



**YOU**

**COULD**

**BE**

**THIS**

Few summer highs top the view from Wyoming's 13,770-foot Grand Teton.

▼

It's true—you *can* do this! We asked America's top adventure experts how you can add adrenaline to your summer. Get ready to do things you never thought possible.

By Gordy Megroz





Brenton Reagan  
of Exum Mountain  
Guides, based in  
Jackson, Wyoming.

THE BEST  
GEAR FOR  
MOUNTAIN  
BIKING

What Weston Shirey, a guide  
for Western Spirit Cycling,  
uses to ride in comfort.



**Smith Forefront (with MIPS)**  
"It's lightweight and offers extra  
protection from rotational forces."  
\$260, [smithoptics.com](http://smithoptics.com)



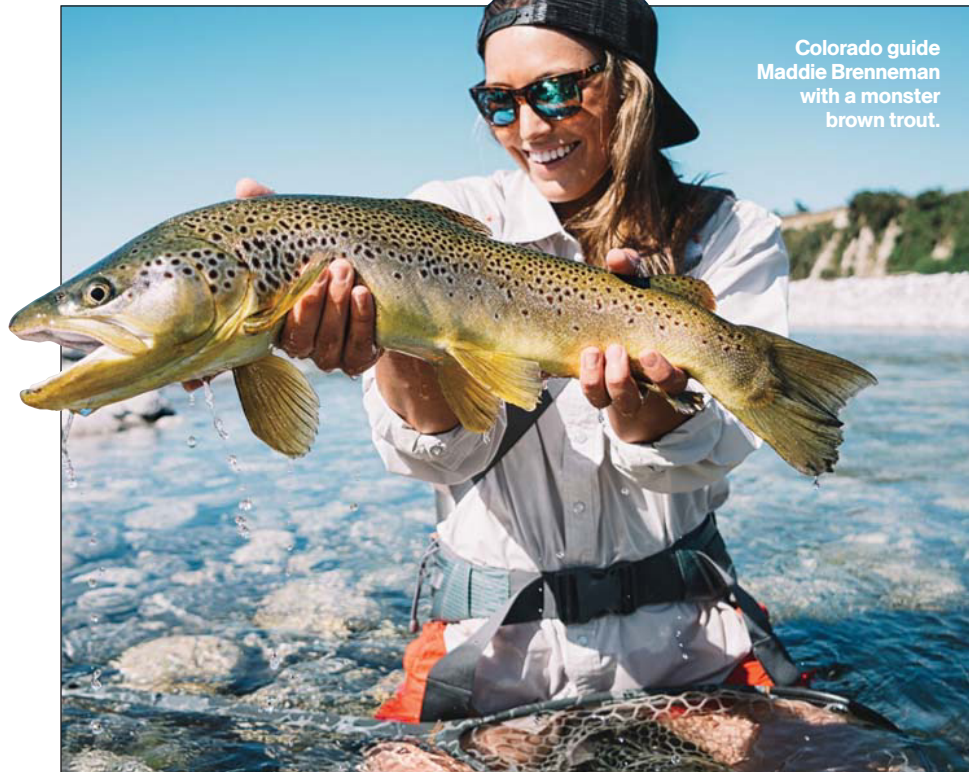
**Smith Pivlock Arena**  
"Easy-change lenses and great  
defense against wind and sun."  
\$159, [smithoptics.com](http://smithoptics.com)



**Giro Terraduro**  
"Grippy Vibram sole and a strong,  
secure ratcheting buckle sys-  
tem." \$180, [giro.com](http://giro.com)



**Camelbak K.U.D.U. 12**  
"Fits great, has back padding,  
and houses a 3-liter bladder."  
\$200, [camelbak.com](http://camelbak.com)

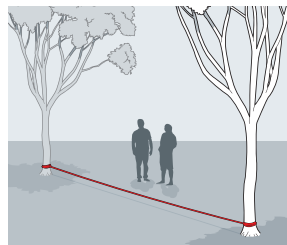


Colorado guide  
Maddie Brenneman  
with a monster  
brown trout.

► **HOOK A WHOPPER**  
"If conditions are right, it's hard to believe the fish just weren't biting," says Maddie Brenneman, a fly-fishing guide at the C Lazy U Ranch in Granby, Colorado. First, observe: Where are they feeding? If fish aren't rising, they may be chowing down below the surface. "Use a wet fly," she says, which looks like those found underwater; you can add weight so it sinks more. No dice? If the fish are feeding, it's probably you, not them! "The way you present a fly matters. Try moving to give your fly optimal drift and to reduce any drag."

Master the Art of Slacklining

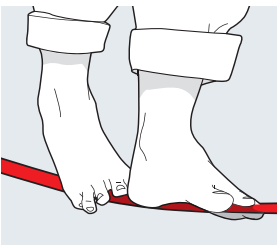
Have fun in your campsite or backyard and sharpen your balance for any sport. Howie Schwartz of Sierra Mountain Guides shows you how.



**1/ Find Your Spot**  
Secure the slackline 2 feet off the ground between two trees 15 to 20 feet apart. The Gibbon Classic Slackline (\$70 for 49 feet, [rei.com](http://rei.com)) sets up easily. Make it taut; more tension is best for beginners.



**2/ Step Up on the Line**  
Have a friend to lean on, and step up with your dominant foot while focusing on a point in the distance; don't look down. Breathe deeply, inhaling and exhaling on a four-count each. Stand until you feel stable.



**3/ Walk This Way**  
Take small steps. You'll learn faster with 10- to 15-minute daily sessions, rather than less-frequent longer sessions. Like a climber, with your eyes closed, practice moves like squats and single-leg poses.



TOUGH  
THE SKY

NEVER CLIMBED ANYTHING? NO problem. As long as you're fit, you can take a two-day course with Exum Mountain Guides. The graduation ceremony is climbing the Grand Teton. Lead guide Brenton Reagan has 17 years of experience helping people rise above their expectations. These are his tips.

1

Read the Rocks

A wrong step can be treacherous (though you're roped in). Exum clients are taught to look for the shine on lichen and icy rocks; both can be slippery. And rocks aren't always rock-solid. Check what that rock is attached to—if anything. If a rock is cracked, find a better, more solid option.

2

Learn to Belay

This means securing a partner with a rope that'll stop his fall if he loses his footing. On the Grand Teton it's a crucial skill. You should know overhand, bowline, and figure-8 knots, how to sit behind an immovable object and brace, and how to position the rope to create friction and tension.

3

Hone Your Balance

To improve your balance skills, you'll walk up rock slabs without using your hands and then progress to climbing vertically in two days. You'll learn to "smear" your feet to get more traction, which is taking small steps and securing your feet in footholds. All of this lowers your chances of slipping.

4

Know Your Escape

The descent is sometimes harder than the ascent! Heading down a mountain often means crab crawling, a slow scoot on your butt. Check the forecast ([noaa.gov](http://noaa.gov) is a good source) and be ready to turn around quickly. Know the best way to get down—storms blow in unexpectedly.

Jimmy Chin (opening spread), David Stubbs (Reagan); icons by MICHAEL BRANDON MYERS

Matt Rainey and Matt Zual (products), Nick Kelley (Brenneman); illustrations by MIKE SUDAL



# RIDE THE RAPIDS

**FLOATING DOWN A RIVER** in a raft is fun. But if you want thrilling, pilot yourself in an inflatable kayak. Use these skills from Anika Lofts, a guide who leads 3- to 14-day trips down Idaho's unspoiled waterways.

## 1 Solve the Puzzle

Look far ahead. That ripple—is it a wave or a rock? If it's an upstream V, it's a rock. Swirling? It's an eddy, a mini-whirlpool that can flip you. If it's too late to avoid, paddle right at it, and be aggressive. Speed can keep you from getting trapped.

## 2 Stoke Your Stroke

Keep your arms slightly bent and your torso upright. Wind your torso in the opposite direction of your intended stroke. When you dig the paddle into the water, unwind through the stroke. Brace your core and power through the water.

## 3 Escape a Whirlpool

Eddies can suck the rear of your kayak down. If you're trapped, use the "butter J" stroke: Roll your wrist as if you're smearing butter on toast. Once you're balanced, paddle forward to spin with the whirlpool, and then faster than it to propel out.

## 4 Rescue Yourself

If you fall out, stay calm and swim aggressively toward your boat. Set the boat upright and pull yourself in. The boat is safer. Most injuries happen when people set off swimming toward shore and get banged up by rocks or logs.



Anika Lofts leads kayak trips for Middle Fork Rapid Transit in Idaho.



# GO DEEP INTO THE WILD

To enjoy the wilderness even more, prepare like survival guide Byron Kerns.



**DOCTORS, ATTORNEYS, CORPORATE** warriors—all kinds enroll at the Byron Kerns Survival School near Florida's Ocala National Forest.

"They want to reconnect with nature, upgrade their wilderness skills, and build the confidence to go farther out there," says Kerns, a former Air Force survival instructor. The two-night Bare Bones course covers first aid, shelter, fire, signaling, food, compass, and the psychology of survival. Here are his four essential skills.

► **Know the H<sub>2</sub>O Equation** Drink at least a pint of water before starting out, and carry enough to drink at least 4 ounces an hour for the duration.

► **Recognize Danger** Heat exhaustion is common, but few know the symptoms, which can include heavy sweating, dizziness, rapid heart-

beat, and headache. The treatment: Cool off. If it happens to a friend, remove his clothes (down to his underwear), lay him in shade, elevate his feet, fan him, and give him sips of water.

► **Start a Fire in Rain** Carry a flint firestarter and a ziplock bag of 10 cotton balls dabbed in Vaseline. Find 10" pieces of dead wood in various thicknesses (pencil lead to salami). Lay down a 3"-diameter log and dry bark in front of it. Put a cotton ball or two on the bark and spark it. Lean sticks from smallest to largest over the flames and onto the log. Then lift the log to give the fire air.

► **Stay Positive** This is your most critical skill if things go south. Focus on small things—clouds, bird songs—to help yourself feel optimistic. Carry a photo of a loved one; if you're close to quitting, gaze at it for motivation to carry on.



Mike Fabry runs Lava Falls, a notorious Grand Canyon rapid.



## THRIVE IN WHITEWATER

Minimize your air time between strokes, says Mike Fabry, a rafting guide for O.A.R.S. who has led trips in the Grand Canyon for 39 years. "Your paddle is like your third leg; it helps you maintain stability best when it's in the water." Use your whole body to leverage power: Lean forward and dig the paddle straight into the water. Then pull with your body and end leaning back. Tip: Don't put sunscreen on the backs of your legs. You're sitting on the raft and it's easier to slip off.

THE BEST  
GEAR FOR  
HIKING

The stuff that veteran guide Ron Bubb trusts on trips into the backcountry.



### Osprey Aether 70

"It's great for overnight trips or weeklong treks; hugs the spine." \$290, [osprey.com](http://osprey.com)



### Western Mountaineering Alpinlite 20-Degree Bag

"Lasts decades." From \$540, [westernmountaineering.com](http://westernmountaineering.com)



### Black Diamond Carbon Poles

"Cork handles are nice because they absorb perspiration." \$160, [blackdiamondequipment.com](http://blackdiamondequipment.com)



### Vasque Breeze 2.0 GTX

"I recommend these for light or medium-intensity excursions." \$170, [vasque.com](http://vasque.com)





## SLEEP IN THE WOODS

Forget a hotel. This Rocky Mountain guide says there's plenty of room in the wilderness.



**TRUE ISOLATION CAN BE FOUND IN** pristine backcountry that hasn't been "improved" by humans, says guide Ron Bubb of the Wildland Trekking Company. Pack a waterproof topographic map, a compass, and maybe a GPS receiver. Most important: Tell friends where you're going and when you'll be back, and leave a note on your dashboard. And then...  
► **Pick Your Spot** Don't bite off too much mileage; 5 miles is plenty with a full pack. You can always do a short hike, set up a basecamp, and then go out on day hikes. Your campsite should be flat, smooth, partially shaded, and away from dead trees or limbs. Take fire restrictions seriously; in summer, Western forests are tinderboxes.

► **Deal with Small Problems** The biggest annoyances in backpacking are tiny: bugs, blisters, and raindrops. Pack a rain poncho and bug repellent (a breezy campsite helps). As for blisters, keep your boots snug with an overhand knot at the second-to-top pair of eyelets before tying a conventional knot. Taping a hotspot early is way better than treating a blister later.  
► **Appreciate the Big Things** Before turning in, step away from your tent to take in that star-filled sky. And even though you've hung your food in a tree or stashed it in a bear canister away from your tent, know what to do if a bear comes sniffing. Raise your arms and fan out your jacket to appear as large as possible. Then make lots of noise. But bring bear spray just in case.



With Ron Bubb's help, you can hike the best of the Colorado Rockies.

### CYCLE UP A HILL

"Understanding cadence is critical to riding hills," says Jason Stawiski, a guide with Backroads. "Cadence is the number of pedal revolutions per minute; aim for 70 to 100. This lets you ride faster for longer without tiring and puts less strain on your knees. Shifting to easier gears on the uphill helps you maintain cadence. When tackling a climb, many riders push too hard too early. Instead, ease into your climb at a sustainable pace and speed up near the top."

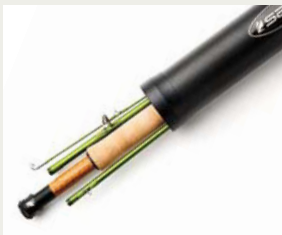
### THE BEST GEAR FOR FLY-FISHING

Top picks from Maddie Brenneman, guide at C Lazy U Ranch in Granby, Colorado



#### Abel #4 Pliers

"Sturdy and well made. They pinch barbs well." from \$195, [abelreels.com](http://abelreels.com)



#### Sage Line 6, 9' Mod Rod

"Neither too fast nor too slow. It is an all-around perfect trout rod." \$250, [sage.com](http://sage.com)



#### Waterworks-Lamson Guru 2 II

"Manages line well, has a strong drag, and can take a beating." \$210, [waterworks-lamson.com](http://waterworks-lamson.com)



#### Yeti Cooler

"Can't control the weather or the fish, but you can have cold beer!" From \$250, [yeticooler.com](http://yeticooler.com)

Joe Morahan/Getty Images (Rockies), Matt Ranney and Matt Zugai (products)



Weston Shirey rides White Rim Road, Canyonlands National Park, Utah.



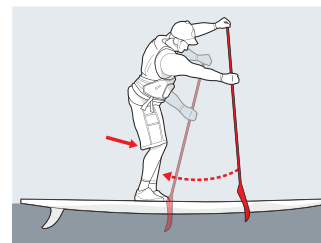
### RIDE WITH CONFIDENCE

Most crashes happen on twisting downhill, says Weston Shirey, a guide with Western Spirit Cycling. "Guys have a death grip on the handlebar and have too much of their weight forward and they lose control." Instead, use

a light grip with two fingers on the rear brake, and push your butt way back. If you do have to bail, scoot out the back and let go of the bike. He also advises standing up to scope the trail on flat and sloped terrain, which will also keep your muscles fresher over a long ride.

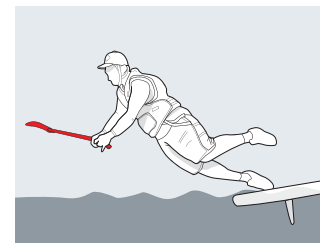
## Paddleboard with More Power

On a stand-up paddleboard, there's an art and skill to going fast and falling the right way, says Tim Thornton of River Drifters, a rafting outfit in the U.S. Northwest.



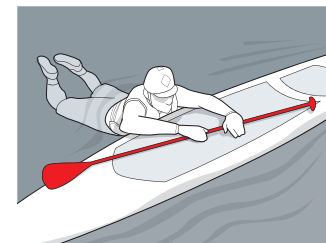
#### 1/ Strengthen Your Stroke

Stagger your feet slightly and bend your knees. Try to stay relaxed so you can absorb the shocks of choppy water. Reach forward until both arms are just beyond 90 degrees; pull hard and end your stroke when your rear elbow is even with your torso.



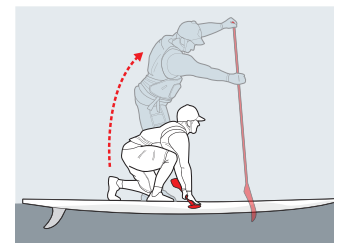
#### 2/ Fall the Right Way

If you lose your balance and find yourself falling off the board, try not to go feet first—you could hit rocks and hurt your legs. To avoid that fate, hang on to your paddle and try to make your body as parallel as possible to the water.



#### 3/ Slide Back on Board

Swim back perpendicular to your board; it won't be a long swim if you're wearing an ankle leash. Reach across the board, grab the edge farthest from you, and pull yourself on. Then spin around to face the right direction.



#### 4/ Get On, Get Going

From a kneeling position, put one foot flat in front of the other and push yourself up (like a lunge). Begin paddling immediately; this helps with balance and stability. You can also paddle from a lunge position if you need a lower center of gravity.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIKE SUDAL