

GUIDE TO DAYHIKING (Trekking)



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KNOWLEDGE

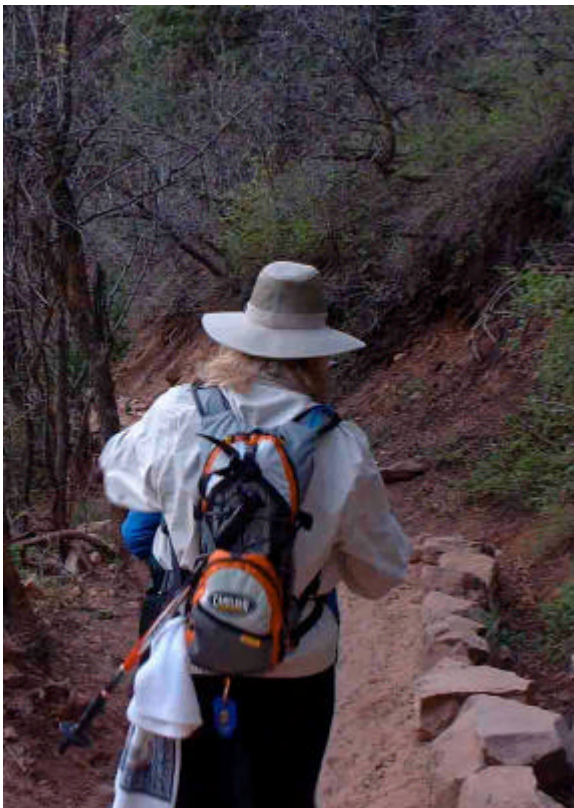
+ PREPARATION

+ PHYSICAL CONDITION

ENJOYMENT

Hiking can be one of the most enjoyable outdoor methods of exercise a person can participate in. Whether the individual is young or old, male or female, an exercise fanatic or a casual walker, the hiker can enjoy the beauty and serenity that nature has provided us. Hiking can give our troubled mind a chance to relax and collect some peace from the problems of everyday life.

In order for a person to get the most enjoyment from the sport of hiking, they should decide how involved they would like to become. There is a great difference between a casual hike around a park to attempting the crossing of the Grand Canyon from rim to rim, and each style of hiking requires different equipment and levels of training. The hiker must remember that Knowledge + Preparation + Physical Conditioning = enjoyment, but should one of those three things be missing, it can mean Disaster. For instance, the National Park Service will recommend that not even the most fit hiker attempt to hike from the rim of the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River and back to the rim in one day. That is because they know that most hikers will overestimate their abilities, and when that situation occurs, it can be disastrous.



Although this handout is designed to inform and educate an individual on some of the requirements for the sport of hiking, nothing can replace actually getting out there and doing it. A hiker should start with easier hikes and work up into more difficult hikes, but before they attempt a high endurance hike, they should get the training required and the advice from a hiker who actually participates in that style of hike. The equipment as well as Physical Conditioning level is much different in every level of hike.

KNOWLEDGE

HIKING ETIQUETTE AND GUIDELINES

1. Everyone is on the trails to enjoy the outdoors so please be considerate of other trail users.
2. Bring plenty of water, especially during the summer months.
3. Always tell someone where you are going and when you are expected to return.
4. All downhill traffic should yield to uphill traffic, no matter what type of user.
5. It is recommended that the hiker stay to the right as often as possible.
6. When passing, announce your intentions.
7. Bicyclists yield to all other trail users.
8. Hikers yield to equestrians.
9. Control your speed at all times.

General Trail Guidelines

1. Stay on the signed and designated trails.
2. Avoid wet or muddy trails.
3. Avoid taking shortcuts, cutting switchbacks, or creating new trails.
4. Keep pets on leash at all times and clean up after them.
5. Be aware of wildlife. This is their home, you are just visiting.
6. Do not discard trash on the trails. If you carry it in, carry it out.
7. Never get off a trail on the downhill side. If you should slip, you would move farther away from rescue.
8. Never attempt a trail that is above the level of your abilities.

Not only are Etiquette and Guidelines necessary for a successful outing, there are many more important things to remember. Not only will a seasoned hiker make sure someone else knows where they will be hiking and when they will return, they will always make sure that they can return to where they start by the most direct route. This is true even if the hiker is not familiar with the trail. This security can be assured by a couple of different methods. One method and the most expensive one is through the use of a GPS positioning device. These can be very good in allowing a hiker to retrace their trail directly, but they are limited by requiring batteries to keep them going. Another method is through the use of cairns. A cairn is a pyramid of rocks stacked by the hiker to lead the way and avoid confusion at forks in a trail, or creek crossings. A hiker should always build their own cairns in order to avoid confusion with cairns left by others. When a hiker returns they should remember to dismantle the cairns they constructed to avoid confusing others.

A knowledgeable hiker also needs to be aware that weather can change abruptly. They need to be alert any time they are hiking in a wadi or any box canyon, even if the weather doesn't appear threatening. A downpour many miles away from the hiker's location can create a flash flood, trapping the hiker in deep, rapid waters.

With dehydration always being a problem, especially in hot weather, a hiker must be aware of the symptoms of upcoming problems. When a person becomes thirsty, they may already be suffering from dehydration. Not only is the problem lack of water in the body, electrolyte depletion is another serious situation. Since weight while hiking is a consideration, powdered sports drink can solve the weight issue. If drinking water is not readily available, a hiker should filter or sanitize with tablets before consuming any creek water.

A hiker should be aware that the trails are open for the enjoyment of everyone. Just because the hiker doesn't meet another person for hours, it does not mean that they are alone. When meeting another hiker, afford them the respect they deserve. If they are ascending, allow them to have the right of way, even if you have to stop to do it. It is always best to stay to the right, but international trail etiquette allows them to select the easiest path for themselves. Whenever overtaking another hiker, remain behind them until it is safe to pass. As the overtaking individual, you are responsible for safety. Do not startle the other hiker by getting too close before passing. Announce your intentions to pass by stating on which of their side you intend to pass.

While hiking, should you observe any equestrian traffic on the trail, move off the trail to a safe location and remain still and quiet until it is safe on the trail to proceed. In the case of mountain bicycle riders, they should allow you the right of way, but do not count on it. Always be safe.

When descending a slope, always control your speed. Where it may be easy to speed up and run, you also take the chance of slipping and falling or worse, knocking another hiker over the edge of the trail. The heavier the pack is that you may be wearing, the harder it is to control your downhill speed.

Always stay on the designated, marked trails. Shortcuts create erosion that will last forever and ruins the area for others. Be aware that wet and muddy trails are not only slippery, hiking them also adds to erosion.

Never discard any trash or anything else anywhere besides trash containers. Some things can ruin the environment forever and be fatal to habitat. **If you bring it in, bring it out.** Take nothing but memories and pictures; leave nothing but tracks.

If you are hiking with a pet, control them. Allowing them to run loose can be a danger not only to them, but also to others. As a responsible hiker, you would also clean up after them should they have to perform their duties.

Be aware of wild life. Should you come upon a snake, give it the right of way. Do not kill the wildlife unless you're life is threatened.

Should you have to go off the trail for any reason, do not go alone. It always helps to have another set of eyes to be alert for poisonous reptiles or other hazards. It also gives you assistance should you become injured. If you are going off a trail that extends across a slope, always go to the uphill side and never to the downhill side. Should you slip, or be injured and fall on the downhill side, you would be getting farther away from rescue.

Knowledgeable hikers will never attempt a trail or hike that is above their physical limits, especially if they are hiking alone. The risk just isn't worth it. Work your way up to the more difficult hikes, and before attempting the most strenuous of hikes, get the opinion of another hiker who has accomplished your proposed hike to make sure that it is within your limits. Also remember, cellular telephones do not work everywhere. Do not count on getting out of trouble by calling 911. On extended hikes remember to take sufficient breaks. While resting, lay in a fashion where your legs are above your heart, allowing the blood circulation to remove the waste products from your muscles.

Make yourself aware of the weather you may encounter. Granted, in the summer you should not encounter ice and snow, the heat, humidity and storms can occur whether predicted or not. Wear the proper clothing, layered if necessary, skin protection, and carry what might be necessary should you have an unexpected delay during your hike. This is especially important on extended hikes.

PREPARATION

Item list (dependent on length of hike)

Ace Bandage	Mole Skin
Analgesic Tablets	Money
Anapestic Hand Soap	Plastic Bags
Anorac Jacket	Powder
Band Aids, First aid kit	Signal Mirror
Batteries	Small Flashlight
Camera (Digital and light)	Sunglasses
Clif Bars	Suntan Lotion
Compass	Survival Knife
Day Pack	Talcum Powder
Electrolyte drink (Powder)	Toilet Paper (Biodegradable)
Emergency thermal blanket	Topographic Map of Area
Extra Socks (3pr)	Trail Mix
Gloves	Trekking Poles
Hat	Water
Heart Rate Monitor	Water Purification Tablets
Hiking Boots	Whistle
Insect Repellent	

The most important item on the preparation list is footwear. Different styles of hiking require different footwear. Where a hike in the park may allow a hiker to wear tennis shoes, a hike of any greater challenge should never be attempted without hiking boots. Not trail shoes, but hiking boots, preferably with a steel shank in the sole and Gortex for wetness. There are three different styles of hiking boot. The high-top, mid-top, and the low top boot. Most of the high-top and mid-top boots have the advantage of being able to tie the boot with varying degrees of tightness of the laces, the lower foot more secure than the ankle; therefore reducing the chance of

losing toenails. A person only has one set of feet, and they will do well if protected with the proper footwear.

Never go to any store to be fitted with hiking boots if there are not experienced hikers to advise you. Never try on boots with any socks different than you will wear while hiking. Always test the boots on a ramp to ensure that your toes will not hit the end of the toe box in the boot. After hiking 14 miles down a slope in poor fitting boots, expect to lose many, if not all, of your toenails.

Footwear is the one area where a hiker should not try to save a buck or two. They will regret it. A proper selection of socks will also come into play, wool socks being more absorbent than cotton and hiking socks being padded in a way to provide the most cushioning where it is needed the most.

Hydropacks are another important item. You will hear controversy about drinking too much water during a hike. In some ways they are correct. Drinking water alone can create problems because the hiker isn't replacing their electrolytes as fast as they are sweating them out. I always encourage mixing water with powdered sports drinks to replenish the body's electrolytes. Not on a 100% basis but at least half-and-half. The length of the hike and the availability of drinkable water will determine the size of the hydropack that is required. I personally have three sizes of Camelbak hydropacks; a 1 quart for winter short hikes, a 2 liter for summer and hikes to 10 miles; and a 3 liter for extended hikes such as a Grand Canyon rim to rim. Even at that, I have to refill at least three times. The larger of the Camelbaks can also substitute as a daypack, holding all one would require for the hike. The drawback with Camelbaks is that they do require frequent cleaning.

I also recommend trekking poles, either one, which is suitable for shorter hikes, or in a pair for longer hikes. Trekking poles have the ability to relieve the knee joints from up to five pounds if they are used correctly. They also can be used to stabilize the hiker while crossing streams. Trekking poles come with two accessories. A mushroom that goes on the bottom of the pole to allow its use in sand and a rubber tip. The tip is designed to be used on a paved trail and should not be used on any other trail. Trekking poles also have a wrist strap. This strap can be a hazard if kept around the wrist. Should the pole become lodged in a crevice, the hiker's arm could be broken very easily. Trekking poles also have the added advantage of reducing hematoma (sausage fingers) in the hands by providing them an active part of the body's motion.

It is always recommended that a hiker wear a hat while hiking. The hat should be ventilated, with a broad enough brim to protect the back of the neck and the ears and have a chinstrap to keep it from blowing off in any wind. Gloves are also worthwhile. Gloves can protect the hiker when getting balance by grasping plants or rocks as well as protect the hands in case of a fall.

A heart rate monitor also can be very useful. It can prevent the hiker from overdoing it physically and putting their body in extremely hazardous state. Most heart rate monitors can also determine time, exercise level and calories burned.

If hiking with a group of other hikers, it is always recommended that two handheld PRS (personal radio service) radios be carried. One should be with the point (front) hiker, and the other with the sweep (last) hiker. As long as the two are in communications, there is less chance of a lost hiker occurring. Make sure both radios are on the same channel with the same access tone before starting.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

The level of your physical condition should always be a determining factor when hiking. It is real easy to miscalculate the difficulty of a trail that we have never hiked. Even if we have hiked the trail before we can sometimes get ourselves in trouble. Therefore we must evaluate our present physical condition prior to taking on any challenge.

A one hour hike around a city park or hiking trail is nothing when put up against the challenge of hiking the Grand Canyon rim to rim in one day. When taking on a challenge such as that, you must condition yourself far greater than the average athlete. You may have to put up with extremes in weather from freezing temperatures on the rim to temperatures in excess of 115 degrees at the bottom. You may encounter rapidly developing storms, which could require you to take cover, or even reverse your direction and return the way that you came in. Heat stress can always be a problem. You must always listen to your body, and not overestimate your abilities.

I always recommend that a hiker work their way up to such a strenuous challenge. It is very satisfying when it is accomplished but can be disastrous if you overestimate your physical conditioning. Remember, even a seasoned hiker in the best of condition is going to be exhausted, with very sore feet, after a hike of that caliber.



It can be difficult while hiking even in the easiest of hikes to remember simple things such as frequent rests, nutrition, and keeping hydrated. It requires even more concentration when a hiker nears exhaustion. This is another reason I would discourage any hiker from attempting this style of hike alone.

Physical conditioning can be worked up slowly. Before progressing too far in conditioning, the hiker should consult their doctor in order to ensure that they can do so safely. A one-hour, moderately level hike is a good place to start. Remember that the normal hiking pace is between 2 and 2 ½ miles per hour. Hiking any faster a pace than that is not necessary. After a hiker has worked his way up to doing a 10-mile to 12-mile hike with varying grades from 10% to 20%, and they can do so in from 5 to 6 hours without feeling like they were dead when done, they might consider a more challenging hike. (Note: The average grade of the Bright Angel Trail in the Grand Canyon from Phantom Ranch to the south rim is 8.447%)

Things to remember when hiking that can affect your physical state:

1. Hydration. Keep hydrated and keep your electrolytes up.
2. Nutrition. Keep eating, both carbohydrates and protein.
3. Exertion. Listen to your body. Don't over do it.
4. Breaks. Don't just keep going; It's a good way to fail.
5. Change Socks. This should be done each 6 to 8 miles.
6. Sun Screen. Sunburn really hurts.
7. Pack properly. Use common sense. Pack for the hike.
8. Getting lost. Adds miles to hike.
9. Blisters/Chaffing. Proper fitting boots and pack.

This handout is not meant to deter anyone from hiking. Its only purpose is to make everyone aware and make the sport of hiking an enjoyable pastime for everyone. Hiking does not have to be limited to only the young. With proper training, almost everyone can enjoy the beauty that is part of nature. Not only is the sport great exercise but the people who participate in it are some of the nicest you could ever meet. Continue to improve and enjoy your new-found hobby.