

Top 10 Mistakes

That Climbers Make

- **Falling**

Seriously though ... Modern equipment has made falling (especially on sport climbs) much less serious than in the past, but there are still many climbing situations in which falling is NOT APPROPRIATE. Pay attention to:

- How run out you are
- What's below you (ledges, horns, etc.)
- Where the rope is (is it around your leg?)

A fall on rock is the #1 cause of climbing accidents **every** year. Your own ability to stay on the rock is your first line of defense against an accident.

- **Poor Communication**

Surprisingly, shouting detailed instructions to your partner who is 150 feet off the deck in a windstorm is not a very effective way to communicate.

KNOW before the climber leaves the ground:

- Will the climber be lowered from the climb?
- Will the climber set up a belay?
- Will the climber rappel down from the top?
- Will the climber be taken **off** belay at any point?

MAKE A PLAN BEFORE YOU CLIMB!

- **Not wearing a helmet**

Injuries caused by falling rocks or other objects come up second on the list of accident causes. Helmets are cheap, weigh nothing, take two seconds to put on

and could literally save your life. Sure, they look goofy, but a head injury looks worse.

- **No knots in the ends of the rope**

Knots in the rope ends prevent you from rappelling off the ends of the rope if they do not reach the ground or if they are uneven. Knots also prevent the belayer from dropping the climber if a top-rope climb is longer than expected.

- **Overestimating your abilities**

Climbing routes and grades vary HUGELY from one area to another. A 5.10 in the gym is going to climb very differently from a 5.10 in Yosemite. Every year climbers get into trouble, following their egos onto routes that they have no business on. Climbers also frequently leave important route info at home and end up off route or on the wrong route. Research your routes! Bring your beta!

- **Trashing the area**

Leaving garbage, walking off-trail, going on private property, being loud and annoying. These are some sure fire ways to piss people off and lose access to climbing for everyone. Travel light, pick up trash, be respectful, practice Leave No Trace. We are not the only people using public land. Check out The Access Fund for additional guidance.

- **Not doing a safety check**

A quick safety check should be performed **EVERY** time you tie in. Check harnesses, knots and carabiners to make sure everything is double-backed, tied correctly and locked. Some of the best climbers in the world have nearly been killed because they forgot to tie their figure-8 correctly.

- **Not bringing the right gear**

These things are essential:

- A headlamp
- A roll of tape
- A jacket

- Water and food

Having them can spell the difference between a funny story to tell to your friends later and a full-blown epic requiring a rescue.

- **Climbing without a rope**

Hopefully this mistake doesn't need too much elaboration. Still, climbing unroped is statistically one of the leading causes of death amongst climbers. Ropes are great. Use them.

10. Not knowing how to help yourself

Climbing up is pretty straightforward. Getting back down again with an injury or an injured partner is a whole different story. Learn as much as you can about the techniques and systems that will allow you to rescue yourself if the need arises. Better yet, take a course.