

OBACHT!

This is a place where everyone should feel comfortable and can come over for bouldering, having a coffee or just taking a shower. Therefore, we do not tolerate sexist, racist, homophobic, or other discriminatory behavior. In case you observe something or feel uncomfortable in any way, please come to the counter and let the staff know.

If you came here for bouldering before, this text may sound familiar to you. We assume that probably everyone who is bouldering at Kosmos supports the above paragraph. However, since there have been a lot of situations lately where especially FLINTA* people (women, lesbians, inter, nonbinary, trans, agender people & everyone who is not mentioned but feels like they belong to it) felt uncomfortable while bouldering (yes, also in Kosmos), we would like to go into more detail here:

What exactly is sexist behavior in bouldering?

Giving unsolicited advice on routes/movements/the beta or: boulder mansplaining

A big fun part of bouldering is solving a puzzle. Spoiling the solution/beta can not only be fun-breaking, but it's also crossing the line, because: Who takes it upon themselves to explain to another person how a boulder works? And thereby puts themselves „above“ the other person? According to our experience and observations, it's mostly cis men* explaining the route to a FLINTA* person, rarely the other way around. Better just ask if your tips are welcome.

Shirtless bouldering or: the sexualization of bodies

Due to the different sexualization of our bodies as well as to the fact that our bodies are constantly being objectified by so-called beauty standards, shirtless bouldering isn't the same thing to a FLINTA* person as it is to a person perceived as male. As long as that is the case, and in order to make everyone feel comfortable while bouldering, everyone please keep your shirts on!

... and some more things regarding body images - we probably all agree on that: Posing during strength training like „look at my beautiful muscles“ or just being a show-off and climbing a route like „I'll just show you how it's done, it's really easy and then I'll return to the hard routes“ often leaves other people with a feeling of being worthless. It doesn't have to be like that. Please talk to each other, spend some time bouldering together and see each other (mutually and yourself) as people and don't try to enter the stage of the body presentation show.

**Cis men are men who were assigned the male gender at birth and identify as men. The term „cis“ or „cisgender“ is opposite to the terms „trans“ or „transgender“.*

How much space am I taking up?

Especially cis men usually learn early in their lives to be allowed and are even expected to be loud, strong and knowing. FLINTA* people, on the contrary, are socialized to be rather reserved, caring and sensitive. Does everyone get to be the same? Please take a moment and think about what it's like during your bouldering sessions and, of course, please queue in front of the boulders like everyone else or ask.

Not all compliments are compliments

A compliment can also hurt, in the moment when it turns the addressed person into something special, objectifies them and/or distinguishes them and thus makes them something not „normal“. We all want to be valued as equal beings in this society.

„That was really strong for a woman!“

„It's great that you found your way on the wall, too.“

„Today the strong women have set some cool routes.“

The intention behind these comments that are supposed to be compliments may be to be nice, but they are rarely well received. Would you say this also to a cis man? Maybe this is a way to reflect on your behavior for a moment.

Self-reflection

This is a constant process anyway, which should never stop and which, in times of Internet and social media, has never been easier than now. Sexism, racism, classism, ableism, capitalism - all the -isms are systems that are reflected in all of our thoughts and behavior every day. Let's decode and reprogram them! Educate yourselves, ask questions, reflect yourselves on your own and in your groups. You can join forces, so that you don't have to do this work alone.

This text was mainly about sexist patterns we observed while bouldering, but also regarding racism, classism, ableism and their connections (intersectionality), there is definitely still some reflection and active work to do - everywhere and of course also in the bouldering community!

Here are some recommendations for starting:

Podcasts:

Feminismus mit Vorsatz
We Care Podcast
Der Lila Podcast
Feuer und Brot
Die kanackische Welle

Books:

Untenrum frei (Stokowski)
Feminism for the 99% (Arruzza & Fraser)
Invisible Women (Criado Perez)
The Frailty Myth (Dowling)
Sie hat Bock (Lewina)