



## Backpacking HOW TO'S

**How to Stay Dry:** If you get wet you lose body heat 20 times faster than if you are dry. STAY DRY!

- Put away gear when not in use and keep your pack covered at night.
- Wrap your sleeping bag in a plastic garbage bag before you strap it to your backpack.
- Keep rain gear handy, cover yourself and your pack (with pack cover or plastic bag) when rain starts to fall.

**How to stay warm:** It can get below freezing in the mountains so pack accordingly.

- Wear layers, base layer of polypropylene (under armor and similar clothing), fleece layers and outer windproof shell.
- Bring a stocking cap to wear around camp and to bed.
- Bring long underwear for sleeping.

**How to poop in the woods:** leaving no trace and retaining your dignity.

- Select a spot at least 200 feet from water and trails.
- Dig a cat hole 6 to 8 inches deep.
- Make sure everything gets in the cat hole and use a stick to mix waste with dirt, (helps with decomposition. Use toilet paper sparingly. Fill in cat hole.

**How to load your pack:**

- Loosen straps for even packing, tighten straps when loaded to keep loads from shifting.
- Pack your heaviest gear in the middle of the pack and close to your spine for comfort and balance. Sleeping bag on bottom, tent and food in the middle, clothes on top.
- Use soft items to cushion hard objects like stoves and gas bottles. Keep rain gear handy.

**How to cross a stream:** and not go for a swim.

- Undo your pack's belt strap so that if you fall, you can get your pack off quickly
- Change into shoes/sandals for water crossing.
- Face up-stream, the direction the water for maximum stability, cross stepping sideways.
- Use hiking poles for added stability, pass them back for everyone to use.

**What to do for day hikes.**

- If you go for a hike, there must be at least two others with you for safety reasons.
- Pack your day pack with the 10 essentials: Water, Rain Gear, Warm clothes, Food, Flashlight, Sun Screen, Lighter, Knife, Whistle, Map (with knowledge of where you are and where you're going)
- Tell someone where you are going

**How to stay hydrated:**

- Hydrate early, hydrate often
- Clear pee good, yellow pee bad
- Drink at least 4 quarts a day

## Backpacking Gear Tips

- **Boots should feel snug, but comfortable**, so you can still wiggle your toes. Most hiking boots won't feel as instantly comfortable as sneakers, but they shouldn't pinch, cause hot spots, or constrict circulation. They should fit securely around your ankle and instep.
- **For maximum comfort and blister prevention** while hiking or backpacking, wear two layers of socks - a thin polyester sock liner with a thicker outer sock. On overnight or extended trips, be sure to carry enough socks to be able to change into a fresh set each day.
- **Empty your water filter!** After using your water filter, pump it to flush out remaining water.
- **Your goal should be to keep your base weight** (everything but food and water and group gear) below 15 pounds.
- **Minimize condensation in your tent** by keeping the upper and lower vents open and clear from items to allow for proper air circulation.
- **Save room by not packing a pillow.** Put clothes inside your sleeping bag stuff sack to make an instant pillow.
- **Organize your backpack correctly.** Carry clothing, cooking essentials, and food in the main compartment. The heaviest equipment should be stowed toward your back and centered in the pack to provide proper balance. Medium-weight gear should be carried toward the top and outside portion of the pack
- **Sunburns occur many times more rapidly** at higher elevations and even at freezing temperatures, so always take lip balm and sunscreen.
- **After frequent use, waterproof and breathable fabrics** lose their edge. Help restore it by washing them with a mild non-detergent soap, machine drying, and lightly ironing the outer fabric on a medium temperature.
- **Modern performance underwear**, made from polyester or polypropylene, is most effective in moving moisture away from your skin and into outer layers of clothing where it can evaporate.
- **Cotton is the worst thing to wear backpacking!** It may be comfortable for a bit, but once you get wet it absorbs water, is difficult to dry, and loses all insulating value, causing increased heat loss.
- **Before your hiking or backpacking trip**, fire up your stove, check flashlight batteries, and double check everything using a gear checklist.
- **To eliminate friction on your feet**, use a foot lubricant like Bodyglide. You can also use powders such as Gold Bond, BlisterShield, or Zeasorb to keep your feet drier.