Extreme sports

It is hard to say which sport is and which it is not extreme. There is no specific definition of an extreme sport. On the other hand there are some factors due to which we can consider sports more or less extreme. These factors are for example high degree of risk, height, speed and physical exertion. While doing extreme sports special gear is usually used, but there are also athletes that do not use any. Extreme sports are not being practiced by students at school. While many of them are practiced outside variables as weather are being involved.

Extreme sports can be divided into groups. At first we distinguish between vehicle and non-vehicle sports. The difference is obvious. While practicing vehicle sports athletes are using some kind of vehicle. To add to this we also divide vehicle sports into four groups. The athletes can move by gliding or by rolling and the movement is supported by motor or it is not.

Vehicle sports

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Gliding | Rolling |
| Motorized | GM | RM |
| Non-motorized | GN | RN |

Some people can consider climbing being an extreme sport. Climbing is a non-vehicle sport. Climbers are gaining steep on topographical objects both outside and indoors. These objects can be both manmade and natural structures. Competitive climbing will be included in the group of olympic sports in Tokyo in 2021. Most climbers are using climbing shoes, chalk bags, ropes and harnesses. There are over 20 different climbing activities including bouldering, rock climbing, free climbing, ice climbing and solo climbing.

Bouldering is usually practiced inside on a manmade structure. The climber's only backup is a crash pad under the climbing wall. Climbers do not reach such big heights while bouldering.

Rock climbing is probably the most popular type of climbing. The climbers are in pairs. One is climbing and the second is standing on the ground and backupping. They are tight together with a rope. Free climbing differs from rock climbing in the way the climbers protect themselves. The rock climbers are protected all the way up and down whereas the free are protected just in case of fall. This means they do not use the gear to reach the peak more easily.

When climbing ice athletes have to wear warmer clothes. They also use special gear like ice axes and crampons.

Probably the most dangerous type of climbing is solo climbing. During solo the climber does not have any protection. Accidents in solo come to tragic ends in most cases.

Alex Honnold (\*1985) is quite a famous solo climber and also documentary filmmaker. His solo performance on the rock El Capitan, Sierra Nevada in 2017 was a climbing triumph.

Another interesting non-vehicle sport is ice diving. Threats like freezing weather, predators or chance of getting lost or trapped in the ice are making this sport quite dangerous. However ice diving is not only used for recreation, but also scientific research and public safety. Ice divers wear full face masks and neoprenes to protect themselves from freezing. They also wear harnesses by which they are tight to a rope through which they are able to send rope signals to the team up on the ice. Air supply is used to stay underwater longer. Diving teams always have to take snow saws with them.

Ice divers are trained to deal with situations such recognising unsafe ice conditions, dealing with frozen air supply or losing contact between line tender and the diver.

Freediving is also about diving under ice. It differs from ice diving in using less gear. For example czech freediver David Vencl wears only a swimsuit while diving. He can swim 80 meters underwater without air supply.

Sport in which a high level of focusing is needed is slacklining - walking on a flat webbing between two anchors. As there are many materials the lines are made of, each line is somehow special. They differ in the amount of tension and width. Slacklining uses the most dynamic line. Therefore focus, balance and strength are needed. Simple walking on the line is not easy, but there are also people practicing tricklining or slackline yoga.

Probably the most dangerous way of walking on a line is highlining. Highliners stretch their lines above valleys or between mountain peaks. Athletes may use backup webbing or climbing harness to protect themselves from falling. Danny Menšík from Czech republic walked the longest distance in Europe with another highliner Nathan Paulin. The line was 1020 meters long.