



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall On Rock – Off-Route**

California, Yosemite Valley, Manure Pile Buttress

**On May 16, after several days of rain in Yosemite Valley, my partner and I went to do a warm-up climb on Manure Pile Buttress.** As it was the first day of good weather in a while, the cliffs were busy, and all the routes were occupied except for an obscure moderate climb. We decided to be adventurous and climb it anyway as its grade was well below our ability level.

On the second pitch I got slightly off-route, committed to a difficult move above my gear, and then a handhold broke. My final piece of protection was good but I was just too far above it for it to do any good (protection opportunities had run out). The protection may have helped absorb my fall, but I still hit a ledge below, hard. The fall was roughly 25 feet total.

The front and back of my helmet took serious impact in the fall; it definitely saved my head. Initially, I felt dizzy and believed I had broken a rib and possibly my tailbone. My partner and I discussed calling for a rescue, but I felt I could get off the climb under my own power and we self-rescued, with my partner controlling my rappel. He helped me to the car and drove me to the hospital where CT and MRI confirmed a minor concussion, three fractured vertebrae, and other spinal injuries.

### **ANALYSIS**

We were too eager to climb. Rather than waiting for a route to open up or going to a different area, we climbed a route that wasn't of the best quality or as safe. Overall, I'm thankful that things didn't end up any worse. I'm thankful that my helmet protected me adequately, and I look forward to climbing again soon. (Source: Anonymous, 28 years old.)

## Images



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