

Daniel Vidal

New York City College of Technology, Cuny

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### Rock Climbing in New York City

What would you do if you weren't able to do what you loved for more than a year? This has happened to most of us as a result of Covid-19 which came unexpectedly. Ever since I used to live in Colombia when I was young my grandmother used to take us to these carnivals or events where they would set up a rock climbing wall for kids. I would always go to these with my cousins and brother in Colombia whenever we saw one. Unfortunately upon moving to New York City with my mom, I noticed immediately that it was completely different than how it was in Colombia. It was a completely different environment with buildings everywhere and less freedom to play outside. You couldn't make friends in the same block as you could in Colombia. I knew I wouldn't be able to find the same activities as I did over there so for most of my childhood I was just going to the park with my brother. That was until in high school I saw a pamphlet of an ad that showed a gym with indoor rock climbing. I knew immediately I had to sign up, so a couple of high school friends and I got free classes every Tuesday after school. I ended up loving it so I went very frequently even if other friends stopped going. This place had small walls that you could do by yourself or tall ones that you needed a partner in order to climb. I was able to get the belay certification that allowed me to belay other climbers and we were now able to climb the tall walls. This ended up being my favorite hobby I had whenever I had free time.

As everyone knows, as a result of Covid-19 that came unexpectedly and still affecting us to this day the former governor of New York Andrew Cuomo decided to put an order to close down gyms, restaurants, and as well as movie theaters for everyone's safety and prevent more spread of Covid-19. I understand it was important to everyone's safety but this put many people to be locked in their homes for 5 months without being able to do what they loved. Many people were angered and some protested saying gyms were a necessity. It was a big issue for other people as well since it led to closing too many other places in New York. Many people were also unable to work which led to a nationwide crisis where unemployment rates were at an all-time high. Many people were struggling to pay for their homes, rent, and even food. It was a very hard time for many families including mine as well. A quote from an article on Bloomberg about protestors against closed gym's order "To the mayor, to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, to the state: You cannot say it's all right to do yoga in Rochester, N.Y., but it's not O.K. to do it on Rochester Avenue in Brooklyn," Adams told protestors outside City Hall." This article was made to show the unfairness that some places in New York were allowed to continue with indoor activities but other places weren't. After order started to lift and people were able to go to gyms again we had to deal with limited capacity so some days people were unable to go in.

Another issue others and I have as rock climbers are having enough money to actually rock climb. After leaving high school the free classes we took every Tuesday ended and we were required to pay for a climbing pass and as well rentals. The costs of things were starting to get costly at the time since I just started college and I didn't have a job. Getting a daily pass plus the rental shoes and harness was around 40 dollars so it wasn't something we could do frequently. Buying new shoes and a harness would end up being 200 plus which was something none of us could afford at the time. This led us to limit the amounts of time we were able to go rock

climbing to about 1 time or hopefully 2 times a month. Being College Students having to worry about school with a lot of work plus getting a job to afford these activities are hard. It's also an issue for us to get a good time to go since all of us have different schedules with either school or jobs. Indoor climbing is the only option for us since outdoor climbing is impossible for us right now. Taking a course in outdoor climbing could take up to 1000 dollars not including transportation to get there. It would be nice if there were some ways it could be more affordable for students who don't have a lot of money to spend. After interviewing with my friends about the cost of rock climbing they brought up extra things that I didn't mention like purchasing a chalk bag plus the chalk to get good grips while climbing and if we wanted to climb using rope we would need the rope, quickdraws, carabiner, and a belay device. These are all extra equipment we would need to buy if we decided not to rent. Not to mention some of the equipment could wear down and we would need to replace like the shoes and rope if they break or wear down.

Having a hobby as a rock climber is hard and expensive but I would not stop doing it because it's something that I love and is fun for me. Climbing difficult and tall walls are thrilling for my friends and me. Even after the pandemic and the cost of it has made me go less than I used to it's fine because things will go back to normal later and on and I would have more free time and money to go in the future.