

Master Class

You've learned the basics. Now take your game to the next level with these top schools. BY MATTHEW FISHBANE

Kayaking

Nantahala Outdoor Center
BRYSON CITY, NORTH CAROLINA
Nantahala was founded in 1972, the year of whitewater's Olympic debut, and has been using Olympians as instructors ever since. During the five-day Advanced Creek Week course with U.S. Freestyle Team paddler Andrew Holcombe (\$1,099), you'll learn crisper eddy turns and combat rolls in Class III runs. noc.com

Sailing

Boston Sailing Center
BOSTON
With I-93 now passing underground, Boston feels like a proper harbor again. At the Sailing Center, a 30-year New England stalwart, you can start with courses in electronic navigation (\$350) and night sailing (\$295). Advanced Sailing (\$795) covers

tuning, spinnaker handling, and navigation over five days. Then learn coastal passage-making on your way to Nantucket (five-day cruise, \$1,290). bostonsailingcenter.com

Surfing

SurfCoach USA
OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA
Get ready to compete. With former pro Sean Mattison guiding you from the lineup during his weeklong Boot Camps (\$375), you'll polish your backhand cutbacks all morning and run mock heats in workable breaks and hollows. You'll get a surf-specific workout plan, too: Mattison preaches physical training and stretching to keep you primed for your next session. surfcoachusa.com

Saltwater Fly-Fishing

Florida Keys Fly Fishing School
ISLA MORADA, FLORIDA
You've waded western rivers and can drop a pale evening dun in front of an 18-inch rainbow. Now head to the Florida Keys, where eight-time Grand Champion angler Sandy Moret and fly-fishing icon Flip Pallot will prepare you to battle 150-pound tarpon. Small-group weekend lessons (\$1,250) teach casting technique and strategy; actual fishing comes later (\$585 per day). floridakeysoutfitters.com

Wilderness Survival

Boulder Outdoor Survival School
BOULDER, UTAH
BOSS's Seven-Day Field Course (\$1,350) covers friction fires, water purification, navigation, and thermodynamics—all with only basic equipment. Think you could be the next Les Stroud? See how you fare on BOSS's more strenuous (and minimalist) 28-Day Standard Field Course (\$3,875), which they've been teaching in southern Utah for 40 years. boss-inc.com

Skiing

National Alpine Ski Camp
MOUNT HOOD, OREGON
"We get the fanatics," says NASC director Brad Alire. Well, who else would go to a ski school that runs from June to August, on the glacial ice of



Practicing rescue techniques with the Alaska Mountaineering School



Mount Hood, a training site for USSA team racers? At the ten-day Ski Training Master's Program (\$1,995), you'll fine-tune steering, edging, and pressure control, hitting nearly 500 gates a day. skicamp.com

Cycling

Carmichael Training Systems
VARIOUS LOCATIONS
This is what it's like to be a pro. A veteran wrench has your rig humming, and Chris Carmichael has just personally set your target watt range. If you flat, the SRAM support vehicle is there. Meanwhile, a fleet of coaches helps you improve pacing and dishes tips on group-ride dynamics. Weeklong spring training camps (\$4,000) load up on miles; two-day performance testing (\$1,000) hones technique. trainright.com

Snowboarding

Whistler Blackcomb Ski & Snowboard School
WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
The same folks who developed Whistler's legendary Dave Murray Ski Camps have turned their attention to boarding. The two-day Quiksilver Freestyle/Freeride camps (\$229) work slope and park technique on terrain that ranges from GS lanes to superpipes. whistlerblackcomb.com

Mountaineering

Alaska Mountaineering School
TALKEETNA, ALASKA
AMS's 12-day advanced mountaineering course (\$2,850) is run like an expedition. On day one, a

ski-equipped, fixed-wing aircraft drops you deep in Denali National Park, and the coursework is full-time from then on, from glacier travel and crevasse rescue to route finding and rock, ice, and aid climbing. They also teach guide courses (12 days, \$2,850). climbalaska.org

Rock Climbing

Colorado Mountain School
BOULDER, COLORADO
From Eldorado Canyon to the Flatiron Range and Rocky Mountain National Park's Lumpy Ridge, Boulder's perfect granite and sandstone is a great place to step up your climbing. And CMS, which traces its guiding lineage to 1877, is the best place to start. Its one-day Big Wall Clinic (\$170) teaches hauling, hygiene, and hanging camp, while the Crack Clinic (\$170) gets you hand-jamming without pain. totalclimbing.com

Triathlon

Multisports.com
VARIOUS LOCATIONS
Eight-time Ironman world champion Paula Newby-Fraser is among the stars who teach three-day camps (\$795) at the sites of Ironman events, seven to nine weeks before race day, to get you fit and familiar with the course. Five-day winter training camps (\$1,145) include video analysis, an anaerobic-threshold test, and lots of miles. Newby-Fraser and coaches like '97 world champ Heather Fuhr and former pro Roch Frey can also be hired for a weekend of one-on-one (\$3,500). multisports.com

TOM TORKELSON

STUPID PARTY TRICK

Be a Human Flag

Technique, practice, and a sturdy, chain-link-fence-size pole are all you need. Your bottom arm—elbow locked, palm facing backward, thumb pointing down—is the brace, pushing into the pole. You'll pull yourself up with your top arm—four to five feet above the other, palm forward. Get a good grip and then hoist your legs with a hard kick. Go horizontal and try to hold it. The world record is just under 40 seconds. You should expect about two.

