
What's new?

Every year the climbers up their game and the walls stay the same. That is the goal at least. Hammerless climbing continues to evolve and the iron racks are getting smaller and smaller. With your help we can accelerate this trend toward the ultimate goal: climbing every classic line in Yosemite without a hammer. Why? Because hammerless climbing is more fun, often faster, and keeps the cracks in their natural state of perfection. If there is a way to improve a perfect El Cap crack, I don't know about it. I do know that pin scars, trenched heads, and drill hooks sure are not an improvement.

One of the original goals with Yosemite Big Walls' first edition was to update the topos with clean aid ratings and modern hammerless racks. That goal continues in this third edition. More pitches have clean ratings and more routes go completely clean. I encourage you to find pitches that still have "A" ratings, do them clean and share on the [SuperTopo Route Beta Section](#) the new "C" rating.

We didn't focus on big wall free climbing topos in the Second Edition because only a handful of people were free climbing walls. That was 2005. In 2011 there are now dozens of big wall free ascents every year and the pace is accelerating. More importantly, publishing free climbing topos hopefully further inspires clean climbing. Nailing a piton on a C2 or C3 pitch that goes free changes the free route forever.

There are big changes to the racks. There are 20-50 percent fewer pitons called for on most climbs than in the Second Edition. Clean aid gear is now better. Offset small cams are no longer listed as optional. They are essential on any C2 or C3 route (you can get by without them but the routes are scarier and you are more likely to nail). The same goes for offset micro nuts: I don't even list regular micro nuts on the racks. If you still have not met a cam hook, introduce yourself. There are many more beaks called for in each topo. The advent of medium and large Peckers/beaks has changed

aid climbing in two ways: 1) Peckers often are hand-placed for hooking pin scars. 2) If you do need to hammer them, they are way less destructive than a Lost Arrow, knifeblade, or angle (just be careful about fixing them in corners). They are also way more bomber. An A4 pitch with knifeblades might be A3 with Peckers. We cut down the knifeblade racks in the topos but some people might cut them out almost entirely and load up on Peckers instead.

The biggest change in SuperTopo beta for Yosemite Big Walls is not in this book but rather online. We now have:

- gear reviews of our favorite big wall gear at www.supertopo.com/reviews/
- an entire online [How to Big Wall climbing guide](#) with video
- topos for routes not included in this book
- lots of [trip reports](#), beta, photos, updates

Some of the "information" chapters in the Second Edition have been omitted from this book but are free to download at SuperTopo.com, chapters such as Staying Alive. This decision was inspired by an awesome handwritten letter from Tom Frost. He encouraged us to cut the extras and deliver the goods. One quote from the letter: ". your implication seems to be that climbing is all about information. Wrong direction! Poor man's for studying the rock face, getting to know El Capitan, getting connected to Mother Earth, actually going climbing."

Tom is right. Big walls are about adventure and a big walls book should inspire you to climb the route AND help you climb in your best style whether it is as free as possible, clean as possible, or both. That was the goal. Let us know if we lived up to it.

The best part of making this book was reading every single beta post and trip report on supertopo.com. Thank you to everyone who has submitted beta and improved this book and thanks in advance for your feedback to make a Fourth Edition even better.



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