



# Via Ferrata Takaka Hill



Welcome to New Zealand's first free and public Via Ferrata climbing park!

## What is a "Via Ferrata"?

"Via Ferrata" is Italian and translates to "iron way". The term is commonly used in the European Alps for a rock climbing route with a series of iron steps and a fixed steel rope that climbers can attach themselves to for safety. It allows anyone with a decent level of fitness to scale heights normally accessible only to experienced rock climbers.



## Where does the "Via Ferrata" concept come from?

The first Via Ferratas were built in the European Alps in WW1 to access remote mountains and peaks. Some can still be used recreationally today. Since then more than 1300 of these routes have been built. These have become very popular among outdoor enthusiasts, mainly in Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and France.

Peaks that were previously only accessible to the brave and skilful few, are now open to anyone seeking challenge and adventure. It's almost a mainstream outdoor activity in the European Alps today with people of all ages enjoying the sport.



## Who can climb a Via Ferrata?

Via Ferrata routes cater to various skill levels, from beginners and hikers to experienced climbers, thanks to their built-in cables, rungs, and ladders. They offer a safe, exciting option for those comfortable with heights and possessing good fitness. Many routes are beginner-friendly, while others appeal to thrill-seekers and those with climbing experience. Family-friendly options exist, often suitable for children 10 and older if accompanied. Basic climbing knowledge and essential gear - helmet, harness, and lanyard - are necessary for all routes, providing a thrilling yet secure adventure in beautiful mountain settings.

## How to climb in this Via Ferrata climbing park?



This is an alpine environment - there are multiple unmitigated natural hazards. These include but are not limited to:

- Loose rock
- Strong winds
- Rain and snow
- Lightning
- Earthquake

1. Understand that this is an adventurous and potentially dangerous activity and that you use the provided facilities at your own risk! The climbing park is open to the public and free of charge but you are responsible for whatever you do.
2. Make sure you have the right safety equipment to undertake the climb! You will need a climbing harness with a special lanyard and a helmet as a minimum. Gloves are strongly recommended as damage to the steel rope can cause deep cuts. See more details on the board to the right.
3. If you are new to climbing Via Ferratas make your way to the Skill Zone route first. It's not far from the carpark and provides an easy short route for you to understand the concept and do your first bit of climbing. The Skill Zone is well suited for kids.
4. If you have climbed a Via Ferrata before or you gained confidence after learning the basics at the Skill Zone then walk over to the Cliff Traverse climbing route. This is the main route here at this stage (more to come). It's very exposed in places, it can be challenging, and will take you 20 to 40 minutes to complete. The times can vary greatly depending on your skill, confidence, and group size.
5. After completing the Cliff Traverse you may scramble down the rough descent track to climb the route again or follow the easy walking track back to the carpark. All tracks are well marked.

# Climbing routes

## WARNING!

Use of all Via Ferrata climbing routes here on Takaka Hill is at your own risk!

Access is free of charge for everyone but you are totally responsible for yourself and must adhere to all safety rules, especially the use of suitable climbing safety equipment. Rules are described on these boards here and along the climbing routes.

Climbing a Via Ferrata is generally a safe activity if carried out with caution and respect.

The structures provided here were constructed in accordance with the European standards, assessed by a Chartered Professional Engineer and are checked for damage regularly. Despite this, Via Ferrata Aotearoa Inc. is a charitable, non-profit club and has no liability for injuries.

If you don't agree - don't climb.

## Difficulty levels

The Austrian grading system for difficulty is used here.

- A: Easy
- B: Moderately difficult
- C: Difficult
- D: Very difficult
- E: Extremely difficult

## The "Skill Zone" - Difficulty B

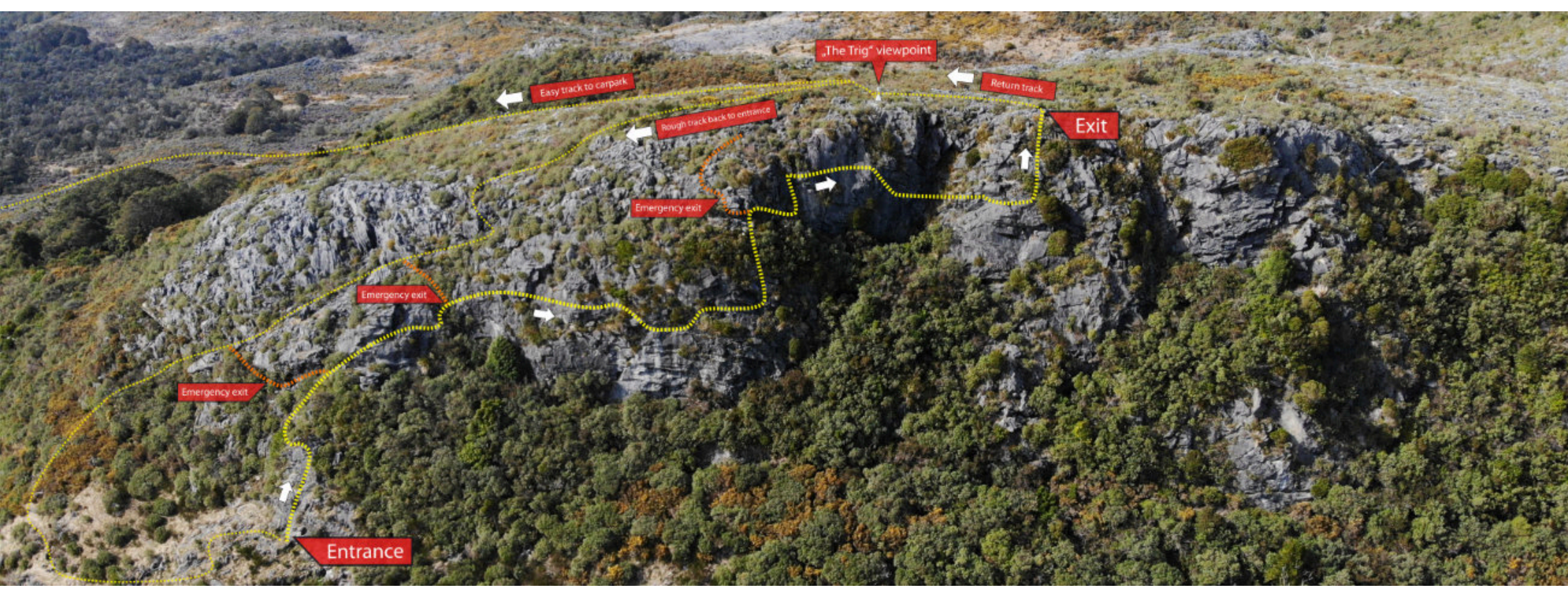
- Length: 20 m, 4 m up and down
- Time to climb: 2 to 5 minutes

The Skill Zone climbing route is a short climb just 5 minutes walking from this carpark. It is intended for newbie climbers and kids to get familiarised with the basic concept of "Via Ferrata".

Go there to try your gear, see how it works and find out if you feel comfortable. If you feel confident, move on to the "Cliff Traverse" climbing route. It's an idyllic 10 minute walk through an ancient beech forest to get there.



## The "Cliff Traverse" - Difficulty C



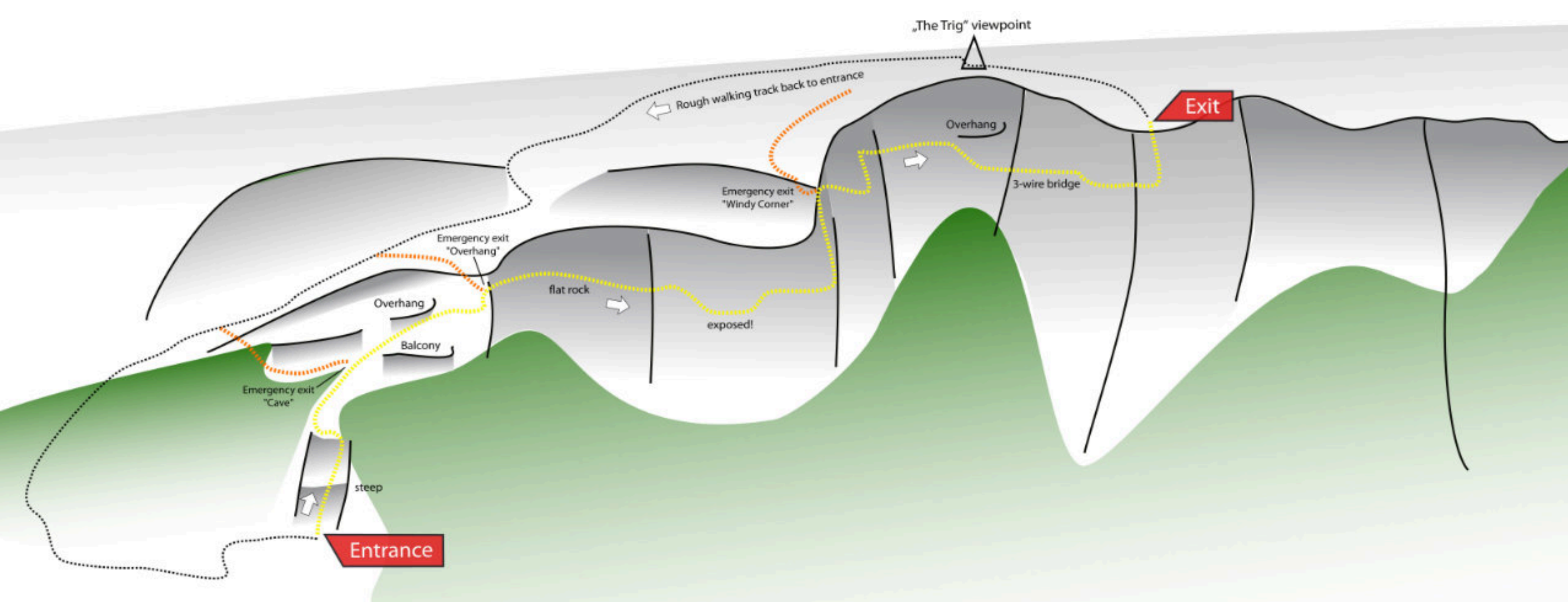
- Walking time from carpark: ~ 15 minutes
- Length: 170 m, 25 m up
- Time to climb: 20 to 40 minutes, times can vary greatly depending on your skill and confidence. Keep in mind that groups will generally be slower than individuals.

The Cliff Traverse climbing route is the main exciting attraction here. It is of moderate difficulty (C), is steep and exposed in places and will challenge beginners that are new to Via Ferrata climbing. If you make it up the first 10 m pitch you should be able to climb the whole route. The climbing is not technically difficult but the vertical exposure can be quite thrilling and will challenge beginners. Vertigo can be a real hazard on this route. You must be secured at all times.

The route features steep ascents, short overhangs that require arm strength, horizontal traverses, short down climbs and a 3-wire bridge.

There are three emergency exits that can always be used if the route is too challenging. So starting the climb doesn't mean you have to climb all the way if you feel uncomfortable.

Please stay on the marked trails to and from the climbing route.



## Coming soon: The "Cliff Conqueror"

More routes are planned on the rock faces further west. The next route will be the "Cliff Conqueror", a high, exposed and challenging route taking a direct line vertically up the cliff.

The society is raising funds to build this route.

Donate here:



Or become a member here:



# Required gear and how to use it

## Required safety gear

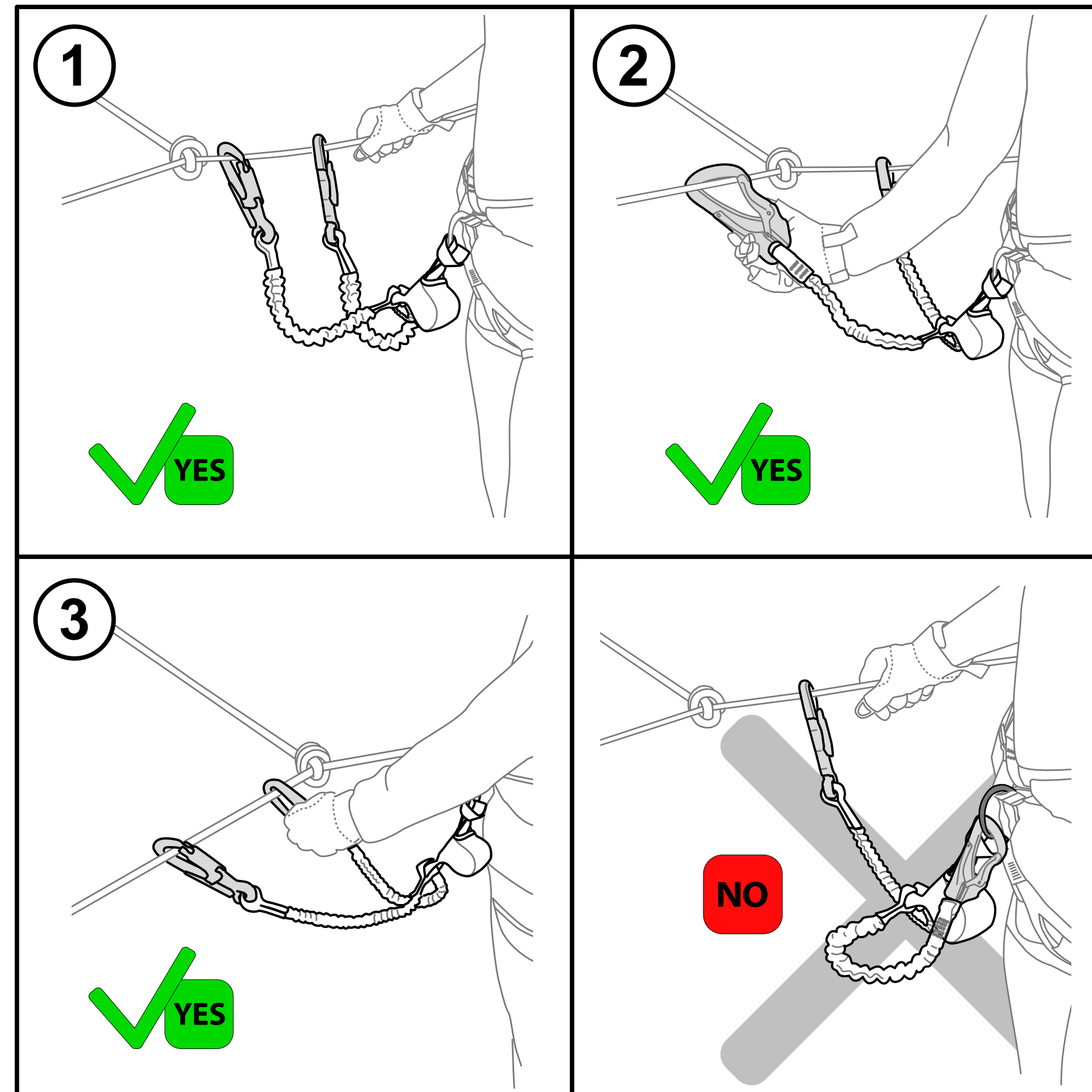
To climb a Via Ferrata safely you need a helmet, a basic climbing harness and a lanyard with two leashes.

Via Ferrata lanyards are Y-shaped and consist of two carabiners connected to a textile shock absorber via two arms. If you fall, the shock absorber will deploy, absorbing the fall energy and dynamically slowing the fall. The use of static lines, cowstails or slings instead of a proper Via Ferrata lanyard can cause injury in the event of a fall and is strongly discouraged.

It is also recommended to wear gloves to prevent getting blisters or cuts from holding on to the rope or sharp rock. Simple gardening gloves are sufficient.



## How to use the equipment



### Climbing rules

- ▶ Climb at your own risk!
- ▶ Only ever attempt to climb a Via Ferrata with suitable safety gear!
- ▶ Always clip to the wire with two carabiners, only release one at a time when passing an anchor.
- ▶ Space out: Only one climber per section (between two anchors).
- ▶ If you have a short rest-loop carabiner or a short sling, use this when you take a break.
- ▶ You may use every available structure to climb: rock, wire, anchors, footholds, trees etc.
- ▶ Take enough warm layers. Cold winds are common here.

## Where to hire or buy equipment

**Ngarua Caves Shop**  
4 km, 5 min (drive towards Motueka)  
Main Road, SH60, Motueka 7198  
Phone 03 528 8093 or 02 726 82115  
www.ngaruacaves.co.nz  
(hire)

**Gearshop Richmond**  
58 km, 60 min  
213 Queen Street, Richmond 7020  
Phone 03 547 7080  
www.gearshop.co.nz  
(hire or buy)



Scan here for the most up-to-date list of locations where you can hire or buy gear.

SCAN ME



Scan here for short video clips about how to climb a Via Ferrata.

SCAN ME



**Tip:** The club's hire gear features a rest loop with a carabiner. Clip it onto the wire or an anchor to sit in your harness and have a break from holding on to the wire.

## A charitable society project

### A community driven non-profit project

This Via Ferrata park was built by volunteers. They founded Via Ferrata Aotearoa Inc., a charitable non-profit society.

The mission of the society is to benefit the community by setting up, maintaining and supporting the development of publicly accessible and free to use Via Ferratas in New Zealand.

A suitable area with several suitable cliff faces was identified up here on Takaka Hill. The site allows for several Via Ferrata routes to be built, comprising varying degrees of difficulty. Here the society aims to showcase that it is legally and practically possible to build, run and maintain a community driven, publicly accessible Via Ferrata in New Zealand.

Since 2021 the society has been working on obtaining all the

required consents, access rights and funding. Route building started here in the winter of 2024 and the first routes were opened to the public in December 2024.

### Support the project and become a member now!

If you like the project please strongly consider becoming a member and support the society with a yearly membership fee or donate a few dollars. This is much appreciated and will help grow this and potentially other Via Ferrata routes.

Members are entitled to free gear hire.

For donations, becoming a member and more information visit:

[www.viaferrata.org.nz](http://www.viaferrata.org.nz)

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