



January 2021

To Our Boulders Community:

Happy February! This comment response will address feedback we've received in the month of January.

As a reminder, comments can be submitted anytime to our [three online comment boxes](#), and to our two physical comment boxes (one in each location). We do our best to respond as frequently as possible in a public forum, and for urgent or easy-to-take-care-of matters, we often fix things on the fly. While we don't address every comment in our public responses, we do try to get the gist of all the comments represented, either through combining comments or addressing a concept more generally. If you have a question about how your comment was (or wasn't) responded to, or the response process in general, feel free to email community@bouldersgym.com.

We can't thank you enough for contributing to improvement at Boulders. We really appreciate the comments, especially the ones which spark thoughtful internal conversations and engagement with our community. We're happy and privileged to serve each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Boulders Climbing Gym

General Feedback:

Comment: *I would really love cleaner mats in the downtown area... I know this is an uphill battle for staff to handle but falling off of a boulder to a used bandage sitting on the floor isn't a fantastic experience. Whether that is sweeps throughout the day, or more thorough cleaning after the gym closes (or before it opens), it would really be appreciated. I've been at the gym while it was being vacuumed (9-10pm window) and it is sometimes disheartening to see how little of the floor is being cleaned.*

Response: We really feel you on this one, and appreciate your patience as we figure out a sustainable way to solve this issue. We've added some shifts for cleaning, and are reaching out to the pad manufacturers to find out what else we can be doing to keep those mats clean. Additionally, you hopefully will see an increase in floor-walks on the part of our desk staff, which should at least help with those larger issues and debris that you note. Again, thank you, and please reach out if you have any other suggestions to this end.

Comment: *at the downtown location, instead of screw gate locking carabiners on TRX just have basic carabiners...makes it easier to do suspended leg exercises*

Response: We sent this over to our facility manager and he's on it, thanks!

Comment: *it would be cool to have a dry tooling clinic or dry tooling wall, not necessarily in the gym proper but in the training room*

Response: This is on our ticklist in the future, we agree it would be cool!

Comment: *Hey. I'm short and use your weights at eastside. Sometimes there are stools back there and sometimes there isn't anything to get to the pull-up bar/hangboards. Any chance you could get some of those step platforms or leave something more permanent for shorties to step on?*

Response: Yes this is an easy fix, thank you for bringing it up! It's been sent to our facilities manager and he'll order some permanent stools as soon as possible.

Two comments, addressed together: #1 *Hey - I've noticed lately that there are some new faces in the gym, which is great. It's good for a growing community and the success of boulders. At the same time many new folks may not understand safety and etiquette in a gym space. I've seen more folks sitting to chat under the arch downtown and many new people walking up to climbs as others who are standing a safer distance from the wall chalk up to get on something. #2* *Nearly fell on an inattentive person video recording their friend while bouldering today.*

Response: We've noticed this as well, and totally agree with you both. We've added additional staff, which should increase staff presence on the floor and their ability to enforce fall zones appropriately. We will also increase our emphasis on giving space for fall zones in our orientations. We're psyched that our community is growing, and, as you both note, don't want it to impact anyone's safety.

Comment: *I have noticed an increase in recording at the gym, so I feel we should have a discussion on recording etiquette for safety and privacy for those who do not want to be recorded while working out/climbing.*

Response: This is a really good point. On paper, the rule is that folks can not record anyone who hasn't given their expressed verbal consent, but we know that as gyms get more crowded this gets harder to enforce. We will bring this up to our desk staff managers and come up with a more permanent and practical solution. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have more suggestions to this end.

Comment: *If theres a femme+ restroom, can there please be a masculine+ restroom? 2 nights in a row I've walked in to a cis woman in the de facto men's room and its extremely uncomfortable. You can still make it clear that non-binary [people] are welcome in either. I'm sure it's uncomfortable for them to realize it's basically the men's room if they've never been here. Also, having a room for women only but not men only reinforces ideas about women being "weaker" and is regressive*

Response: We went into this issue in more in detail in the past, so feel free to look back at older responses if you'd like a longer explanation. We would prefer to have both all-gender bathrooms, as we believe that segregation based on gender is regressive and antiquated. However, we understand that there are a disproportionate number of women and femme people who have been traumatized, again disproportionately, by men and masculine folks. To provide a trauma-informed safe space for these people, we have a femme+ restroom. We hope you can join

us in shouldering a small amount of discomfort as we all work towards the less-gendered future we'd love to see.

Comment: *The lack of kids made it boring*

Response: We agree, and we are so glad to have them back!

Routsetting Feedback:

Comment: *Can you try to include more climbs in the 5.9/5.10- range on the lead only wall at the east side location? Given the short length of the walls, it would be fun to have the option of a longer route that isn't 5.11.*

Response: Yes! You should have already seen an increase in this grade range on the lead only walls.

Comment: *Reading through the old feedback, it seems this has been brought up before, but wanted to add to the request for crack climbing holds / sets.*

Other gyms (such as the one in Milwaukee) have cracks built into the walls to practice on. It would be nice to have something to practice some crack techniques in the gyms here!

Response: Our head setter is actually in the process of developing some crack-practice holds right now, so stay tuned and you should see them in the near future!

Comment: *I would like more pink routes please*

Response: Thanks for letting us know, we'll pass this along.

Three separate comments, addressed together: **#1:** *I usually project v4/5 but in this set, there are a lot of orange routes kicking my [butt]. Too hard!* **#2:** *Please fix the grading. [T]here is no reason the pinks and reds should be harder than some oranges and yellows and even a green I did today.* **#3:** *I went to warm-up on pinks and reds today, and to my discouragement I couldn't send just my warmups. After getting more and more frustrated I decided to try a couple yellows and greens before I left. The yellow problems that I tried were much easier than any red or even a couple pinks that I tried tonight. Please fix this grading issue as it makes climbers frustrated and not want to climb. I almost left tonight before even trying my normal grade.*

Response: If you've read past responses, you know that grade creep and grading in general has been a recurring theme. There are essentially two parts to our response here, please feel free to read past responses if you'd like more in depth answers.

Part One: Thank you for letting us know that this pink/orange/red circuit was too hard. Grade creep happens, and it's hard for new folks to notice it, so having members and recurring climbers point it out helps our setters a lot. We've already passed this on to them, and you should see a change in the next set.

Part Two: As a gym, we are trying our very best to decrease emphasis on grading. While it's deeply important to us that people have enough to climb within their grade range, the actual *grade* assigned to the climb matters less to us. We've received decisive feedback from climbers of all

abilities, and particularly newer climbers that this helps them feel more included. We hope that everyone in the gym can use the color system as a vague guide, but that folks never feel discouraged when they aren't climbing a color they believe they should be able to. Climbing style and "off-days" are incredibly real, and even if that wasn't what was happening here, we still feel it's important to emphasize

Again, thank you for pointing out this grade creep, we truly appreciate the feedback..

Safe Space Feedback:

There were no comments in this section that were not either responded to directly, and/or in the following section.

Big Picture Feedback*

**This section addresses one or more issues that came up during this feedback period that feel core to the construction of community, who we are as a business, and how we would like to engage with each other moving forward. Please feel free to email community@bouldersgym.com if you have any questions, or if you would like to engage in further discussion regarding any of our Big Picture Feedback comments or responses. We think this works best as a dialogue and would love your input.*

Comment: I am wondering how forcing your patrons to be vaccinated falls within your community guidelines for inclusivity? "Boulders Climbing Gym's vision is to create a culture in which all people are represented and celebrated." Do ALL people also include individuals who choose to exercise their right to medical freedom?

Response: Thank you for bringing your frustration to our attention. This comment, as well as others that accompanied it, and subsequent dialogue, have encouraged us to take a closer look at the specific language we use surrounding community construction in our gym. As you may already know, the vaccination requirement has been lifted, but we still feel that this comment in particular is critical to address, as it brings up larger issues regarding how we feel it is appropriate for us to create boundaries within our community.

Before we begin this discussion, we'd like to note that for the purposes of this response and all of Boulders' pandemic responses, we follow the CDC's guidelines and recommendations, including the stance they've taken on the efficacy of vaccines. As far as we know, vaccines reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which means that a community with higher vaccination rates will have lower transmission rates.

As such, those who are at higher risk of serious infection and/or death from COVID, are safer in spaces with higher vaccination rates. To keep those that are most vulnerable safe during the recent spike in COVID cases, we felt it necessary to ensure a high vaccination rate within our gym. To do so, we temporarily restricted access to our facilities to those who are vaccinated, or who are unable to be vaccinated due to medical reasons or lack of eligibility. We know that this guaranteed vaccination rate enabled folks with a variety of higher risk conditions to continue their use of the gym during this spike.

We understand that there are many incredibly valid reasons to choose not to be vaccinated, and

that vaccines are not a perfect, catch-all solution to this pandemic. However, vaccines are one of the only tools we as community members have been given to keep ourselves and each other safe. To maintain a safe vaccination rate, we reserved our unvaccinated slots for those who were unable to be vaccinated, as we did not believe it would be appropriate for us to police which reasons for *choosing* to be unvaccinated were more or less valid.

We appreciate your legal right to exercise your medical freedom, just as we appreciate your right to not sign our waiver, or to disregard any of our other gym-specific rules. However, choices have consequences, and may even restrict your access to a specific space or community. To maintain a safe space for those who did not have the privilege to choose their higher-risk medical status, we created a temporary boundary that folks could choose to comply with, or not.

We are incredibly happy to be lifting the vaccination requirement, as we know it opens our doors wider. However, we will continue to create and maintain boundaries within our community; we believe it's actually an incredibly important part of our work. If and when you find yourself at risk because of something beyond your control, please rest assured that we will do everything in our power to maintain your safe inclusion, too.