap below. Once up the first 12', attach second handled ascender (you can steal the one from the victim) to fair lead of AZTEK and use foot stirrup to pump away with leg, lifting victim up to your new position. The belay is managed also by the rescuer. Once victim is at your location secure them, and repeat the process until you are at the top with victim in tow. It is a good workout.

3) **COUNTERBALANCE RESCUE:** The "counterbalance" is an optional, however fun, personal skillset in the PSRW. It is really in between the pitch head and the pitch toe solo rescuer techniques. Once again you start with the rescuer at the anchor on top and the victim whatever distance below you hanging on rope. Rescuer uses both of their personal Purcell prusiks here in various configurations to transfer the anchored loaded line to the victim to their own rescue system. This involves the rescuer using their own mass hanging below a progress capture pulley to "counterbalance" the victim up as they go down. Rescuer must also manage belay for victim. Again, I don't see this being a skill that students must complete for the PSRW at this time. However, things do change as the PSRW grows in difficulty.

Basically, the Personal Skills Rescue Workshop is a full-on solo & semi solo rescuer extravaganza. There is no framing, no litter work, no offsets, and no lecture other than to set forth the top down and bottom up scenario. Just the student on rope as a victim or on rope performing a rescue by their self.

HAWAIIAN SHIRT DAY!

The final day of all RTR programs is Hawaiian shirt day. It is a silly but fun tradition which we try to maintain. Please bring a Hawaiian shirt to receive an RTR embroidered hat!

KNOTCRAFT (Get ready with Sequoia, the Green Cheek Conure!)

If you have signed up for any RTR workshop, you can join us on the CLOSED Facebook Page ["Arizona ART of Clean Rigging"](#) for RTR students and alumni ONLY. This is a secret special place where we all meet to discuss rigging. You must apply for membership and if you are signed up, we will admit you there. On that page, you can watch the various knots being tied by Reed & Sequoia (the Green Cheek Conure). They are found under the "Media" section of that page. Go to "Albums" and then click on "KNOTCRAFT with Reed & Sequoia" link. This will give you a head start on the knotcraft used in RTR workshops. Enjoy!

