



AAC Publications

Ice Tool Up Against The Head

New York, Adirondacks

Having rock climbed for about six years, I was eager to try something new, namely ice climbing. A few friends had rented out a house for the weekend in the Adirondacks, so I decided to join them. Many of them were already experienced in ice climbing, so I decided to take an intro class from a guide at Rock and River. With my rented gear in hand, I and another friend who was new to ice climbing headed out with our guide to an artificial ice climbing area created by the management of Rock and River.

I picked things up pretty quickly and moved from basic climbs to more advanced ones. On my second to last climb of the day, I was attempting to traverse right to move past an ice feature I didn't feel comfortable with. The top-rope was to the right of my right arm, and I decided I wanted it more in front of me, so I let go of the tool in my right hand, reached around the rope, and went to grab the tool again. Just as this was happening, my crampon slipped and I fell. As I dropped, I grabbed for the my tool with my right hand and felt an impact on my helmet. I wasn't entirely sure what had happened, but when my guide asked if I was okay, I turned away from the wall to face him and replied, "What do you think?" He quickly lowered me to the ground, and upon inspection, I realized I had lodged my tool into my own helmet!

Interestingly, the tool hadn't damaged the helmet at all, simply entered one of the air holes. The tip of the tool was less than an inch from the top of my head. Bottom line, I was completely fine—no injuries, just a little shaken up. I jumped right back on the wall and had a funny story to tell my friends over drinks that night.

ANALYSIS

It's hard to say if my helmet prevented the tool from hitting my skull. The pick entered the ventilation hole, but it's possible the shaft impacted the shell of the helmet, preventing the pick from penetrating further. Either way, I was glad to have a helmet. In retrospect, as my guide pointed out, I would have been better off leaving the tool in the ice when I fell rather than trying to grab it in a way that could have injured me. (Source: Josh Rothman.)

Images



Article Details

Author	Josh Rothman
Publication	ANAM
Volume	0
Issue	0
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Accident reports