



## AAC Publications

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### **Leader Fall and Mild Head Injury**

West Virginia, Reed's Creek

**On July 23, an experienced male climber (age 24) was leading Reaching Conclusions, a 5.10a sport route at Reed's Creek (near Petersburg, WV).** The climber was attempting an awkward move, squatting on a ledge with his left hand on a hold between his feet. As he reached up with his right hand to a hold above, the climber fell backward, striking a nearby tree with his head, inverting, and striking his head again against the wall. The belayer immediately lowered the climber to the ground. The belayer, who is a medical student, assessed the fallen climber and initiated care. The climber suffered a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) and lacerations to his left ear and the side of his head. (Source: Anonymous report by belayer.)

### **ANALYSIS**

Though the climber and belayer are unsure of exactly what occurred, they believe the hold in the climber's left hand came loose, causing the fall. In areas known for loose rock or areas that do not see a lot of climber traffic (as is believed to be the case here), take extra care to test suspect holds. The climber's awkward, inverted fall seems like a case of bad luck. Both he and the belayer were wearing helmets, and this likely lessened the extent of the climber's head injuries. (Source: The Editors.)

**Images**

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