



SWING TIME

Protect your follower on traverses

| By Adam Scheer |

PITCHES THAT TRAVERSE sideways can be as dangerous for the follower as for the leader, exposing both climbers to the risk of long, swinging falls. When leading, a climber naturally seeks pro *before* the crux; after the difficulties, however, he may cruise across easier terrain unprotected. This leaves the second dangerously exposed. So the leader should also place gear right *after* cruxes on a traverse. Here, a few additional considerations to minimize swing time:

SOMETIMES it's not possible or desirable to place gear after a crux. If the line traverses but then sweeps back, following a "C" path, you might be able to hold off placing pro until you've climbed back into the plumb line above the crux, so the rope will run directly down to the second.

IT MAY BE possible to climb a bit off route and arrange gear above the crux for your second. For example, after a rightward traverse, the rock might allow you to step back left, place some pro above the traverse line, and then continue up the route. (See illustration above.)

DOUBLE-ROPE TECHNIQUE may allow you to have the best of both worlds, clipping protection wherever you want with one rope, and leaving the second rope unclipped to provide a free-running toprope for your follower.

GUIDEBOOKS often note poorly protected traverses. On such routes, both leader and follower will need to be comfortable at the grade.

IF YOU DO a traversing route with one climber who will be at (or above) his limit, climb in a party of three. Belaying from both sides simultaneously can effectively protect the middle climber on almost any traverse.

MIND GAMES

SPEAK UP!

Choose your words to climb harder

| By Arno Ilgner |

ATTITUDE AFFECTS your climbing, and the right attitude can be worth two letter grades or more. The solution to a performance plateau may be as simple as rephrasing the things you say—out loud or to yourself—so you apply energy toward your goal, instead of allowing your words to create doubt. Climb harder by "speaking up," not down. Speak down: "It feels too hard." Instead, speak up with a question: "What's possible here?"

More opportunities to speak up:

ORIENT YOURSELF FORWARD into action, not backward, away from errors. Speak down: "Don't hold your breath." Speak up: "Remember to breathe."

DOES CLIMBING PRESENT PROBLEMS OR OPPORTUNITIES?

When you speak down, you emphasize problems: "This looks gripping." Speak up to focus on opportunity: "What can I learn from this runout section?"

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING IN CLIMBING. Speak down: "I have to get better at crack climbing." Speak up: "I choose to practice crack climbing."

DON'T TRY—DO. Create goals that relate to effort and actions (which you can control), and not end results (which you can't). Speak down: "I'll try to do it without falling." Speak up: "When I start to get pumped, I'll shift more focus to my footwork and keep moving up."