Introduction

Brixton Wall is located at the Brixton Recreation Centre. The nearest tube station is Brixton in the Victoria line. When getting out of the station, turn right and walk for about 200m and under two bridges, immediately after crossing the second bridge, turn right and you will see a big red brick building, this is the recreation centre.

Brixton Wall is relatively small, it has brick construction with climbing holds made out of real rock and concrete embedded into the brick wall. Tiny knobs, flakes, jugs and plenty of cracks are available. It is perhaps the only indoor wall in London where appropriate jamming technique can be attained. London climbers planning a trad trip to the Peak District are strongly encouraged to visit the crag and refine their jamming here. The bottom of the wall is covered with thick crash pads, this together with the quietness of the area and the warm microenviroment make up for a very relaxed climbing experience where it's easy to push oneself to the limit.

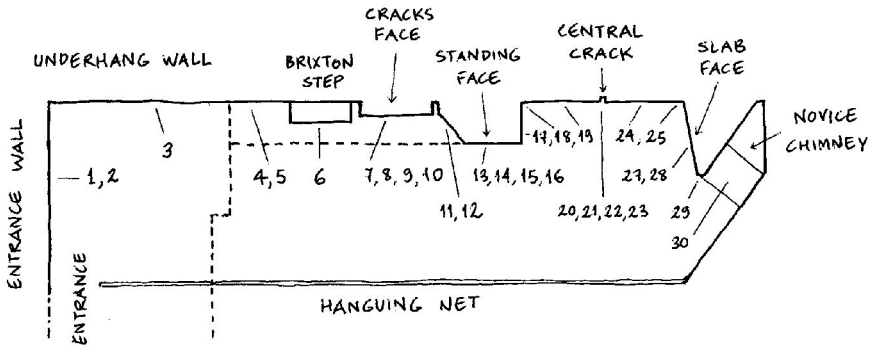
The author of this guide has no connection whatsoever with Brixton Recreation Centre. Although the information contained herein is thought to be accurate, it is not guaranteed to be so. Use your common sense when attempting any of the climbs described in this guidebook, and please get yourself familiar and follow any conditions for climbing that the centre might have in place. Climbing is a dangerous activity that might result in serious injury or death, and you must understand that your own safety is your sole responsibility.

The Grades

The climbs described in this guidebook have been given climbing grades as a pointless exercise in mathematics. British technical, adjectival and French grades are all mixed up here to satisfy the demands of traditionalists and sporties alike. The adjectival grades are given assuming that the routes would be properly trad climbed, placing gear on lead, and assuming that no crash pads are at the bottom; they are there just to give a taste of what a real, say E1, would feel. At the end, a fall at Brixton Wall is more likely to break egos than bones, although you must be careful because some people have indeed broken some bones here. If in doubt speak to the current climbing instructor, Pascal Bressange, for a terrifying anecdote.
Some climbs have very specific instructions that must be strictly followed in order to comply with their grading. The wall presents bolts and metal bars embedded into the cracks that can only be used for protection and not as hand or feet holds! The bolts should be used for protection only if the climb is to be attempted as a sport route. For trad climbs the bolts should not be used, although putting slings around the metal bars for protection is considered ok.

The Climbs

This is just a tiny list of the worthwhile routes that can be climbed at this impressive London crag. Endless, perhaps infinite variations to these climbs exist that cannot be practically put into such a small guidebook. The authors have decided not to star any climbs because all of them are equally nice, and they all deserve three stars, so get moving, start climbing and decide by yourself which climbs are the best, but please, try them all, even those nasty looking cracks.



1. Brixton overhang, 6b E4 F7a?
Start straight up entrance wall, and tackle the overhang using a series of pockets and undercuts until you can reach the monster jugs that await just over the lip. Do not use the anchors and do not bridge onto underhang wall. Finish straight up. Very hard, never seen anyone doing it, and perhaps the hardest climb in Lambeth Council.

2. Brixton overhang variation, 5c E2 F6b+
Do the previous climb but using the hanging anchors as much as you like.

3. Overhang variation, 5c E2 F6b
Start up underhang wall and trend right and out until the jugs and the pocket on overhang wall can be reached. Pull hard on them and go straight up. Do not use the anchors and do not step onto Brixton direct.

4. Brixton direct, 5b E1 F6a+
Climb the narrow wall between the overhang and the step, do not use any of those and go straight up.

5. Brixton corner, 4a S F3+
Start between the overhang and the step (without using this last one), and climb up until the corner is gained at 2m height. Climb straight up bridging, and at the top exit on the left avoiding the little overhang. Do not use the green tube at the top.

6. Brixton step, 4a S F3+
Mantelshelf over the prominent step. Finish easily straight up.

7. Cracks face, 4c VS F5
A classic. Tackle the face with a superb series of hand and fist jams, without using the arêtes or bridging. Finish with an elegant mantelshelf using the inverted pocket at the top.

8. Cracks face variation, 4b HS F4
Go straight up the face anyway you like.

9. Right narrow, 5c E2 F6b
Climb the right half of the face without using the arête or bridging. A slippery jam at the top crack is needed to reach the top. Mantelshelf straight up carefully over the ledge, without using the pockets and without deviating left or right, very hard.

10. Left narrow, 6a E3 F6c
Similar to the previous route, but much harder. Climb using only the left hand side of the face. Finish with a similar mantelshelf.

11. Parallel sided crack, 5b HVS F6a
A bit masochistic. The crack can be climbed with fist or hand jams (more painful). Jam your feet inside the crack too.

12. Standing left, 5c E2 F6b
Climb the narrow left face of standing wall without using the arête, the crack, and without bridging onto crack face. Very technical and strenuous. Your body must not touch any part of cracks face and you must not heel hook onto standing face. Nice.

13. Standing left arête, 4b S F4
Go straight up the left side arête.

14. Standing face, 5a E1 F6a
Go straight up the face without using the arêtes at either side. A tiny knob at

the top makes the crux of the climb. A Brixton classic.

15. Standing face variation, 4b VS F4
Go straight up the face but this time using the both arêtes.

16. Standing right arête, 4a S F3+
Go up the easy arête on the right.

17. Standing right, 5c E2 F6b+?
The opposite of standing left. Same rules apply.

18. Left corner, 4c VS F4+
Climb into the corner, normally easier facing left and doing layaway moves on the flakes and cracks.

19. Left face, 5c E2 F6a+
Climb the face left of the crack without using this and without bridging onto the left. Very fingery and crimpy for the right hand. The grade assumes that no body contact AT ALL should be made with the wall on the left, so careful technique is needed in order to avoid doing barn door.

20. Central crack, 4c VS F4+
Climb the centre of the face using the crack in whatever manner suits you best (jamming, pulling on its sides, etc.) and using the crack and the holds on either side for your feet.

21. Jamming crack, 5a HVS F5+
Climb the imposing crack with fist and feet jams. No bridging. Relentless and painful.

22. Right layback, 5a HVS F6a
Layback the crack on its right hand side. Easy at the bottom and hard at the top. You must touch the ceiling with your head.

23. Left layback, 5a HVS F6a
Layback the crack on its left hand side. Very hard at the bottom, so watch out for the big and sharp bulge on the left. Considerably easier at the top.

24. Right face, 4c VS F5
Climb the face right of the crack without using this and without bridging onto slab face.

25. Right corner, 4b HS F4+
Good for beginners. Climb the corner anyway you like.

26. God's traverse, 4b VS F4+
Go up either standing face or left corner. From the ledge traverse at the top of the wall, with a slippery jam in central crack until you reach the ledge of Novice chimney. A heart quickening route that is best tasted when soloed.

27. Slab face, 5a HVS F5+
Climb the slab without bridging onto the left.

28. Slab face direct, 5b E1 F6a
Climb the slab without bridging or using the arête. A painful finger jam might be needed.

29. Unsolved arête, project.
Climb the immaculate arête. Do not bridge into the chimney and do not use the holds on slab face. Can this be done laybacking or heel hooking and smearing? Only God knows.

30. Novice chimney, Easy
Just go up the chimney whichever way you like. Traversing at low height from slab face and getting into the chimney without touching the ground makes this a much more interesting climb.

31. Girdle traverse, 4c Vdiff F5
Start at entrance wall and traverse at around ½ to 1 m height from the crash pads. Keep going all the way until you reach and get into novice chimney. Now get out of the chimney and repeat the process in the opposite direction. Very nice, very classic.

Back to Base Camp Climbs.
This climbs were designed by Pascal Bressange to be soloed, and together they make up a nice training session. They can be linked continuously, or 1-4 min rests can be taken between them. 6-7 Back to Base Camp's can easily take an hour to complete and they'll leave you sweating and knackered.

Back to Base Camp I
Do the Girdle Traverse until you reach Novice Chimney, go up this and climb down Right Corner, traverse back to base camp (Entrance Wall).

Back to Base Camp II
Repeat the previous climb but this time going up Right Corner and descending the chimney.

Back to Base Camp III
By now you should be warm already. Traverse from Entrance Wall until you reach the bottom of Left Face. Climb up this with wide bridging, left foot on Standing Right and the right one on the holds right of Central Crack. It might feel a bit strenuous during the first tries, but this is an excellent excercise to develop bridging technique. You can put your hands anywhere you like. Do God's Traverse, climb down Left Corner and traverse back to Base Camp.

Back to Base Camp IV
Start at Entrance Wall and traverse until you can do the first moves of Overhang Variation. Hanging from the jugs try steping and get established over the Brixton Step. Now breathe deep and traverse up and rightwards until you can reach the top of standing face, but don't go over the ledge. Now traverse across central crack, with your hands at the same height as the ledges, until you can reach Left Corner, climb down this and traverse back to Base Camp.

Back to Base Camp V
Traverse from Entrance Wall to Left Corner and go up this, do God's Traverse and climb down Right Corner. Traverse back to Base Camp.

Back to Base Camp VI
Repeat the beginning of Back to Base Camp IV until you reach Brixton Step. Once you are established there, traverse right always at the same height until you can reach Slab Face, go up this a little bit, and with awkward moves swing into the Chimney. Climb up this, go over the ledge, descend Right Corner and traverse back to Base Camp.

Back to Base Camp VII
Repeat the previous climb until the step. Go up Brixton Corner, but do not go over the top ledge. Hand traverse across this all the way to Left Face, keep traversing until you reach Right Face and descend delicately down this (do not bridge onto the right), finally, yes, you guessed it, traverse back to Base Camp!

Back to Base Camp Eliminate

At this point you should be sweating abundantly and feeling a bit knackered. If you have some strength left, traverse from Entrance Wall to Brixton Step and climb this the easy way, don't go over the ledge. Traverse right onto Cracks Face, and climb this down using Parallel Sided Crack for hand jamming and balance. At the bottom, traverse right and go up Standing Face, without going over the ledge. At the top move further right and climb strenuously and delicately down Left Face. If you haven't fallen yet, move left and go up Jamming Crack, all the way to the top, and then move right and climb down Right Face the hard way. At the bottom, move right again, and climb Slab Face Direct, without going over the ledge, instead, hand traverse right and get into the Chimney, climb down this, and use your last bit of strength to reach the safety of Base Camp.