

Climbing without barriers: Vertical Pro puts inclusion in the spotlight

- **DAV and “Ich will da rauf e.V.” place a special focus on inclusion in climbing gyms as part of the supporting program**
- **Numerous live demonstrations, workshops and testing opportunities from different areas of working at height**

Friedrichshafen – For many people, climbing begins with reaching for the wall, clipping into the rope and taking the first step upwards. But not everyone can take these things for granted. Sometimes, access to the climbing gym alone determines whether participation is possible. Elsewhere, belay systems, routes, structural conditions or communication can become barriers.

For Anja Pinzel from the German Alpine Club (DAV), inclusion therefore starts with creating climbing environments that take different needs into account from the outset. “For us, inclusion means designing climbing and bouldering gyms in a way that makes as many people as possible feel welcome and enables them to participate. This benefits not only people with disabilities, but ultimately all visitors.” With barriers still existing in areas such as access, activities and route setting, she sees exchange within the industry as particularly important: “That makes it all the more important to share experiences and work together on concrete solutions.”

Vertical Pro will provide a platform for exactly this exchange when it takes place in Friedrichshafen on November 13 and 14, 2026. “Together with the DAV and the association ‘Ich will da rauf e.V.’, we are deliberately placing a focus on inclusive climbing within our supporting program. We not only want to talk about existing barriers, but above all demonstrate practical solutions for everyday operations in climbing gyms,” emphasizes project manager Sharon Bareth.

The sixth edition of the trade fair will bring together around 200 exhibiting companies from the fields of climbing and bouldering gyms, high ropes and forest rope courses, rope access technology, working at height, occupational safety and rope rescue.

Rethinking climbing with inclusion in mind

The German Alpine Club will demonstrate what inclusion can look like in practice through several sessions. Judith Lattner, Anja Pinzel and Julius Kerscher will present, among other things, auto-belay systems with assistive functions as well as climbing holds designed for inclusive route setting. A further

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session will explore the positive impact inclusive activities can have on climbing gym operations as a whole.

The association “Ich will da rauf e.V.” will also contribute its experience from inclusive climbing and present its inclusion concept in a dedicated talk. In addition, a hands-on workshop will invite visitors to identify barriers encountered in everyday climbing gym operations and explore ways of removing them. The focus will not only be on access, structural requirements and suitable aids, but also on less visible obstacles such as uncertainty or a lack of knowledge when dealing with inclusion and disability.

Katharina Glögl from “Ich will da rauf e.V.” emphasizes that this is about much more than individual adaptations: “Climbing, perhaps more than almost any other sport, offers the opportunity for people with and without disabilities to be active together. For us, inclusion therefore means thinking about climbing from the outset in a way that enables everyone to participate.” Climbing gyms in particular are key places for these encounters, she says. “Vertical Pro provides an opportunity to discuss existing barriers and demonstrate that inclusion is not a niche topic, but an opportunity to develop climbing together – towards a sport for everyone.”

Hands-on experience across the vertical world

Beyond climbing and bouldering, Vertical Pro covers the wider spectrum of the vertical industry. In the extensive Demo + Test Areas, equipment, safety systems and working techniques will be demonstrated and tested under practical conditions. A wide range of training and application environments will be set up at the trade fair, from a bouldering block and climbing trees to a platform incorporating a ladder, shaft and climbing wall, as well as trussing and a container tower. This allows applications from climbing sports, rope rescue, tree care and professional work at height to be demonstrated directly on site.

The different vertical disciplines also come together throughout the wider supporting program. New this year is the Expert Forum, which provides exhibiting companies with a stage to present specialist expertise, products and concrete solutions and to engage directly with experts and industry partners. The Women at Height networking platform, Science + Research Hub, Future Wall and Jobmarket complement the extensive supporting program of presentations, workshops and live demonstrations.

Further information and opening hours

Vertical Pro will take place in Friedrichshafen on November 13 and 14, 2026. The trade fair will be open from 9 am to 6 pm on Friday and from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday. Parking is free of charge and camping facilities are available.

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About Vertical Pro:

Vertical Pro brings together all height professionals – from both the sports and professional sectors. The trade fair presents topics for operators of high-rope courses, climbing gyms and bouldering halls, people working at height, rescue and aid organizations. The focus is primarily on interaction: equipment such as ropes, climbing holds or carabiners as well as safety systems can be tested and compared in the Demo and Test area. The supporting program offers a wide range of opportunities for knowledge building and inspiration. The concept focus of Vertical Pro creates new synergies for sporting and industry climbers, providing the ideal meeting point for exchanging ideas across industry and country borders.

About Messe Friedrichshafen:

Messe Friedrichshafen GmbH is one of Germany's leading trade fair companies and is based on Lake Constance at the nexus of four different countries. Founded in 1950 to promote the region's economy, it has made a name for itself worldwide as an organizer and marketer of leisure and trade fairs. Congresses, corporate and sporting events as well as TV productions and live concerts complement the broad portfolio. Every year, Messe Friedrichshafen attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors and thousands of exhibiting companies from more than 100 countries to Lake Constance. A total of 87,500 m² of exhibition space spread over twelve exhibition halls and two multipurpose foyers as well as the two open spaces in the inner courtyard of 15,500 m² and the static display of 20,000 m² offer unique possibilities for eventful trade fair days. The compact exhibition grounds with their own lake in the immediate vicinity of the airport as well as halls with hangar doors allow for a wide variety of potential uses