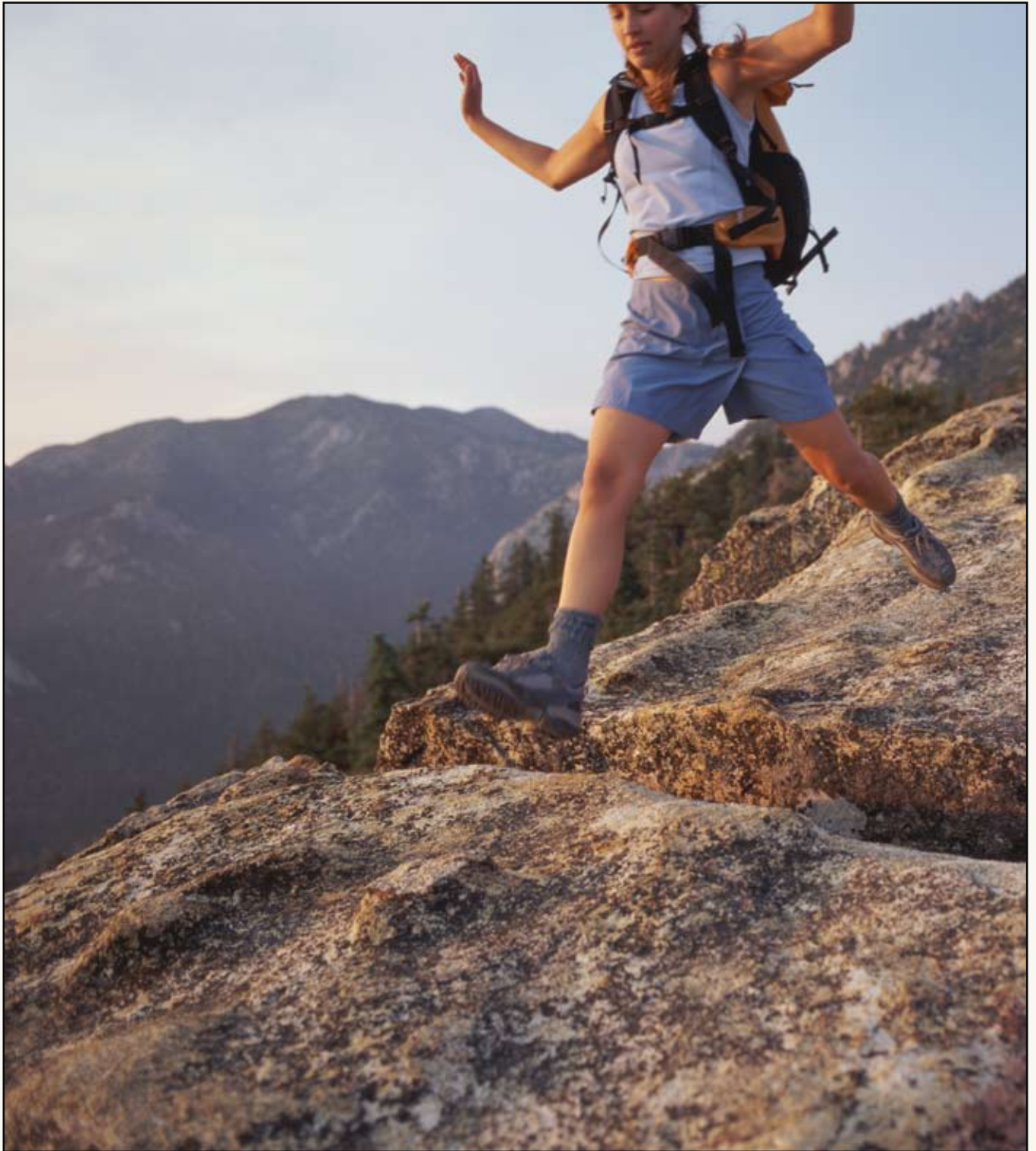


THE DIRT



STEVE CASIMIRO / THE IMAGE BANK / GETTY IMAGES



OUT THERE

Get HIGH

Beat the heat this summer and head up to the mountains. Whether it's to photograph the alpine wildflowers or to push your physical limits on a new trail, outdoor adventures in the high country are popping up on women's summer itineraries. Some great organizations across the country offer day and overnight hiking, backpacking, and climbing trips for groups of all ages and abilities.

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

This summer the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), which has 12 regional chapters from Maine to Washington, D.C., is offering day hikes and overnight trips—from hut-to-lodge hiking, volunteer trail vacations, and alpine flower tours—in places like New Hampshire's White Mountains, Maine's Moosehead Lake region, and New Jersey's Delaware Water Gap. This summer, for the first time, AMC is offering Family Adventure Camps, created especially for families with kids ages five to 12. AMC also has mix-and-match trips so you can make your own itinerary. For example, the Northern Presidential Traverse comprises Joe Dodge Lodge plus Lake of the Clouds Hut plus the Madison Spring Hut—a challenging three-night adventure that will take you above the tree line for spectacular views and the chance to summit New Hampshire's four thousand foot Mount Washington. Prices for AMC's various trips are reasonable too: all-inclusive per-night rates (lodging and food) for hut-to-lodge hiking trips start at \$50 for adults and \$32 for kids. AMC staff and fully trained volunteers lead the organization's trips, and the group also offers outdoor education programs for kids and adults, ranging from basic backpacking to navigation to wilderness first aid. www.outdoors.org; 617 523 0636

EXUM MOUNTAIN GUIDES

From Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park to the crags in South Dakota, Exum Mountain Guides women's programs have something for more-experienced climbers and mountaineers. The four-day Sport Climbing Seminar (September 7-10) will have you pushing your limits on difficult climbs (5.7 and harder) in a safe environment; whereas the five-day Alpine Skills Seminar concentrates on mixed climbing on snow and rock terrain. Women in the Winds is a five-day rugged free-climbing trip (August 21-25) to the famous granite rock of the Cirque of the Towers—about three hours south of Jackson, Wyoming. The low 2:1 client-to-guide ratio means more climbing and instruction to really improve your technique. www.exumguides.com; 307 733 2297

NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) has several different chapters that organize hikes, picnics, overnight backpacking trips, outdoor education classes, and volunteer trail maintenance activities in central New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and elsewhere. For example, August events include day hikes through the Harbor Springs, Michigan, chapter and the Chequamegon chapter in

Wisconsin. To find an event near you, the website is your best source. You can search based on the entire trail calendar or by local chapter listings and links, and even click on whom to contact. The calendar lists the closest city to the hike or trip destination as well as phone numbers and how much (if anything) the event costs. Be sure to check out the legend at the top of the trail calendar—different colors indicate the types of events (for example, blue designates an overnight hike, and green indicates a day trip). www.northcountrytrail.org; 866 445 3628

AMERICAN ALPINE INSTITUTE

For activities in the western United States, check out the American Alpine Institute's high-altitude summer adventures. Programs range from alpine climbing, rock climbing, and guided ascents to expeditions and treks in Alaska, Washington, California, British Columbia, Bolivia, and Nepal. Women's-specific summer adventures—led by female instructors—include a three-day ascent of Mount Baker in Washington and a six-day alpinism 101 and expedition training course. www.aai.cc; 306 671 1505

TOTAL CLIMBING

Outdoor, indoor, mountaineering, avalanche training, ice climbing, personal training. You name it, Total Climbing has it. The Colorado Mountain School and Boulder Rock Club have joined forces to create Total Climbing, which offers world-renowned guide services and climbing instruction to people of all skill levels. Throughout this summer and fall, Total Climbing is holding myriad courses and expeditions, such as Mountaineering 101 (offered on various dates from July through December) a two-day course that teaches the necessary skills for safely climbing a peak; and the one-day Crack Clinic 302 (August 5 and September 2) teaches more experienced climbers how to improve their crack climbing technique. Total Climbing has two locations: one in Boulder, Colorado (home to the Boulder Rock Club) and one in Estes Park, Colorado (home to the Colorado Mountain School). www.totalclimbing.com; 800.836.4008

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out www.peaktopeak.net/clubs.html for links to trails and organizations across the United States. You can search by geographic region and even international and government locations. Also visit www.womenspecific.com for event listings, gear reviews, a list of women-only camps across the country, and forums on virtually every sport you can think of—both land- and water-based.

—J. B.