

Hikuai Pinnacles

by Cliff Ellery Sep 2023

Another adventure crag on the second branch of the Tairua river, or as I like to call it "The Best Branch of the Tairua River".

The valley is home to many mature and juvenile Kauri trees. In an effort to reduce our environmental footprint and prevent the spread of Kauri Dieback Disease while enjoying this crag it is essential that you arrive with clean gear. Ensure your walking and climbing boots are scrubbed clean of dirt and seeds before you leave home. Wash your rope and other equipment between crags if spending time in other Kauri forests. For more information visit www.kauridieback.co.nz

Located halfway up the valley on the left-hand side (opposite side of the valley from main Tairua crag) and less than an hour's walk in, this crag consists of 4 large pinnacles. There is climbing on three of the four pinnacles. All the cliffs face north, so they are ideal for winter climbing but can be climbed year-round.

Gear

To date, all routes are sport and you will need at least 14 quickdraws. Most abseils are set up for 30m so you can get back down with 1 x 60m rope.

Descending

After climbing these pinnacles comes the tricky and dangerous bit, the descent, so you need to know your stuff. All the cliffs in this area are pinnacles, so there is no easy walk off option. Abseiling back down the way you came is the safest option. Before you climb in this area make sure you and your partner have your belay management and descent systems sorted. You will need

1. A helmet.
2. Harness with 2 x safeties.
3. Descender backed up with a Prusik / shunt or similar. Having your descender backed up allows you to use your hands to manoeuvre yourself to the next bolt anchor and reduces the likelihood of you abseiling off the end of your rope.
4. 1 x 60m rope or longer. Make sure the ends of the ropes are knotted. A 50m rope will not work on any of these abseils. Due to the blocky nature of the rock there are hundreds of potential knot snags, so if you are on double ropes take the time to ensure your ropes will pull.

www.freeclimb.co.nz. Number One, for up to date Rocking Climbing Information.

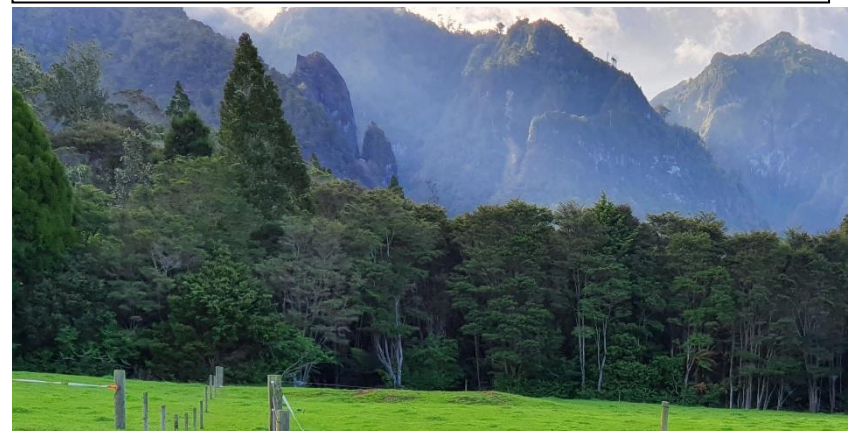
5. Until you are standing on the ground you always need to be clipped into 2 points; 2 x steel bolts or on an abseil rope connected to a 2 bolt anchor.
6. If any of the above is unfamiliar or you do not understand the terminology or systems mentioned above then do not attempt to climb here, go and go practice the skills at your local crag.



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Number One, for up to date Rock Climbing Information

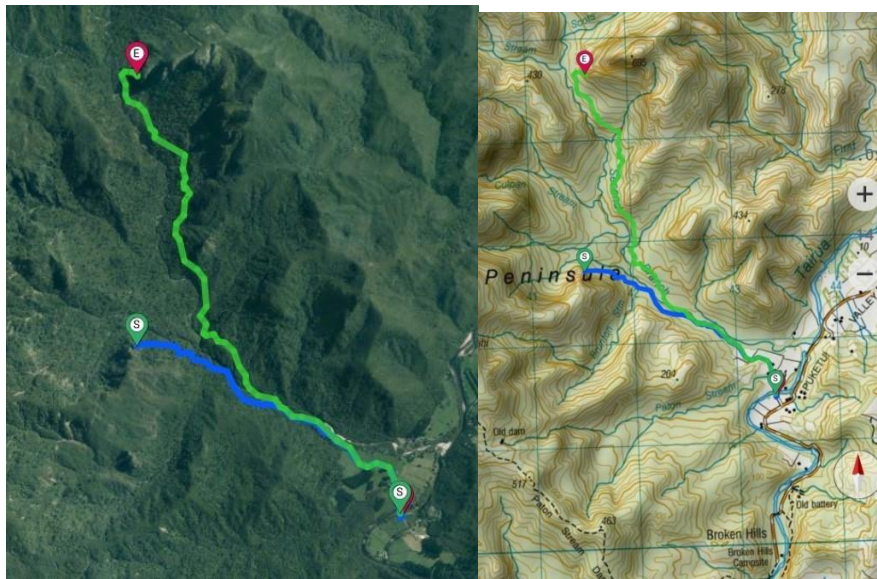
TAIRUA VALLEY AND THE HIKUAI PINNACLES



Walk in

After parking and signing in. Take the Tairua crag track across the farm (leave all gates as you found them), stay on the Tairua track for about 15-mins but do not cross the cross-river at the dry island, instead continue along the track on the left side of the river. After another 10 minutes you come to the Burton stream. Cross the stream and continue following the track and river for 100m then branch left up the hill away from the Tairua river. The track follows the right bank of the Burton stream for a while before branching off right. From there climb over a large log marked with an arrow and follow a rough climber's track (Track markers are small aluminium strips) It climbs diagonally up the hill away from the Tairua river and after 30 mins you should arrive at base of the Crag and the main Hihi Pinnacle. Walk up the hill along the base to the area just below the smaller off the pinnacles (Tahi).

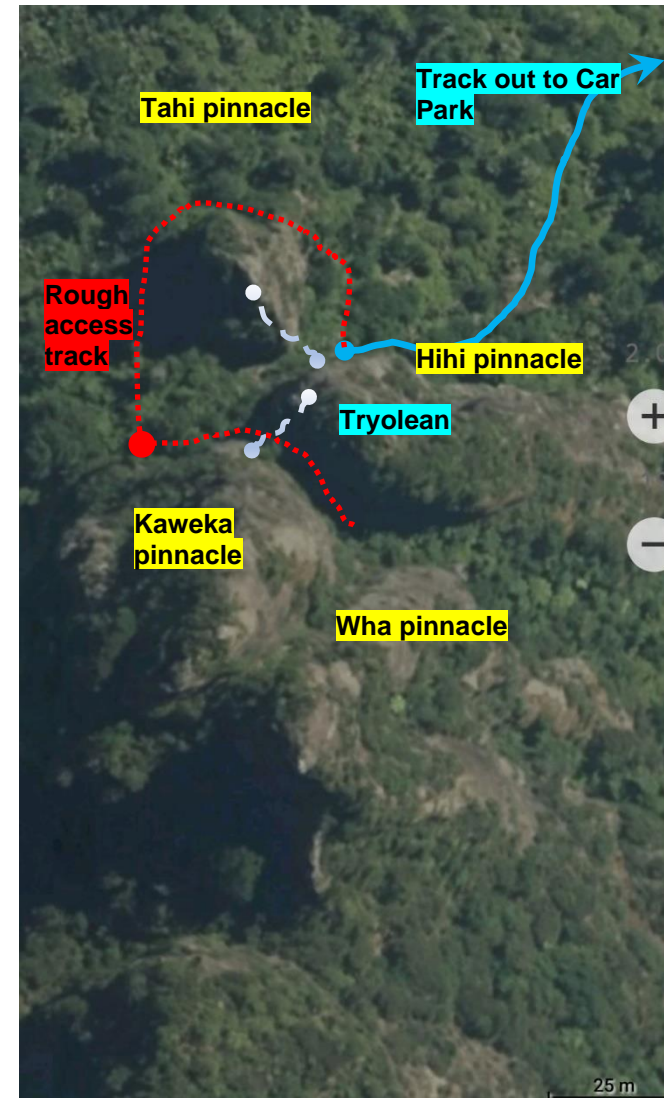
THE WALK IN



Key

Tairua Track 
 Hikuai Track 
 Access Tracks 

HIKUAI PINNACLE AREA - AERIAL VIEW



Front smaller pinnacle = Tahi (one)
 Middle pinnacle = Hihi (Ray of sun)
 Back higher pinnacle = Kaweka
 Side pinnacle = Wha (4th)

Hihi (ray of sun) Pinnacle

All lines on Hihi area are multi-pitch climbs 3 to 5 pitches. Three start at the base within 30m's of each other and top out at the very top of the Hihi pinnacle. The 4th is a tyrolean-traverse from the near the top of the Tahi pinnacle on to the west arete of Hihi. A good view of Hihi pinnacle can be gained from climbing a large boulder 50m back for the cliff. Climbs are described from left to right are

***Faint of Heart (21, 19, 21) 100m

Climb the left had face, 5m left of Hikuai route. The 1st accent included a run in with a loose rock and a fainting episode 60m up!

Pitch 1 (21) 45m 14 Bolts. Bridge up the short off width crack section to the top rock prow below the overhang. Crux lay away move to get established on the left hand face then blast up step ground on large holds. Move right based an abseil belay and climb to the face to the right of the tree up through step ground to ledge and DB belay. A great pitch on great rock.

Pitch 2 (19) 25m 8 Bolts. Climb block arete t left of belay then move left into overhanging corner. Climb this on big holds then up low angel head wall to delux belay ledge. Decent, Back down the route 3 abseils.

Pitch 3 (21) Climb the step face above the belay on to low angle ramp. Climb this then move left on fin arete, climb up arete to ledge then move back right and climb the face. Move back left at top to DBC belay

Cliff Ellery, Lady Rachael Mayne Jess Dobson 20 April 2021.

***Hikuai Route (20, 20, 20, 20, 16) 140m

A distinctive right facing corner and crack system. The Hikuai route climbs the face to the right of this corner.

Pitch 1 (20) 35m 14 Bolts. Step off the boulder at the base of the cliff and climb the face. Steep climbing through bulges in the middle of the face marks the crux. At the top roof either power right on big hold or balancy, but easier climbing, out right. Clip the bolt, and then traverse right on the low angle rock ramp past one more bolt (Note this bolt is hidden from the previous bolt). Continue moving right to the double ring bolt belay. You can abseil from this point directly to the ground (30m). A great pitch on great rock.

Pitch 2 (20) 25m, 10 Bolts. From the belay move right past 2 bolts then climb the steep white grove. At the top of the groove you reach a small roof. Traverse left past 2 bolts and then left again around the arete and up a short corner and crack, to the DBC belay.

Pitch 3 (20) 30m 13 Bolts. From the belay climb the face to the right of the black groove. The black rock is very friable so treat it with care and where possible stay on the white rock. After a 4m move right (away from black rock) across the face

then up a slab and into the groove above. Climb the steep groove to the top then move onto the slab and belay. DB belay.

Pitch 4 (20) 30m, 10 Bolts. Up the easy slab moving right around the corner and then climb the steep head wall, awesome moves in an exposed location. Move right at the top to DBC belay.

Pitch 5 (15) 20m, 6 Bolts. Scramble up the arete past 3 bolts and a chain belay, don't stop here. Continue up past 1 more bolt then scramble up through the trees to the top of the pinnacle and the DB chain belay.

Cliff Ellery, Jess Dobson & Rachael Mayne. 3 October 2020.

* Hihi (20,19,20,18) 120m

A 2 star route if you take in to consideration the location and atmosphere.

Pitch 1 (20) 40m 12 Bolts. Climb up the vertical wall tending left to a small overhang. Climb this using a few deep pockets to the left (crux) up to a ledge at 15m height. Extend bolts and traverse the ledge left around a blunt arete to head wall. Climb groove and face to a large ledge system and DBC belay.

Pitch 2 (19) 25m 14 Bolts. Variable rock quality on this pitch. Step 1m right of belay and climb corner, move onto right wall of corner and pull up into base of large chimney. The rock here is a mix of conglomerate and friable black rock, however the chimney can be easily climbed by bridging on large holds with closely spaced bolts. At the top of the chimney the rock quality improves, move out right onto the head wall and climb the head wall and slab. At the last bolt traverse left 5m to ledge and DBC Belay

Pitch 3 (20) 30m 12 Bolts. A steep exposed pitch on good rock. Climb corner directly above belay, the line stays left of the large roof systems on steep rock with good holds. At the top overhang, bridge up the overhanging groove until you can clip the last bolt, traverse right 2m to DBC belay.

Pitch 4 (18) 30m 10 Bolts. Move right of belay and climb headwall on rock nubbins . Top out on the very top of the pinnacle DBC belay.

Cliff Ellery, Jess Dobson & Rachael Mayne. Oct/ 2019.

* **Tahi (21,15) 60m**

The smaller front pinnacle. From the base of Hihi scramble up the hill to a small platform at the base of the slab.

Pitch 1 (21) 40m 14 Bolts. (35m). Scramble up slab to the left facing corer. Start in corner till 1st bolt then move onto wall. Climb steep face (21), at 5th bolt you can either go, right around bulge (19), or continue straight up (21). Continue past intermediate abseil station and climb shallow groove above on small nubbins and edges. A sustained pitch.

Pitch 2 (20) 20 6 Bolts. More about the destination than the climbing. From the belay to the DBC belay continue up and right through the garden to the top of the pinnacle to DBC Belay. See decent section below.

Cliff Ellery & Rachael Mayne. Nov/2021

Tahi, Rua(21,Ty,18,21,16) 120m

A Tyrolean traverse from the Tahi pinnacle across to the Hihi pinnacle.

Pitch 1 (21) 40m 14 Bolts. Climb the first pitch of Tahi.

Pitch 2 (Tyrolean) From the first Belay ledge of Tahi. Move left along the chain to the Tyrolean-traverse pull cord. Set up the Tyrolean (see instructions below). This Tyrolean is on an incline so I strongly recommend taking a shunt or jumars to haul you up the last section.

Pitch 3 (18) 4 Bolts. (10m). Climb and traverse up the left ledge system to DBC belay and large grassy ledge.

Pitch 4 (21) 30m 12 Bolts. Climb up the right tending arete until you get to the large low angle ramp on the right of the arete.. Climb the ramp and head wall past 6 bolts until you get to the roof. Traverse left around the roof and up to DBC belay.

Pitch 5 (18) 4 Bolts. (10m). Climb and traverse up the left ledge system till you get to the 4th pitch of Hihi, climb this to top of the pinnacle.

Cliff Ellery, Jess Dobson & Rachael Mayne. Sep/2022



Haweka Pinnacle

Following the track around the north side of the Tahi pinnacle. Scramble up the steep hill keeping the Tahi pinnacle on you immediate left. These leads you to the base of the Kaweka pinnacle. Head up hill (east) for 200m until you reach.

** Kaweka Challenge (16, 22, 21,16) 65m

Pitch 1 (16) 10m. Climb the low angle groove that cuts through the sea of rata, up past 6 bolts to a large ledge system and DBC belay out left. The rock on the right side is solid, on the left side its no so.

Pitch 2 (22) 20m. Step back right onto the steep head wall and climb the groove to the roof. Move right across the groove on buckets until you're on the face immediately below the roof/corner. Difficult move to gain corner. Once in the corner clip the bolt then move left out of corner onto the head wall. Climb steep wall above (crux). Belay in small hollow on DBC belay, 8 bolts.

Pitch 3 (21) 25m. Muster up some courage then climb the exposed head wall up and to the left of the belay. Once over the lip continue up technical climbing to a small ledge and DBC belay. 10 bolts (approx.)

Pitch 4 (16) 5m. Scramble up arete past 2 bolts to large ledge and DBC belay.

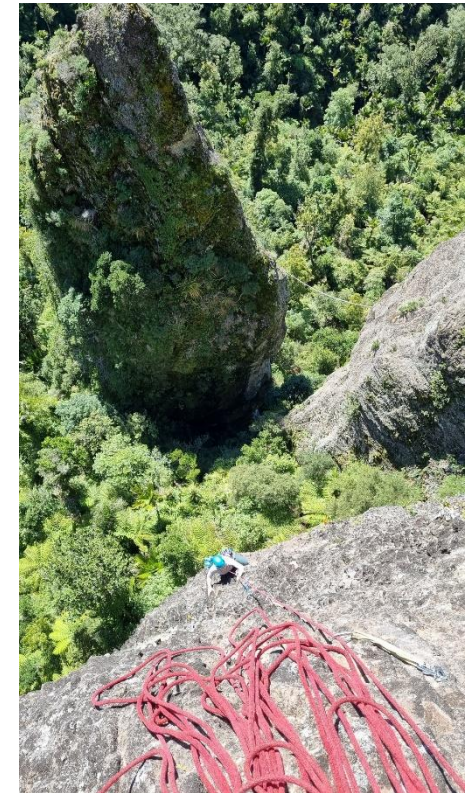
Descend by abseiling down the route. If you have a 60m rope then abseil down to pitch 3 then pitch 2 belay and then from here to the ground.

The next route climbs the back of the Hihi Pinnacle. Scrambles up the very steep gut between the Hihi and Kaweka pinnacle till you reach the obvious saddle and fixed rope.

Drop your draws (19) or A1 20m

The aid access route up the back of the Hihi pinnacle. "Drop your draws" is an aid route that can be free climbed at grade 19. At the top of rock a vertical bush scramble gets you to the top of the pinnacle. The access track and scramble finish are not for the faint of heart.

PHOTO. 2ND AND 3RD PITCH OF KAWEKA CHALLENGE



Hikuai to Kaweka Tyrolean Route (20, 20, 20, 20 16, Ty, 21,20,17) 240m

A must Do. Having climbed the Hikuai or Hihi routes why not keep going by tyrolean-traversing across to the Kaweka pinnacle. The Hikuai to Kaweka climb is 9 pitches, probably some sort of record for the North Island and definitely the only one of two in the country with a Tyrolean traverse in the middle.

Climb Hikuai route 5 pitch's, 20, 20, 20 20, 16

Pitch 6 15m. Tyrolean Traverse. On the eastern side of the top bollard, abseil off the double ring bolt belay, 10m down to the start of the tyrolean. Clip into the belay and chain. Thread the Tryoloen then climber 1 traverses before reversing the rig and bringing the second climber across. Please read the instructions on Tyrolean below.

Pitch 7 (20) 30m 13 Bolts. From the belay, climb the overhanging face tending left. Mantel onto the lower angle wall (crux) then climb the slabs on edges and knobs.

Pitch 8 (20) 30m, 10 Bolts. Up the knobby little headwall then traverse right into the corner. Climb the short headwall and traverse back left at the top and mantel onto slab. Climb the slab up to the ledge and DBC belay.

Pitch 9 (18) 25m, 8 Bolts. Climb straight up past 2 bolts then traverse left. Continue climbing and traversing left up the low angle head wall all the way to the top and DBC belay.

Cliff Ellery, Jess Dobson 28 Nov 2020

Descent

No walk off option! Abseil down the top 3 pitches, then a 50m abseil from the base of the 6th pitch (tyrolean belay) puts you on the ground. I would recommend stashing footwear and a second rope at this point at the beginning of the day. Alternatively you could take a second rope with you.

PHOTO. RACHAEL MAYNE ON PITCH 2 AND 4 OF HIKUAI ROUTE



Descent off Pinnacles

Well done on climbing to the top, but you are now stuck on the top of a pinnacle with no walk off option!. I would strongly recommend you descend down the route you have just climbed as you will know where the belays are and where you are going.

“Tahi”. From the top, abseil down bolt line. Top 2 bolts have fixed gear so you can clip one rope and prevent a big swing. Suggest 1st person down clips a few other bolts for second to retrieve, while you partner pulls you across to belay. If you have a 70m rope you can get down in 1 rapel. If not stop of at intermediate abseil station.

“Hihi” is 4 abseils but the 2nd and 3rd are real rope stretchers. Send your heavy climbing partner down first and ensure you have your safeties ready to clip into the belay, or down the **Hikuai** route, 5 abseils but all require significant traversing to swing into the next belay. So make sure you have backed your abseil device up with a prusik or similar and have your safeties ready to go.

“Kaweka” Abseil down the top 3 pitches, then a 50m abseil from the base of the 6th pitch (tyrolean belay) puts you on the ground. I would recommend stashing footwear and a second rope at this point at the beginning of the day. Alternatively you could take a second rope with you

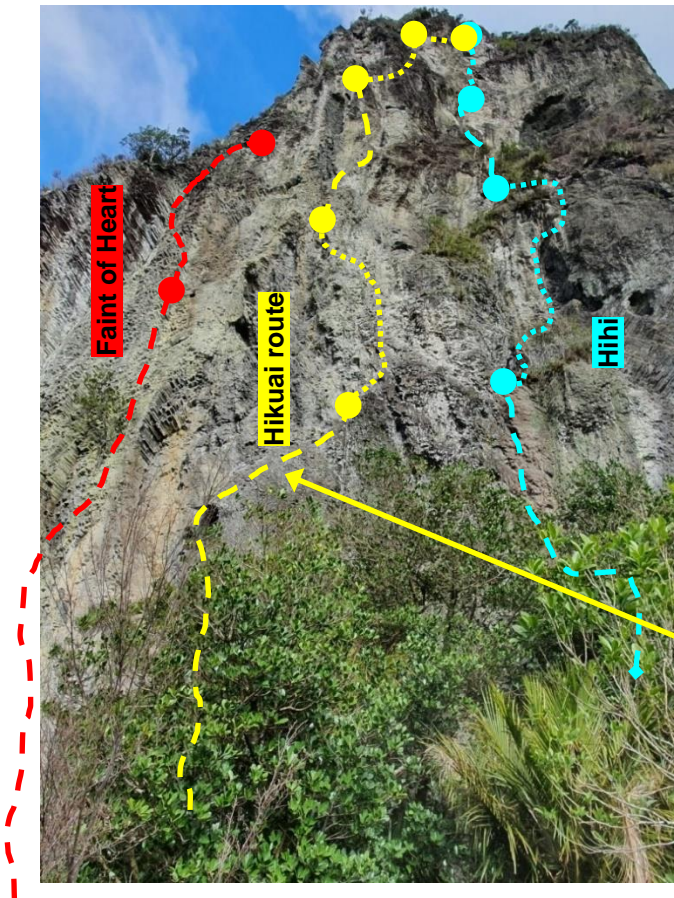
PHOTO. CLIFF ELLERY PITCH 1 HIKUAI ROUTE



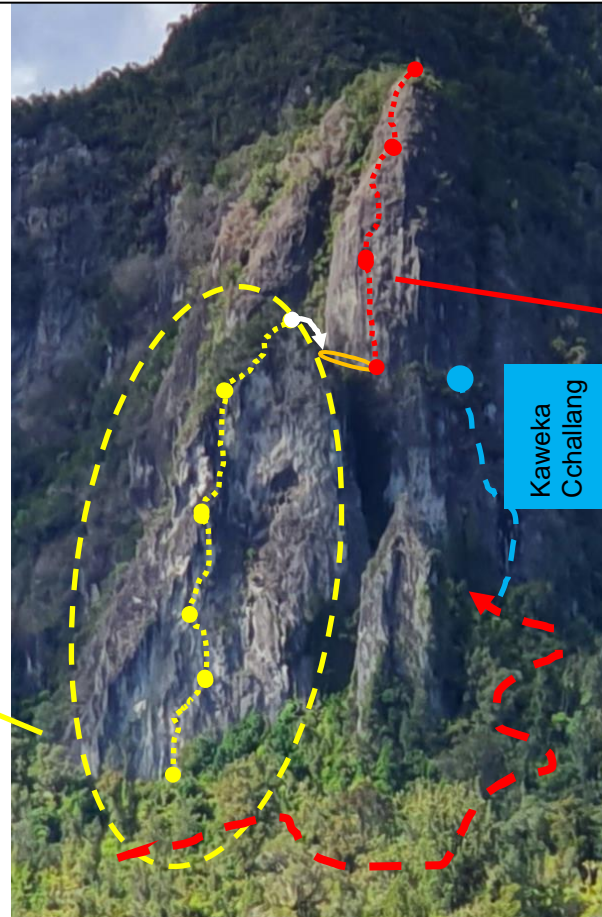
PHOTO. 3RD PITCH AND TYROLEAN ON TAHI RUA



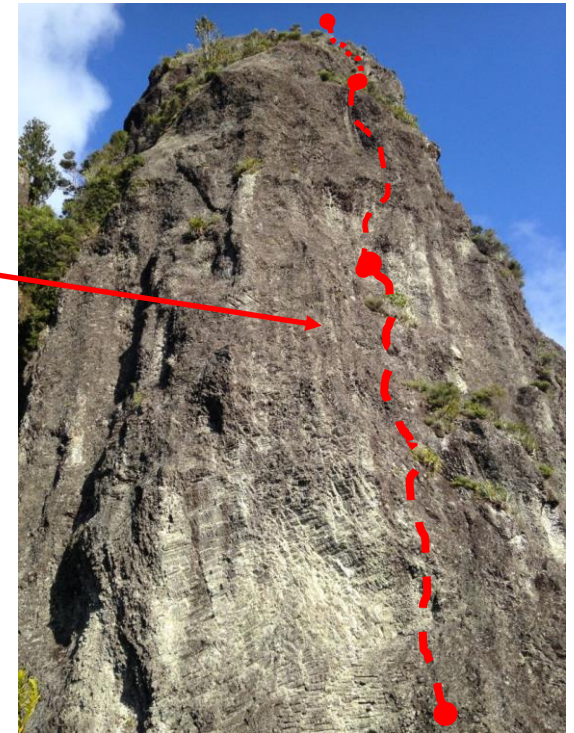
TOPO HIHI PINNACLE



TOPO : HIKUAI PINNACLE & THE TYROLEAN ROUTE



KAWAKA PINNACLE



Tyrolelean Traverse

Don't let the bush around the top of the pinnacle fool you. The Tyrolelean is 50m off the deck and the drop-offs on each side are even higher. Always clip into the belays with 2-points. Both tyrolelean traverses is set up with a drawcord to enable you to pull your climbing rope through to the opposite belay.

Danger!!! Under no circumstance load the pull cord with body weight or attempt a tyrolelean on the pull cord. It will break and you will die.

To execute a successful tyrolelean-traverse you will need

- Climbing rope.
- Tape (duct tape or strapping tap)
- 2 confident climbers, both able to rig and unrig the system.
- *A shunt or jumar makes getting across easier but is not essential.*

Method

1. Both climbers rappel 10m down from the top of the pinnacle to the Tyrolelean belay station, clip in, then pull your rope.
2. Find the knot on the pull cord then manoeuvre it the other side.
3. Thread one end through the Tyrolelean mallion.
4. Tape this end of the rope to the pull cord (4 places over a 1 metre) just behind the pull-cord knot, i.e. pull-cord knot is in front of rope and clear of the rope.
5. Slowly pull the pull-cord around feeding out your rope. Take care as the climbing rope feeds through the opposite wall belay. Hint, if you stand in between the pull loops you prevent the rope twisting in the wind.
6. Keep pulling cord until you have a good 3m of rope back at your end.
7. Tie a figure of 8 about 2m from the end and clip this to the belay.
8. Tie a bite in this rope 1.5 m out from the belay. Clip in Caribana into bite. Thread end through bite and back to belay.
9. Pull the other end hand-tight getting all the slack out of the system. Tie this off to the belay.
10. Use the bight on the other end to tension the rope. Tie this off to belay.
11. Tie the two ends of the rope together. This will prevent you dropping the rope when you go to reverse the set up.

Now you are ready to Tryrolelean.

12. Climber 1 (crash test dummy). Clips large screw gate carabiner over both climbing ropes and clips direct to their harness. (do not clip into the pull cord)
13. Test weight the system while you are still clipped into the belay.
14. Clip safety on to roper the lowers out till you are in the middle.
15. Hollers. Then they pull themselves up onto the opposite wall and belay. Shunt can come in handy.

Now you need to reverse the system

16. Climber 2, needs to un-tension and de-rig the system. Ensuring ends of the rope are always secure, i.e. ends tied together and threaded through mallion.
17. Climber 1 then pulls rope around until both ends are at the second belay.
18. Then repeat the set up and tensioning process.
19. Climber 2 then comes across, goes whoowhooo, then joins climber 1 at the second belay.
20. Untie one end of the rope and pull through, just like a standard abseil.
21. Now are ready to climb the next pitch.

You can abseil to the ground from this point (50m).

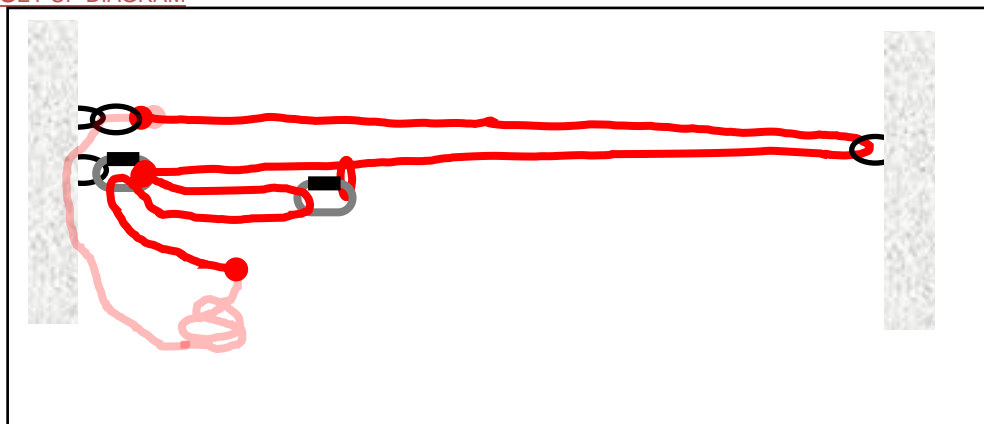
TAPING CLIMBING ROPE TO PULL CORD



TENSIONING BITE



SET UP DIAGRAM



Ready to Go

