



POLAR TRAINING COURSE

COURSE NOTES





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COURSE DETAILS

Dates: Available on demand from July to November

Duration: 4–10 days

Departure: ex Wanaka, New Zealand

Price: From NZ\$5,450 per person (1:1 ratio)

▲ Make your polar dreams a reality! Photo: Andy Cole

Our Polar Training Course has been designed to introduce you to the essential skills and techniques you'll need for an expedition to the ends of the Earth. This course can target specific skills or encompass a more comprehensive syllabus, all whilst fostering a greater confidence in the judgment and decision-making aspects of polar travel.

Your guide will spend as much time as possible with you out in the field, travelling on skis, dragging sleds, putting up tents and sleeping in cold environments. You will learn skills such as food preparation, navigation, camp management and even how to go to the toilet in a storm! We can also cover equipment requirements and how to plan and pack for an expedition, which is popular with teams preparing for longer polar objectives.

We operate this course each winter from July to November to maximise the 'polar' conditions found in the New Zealand ranges during this time. The course is run over 4 to 10-days and you can choose specific dates and durations that suit your own availability. Whilst the course is primarily based in the mountains, we do also introduce some planning and preparation components which can be undertaken in a 'classroom' environment.

Participants need not have any prior training, although confidence on cross-country skis will serve as a big advantage. We can arrange some training days beforehand if you are not yet a skier.

Whilst nothing can prepare you fully for the real thing, this course based in the New Zealand mountains presents the opportunity to learn in a variety of terrain to develop essential skills for polar environments.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

There is a huge amount of information and learning required to operate safely in polar environments, as conditions can be so harsh that a minor period of inattention can lead to disastrous consequences. Our objective is to pass on the skills to enable you to safely partake in a polar expedition:



Learn current polar travel techniques. Photo: Dean Staples

- Solid planning and preparation skills
- Basic mountain/polar awareness
- Sound judgement of your own ability
- Strong decision making

Generally, someone coming through our Polar Training Course would use it as preparation for an expedition such as our Greenland Crossing or North or South Pole Last Degree Expeditions. Following your training with us, you can put your skills into practice under the supervision of an expert, who can help you further develop by partaking in some of the leadership of your chosen expedition.

Should you aspire to partake in self-sufficient polar travel, your level of training would need to be a lot more intensive. In that case, we recommend you partake in a longer duration course that we can custom to suit your requirements and timeframe.

No matter what training you receive from us, we strongly advise a progression towards the longer duration and more serious expeditions through a series of ever more difficult trips.

SKILLS COVERED

We endeavour to cover the following skills during the course:

- Planning and preparation
- Equipment requirements
- Route finding and navigation
- Navigating crevassed terrain
- First aid and health management
- Erecting tents and snow walls

- Camp management
- Glacier travel and self-rescue skills
- Crevasse extraction
- Weather analysis

NOTE: Participants may decide to focus primarily on one or two aspects of training to increase their skill set in that area. Factors such as weather and conditions may also dictate that some skills are not covered in full.

We are happy to arrange a programme to suit your needs. In some cases, a course can be scheduled just prior to departure on your polar expedition so you become completely immersed in the environment with a seamless transition from training to the event itself.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

The skiing component of polar travel is not very technical. The skis are used to slide along the snow and to stop you 'breaking through' the snow surface. It is a much faster mode of travel than going on foot. Having stated that, it is important that you have good balance on your skis and are familiar with the motion of skiing. Injuries could occur to those not, and any self-respecting polar traveller will make a point of learning the skill—Robert Falcon Scott decided against using skis on his journey to the South Pole with disastrous consequences!

If you are not already a skier, we suggest you come to Wanaka early to spend some time developing these skills and we can help arrange tuition.



▲ Learn how to navigate in harsh conditions. Photo: Colin Monteath/Hedgehog House

OUR GUIDES

We engage professional and experienced mountain guides with polar experience to instruct on this course. Adventure Consultants has a commitment to ensure the highest standard of instruction and guiding practices and we only employ guides who share our philosophy. Our guides will offer you the best possible learning experience, and a safe and enjoyable time.

Our guides are all NZMGA and/or IFMGA internationally qualified. They have been trained and assessed through the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association, and operate to the high standards and guidelines set out by the Association.

THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING AN ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS COURSE

From our headquarters at Lake Wanaka, we have the distinct advantage of short travel times to multiple venues, depending on the best weather and conditions at the time.

This course has been designed by Guy Cotter who has been climbing for 40 years. Additional to his extensive record in New Zealand, his career has numerous high altitude expeditions and polar journeys, including multiple ascents of Mount Everest and other 8,000m peaks.

As an IFMGA Guide since 1991, Guy Cotter recognises the need for people to learn about 'climbing', and not just being taught the technical skills in isolation. This is not an easy task and requires experienced and highly skilled guides with good instructional skills to achieve. The guides at Adventure Consultants are recognised as amongst the best in the industry, with the ability to help you get the most from your time with us.

HOW THE COURSE OPERATES

Our course starts with introductions in Wanaka. We'll discuss the outline of the course and begin our equipment checks, often introducing the basics of polar clothing and equipment as we go. We discuss what each item is, how it functions and what to do when it wears out or breaks! Being a good fix-it person really helps when you are



▲ Learn rescue techniques. Photo: Andy Cole



▲ Terrain differs greatly between the North Pole... Photo: Leifur Örn Svavarsson



▲ ...and the South, learn to tackle both. Photo: Andy Cole

thousands of kilometres from the closest store! You will learn what foods to take and we'll discuss the best way to pack your sled.

Before long we make our way towards the mountains, don our skis and begin our journey into the wilderness! We'll travel to a suitable location and establish our camp for the night. Factors such as wind strength and direction need to be considered and it's very important to manage your equipment well. Leaving something on the ground will likely lead to it being lost when it gets covered in snow overnight!

The next morning we're usually off into the snow with our skis on to continue our journey further into the backcountry. We'll travel to another good location to set up camp for the night. It takes some time and practice to become familiar with how best to establish camp and get ready for the night ahead.

We will spend parts of the day learning skills such as navigation, use of stoves, tents and sleeping systems. You'll also get many other vital pieces of advice that you will need in your quiver of knowledge, such as how to avoid frostbite and how to manage if it does occur.

Each day your journey will take you to a new location where you will need to become proficient at setting up camp and totally dialled with your gear. As you travel, you will be consolidating skills such as crucial navigation while you crank out the miles dragging your sled behind you.

On the final day, you will return to base, sort gear and have a thorough debrief. This may include discussion around a progression plan and developing a training program for your upcoming polar journey!

On longer courses, the curriculum may also move on to focus in greater detail on the skills required for independent polar travel.

COURSE VENUE

The course starts and ends at our office in Wanaka, New Zealand. Departing from here, we have two location options from which our course can be staged.

Please be aware that factors such as weather and snow conditions can affect the venue and time we spend in the mountains.



▲ Master tent etiquette for a happy team life! Photo: Maxime Poncet

PISA MOUNTAIN RANGE

In July and August, we operate our Polar Training Courses in the Pisa Mountain Range or the Old Man Mountain Range close to our base here in Wanaka.

TASMAN GLACIER

In the later months of spring (September to November), we can still operate in the high alpine glaciers of the Aoraki Mount Cook region. This option offers the most dramatic environmental conditions using helicopters or ski planes to give us quick access to the snow line. Here, we can specifically focus on glacier travel and crevasse rescue techniques. These journeys will require the additional use of ice axe and crampons on the steeper slopes that you will encounter along the way. Full training will be given in these techniques as well as rope work specific to this type of terrain.

COURSE ACCOMMODATION

Adventure Consultants will provide your accommodation while the course is running, which is from 9.00am on Day 1 until 5.00pm on the last day of your course.

All food and accommodation outside this time will be at your expense.

In the mountains you will stay in tents with limited facilities, where you will be exposed to the elements.

For nights in Wanaka, you will be accommodated in dormitory style backpackers with shared bathroom facilities. You may upgrade to single accommodation in Wanaka at your own expense, should you desire.

WEATHER

New Zealand has a maritime climate and the weather is always a consideration in the high mountains. You can expect temperatures in July and early August to be as cold as -15°C or as high as 10°C .

The temperatures are coldest in July and early August, making conditions more akin to polar travel. However, cold temperatures are still possible through October and November in the high mountain regions.



▲ Learn correct sled hauling techniques. Photo: Alexander Pancoe

GROUND & AIR TRANSPORT

PISA MOUNTAIN RANGE COURSE OPTION

The Pisa Range is accessed by ground transport from our base in Wanaka. Ground transfers are included in course fee.

TASMAN GLACIER COURSE OPTION

We utilise helicopters or ski planes to access the high glacier regions at the start and end of the Tasman Glacier Course Option. This alleviates long and tiring walks into the alpine region with heavy packs. It allows you to start the course fresh, gain more valuable instructional time and take advantage of fine weather periods. Aircraft access and egress is included in the course fee for this option.

EQUIPMENT

Venturing into New Zealand's Southern Alps requires good quality personal gear due to the potential extreme weather conditions. Our focus is on having the essential clothing and equipment, whilst keeping pack weights as light as possible for your comfort and ease of travel.

We will supply a full equipment list in preparation for your course and we hold a good range of modern rental equipment. If you will be renting equipment from us, please advise your requirements in advance to ensure correct sizing and availability. If you intend to buy any equipment items, we are happy to advise on brands and models, and of key importance, their suitability to the activity.

We offer our clients discounted prices on a selection of AC recommended climbing equipment and clothing and we can arrange for the equipment to be ready for you when you arrive.

GUIDE BOOKS & MAPS

We recommend 'A Climbers Guide to New Zealand Mountaineering Techniques'. Written by Adventure Consultants guides Guy Cotter, Dean Staples and Mark Sedon, the 'ACG' was published specifically as reference material which you will find useful before, during, and long after your course has finished. Whilst the Climbers Guide does not focus specifically on polar travel techniques, there are plenty of useful sections for alpine environments that are applicable to polar travel.

It is useful to have your own map for navigation exercises. Your guide will advise you of the relevant 1:50,000 topographic maps required when the course begins. The precise training area for your Polar Training Course will generally only be decided just prior to course commencement date to ensure the most favourable area is utilised. Books and maps can be purchased in Wanaka.

COMMUNICATION & MESSAGES

Our guides are in radio/cell/satellite phone communication with our operations base and the Department of Conservation headquarters throughout the trip. This assists us with schedule and weather forecast updates, helicopter coordination and safety back up.



▲ The New Zealand mountains provide an excellent classroom. Photo: Andy Cole



▲ Focus on cold weather camping skills. Photo: Andy Cole



▲ Learn to be self-sufficient. Photo: Dean Staples

Urgent messages can be relayed via our office to the field if required. Each course travelling into remote regions carries a locator beacon for additional security.

FITNESS & HEALTH

To make the most of your training experience we encourage you to work on your fitness prior to the trip. If you can, prepare yourself by cross-country skiing or ski touring. If this is not possible you could consider coming to Wanaka early to spend some time developing these skills.

You will find that training with a 20kg/44lb+ pack is good preparation for the mountains, with the aim of getting 'pack fit' and building your endurance. Your guide places special focus on fitness levels and will regulate the pace accordingly.

Our registration form requests that you advise us of any medical problems you may have and of any medications you are taking. Any information you supply will be treated as confidential.

FOOD

We place emphasis on providing nutritious meals and a good supply of snack food throughout the trip. If you have any special dietary requirements, please advise us at the time of registration. For special diets such as vegan and gluten/dairy free, we will call you to discuss your needs and how this will work in the group cooking situation.

INSURANCE

We highly recommend that you take out trip cancellation insurance. This is usually packaged together with your travel insurance and covers you for loss of deposit should you not be able to make the trip due to personal reasons or mishap.

Whilst our focus is on safety and our track record supports this, the mountains do have hazards and there is always the potential for mishap. If you were injured whilst on the trip, the New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) would pay rescue costs, however, you may not be eligible for bulk compensation payments. You are responsible for any medical or evacuation costs beyond the cover provided by ACC.



▲ Learn from experienced and qualified polar guides. Photo: Dean Staples

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

We commence our Polar Training Courses from Wanaka. Air New Zealand and Qantas/Jetstar provide daily flights from Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington to nearby Queenstown. There are also direct international flights from most major Australian cities to Queenstown.

A shuttle service operates several times daily between Queenstown and Wanaka (approximately one hour driving time, at a cost of NZ\$40 per person each way), check <https://www.ritchies.co.nz/wanaka> for details.

Bus services also operate daily between Christchurch and Wanaka (approximately 6 hours travel time).

Wanaka has a range of accommodation from backpackers, youth hostels, motels and hotels to luxury lodges.

We are happy to assist with these arrangements.

COURSE FEE

The 4-day course fee, ex Wanaka, New Zealand is:

Pisa Range Option: NZ\$5,450 (1:1 ratio)

Tasman Glacier Option: NZ\$8,250 (1:1 ratio)

NOTE: Please enquire for costs on longer trips and group prices. Prices are subject to change without notice.

The price includes:

- Guide fees
- Hut fees
- All meals and snack foods whilst on the trip
- Group equipment such as ropes, tents and stoves
- Ground transport ex Wanaka
- Department of Conservation fees (37125-GUI)
- NZ Goods and Services Tax (15%)
- Aircraft access and egress *Tasman Glacier Option Only

PAYMENT DETAILS

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following bank and account:

Bank: Bank of New Zealand

For the Account of: Adventure Consultants Limited

Account Number: 02 0673 0043443 00

Account Type: NZ Dollars

NOTE: All bank transfer charges are for the remitter's account.

We also accept payments by credit card (Visa, Mastercard and Amex) plus a 3% card charge.

DEPOSIT

To confirm place on one of our courses, we require a completed registration form with a deposit of NZ\$1,000 per person.

BALANCE

The balance payment is due 60 days prior to the



▲ Preparation is the key to success on any polar venture. Photo: Andy Cole

course start date.

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

- Cancellations outside of 60 days incur a NZ\$500 cancellation fee.
- For cancellations made within 60 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the full fee.
- For cancellations made within 30 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 75% of the full fee.
- For cancellations within 15 days of the departure date a cancellation fee of 100% of the full fee applies.

We recommend you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent if you wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.

HOW TO JOIN THIS COURSE

If you would like to join one of our Polar Training

Courses, please complete our online booking form and forward your deposit payment at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/climbing-schools/climbing-school-new-zealand/polar-training-course/book-now>.

CONTACT US

If you require more information, please contact us at:

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▲ Pisa Range or Tasman Glacier options available. Photo: Adrian Camm



Adventure Consultants is affiliated to the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA), New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) and a corporate member of the American Alpine Club (AAC). Adventure Consultants is a supporter of the dZi Foundation in Nepal for their 'Revitalise a Village' programmes.

Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.



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