



## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

If you're lucky enough to have some wild open spaces at your disposal you will never be bored. Tired, muddy and hungry, yes. Bruised and battered, perhaps. But bored – never.

## Falling

*Learn to walk before you run; learn to fall before you climb. Knowing how to fall properly is an art. Done well it is exciting, it looks great, can be very funny – and besides, crutches are such a bore.*

\* Start by perfecting the stage faint, itself an invaluable accomplishment and a useful exit strategy for all manner of uncomfortable situations (non-completion of maths homework, getting out of PE, wanting the morning off school). Practise it on a lawn or in a room with a thick carpet.

Bend your ankles, bend your knees and let yourself go floppy, collapsing vertically at first, until you start to topple. The trick is to be very loose, very relaxed, and not to stick out a hand or try to catch yourself; you are supposed to be unconscious. The aim is to hit the ground from the ground up, so that the bits nearest the floor land first, softening the impact. A crumple is really what you're looking for – first your calf, then your thigh, then your waist, then your shoulder. For added drama, and to dissipate the impact, you may wish to add a half roll. Land with your eyes shut (or if you're feeling really confident, rolled back in your head). Resist the temptation to open one eye to check the reaction.

Once you've mastered this technique, you can use it to tumble off everyday objects, such as garden walls and top bunks. Higher challenges require a higher degree of skill: land feet first, everything bent, and topple sideways very quickly, catching the secondary impact on your shoulder. Now the roll is the most important thing; you do not want to absorb all the shock through your shoulder. Roll over once, twice, three times if you feel like it. Remember: you are not trying to avoid the ground; you are trying to befriend it at speed.

*TIP: When falling out of trees you should beware roots, knobbles and the trunk. Push yourself away from the trunk if you are close to it.*