

# HOW TO READ A BETA BOARD - TOP ROPING

**Beta:** The climber's word for information. Any feedback or advice you receive from your belayer (or from other climbers) while you're climbing is also called Beta.

## Title of the route:

May provide hints to the style or "feel" of the route. E.g. "Funny Fingers" is likely to describe a route that demands finger strength. This is not always the case though. Some titles are chosen at random or just describe the mood or thoughts of the setter at the time, e.g. "Spaceship Mayhem".

## BETA BOARD

"Funny Fingers"

Route #      Set By:      Date Set:  
12E      Joanie & Chachi      Dec 9, 1953

Grade: 5.6

Details: Use it all!

Grade: 5.10b

Details: - Start both hands on "T"s  
- Red taped holds only  
- Limestone out  
- Features in  
- Finish on top beam

## Grade:

This is the difficulty level. "5.1" is the easiest grade and routes progress to expert levels such as "5.12c" or even harder.

Easier routes are usually listed first.

Follow the instructions in "Details" to achieve your challenge.

Expert	5.12c+ 5.11 a-d 5.10 c, d
Hard	5.10 b 5.10 a 5.10 5.9
Intermediate	5.8 5.7 5.6 5.5
Beginner	5.4 5.3 5.2 5.1

**Details:** Instructions to follow in order to climb the route. In this example, to climb the 5.10b route, you must start the climb having both hands on the hold labeled with two taped "T"s. You may not use the limestone ("Limestone out"), but you can use all the hand and foot holds taped red, as well as the "features" (corners, edges, seams, boxes, etc. provided by the shape of the walls). If you do not follow these instructions, then you have not climbed the 5.10b route. To climb the 5.6, on the other hand, "use it all" means you can use all the holds on the wall (taped and untaped), all the features, and the limestone.

## Other "Details" you might see:

"Sit Start"-start the climb while sitting on the rubber, feet on appropriate holds. Pull yourself up.  
"Side Wall In"- routes in corners provide two walls that you can use for hands or feet. Use them whenever you can if the details say "Side Wall In".

GRADES AND NOTES FOR ROUTE SETTING AT THE BOILER ROOM – © ROB CHISNALL

GRADE / DIFFICULTY	CHARACTERISTICS AND DESCRIPTION	TECHNIQUES AND MOVEMENT	HOLDS AND FEATURES
5.0-5.2 VERY EASY	Like climbing a ladder, lots of resting spots.	Three points of contact push with legs, balance with hands, climb square on static moves	Huge hand holds (jugs and rings) close together. Large, positive footholds frequently placed.
5.3 EASY	Ladder climbing with some minor challenges and irregularities.	Some easy stemming and one-leg presses. Balance and correct force on hand holds needed.	Big hand holds: table tops and jugs. Large footholds not evenly spaced.
5.4-5.5 MODERATE	Rudimentary technical moves. Some style required.	More sophisticated use of all sides of holds. More precise footwear & climbing shoes necessary. Hip shifts, down-palms and elementary mantles, stems, <i>matching</i>	Big hand holds, side pulls, pinches, table-top holds. Medium footholds which may be slightly slopped and mildly awkward to reach.
5.6-5.7 MODERATELY DIFFICULT	Technical climbing with some non-strenuous, but somewhat challenging, moves	Laybacks, stemming, chimneying, sprags, keeling. Occasional rudimentary outside flagging. Easy overhangs. The basics of subtle footwork	Medium positive hand holds: large easy slopers, underclings, spaced sufficiently to require efficient footwork. Footholds: medium to small positive foot holds or large to medium slopers. Foot holds and hand holds easily distinguished.
5.7-5.8 DIFFICULT	More advanced technical moves and good style essential. Not overly strenuous	More sustained climbing involving endurance and pace. Basic drop knee, back flagging, mantles, hand stems and braces, <i>h/f watch</i>	Medium to small hand holds, positive or slightly sloping. The odd large, slightly awkward hold. Less-positive, medium foot holds to small, positive foot holds.
5.9-5.10 VERY DIFFICULT	Strenuous and somewhat demanding endurance and experience required. Good technique critical	Foot and hand flagging techniques, drop knee, steep, overhanging precision foot work. Toe and heel hooks. Popping for holds and dead-points. Arm and leg bars sequences of moves through overhangs	Small handholds, some may be slightly sloping, crimpers. Somewhat reachy hold spacing in places. Foot holds small to tiny. Foot and hand holds cannot be distinguished easily.
5.11 -5.12 SEVERE	Experience and training necessary. Physically demanding with some cryptic sections	Strenuous and sustained gymnastic climbing. Dynos, figure fours, figure nines, rose moves, high steps and long stems. Typically, continuously overhanging	Small holds, some of which are of poor quality. Foot holds are few and tiny. Awkward to somewhat unusual macro-holds and features.
5.13-5.14 EXTREMELY SEVERE	Rigorous training and practice required. Extremely strenuous and demanding unusual moves and technical innovation required.	Extremely strenuous and sustained, technical and delicate. Requiring rehearsal and precise choreography. Moves are not obvious - in most cases, the moves are quite obscure!	Very tiny holds of poor quality and awkward, reachy spacing. Awkward macro-holds, very unusual and innovative features.