

ULTRALIGHT CAMPING GUIDE BACKPACKER

THE OUTDOORS AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Your Lightest Load Ever!

33 ways to slash weight, spend less, and double your hiking comfort

Where
Solitude
Still Reigns

30 crowd-free sanctuaries hand-picked by rangers, guides & our map experts

FREE MAPS!
NEW HIKES
NEAR YOU

AUGUST 2009



81 NAVIGATION
SUMMER SURVIVAL
SKILLS WEATHER
FIRST AID
WILDLIFE

THE PRECIPITATION

Lightning Storm

START

As you and a buddy near the 14,494-foot summit of California's Mt. Whitney, a loud boom signals an approaching thunderstorm. You...

A) Backtrack along the ridgeline and look for cover.

B) Drop your pack and sprint down the nearest scree slope.

The scree is steep and slick. Flip a coin to see if you'll survive.

A) Heads

B) Tails

Lunchbox The Cadaver Dog sniffs out your remains two weeks later.

10, 9, 8,
7, 6, 5...

You count 10 seconds between flashes of lightning and cracks of thunder. How far away is the storm?

A) Two miles—you divide the number of seconds by five to get distance. Time to seek cover!

B) 10 miles—you calculate that each second equals one mile. No need to run.

Wrong! The storm is right on top of you, and the hair on your friend's head is standing on end. You...

A) Grab your camera to snap a photo.

B) Run to the nearest shelter you can see—a crevice under a huge boulder.

Correct! You take shelter:

A) Near the mouth of a cave.

B) In a low spot among some small hills.

C) In a dry ravine.

You're in a bad position: Wet rock conducts electricity, and lightning can arc across a cave entrance. Flip a coin.

A) Heads

B) Tails

100 million volts of electricity lift you off your feet, then slam you to the ground. What should your buddy do?

A) Start CPR.

B) Lift you in a fireman's carry to get you down the mountain ASAP.

C) Not touch you to avoid electrocution.

Lucky you! Your friend's first-aid skills save you—though you'll suffer from severe burns and chronic pain for the rest of your life.

Good choice, but you're not out of danger. Your next move?

A) Lie on your stomach, covering the back of your head with your hands.

B) Drop your poles, move 20 feet away from your buddy, and crouch on a jacket or sleeping pad.

C) Stay standing so your rubber-soled boots can protect you.

Bolts flash all around, but you ride out the storm. Ten minutes go by without any thunder or lightning. You...

A) Stay under cover for 20 more minutes.

B) Climb back to the ridge. There's still a peak to bag!

You remembered the 30/30 rule: Seek shelter when 30 seconds or less separate lightning and thunder, and remain under cover for 30 minutes after the last thunderclap. Reward yourself with a posthike beer.

Your name appears on page 25 of *Accidents in North American Mountaineering* 2009.