

## READING Homework:

Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–G the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

A They're thinking about the future or about something that's happened in the past.  
B Then, the following week, a guitar fell on my head when I was opening a wardrobe.

C However, he always managed to fight back to health.  
D If you're chopping onions with a sharp knife, you have to concentrate on it.  
E Nevertheless, the results are encouraging for those who have difficulty doing many things at once.  
F Take the sad case of Trevor Cookson.  
G Recent research indicates that accident-prone people really do exist.

# ACCIDENT PRONE

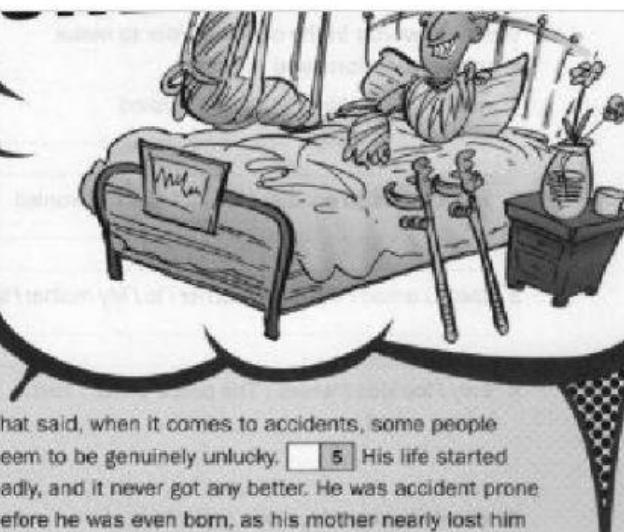
**Everyone has accidents from time to time. A bump on the head, a slip on a wet floor – It's almost impossible to go through life without suffering such minor events once in a while. But why do some people seem to suffer accidents more often than others?**

Take Kirsty Ball, for example, who considers herself to be particularly accident prone. 'I seem to have more accidents when I'm feeling stressed, or thinking about something,' says the 19-year-old computer programmer. 'Once I slipped on a wet kitchen floor and broke my wrist, and three days later I fell off my bike and hurt my shoulder. **1** I'm sure these things all happened because I wasn't paying attention.'

Danielle Mamby, author of 'Stress and Health', agrees. She believes that people who are stressed aren't 'living in the present'. **2** That's why they aren't paying attention to what's going on around them. 'If you're busy, you go from task to task, and while you're doing one thing, you're thinking about what your next job is going to be,' she says. 'Or you might be thinking about a conversation you had earlier in the day, and wishing you had said something different. Either way, you're not living in the present. You're somewhere else. And that's when accidents happen.'

Science seems to agree with Danielle. **3** Scientists in The Netherlands studied the accidents of nearly 150,000 people from different countries, and found that one out of every 29 people has a 50% or higher chance of having an accident than the rest of the population. So, does that suggest that these people are more stressed than the other 28 in every 29?

No, not necessarily. The scientists concluded that stress wasn't the main factor in causing accidents. 'Stress and anxiety don't help,' says Professor Kurt Knopf, 'but the biggest problem seems to be multitasking – trying to do more than one thing at a time. **4** You can't let things like shouting children or a ringing telephone distract you, or you'll cut yourself.'



That said, when it comes to accidents, some people seem to be genuinely unlucky. **5** His life started badly, and it never got any better. He was accident prone before he was even born, as his mother nearly lost him when she was pregnant. Then he suffered a lot of serious accidents as a child. He broke bones in the playground, and had to have a major operation when he was hurt playing rugby.

As a teenager, he fell from a high wall, then he had a bad bicycle crash just before he started university. That didn't stop him going to university and studying law, though. After he graduated, he worked in a law firm where he had to travel a lot, and as a consequence, broke his back once in a car accident. **6** What's more, he never seemed to be particularly stressed or anxious about anything. In fact, he's now married to a nurse he met when in hospital after breaking his back. 'At least I'm there to look after him when he has another accident', says Simone, his wife, though he's managed the last few years without any accidents at all!

So next time you have an accident, think about Trevor Cookson. He never complained!