

# BACKPACKING

101

# AM I READY?

(PHYSICAL PREPAREDNESS?)

## *What does it entail?*

- Backpacking requires carrying a 25 to 50 pound pack over a variety of terrains, from steep and rocky trails to stream and river crossings.

## *How do I get ready?*

- Aerobic exercise, such as hiking, jogging, and other active hobbies are recommended.
  - Exercising 3 to 5 times per week for 30 to 60 minutes will help prepare you.
- Before embarking on a longer trek, such as to Philmont, one should go on a minimum of three weekend backpacking trips, to ensure they are in sufficient physical shape.

## *Points to consider:*

- Anyone beginning an exercise program should see their physician for a complete exam
  - Although it is possible to exercise individually, it would be more productive to make preparations as a crew. In addition to being more enjoyable, working together as a group will encourage participation and will help develop a spirit of teamwork.

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

(LESSENING YOUR IMPACT)

## **Planning ahead:**

- Know the regulations and concerns for the area you'll be hiking, backpacking, or camping in. Restrictions are based on any past abuse and the special conditions of an area.
  - Camp and travel in small groups. They are quieter and do less damage.
  - Learn how to properly store your food to protect it from bears and other animals.
- Make sure you have a way to properly dispose of your trash (use your Ziploc bags and bring an extra garbage bag).

## **Once you arrive:**

- Stay on designated trails while hiking or backpacking. Walk single file in the center of the path. Leave only the lightest of footprints.
- Hike and camp on durable surfaces (rock, sand, gravel, snow, pine needles, or dry grasses) to prevent vegetation damage and erosion. Have your group spread out while hiking off-trail so that new trails aren't created.

# HOW DO I PLAN THIS THING?

## (PLANNING YOUR FIRST TRIP)

### *Decide on a location and duration:*

- Some destinations are very crowded at certain times of year (e.g. around holidays) and others are inappropriate for backpacking at certain times of the year.
- Beginning backpackers should consider local 1 to 2 night trips to familiarize themselves.
  - Locate appropriate maps, and learn the skills necessary to utilize them.

### *Planning a route:*

- Utilizing the aforementioned map, plan a route that encompasses several characteristics:
  - Adequate access to water
  - Hiking distances that you are confident you can achieve
    - Campsites that will accommodate your group size
- Keep in mind the need for transportation at either end if not hiking in a loop

### *Secure necessary permits:*

- Many locations require obtaining a permit, either by first come first serve, or lottery style drawing.

# WHAT SHOULD YOUR GROUP HAVE?

(GROUP EQUIPMENT)

**Some Notes:**

- This list must be tailored for each individual campout based on the locale and expected weather.
- With respect to all your gear, when you have a choice, always take the smaller or lighter item. Keeping your weight down is critical in backpacking avoid bringing unneeded or heavy gear.

**Group Gear list:**

- Tents (divided among those in each tent)
- Method to filter water (tabs, pump, or UV light)
- Trowel and Toilet Paper
- Detailed map and compass (at least 2 per 8-12 people)
- Bear Bags (typically two per 8-12 people)
- Water bladder (typically two per 8-12 people)
- Optional items: Sunscreen, bug spray, dining fly, folding saw.
- Cooking Pots (typically two per 8-12 people)
- Stove & Fuel (Typically two per 8-12 people)
- Cooking Utensils (tongs, spatula, spoon)
- 2 Large Ziploc Bags, sm. Bottle camp-suds, sm. Scrubbie pad, matches. (inside cook pot)
- Backpacking First Aid Kit (tailored to location and group size)
- Small repair kit ( Needle, floss or thread, safety pins, K tape)



# WHAT DO YOU NEED?

## (PERSONAL GEAR)

### Some Notes:

- This list must be tailored for each individual campout based on the locale and expected weather.
- With respect to all your gear, when you have a choice, always take the smaller or lighter item. Keeping your weight down is critical in backpacking avoid bringing unneeded or heavy gear.
- Remember, synthetic fabrics and wool are key to comfort when backpacking, cotton should never be worn.

### Typical Three-Season Personal Gear:

- **Base Layer:** your preferred underwear and long john top and bottoms
- **Mid Layer:** Short and long sleeve shirts, pants or shorts to hike in.
- **Outer Layer:** fleece or wool sweater or jacket, waterproof rain jacket and pants, Gaiters, Fleece or wool hat and gloves
- **Other:** 2-32oz water bottles, sunglasses, 2-1gal. Ziploc bag, Hat/bandanna.
- **Foot Wear:** lightweight hiking boots or shoes, camp shoes (optional, moccasins, etc.) three pairs of hiking socks
- **Sleep system:** 15-30 degree sleeping bag, sleeping pad
- **Pack:** Internal or external frame, 3-5000cubic inches
- **Other:** Eating bowl and utensils, headlamp & extra batteries. Pocket knife/multi-tool.

# WHAT IF IT RAINS?

(PLANNING FOR THE WEATHER)

## *Know Before You Go:*

- Research the weather patterns of your destination
  - Pack gear to suit the anticipated weather

## *Some tips:*

- Stay cool. Even the best waterproof/breathable shells can cause overheating if you're working hard, making you wet from sweat on the inside.
- Wait it out. If the shower is likely to be temporary—like a passing mountain storm—30 minutes of patience can prevent a day of soggy clothes.
- Make the last hour count. When you have about 30 to 60 minutes of hiking left for the day, assess your comfort and the conditions. Chilled? Increase your pace so you warm up before stopping (otherwise you'll get cold fast in camp). Overheated? Slow down, so you start drying on the trail and don't reach camp with sweaty (read: cold) inner layers.



# HELP, I STUBBED MY TOE!

(HEALTH AND SAFETY)

## Keep in Mind:

- Before rushing to treat an injury, make sure it's safe to do so!
  - Never send the sick or injured down alone.

## Some Common Maladies:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Blisters:</b> Hot spots, the precursor to a blister, are treated by drying and taping immediately, blisters should not be popped, and covered with a moleskin donut</li><li>• <b>Cuts and Scrapes:</b> stop bleeding with direct pressure, irrigate with clean water, and dress wound</li><li>• <b>Burns:</b> Sunburn can be prevented with sunscreen, treated with aloe lotion. Thermal burns can be cooled with water, and burn ointment and gauze applied.</li><li>• <b>Heat exhaustion:</b> symptoms include thirst, profuse sweating, goose bumps and nausea, treat by bringing the patient to a shaded area, giving cool water, and cool compresses.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dehydration:</b> Encourage slow steady consumption of water. Give electrolytes if necessary.</li><li>• <b>Stings/bites/poison Ivy:</b> Utilize bug spray/calamine lotion, remove stinger if bee/wasp. Administer Benadryl if needed.</li><li>• <b>Sprains and strains:</b> Utilize R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) Pain Medication can be given</li><li>• <b>Hypothermia:</b> Indicated by the Umbles (Stumbles, Mumbles, Grumbles, Fumbles. Treat by removing wet clothing, getting the victim to shelter, and warming the victim slowly and passively</li></ul> |
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# I'M HUNGRY!

## (FOOD SELECTION AND PREPARATION)

### Before you buy:

- Backpackers burn 3000 to 4000 calories a day
- This is between 1.5-2.5 pounds of food per day
- Consider nutrition, complex carbs and protein give your body fuel
- Low bulk and weight foods typically come dehydrated or freeze dried
  - Simple and tasty are your goals
- Foods that go bad without refrigeration should be used within the first 24 hours on the trail
  - A simple spice kit can kick your meals up a notch

**Breakfast:** Consider fast hot foods, such as oatmeal, you need energy for your day of hiking.

**Lunch:** Cold meals with meat are your best bet here, sausages that do not need refrigeration, and hard cheeses make great tasty lunches

**Dinner:** Pasta is a hearty dinner that gives you plenty of carbs; however it should be paired with a protein source

### Trail Snacks:

- Snacks such as jerky, energy bars and trail mix are great sources of protein

# LEAVE NO TRACE

1. ***Plan Ahead and Prepare:*** Poorly prepared people, when presented with unexpected situations, often resort to high-impact solutions that degrade the outdoors or put themselves at risk. Proper planning leads to less impact.
2. ***Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:*** Damage to land occurs when surface vegetation or communities of organisms are trampled beyond repair. The resulting barren area leads to unusable trails, campsites and soil erosion.
3. ***Dispose of Waste Properly:*** Though most trash and litter in the backcountry is not significant in terms of the long term ecological health of an area, it does rank high as a problem in the minds of many backcountry visitors. Trash and litter are primarily social impacts which can greatly detract from the naturalness of an area.<sup>[5]</sup> Further, backcountry users create body waste and waste water which requires proper disposal according to Leave No Trace.
4. ***Leave What You Find:*** Leave No Trace directs people to minimize site alterations, such as digging tent trenches, hammering nails into trees, permanently clearing an area of rocks or twigs, and removing items.
5. ***Minimize Campfire Impacts:*** Because the naturalness of many areas has been degraded by overuse of fires, LNT teaches to seek alternatives to fires or use low-impact fires.
6. ***Respect Wildlife:*** Minimizing impact on wildlife and ecosystems.
7. ***Be Considerate of Other Visitors:*** Following hiking etiquette and maintaining quiet allows visitors to go through the wilderness with minimal impact on other users.

