

# Coach Your Coaches With This Five Week Plan

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in [CWA Blog](#)



You have grown your youth program, interviewed many coaching candidates, and finally hired new coaches. Instead of throwing them in the fire and hoping they don't get burned, put the same care and attention into your coaches as you do into preparing your climbers.

I developed a five-week curriculum for 'coaching' our new coaches, to better prepare them for inspiring a new generation of crushers. Each week, we discuss a new skills-based topic and have the opportunity to practice during youth practices. We will explore safety, instructing techniques, group management, growth mindset, giving creative challenges, and assessing deficiencies.

**The following is written as a guide for a head coach to train their new coaches in the best practices to see results in their climbers over a five-week period.**

## Week 1: Safety

Our new coach should arrive 30 minutes prior to practice to discuss this week's topic with you. Many climbers learn by doing; showing skills first then allowing an opportunity for hands-on learning will build confidence and increase retention.

Begin by reviewing the rules together. Next, take the coach through a belay, boulder, and auto belay orientation. When climbers come in, introduce your new coach as "Coach \_\_\_" to inspire confidence from climbers and your new coach. Assign the following drills to your new coach.

### Drill 1: Rules & Orientation

- Ask your coach to take climbers to the rule board & review gym rules with them.

- Ask your coach to do an auto belay orientation with any new climbers.

## Drill 2: Group Management

Your coach should try these to regain a group's attention:

- Minimize visual distractions and look at them when instructing.
- Lower your voice for instruction.
- Use their names.

### Coach Debrief:

Ask your coach what they noticed about teaching today, what they did well, and what will they work on next practice. Review this together.

## Week 2: Technical Skills

Kick off the next week by recalling the safety protocols and discussing group management tactics. This week, we will focus on teaching skills and giving feedback.

### Drill 1: Teaching Skills

The coach will show a new skill while facing the group.

Ex: Hold reading! Let's play a game for warm-ups and technique review. I recommend the game [Squish](#), to review and introduce climbing techniques. Your new coach should then lead the game they introduce to the group.

### Drill 2: Reading & Reinforcing

Ask your coach to help climbers read the holds, ask climbers about their projects, and point out the technical positives they see.

### Drill 3: Giving Feedback

Encourage your coach to tell a parent or guardian what their climber did well during the session. Communicating with parents and guardians builds trust and increases value in your program. It also gets parents involved.

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**Read: The Five Types of Climbing League Parents And How To Tap Into Their Potential**

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### Coach Debrief:



Ask the coach what they noticed about teaching today, what they did well, and what will they work on next practice. Review this together.

## Week 3: Finding Your Strength

Talk to your coach about a growth mindset and why it's important. Ask about natural strengths and abilities that they may bring to the position and how to apply them.

### Drill 1: Seeing & Communicating the Positives

The coach will start by showing a new technique. (Ex. Switchfoot) Next, they will ask each climber to attempt the technique, while your new coach points out positives. Today in practice, ask the coach to check in with each climber and ask if they would like beta on their projects.

### Drill 2: Creative Challenges

Give feedback on how climbers can train at home.

Ex: "I want to hit that dyno!" - "Do 10 box jumps or similar every day at home."

### Coach Debrief:

Point out specific positives you see in them as a coach. Ask what is something they would like to do differently next time.

## Week 4: Endurance & Play

Climb with curiosity! Identify what is fun when you climb, or what you would like to develop over time.

Ex: Dynamic movement & correcting balance through flagging/smearing

### Write a practice with your new coach:

Discuss theme and appropriate warm up: \_\_\_\_\_

Drills for practicing skill: \_\_\_\_\_

Challenges/ games/ problem: \_\_\_\_\_

Cool down/ conditioning: \_\_\_\_\_

Debrief questions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Drill 1: Lead Warm-Ups and Practice

Warm-up with similar movements to prime the body.

### Drill 2: Pick Out A Movement to Practice

## Drill 2: Pick Out Appropriate Routes

Consider skill level and assign routes to climbers.

Any improvements? Any trouble? Give feedback for improvement.

### Coach Debrief:

Ask your coach what they noticed about teaching today.

## Week 5: Learning to Read

Identifying deficiencies in technique, strength, and balance will help your new coach hone in common climber deficiencies.

### Drill 1: Assessing Techniques

The coach should watch a newer climber identify deficiencies and give feedback.

- Underdeveloped: sliding feet, fast, wild, or slapping motions, lots of upper body effort.
- Developed: Slow, controlled, confident movement or placement.

### Drill 2: Assessing Strengths

The coach should watch a newer climber identify deficiencies and give feedback.

- Underdeveloped: shaking, not going through a full range of motion, saying "I feel weak", using accessory muscles, or compensating.
- Developed: Fully-extending or locking off, coordinated, confident movements, or very slow and controlled movements.

### Drill 3: Assessing Balance

The coach should watch a newer climber identify deficiencies & give feedback.

- Underdeveloped: Overcompensating with hips, swinging off route, hips or head distant from the wall.
- Developed: Fine adjustment with ankles, hips, or shoulders, graceful movements.

### Coach Debrief:

Ask the coach what they noticed about teaching today, what they did well, and what will they work on next practice.

Debriefs provide a venue for retention and any questions that may arise. If you or your coaches are interested in learning more about climbing wall instruction, [check out the Climbing Wall Instructor Provider courses through the CWA](#). They are a fantastic way to bring standards and professionalism to your programming.

Climbing is such an encouraging sport. so I encourage you to promote curiosity and play in your



...making is such an essential part of climbing, so make sure you do practice safely and play with your new coaches to stay inspired! When you're having fun, so are your climbers!

Preventing injury is a hugely important component of coaching and training, and is critical to the future success of new coaches. The 2022 CWA Summit features the conference session – [Rock Climbing Injury Prevention](#) (and many more designed for coaches and trainers at all levels). Get your tickets today!

## About the Author



Hailey Caissie is the Programs Manager at [The Crag](#) climbing gym in Nashville, Tennessee. Hailey has been a climbing instructor since 2006 and loves seeing new climbers discover their abilities. She finds it especially fulfilling to coach young athletes toward discovering their potential. She works to inspire generations of climbers to become more intentional, influential, and inclusive.

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