

FOUR STICKY SITUATIONS... AND THE GEAR THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

1. A TREE FALLS IN THE WOODS AND NO ONE'S AROUND TO HEAR IT LAND ON YOUR LEG

THE SOLUTION The G3 Bone Saw

This easy-to-pack, 6-ounce blade dices wood, snow, or ice. Just attach it to the end of your ski pole (or shovel or ice ax), watch your fingers, and start sawing. If you'd prefer not to harm the tree, it'll cut through bone, too. \$59, genuineguidegear.com



4. ANYONE SEEN CHARLIE?

THE SOLUTION The Motorola Talkabout SX700R

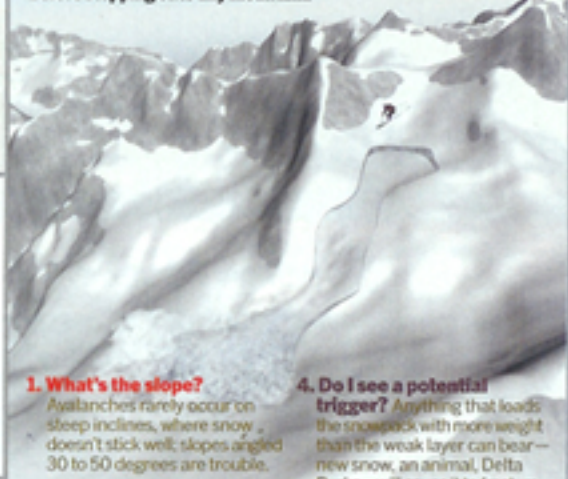
The 12-mile range on this radio ensures no one gets lost. Not for long, anyway. Even better, because it's completely hands-free, you don't need to pull it out of your pack and press a button to talk. It even has a vibrate setting, so as not to antagonize the polar bears. \$70, motorola.com



HOW 2

Survive an Avalanche

It's the winter mountaineer's greatest fear: a mass of snow thundering down a mountain at speeds of up to 200 mph, burying everything in its path. All that's needed is a weak layer within the snowpack, a moderately steep slope, and a trigger. Prevention is the best medicine, of course, so ask yourself these four questions before stepping onto any mountain:



2. IS THAT RUMBLING I HEAR?

THE SOLUTION The Black Diamond Avalung II

If you're caught in an avalanche, this backup lung, worn over your bottom layer, draws oxygen from the snowpack in front of you while expelling deadly carbon dioxide in back. It extends your survival window from 15 minutes to an hour or more. \$115, bde.com

3. CRAP, I HEAR IT NOW

THE SOLUTION Mammut Rescue Bundle

Apocalypse now? The beacon in this kit automatically sends out a distress signal if you're snowed under, or guides you to a buried buddy via LCD display. The probe lets you poke around for an "ool." The shovel is strong, for quick digging from the top, and streamlined, for working in tight spots (like under 15 feet of snow). \$379, mammutusa.com



1. What's the slope?

Avalanches rarely occur on steep inclines, where snow doesn't stick well; slopes angled 30 to 50 degrees are trouble.

2. How deep is the snow-pack?

Massive snowpacks result in slab avalanches—big, icy chunks of snow moving en masse. These are the most common and dangerous slides. Smaller snowpacks produce slough avalanches—small, loose, usually harmless slides.

3. How's the weather been?

Varying weather conditions—light, dry snow one day, heavy sleet the next—result in poor layering. Instead of bonding, sheets may be joined by ball bearing-like snow crystals.

4. Do I see a potential trigger?

Anything that loads the snowpack with more weight than the weak layer can bear—new snow, an animal, Delta Burke—will cause it to fracture. Loud noises won't initiate collapses. More than 80 percent of avalanches release during or just after a snowfall.

When it's too late...

Run like hell—or hide behind a large boulder for protection. If you're swept away, "swim" in the moving snow to stay near the surface or move to the outer edge. As the avalanche stops, put your arms in front of your face to create an air pocket. Dig yourself out. Can't tell which way is up? Let saliva drip out of your mouth; gravity still works.