

SAC Ski Touring Grade scale

Schweizer Alpen-Club SAC
Club Alpin Suisse
Club Alpino Svizzero
Club Alpin Svizzer



1. The overall rating (grade) of a ski tour corresponds to its top value under “Main Criteria”.
2. Additional considerations posed by one or more “Auxiliary Criteria” may raise the overall difficulty level by 1/3 (e.g. from WS + to ZS-).
3. A minus (-) indicates less difficulty than the stated difficulty level; a plus (+) = higher.
4. The given grade is a guideline, assuming good snow and weather conditions.
5. This evaluation refers exclusively to the skiing part of the tour. Alpine technical difficulties are described separately in the description header (UIAA scale for climbing sections + word description for ascent on foot).

Grade	Main Criteria				Examples from the Berner Alpen West, from the Berner Alpen East
	Slope Angle	Exposure	Terrain style - Ascent and descent	Bottlenecks In descent	
L (+)	≤ 30°	No risk of slipping	Simple, hilly, smooth ground	No Bottlenecks	Niderhorn from Boltigen Steghorn from Lämmerenhütte <i>Faulhorn from the south</i> <i>Grünhornlücke</i>
WS (- +)	≥ 30°	Small risk of slipping, gentle runout	Mostly open slopes with short steep sections. Obstacles avoidable (Kick-turns necessary)	Bottlenecks short and not very steep	Bunderspitz Arpelistock from Geltenhütte <i>Sattelhorn (Kandertal)</i> <i>Sattelhorn (Driest)</i>
ZS (- +)	≥ 35°	Longer slides possible, chances to arrest fall, but risk of injury	Unavoidable short, steep sections, obstacles in moderately steep terrain require good reactions. (Kick-turn skills crucial)	Bottlenecks short, but steep.	Männliflue from the south Rinderhorn Normalroute <i>Bundstock from Kandersteg</i> <i>Grosshorn from Süden</i>
S (- +)	≥ 40°	Long slides, possible steep drops, risk to life	Unavoidable steep slopes. Many obstacles requiring sophisticated and safe skiing technique.	Long, steep bottlenecks. Short turns still possible for advanced skiers.	Winterhore N-Flank Vorder Lohner SW-Flank Altels NW-Flank <i>Dreispietz</i> <i>Wyssi Frau NW-Rib</i>
SS (- +)	≥ 45°	Long slides, steep drops and cliffs likely, risk to life	Generally persistent, steep terrain, interspersed with rock steps. Many obstacles in quick succession.	Long and very steep bottlenecks. Side Slipping and jump turns necessary.	Märe N-Couloir Balmhorn N-Face direct <i>Düdenhorn S-face</i> <i>Lauteraarhorn</i> <i>Mönch S-Face</i>
AS (- +)	≥ 50°	Very exposed. Falls often fatal	Very steep flanks or couloirs. No opportunity to relax on the descent.	Long and very steep bottlenecks, interspersed with steep drops, only jump turns and side slipping.	<i>Mönch NE-Wand</i>
EX	≥ 55°	Extremely exposed. Falls fatal	Extremely steep walls and couloirs.	Abseiling over rock steps may be necessary.	<i>Eiger NE-Wand</i>

Auxiliary Criteria: Difficult orientation (ascent or descent); Route not easily viewed; Route errors hard to correct.

Table Key

- L (leicht) = Easy
- WS (wenig schwierig) = Moderate
- ZS (ziemlich schwierig) = Somewhat difficult
- S (schwierig) = Difficult
- SS (sehr schwierig) = Very Difficult
- AS (ausserordentlich schwierig) = Exceptionally Difficult
- EX (extrem schwierig) = Extremely Difficult