



ASK ANDREW

Q: *How do you handle being tent-bound with a bunch of other dudes for weeks, and what actually goes on during that time?"*

Doing time in nylon lockdown is a mountaineering privilege. At least it helps to think of it that way, since you may not have any other choice. Tent-time gives you a chance to think about things, like how many days you've spent inside a tent in your lifetime (over a year for me, I think) and all of the great things you can do after you get out: namely, go on more trips and spend more time in a tent.

My favorite tent-bound mantra comes from Jonny Woodward, who is an amazing rock climber and employs what he calls "Lion Training." The theory is that lions spend most of their time sleeping and playing, but when they get hungry, they have an intense burst of energy, chase something down, kill it, and eat it. The same idea can be applied to nailing a big ski descent, but I took the liberty to change the name to something more befitting a tent-bound regimen: "Lie-In Training."

I enjoy being tent-bound because it's a state of forced inactivity that's hard to come by in a world of Twittering, newsfeeds, and instant updates. Relaxing is an art form. I consider myself lucky to be warm, dry, and

comfortable while snow falls outside and wind shakes the tent. Sure, you may not be able to go skiing right at that moment, but it's not exactly solitary confinement at GitMo either. An essential element of tent-time enjoyment is to allot plenty of leeway in your trips. Four days in a tent is a deal breaker on a week-long trip, but not bad for two weeks.

Aside from counting stitches in the seams, thinking about string, reading books, and pondering the Middle East conflict, I try to make the best of tent-time. On ships, this is called "Make & Mend," and the idea is to fix everything while you can. Trim off labels; add drawstrings; figure out your watch, camera, and GPS functions; review topos; rig up drying lines or write postcards. This is not wasting time, but prepping to make the best of it when the weather clears.

Another good use of tent-time is eating and drinking. Tent-time has produced such tasty treats as butter-infused hot chocolate (up to ½ stick per drink) and Emergen-C tea. If you're *really* bored, try sucking down a round of dry Emergen-C. It's an experience. Along those same lines, a fun way to

pack down calories is a game called "I Dare You to Eat That." The idea is to create a gourmet treat—like, say, a cracker topped by sardines, Chinese hot mustard, a handful of Wasabi peas, and Tabasco sauce—and serve it to your tent-mate. If they survive, they usually up the ante when it comes time for your "treat." Hydro Challenge 2000 is another game; it requires drinking two full liters of water without moving. The Golden Griddle Award is always good for wasting a few hours, too. The goal (often futile) is to brown a perfect pancake over a furnace-like MSR XGK stove. Years of experience have taught me to reduce tank pressure and use the windscreen to raise your frying pan out of the inferno.

Speaking of infernos: Never, ever, under any circumstances discuss your butt. One of my favorite photos is of a big-wall climber with a piece of Duct Tape stuck to his chest, on which is written, "I don't want to hear about your bowels." It's obvious and unavoidable, so talking about it only makes it worse. I know. Your ass stinks. I've noticed.

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