

Mount Shuksan: Women's Mountaineering Skills Seminar

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IMG's Skills Seminars are our most in depth, hands-on training programs, offering a generous amount of time to build your proficiency in critical mountaineering skills including glacier travel and crevasse rescue. Our women's programs are equally suitable as an introduction course for first time climbers, or a comprehensive refresher course for veterans of past climbing adventures looking for a spectacular climb and in-depth mountaineering curriculum. Our primary goal during our Women's Skills Seminar is to build your competence and confidence in the mountains while offering a unique team dynamic, building lasting relationships, and having a great time on an amazing adventure.

Throughout the seminar, your guides will delve into great detail during the training, lectures, informal discussions, and hands-on skills sessions to allow you to comprehensively understand the topics covered. At the end of the program we will make a summit bid as a team, utilizing the training we have learned during the seminar.

The curriculum of our Women's Skills Seminar includes many topics fundamental to general mountaineering. However, your guides have the flexibility to determine the current skillsets and intentions of all of the participants and adjust the content as necessary to give you the best experience possible.



PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for the Women's Skills Seminars. However, all participants must arrive in excellent physical condition and come prepared to carry 50 lbs. For training suggestions, please review the information provided on our [Training for Rainier page »](#)

We look forward to meeting you and working together to build individual competence and confidence in the mountains, and share a powerful and meaningful adventure in a spectacular setting!

For any inquiries, email office@mountainguides.com or call 360.569.2609. We're happy to answer questions and/or put you in touch with one of our female guides.

Mt. Shuksan Women's Skills Seminar

Mount Shuksan is one of the highest non-volcanic peaks in the Pacific Northwest at 9,127 feet. It is also one of the most strikingly beautiful peaks in the United States, which makes it one of the most photographed mountains in the world. Our approach to Mt. Shuksan has it all for the aspiring mountaineer: A beautiful hike through dense forest and up into the alpine zone will lead to the base of permanent snow. Shuksan's varied and world-class terrain make it the perfect training ground for our women's mountaineering course which culminates in a summit bid of this breathtaking peak.

Our route of ascent to the summit is via the Sulphide Glacier, the most direct route up the mountain with the fewest technical difficulties. The broad rolling expanse of the Sulphide Glacier provides a moderate roped glacial approach to the final 600-foot rock summit. The final summit pyramid involves climbing steep snow in early summer, or later in the summer months it is fourth-class rock scrambling with a few low fifth-class moves. Your guides will take you through the comprehensive trainings and practical skills sessions necessary to successfully and safely reach the summit of Mt. Shuksan, providing a classic Northwest mountain experience.

All participants must be in very good physical condition. The need to train for this climb cannot be overstressed. For several months prior to the start of the climb, training should include lots of long, slow, distance runs over hilly terrain, an hour or more in duration, and at least one outing per week carrying a heavy pack (45-50 pounds) up **and down** steep hills or stairs. These sessions should gain 2-3,000 feet over three or more miles.

Possible Course Objectives:

- Cramponing
- Belaying and rappelling
- Route finding and navigation
- Glacier travel and rope management
- Crevasse rescue haul systems
- Anchor systems in ice and snow
- Short roping and short pitching
- Ascending and descending fixed lines
- Glacier and snow camping and shelters

Dates: TBD

Cost: \$1,800

Guide/Climber Ratio: 1:2 (max 6 climbers)

Included in your fee: all group equipment including shared tents, stoves, climbing ropes, hardware and climbing permits.

Not included: transportation to the trailhead, lodging the evening prior to the start of the climb or the last night of the trip.

REQUIRED Insurance: IMG requires that all* trip participants purchase [Travel Insurance](#) that includes coverage for medical evacuation, repatriation and medical expenses for the duration of their IMG program. Trip Cancellation Insurance is strongly recommended. Trekking and mountaineering programs are true "adventure travel." **The insurance requirement does not apply to IMG customers on programs within the continental USA, but is strongly encouraged.*

Mt. Shuksan Seminar Sample Itinerary

(Itinerary subject to weather, conditions, and group goals)

Day 1: The group meets at the Sedro Woolley Ranger Station in the North Cascades at 8:00 a.m. Car pooling can be arranged by IMG from the SeaTac airport for those interested. After check-in we drive together to the trailhead for final pack check and issue of team equipment. The trailhead is approximately 2,500 feet in elevation. We climb through dense forest and up into the alpine zone to camp at approximately 6,000 feet on the edge of the Sulphide Glacier. A long day with 50 lb. packs, 5-7 hours in duration, and probably the hardest day of the trip.

Days 2-4: Discussions, lectures, and hands-on practical skills sessions. Please see "POSSIBLE COURSE OBJECTIVES" above. We may move camp one or two times to practice tearing down and setting up camp, incorporate expedition-style climbing practices, and to put ourselves in the best location for our summit bid.

Day 5: Typically the summit day, but flexible based on weather, conditions, and the group. On summit day we get up well before dawn, eat a quick instant breakfast of hot cereal and drinks, put on harnesses, helmets and crampons, rope up into teams, and begin our climb up the Sulphide glacier. It generally takes 3-4 hours to reach the base of the summit pyramid, and depending on sill level and group size another 2-3 hours to reach the true summit. From there we will enjoy spectacular views of Mount Baker and the rugged North Cascades, and descend back to camp in about 5 hours.

Day 6: After packing up camp the team will head down to the trailhead. Often people enjoy a meal out at one of the local restaurants to plan our next adventures together and exchange contact information before a final round of hugs and parting ways.

"Climbing Mt. Shuksan with IMG with an all-women's crew was undoubtedly the best outdoor experience I've ever had. The guides were tough, hilarious, gritty, and so supportive. There's something about having fellow women as leaders that holds me accountable. The other women on the trip, as well, inspired me to try my hardest — the young mother of an infant who climbed a mountain and gave birth in the same year, the pairs of friends climbing together for the shared experience, the obvious love all the women had for the mountain. It all came together for the perfect week. We all worked hard at learning new skills, overcame things that were scary, new, confusing or plain weird, and laughed the entire time. Summit day was incredible, but the most amazing moment was coming back to camp and seeing all the joyful faces waiting for us... I honestly could not recommend this kind of trip enough."

—Sonya P.

"I recently climbed Mount Rainier with three female IMG guides, and I was absolutely blown away. They're professional, supportive, strong, and fun. I hadn't thought it would make a difference for me to climb with other women (instead of with men), but it turned out to be a highlight of my adventure."

—Katherine P.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Mt. Shuksan Equipment List

Clothing

- Long underwear top and bottom (light or medium weight)
- Expedition weight long underwear top
- Fleece or soft shell jacket ***
- Stretchy, dense weave synthetic climbing pants
- Waterproof/ breathable shell with hood ***
- Waterproof/ breathable pants (full side zips preferred)
- Warm, roomy down or synthetic jacket with hood (not an 8000 meter jacket) ***
- Wool or fleece hat
- Insulated ski or climbing gloves ***
- Fleece or lightweight climbing gloves
- Heavy wool or synthetic socks with liners (one extra change)
- Baseball or sun cap
- T-shirt
- Nylon Hiking shorts or pants

Gear

- Full size internal frame pack, 55 to 65 liters (around 4,000 cu. in.) ***
- Sleeping bag with stuff sack, rated to at least 20 degrees F.
- Sleeping pad
- Plastic mountaineering boots *** or leather climbing boots; must be rigid soled and insulated. Leather climbing boots are best for climbing in mid-summer.
- Full or ankle length gaiters
- 12 Point adjustable crampons, fitted to your boots ***
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Ice Axe, 60 or 70 cm. in length, with wrist leash ***
- Climbing harness with adjustable leg loops.
- Climbing helmet ***
- 3 Carabiners (One locking pear shaped)
- One sewn webbing sling or tied 6 mm prussik loop (approx. 24" diameter)
- 24' of 6 mm perlon rope
- Adjustable ski poles ***
- LED Headlamp, bring an extra set of batteries

- [] Dark glasses, UV rated with side protection (wrap around or side shields)
- [] Double lens ski goggles or spare glasses
- [] Two wide-mouth plastic water bottles, 1 liter capacity
- [] Pocket knife
- [] Plastic bowl, plastic insulated mug, spoon
- [] Camera. The smaller and more convenient the camera the more opportunity you will have to photograph the climb.
- [] Personal lunch food for six days. Bring a variety of your favorite foods. Include easy to eat snacks for the trail.
- [] Light toiletries: toothbrush and paste, small roll of t.p., ear plugs for sleeping
- [] Personal FA kit to include moleskin, a few Band-Aids, tape, aspirin, Advil, etc. Also consider bringing water treatment tablets and/or insect repellent depending on the season.
- [] 2-3 Large heavy duty plastic garbage bags.



“Mount Shuksan, and the area around it, are some of the most beautiful scenery I’ve ever seen. It’s the perfect training ground for learning about glacier skills, mountain travel, and climbing. I can’t wait to go back!”

—Lucy R.

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