

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET

# Lost

### STOP

If you find that you have lost the trail and are now 'bush-wacking' in the brush or you're on snow in a white-out (low visibility due to clouds/blowing snow/fog), avoid the temptation to plunge hopefully on. Stop. Take a moment. Look around and listen.

### STAY TOGETHER

Groups of two or more rarely become dangerously lost provided they stay together. Do not send one out in advance to scout...instead, assign a rear guard to keep track of stragglers.

### SHOUT

If you have become separated from your group, don't panic. Shout (or use a whistle) in all directions and listen for answering shouts.

### GET OUT THE MAP

Look at the map and see if you can approximate your position. Look around for landmarks: big peaks, highways, creeks or ridges. Orient to directions using your compass (or the position of the sun/lightness of the sky if you don't know how to use one). If that doesn't work, try to think of the last time you or your group did know your exact location. If that spot is fairly close - within an hour or so - retrace your steps and try to get back on route. If the spot is hours back, or the terrain makes going back too hard, go forward cautiously with an eye for landmarks. Proceed carefully in dense undergrowth, snow or whiteout - you don't want to turn an ankle or step over a cliff.

### MARK YOUR LOCATION

Make a cairn of stones; weave branches, dig an arrow in the snow, or use flagging tape (if you have any). Now scout in all directions, returning each time to your marked position. Continue to look for signs of the trail or landmarks that will help orient you to your position. If you are fairly sure of your direction, continue to place markers periodically as you head out. This will keep you from circling aimlessly and may help others follow your trail.

### LOST AFTER DARK

Well before dark, prepare for night by finding water, firewood, and shelter. Put on your extra clothes and eat something -- it's easier to stay warm if you never get seriously chilled. Seek a spot sheltered from wind/water and out of avalanche or rockfall danger (not in a steep gully). If in snow, use a tree moat for shelter (it's warm) or hollow yourself a small cave. Use dry branches for insulation at lower elevations. Empty your pack and put your legs in it. Make a fire to give searchers something to see, and try singing to keep your spirits up and provide an audio cue. Stay busy; odds are you'll be found in the morning.

## Leave No Trace

Today's wilderness ethics and the large numbers of people frequenting the backcountry require everyone to 'clean it up and pack it out.' When nature calls select a site at least 200 feet from any water source, campsites, trails and drainages. Pee on rock or earth, not foliage. Bury solid human waste in "cat holes" dug 6 to 8 inches deep, in organic soil. Bring your own TP, if you don't like using snow or leaves, and pack it out.

It is absolutely, completely UNACCEPTABLE to leave toilet paper/sanitary/feminine hygiene products behind, even buried, as critters will quickly un-bury them. USE that zip-lock bag. Toilet paper flags in the mountains are inexcusable and repulsive. Ditto any other form of trash.

### Leave-No-Trace Kit

- Toilet Paper and Plastic Bag
- Light Weight Hand Trowel
- Small Bottle of Hand Sanitizer

## Resources

### Maps & Hiking Guides



Maps let you check out the topography or "lay of the land" for where you're going. In the Northwest, you have three good options: USGS (put out by the government), Green Trails, and Custom Correct. The latter two also clearly mark the trails and are usually more up-to-date.

There are also many excellent guidebooks on the Cascades and Olympics (and areas further afield). Worthwhile for every hiker, they are more descriptive about routes and conditions than maps alone.

Many of the books and maps you'll need can be found at The Mountaineers Bookstore, 300 Third Ave West, Seattle. Visit us on the web at [mountaineers.org](http://mountaineers.org) or contact us at 206-284-6310 or [bookstore@mountaineers.org](mailto:bookstore@mountaineers.org)

Or visit Mountaineers Books on the web at:

[www.mountaineersbooks.org](http://www.mountaineersbooks.org)

### Northwest Weather

NOAA	<a href="http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sew/">www.wrh.noaa.gov/sew/</a>
University of Washington	<a href="http://www.atmos.washington.edu/">www.atmos.washington.edu/</a>
Northwest Weather & Avalanche Center	<a href="http://www.nwac.noaa.gov/">www.nwac.noaa.gov/</a>
USGS Water Resources	<a href="http://wa.water.usgs.gov/">wa.water.usgs.gov/</a>

## Hike with The Mountaineers!

The Mountaineers hike year-round in Western Washington's wilderness areas and parks, with summer backpacks offering more extended trips. The club has branches in Bellingham, Everett, Kitsap, Olympia, Seattle, Snoqualmie Foothills, and Tacoma, and each organizes hikes in areas far and near. Members are free to participate in hikes at any branch, and most trip go regardless of weather. In the winter, we tend to visit lowland areas that are snow-free (except on our snowshoe trips!). Hikes are almost always free, and are led by volunteers with years of outdoor experience.

All upcoming hikes are listed online and in our monthly bulletin, the *Go Guide*. These listings will provide you with all the information you will need, such as distance roundtrip, elevation gain and our scale of difficulty that ranges from easy to very strenuous. You can choose whichever level of activity you prefer. For the absolute beginner, most branches offer both beginning hiking and/or backpacking seminars and easy newcomer hikes. Kids 14 and up are welcome on any hike; younger children can usually go as well when accompanied by a parent, but please consult the hike leader before registering for an outing.

You can also sample Mountaineers hikes without joining. By filling out a Guest Membership Application, you can sign up for two hikes or backpacks without any obligation.

To join, obtain a guest application or for more information, visit us on the web at:

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)

Or phone us at:

206-284-8484

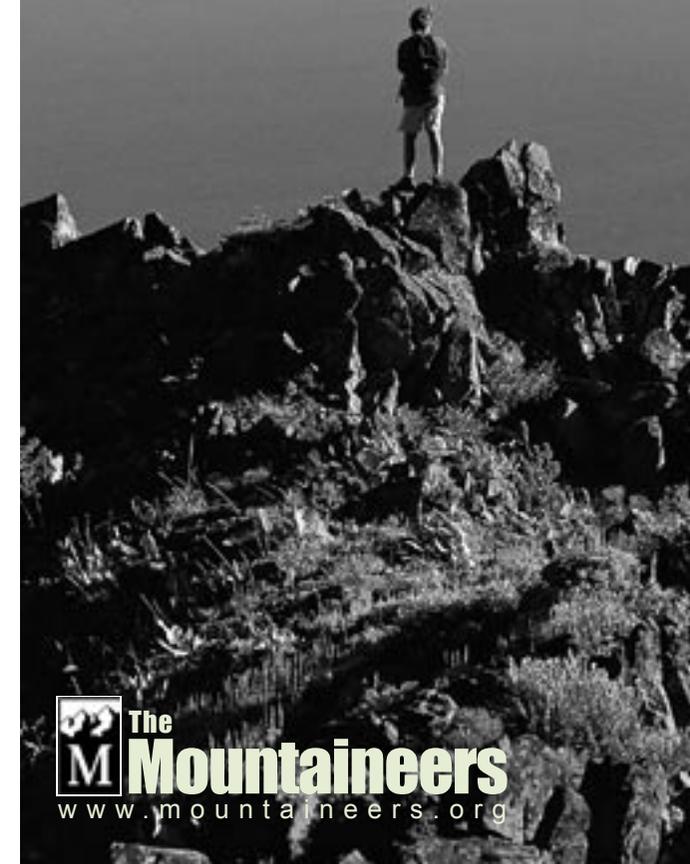
800-573-8484

(Outside Seattle area)



# Hiking Basics

## The Ten Essentials



 **The Mountaineers**  
[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)

# Why The Ten Essentials?

The mountains and rivers of the Northwest have something to offer just about everyone: enjoyment of nature, great exercise, adventure, challenge, inspiration. Whether you hike, study flora and fauna, mountain bike, backpack, scramble or take up more technical sports such as rock climbing or ski mountaineering, there is always some risk involved. Anyone heading outside should understand the risks and prepare for them. This is where the Ten Essential Systems come in handy.

What are the “Ten Essential Systems?” They are simply a collection of items that have proven useful and are recommended for every outdoor trip, whether travelling on trails or heading into the backcountry wilderness. Experienced hikers, climbers and scramblers usually keep these items in their packs at all times, and each member of the party carries his or her own.

Some of the items on the list of systems are things you will always want to have. Everyone needs water and food to keep their body going. Insulation is extremely important in the Northwest, where weather can change in an instant. Don't be afraid to take an extra layer of clothing.

Other items you may not always need, but it's still a good idea to bring them along. Navigation tools are good for unfamiliar destinations, even if you only plan to hike on trails. A flashlight or other illumination might come in handy, since it usually gets darker earlier in the mountains. And even though it looks cloudy, sun protection can help avoid those UV rays that sometimes penetrate cloud layers.

Last, a few items on the list are things that you never hope to use, and don't require too much explanation. A first aid kit for cuts, wounds, insect bites. Emergency shelter and fire in case of unforeseen circumstances. A repair kit for that broken strap, torn tent or snapped shoelace.

The basic principles here are just for starters. Ask questions and observe more seasoned hikers, read books, and most of all, apply common sense. Then pack up and get on the trail.

# The Ten Essentials

A systems approach

## 1. Navigation

It's a good idea to carry a map and compass - and know how to use them. USGS, Custom Correct and Green Trails<sup>®</sup> all provide useful topographic information, and the latter two show relatively up-to-date trail info. Even if you don't plan on leaving the trail, being prepared is essential.

## 2. Sun Protection

Sunglasses, sunscreen and hats are smart items to carry year-round. While the benefits are obvious on a sunny summer day, these items are useful against glare and sunburn while traveling on snow or under cloudy skies which UV rays may still penetrate.

## 3. Insulation

Pack extra clothing, in anticipation of the worst possible conditions you could encounter on your trip. Weather can change on short notice, and it's not uncommon for temperature (and precipitation) to vary significantly between the trailhead and higher elevations. If done smartly, these items won't add much too much weight to your pack.

Items you should carry (avoid cotton!):

- fleece or wool sweater
- water resistant shell (such as nylon or gore-tex)
- extra hat (wool or fleece)
- mittens or gloves
- extra socks (synthetic or wool)

## 4. Illumination

Remember that it usually gets darker in the mountains earlier, so having a flashlight or headlamp is handy. Headlamps also have the benefit of leaving your hands free. When choosing batteries, consider using rechargeable. Make sure the light won't turn on by itself, and is accessible in case you need to find it in the dark.

## 5. First-aid supplies

A good first aid kit doesn't need to be big and bulky, and many of the basics are items you probably have around the house. Outdoor stores sell a range of kits that vary from a small “envelope” type kit to the larger “box” kits. Depending on the length of your trip and the size of your pack, you can adjust the contents as needed.

Basic first aid kit items:

- Band aids - mainly large fabric type; include butterfly/finger
- gauze pads
- adhesive or athletic tape (to hold gauze in place)
- small tweezers

- moleskin (good for blisters)
- one athletic compression bandage
- one or more triangle bandage (think arm sling)
- antibacterial ointment (small tube is plenty)
- OTC painkiller such as Advil or Tylenol
- OTC antihistamine such as Benedryl
- extra supply (2 dasy) of any prescription medicine

You don't need to take full bottles or rolls! Zip-type bags or photo canisters work great for small objects. Consider taking a first aid course. Workplaces often offer a basic first aid course for employees.

## 6. Fire

Temperatures can drop significantly overnight, and having a means to start an emergency fire will help ensure you maintain warmth if necessary. Waterproof matches, butane lighters and firestarters (candle stubs, chemical heat tabs, canned heat) should be reliable. If you are headed where there may be very little firewood, an ultralight stove is a good source of emergency heat.

## 7. Repair kit and tools

Anything to repair the gear and/or equipment you will be carrying. There are a number of multi-tools out on the market, along with the standard swiss army knife. Other items to consider: shoelaces, safety pins, needle and thread, wire, duct tape and nylon fabric repair tape.

## 8. Nutrition

Even if only heading out for a day hike, nutrition is an important factor in your well-being. In addition to your lunch and snacks, pack a few extra compact food items in case your trip is unexpectedly extended. Choose no-cook foods: fig bars, cheese, nuts, bagels, pop tarts, candy bars, energy bars or packets, etc..

## 9. Hydration

Extra water. Many people forget that we all need a plentiful supply of water each day, and especially when our body is expending extra energy. 1 liter is a minimum quantity for a short day hike; 2.5 for an all-day excursion. Take hot weather and the strenuousness of your outing into account. More heat or effort means more water. And it's not advisable to rely solely on water sources near the trail. If you must use these, be sure to pack a reliable water filtration system.

## 10. Emergency shelter

Most day hikers shouldn't need to carry a tent with them. However, it's a good idea to pack an emergency space blanket. Most of these that are commercially available fold down to a wallet-size packet. For the budget minded, a jumbo size plastic trash bag can also be used to keep out wind and rain.

# hiking safety

## PLANNING

Look at the route description in a guide book before setting out. Note hiking time, route conditions (rocky, exposed, dry, wet). Pack food, clothing, water & gear accordingly. Before setting out, get a weather forecast, read a guidebook, look at a map, and visit the nearest ranger station or visitor center.

## LEAVE THE TRIP SCHEDULE...

with at least one responsible person. Give the name of the trail or a route description, names of people in your party, and expected time of return. (Remember to call this person when you get back!)

## THE HIKING PARTY

The rule of thumb for newcomers is “don't hike alone.” A group of three is usually minimum for backcountry trails.

However, once they have experience, many people do like to hike alone. If you choose to hike solo, the need for training and equipment becomes more important.

## STAY WITH YOUR GROUP

When hiking with a group, do not gallop ahead or wander off by yourself at rest stops ... the others will be peeved if they have to search for you, and there is an increasing possibility that others will *really* become lost.

## DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Even on the warmest summer day, it is NOT a good idea to take just cotton shorts and t-shirt. Synthetic clothing is recommended because it wicks perspiration and dries faster if wet by rain. The Mountaineers recommends lug-soled hiking boots for all hike participants because they provide lots of support, traction and protection.

## FITNESS

To ensure a fun trip, and out of consideration for others in your party, select trips of a distance and grade that are suitable to your current level of conditioning.

## GET TRAINING

Do you *really* know how to use a map and compass? Can you interpret changing weather, splint a broken ankle, and build a fire from wet wood? If not, get some training. Classes In Navigation, Wilderness Travel and First Aid are available through The Mountaineers at reasonable cost. All are welcome.