

ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A BOY SCOUT? 20

BACKPACKER

THE OUTDOORS AT YOUR DOORSTEP

America's Newest Trails

20 undiscovered dayhikes, long
paths & life-list adventures

Rate Your Outdoor I.Q.

Take our quiz—from
navigation to knots (p. 41)

Colorado's
forgotten park
Secret getaways
in the Tetons
California's
unknown island
adventure
A fresh twist on a
Smokies classic
Florida's new
long-trail miles
Quiet high points
in the Rockies

TESTED

The year's
best shells,
baselayers
& warm
jackets

HOW TO

PREDICT THE WEATHER
STAY DRY IN ANY STORM
HIKE STEEP TRAILS SAFELY
START A SURVIVAL FIRE





THE PREDICAMENT

In Too Steep

START

While scrambling off-trail in Wyoming's Wind River Range, you overestimate your climbing chops and find yourself uncomfortably high on a steep, scree-covered slope. You...

A) Turn back and scout for a safer route.

B) Press on! The summit is in sight, and going up is easier than going down.



Smart move! Falling on steep terrain like this is the #1 cause of death for hikers. Congratulate yourself with a burger back in town.

Rescuers find you—bloodied, battered, but alive—30 hours later.



Soon, you're stuck on a ledge with no obvious way up or down. You...

A) Loop your bear-bag rope around a boulder just above your head and try to pull yourself up.

B) Traverse to gentler terrain.



The ledge is surrounded by a 40-degree scree field. To move sideways safely, you...

A) Flatten your body against the slope for maximum surface friction and slide your feet quickly across the rock.

B) Stay upright and press the edges of your shoes into the slope.



Your foot slips and you fall 20 feet, catching yourself just before a cliff—but your left leg is shattered. Did you leave your hiking plans with family or rangers?

A) Yes

B) No. It was just a short dayhike!

You lose your grip and tumble 40 feet, slicing your femoral artery on a sharp rock. Lunchbox The Cadaver Dog finds your remains a few weeks later.



Edging—a basic move that increases your grip on the slope—gets you across the steepest section, but there's still one obstacle between you and safety: a car-size boulder. You must climb over it. You...

A) Lunge for a tree root two feet above your head.

B) Grab a rocky hold just above your shoulder.

C) Test the hold for stability first.

Uh-oh. Flip a coin to see if you'll be found before you die of exposure.

A) Heads

B) Tails

You place all of your weight on the rock. Flip a coin to see if it holds.

A) Heads

B) Tails



Downclimbing safely requires extreme caution—but you make it. You scramble back to the trail and head to the nearest bar for a beer.



Choosing solid hand- and footholds within easy reach gets you over the boulder. You spot a trail 30 feet below you. The class IV slope is very steep, but you think you can downclimb. You descend facing...

A) Toward the slope.

B) Away from the slope.

