

Future Proof Your Climbing Gym With 2026 Indoor Climber Survey

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in [CWA Blog](#)



Back in 2019, the CWA conducted the first Indoor Climber Survey. It spanned the US and Canada and included the voices of more than 20,000 individual climbers. With the help of climbing gym operators, the data gathered from those voices became a cornerstone of many organization's research efforts. Now, we want to do it again, to compare and benchmark the research from 2019. This is how, and more importantly, why, you should help.

Data unites us all.

Consider your own purchasing habits and the decisions that underpin them. If afforded the time, you probably do at least some poking around before pulling out your credit card. The companies that are selling the items you're looking into know that. They will do everything they can to ensure that whatever you see supports your decision to buy. That may mean improving their product, removing barriers to entry, or changing the pricing structure.

What most of these companies selling products don't have: someone interested in conducting this research for them. Climbers deciding to buy a membership or a day pass have myriad reasons for doing so. When the climbing wall industry unites, data becomes an extremely powerful tool supporting everyone, including everyday climbers.

This is more than an activity.

We've all heard climbing origin stories; you've likely even told one. It's not uncommon to hear that climbing, and specifically indoor climbing, has changed someone's life. Fortunately, our industry is one of passion, determination, competition, and reward. Climbing gyms can become

places where people meet to bond, not just perform an activity and leave.

In 2019, 81% of climbers ranked 'to have fun' as the most important motivation to climb indoors. This was above physical health, mental health, spending time with others, practicing for outdoor climbing, etc. What makes a climbing gym fun?

Naturally, lots of things. That question is likely a very personal one, but the fact that it's the answer means that you can dig into your local community, and learn about how to make it more, or keep it 'fun'.

Data can literally draw in more customers.

In 2019, climbing harder inside literally tied with climbing outside in why climbers train. 61% of respondents said that they don't climb outdoors because they don't have the equipment. Only 19% said it was because climbing wasn't close by. Of the 59% of climbers who said that their climbing gym doesn't offer classes for outdoor climbing, 68% said they would likely take one of those classes if offered.

Cherry-picking data points shouldn't be the standard. Just as an example, though, these are some national trends that can support or refute business decisions. Even more importantly, we can now benchmark these data points from 2019 against 2026 and see how things have changed. That becomes an even more powerful tool.

That only works if people take the survey.

The 2026 Indoor Climber Survey will be released to climbers on January 1. It's paramount that we spread this survey far and wide.

We need single-location gyms, individual facilities part of chains, gyms in densely and sparsely populated regions: we need you. **Without a diversity of voices, the dataset becomes less helpful.**

Understatement of the century: a lot has changed since 2019. The change here, though, is that folks have gotten a lot more used to taking surveys on the go. Technology has only entrenched itself further into our everyday lives. This makes our lives both easier and more difficult. Easier because QR code use has become a norm, many more cell phones are smartphones, and people are generally familiar with taking surveys.

Gathering data is more difficult because of these same exact things. People are bombarded by survey requests, marketing, and QR codes on menus. Think about yourself: would you want to take a 6-minute survey? After you sign up to help distribute the Indoor Climber Survey you'll get

a ton of assets to help get the word out, e-mail copy, posters, social media images, and one page training sheets for your staff. We're even offering a \$500 restaurant delivery card to the location that sends in the most responses to help fund a staff party.

We need as many facilities as possible to market this survey and cut through the noise. A surefire way of making accurate predictions of the future is by analyzing the past and the present.

To get involved, sign up for more information, learn about our climber incentives, and more, [visit our Indoor Climber Survey landing page.](#)



**THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITTEN
WORK AT HEIGHT PLANS**

January 5, 2026

**YOUTH TEAM CLIMBERS AND
DISORDERED EATING**



December 14, 2025