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Comments: Climbing is a sport for all ages and abilities not just for the elite risk-taking athlete. A climber can customize their climbing experience to match their abilities. I discovered climbing in my 50's and am still going strong at the crag in my 70's. The community is very inclusive and welcoming.

Climbing is a growing sport. As the climbing instructor at a small church wall that is only open two hours a week, I have seen over 80 new youth since the pandemic waned.

The physical health benefits of being outside and active are obvious but what is rarely noted about climbing is the mental health benefits. As a stressed physician I found climbing to be the best sport for mental relaxation. One is so focused on the rock in front of you and how you need to move or balance your body that absolutely nothing else enters your mind. This complete release from daily life's worries leaves one better able to move positively forward.

For most climbers safety is priority one. This means not only in their personal behavior and equipment but in the climbing environment. Safe hardware (bolts, hangers, and anchors) are critical to safety at the crag. Many of the hardware pieces placed early in the evolution of our sport have become marginally safe with age. It is imperative that climbers be allowed to replace these older pieces with improved materials. A time-consuming approval process will only delay these safety enhancements or stop them altogether as the rate of degradation exceeds the replacement rate.

As the climbing population grows, we should not now be limiting public access to safe climbing venues or allowing their safety to be compromised by prohibiting replacement of aging hardware. Note that this would rarely affect other outdoor enthusiasts as the climbing venues and hardware are rarely along the "beaten path" of the average visitor.

Thank you for your consideration.