

СКРИПТ

When you go extreme snowboarding, you head for the highest peaks and the steepest slopes, taking little more than a map and some basic survival equipment with you. Unlike in ski resorts, (1) you won't see any signs telling you there are rocks, or trees around, so it's up to you and your guide to make sure your route is as safe as possible. Of course, you should never attempt to go down a slope on your own. It's essential to be accompanied by (2) a guide, who must go first every time as there may be no clear route down through the rocks and other dangers.

They'll also show you the way up to your starting point, which may involve a long, difficult climb, and may wear a backpack containing supplies. I know some snowboarders like to take a helicopter up to the top, and that's quick and easy – though expensive – but (3) I always prefer to go on foot, with a helmet on, of course. When you finally get up there, the view is always completely different from the way it looked from below. People say to me it must take a lot of courage to start going down such a steep slope, but if you've reached that point then you must be a pretty experienced snowboarder and (4) what's really required is a tremendous amount of confidence. You never know exactly which way you're going to go or what you're going to encounter on your way down, and you often find yourself having to make split-second decisions, but that's part of the fun. (5) There's nothing quite as exciting as suddenly having to perform a series of jumps as you descend, and then managing to stay on your feet afterwards. The ability to do that is obviously something that takes those new to extreme snowboarding quite some time to learn. And whereas doing a reasonably good take-off seems to come fairly naturally to most of us, (6) landing is a more complex skill to acquire, as I found in my early days out on the mountain side.

Falling correctly is also something you need to practise, initially at low speed and on gentle slopes, and later in conditions more similar to those you'll encounter on the mountain. (7) Rule one when you lose your balance is not to panic, or else

you'll get tense and be far more likely to injure yourself than if you're relaxed and just let yourself go with the fall. Often the best thing to do is roll out of the fall, but it's natural to try to use your arms to try to slow yourself down and if you do so remember that (8) elbows, if you fall on them, are much stronger and less likely to be injured than wrists. Following a high-speed fall, you might find yourself covered by some of the white stuff that has fallen with you. There may be just a few feet of it and you can usually pull yourself up to the surface, but if you can't you're in big trouble and that's why (9) I'd never go down a slope without a small device fastened to my body that sends out a signal to the rescue services if I get buried. I know some safety experts recommend also taking a medical kit, but somehow I think that if I were buried under ice, my priority would be to get out or get rescued. I'm always looking for new challenges. Competition snowboarding was something I looked at, but there were just too many guys showing off. Teaching snowboarding is certainly something I might do one day, but (10) what I really dream about is parachute snowboarding: going straight down a mountain, flying off a cliff and then floating down to the valley below. Now that's what I call extreme.