



The Colorado Mountain Club

What to Bring on a Hike

Here we have a compilation of items to bring on a hike. Of course you would not need all of this for hiking the Highline Canal, but most people go way too light. If you are attempting to climb the fourteeners, then before you have climbed all 54 you probably will have needed every item listed here. If you are going on a CMC hike, then you are responsible for providing everything you will need including your lunch. :-)

We start with the old standard "Ten Essentials" followed by [outdoor clothing](#). Then expand on the essentials with a list of [equipment](#) for handling backcountry emergencies. A list of contents for a [minimum first aid kit](#) finishes this section.

Ten Essentials

The special items most hikers believe should always be with you:

1. Map
2. Compass
3. Flashlight/headlamp
4. Extra food
5. Extra clothing
6. Sunglasses
7. First aid supplies
8. Pocket knife
9. Matches
10. Fire starter

This compilation comes from *Mountaineering: Freedom of the Hills*. The Mountaineers.

Outdoor Clothing

The following items are considered essential for a successful outing.

- Boots: Of heavy lug construction, they should fit comfortably snug with free play for toes and with little or no slippage on the heel. The boots should be weather proofed and broken in before hiking.

- Socks: Four pairs recommended; two of lightweight nylon and two of heavy wool. Wear one pair of wool socks over one lightweight pair. The other two pairs go into your pack in case you need dry socks.
- Pants: Constructed to be loose, warm, comfortable, and quick drying. For added warmth, wear polypropylene underwear.
- Shirts: Light, man-made fiber - such as bunting or nylon pile - recommended for good insulating quality and quick drying.
- Jacket: Mountain style with a hood, windproofed, waterproofed, and sized large enough to cover more insulating clothes worn under it.
- Head Covering: Styled to retain body heat or provide shade as changing weather dictates.
- Gloves and Overshell Mittens.
- Rain Gear: A lightweight poncho, or rain pants and hooded parka.

Equipment

The following list of items is designed to support life under any trip emergency in the backcountry, regardless of the season or weather conditions. Learn how to use it. Keep it always in your pack and check the condition of these items periodically. Your life may depend on it.

- Fire starting kits. Bring two or three, each one different, plus cigarette lighter. Make sure they all work in wet, cold, and windy conditions.
- Pocket knife and wire saw. The saw is for cutting large pieces of wood for an emergency fire.
- Space blanket. The space blanket can be used as a wind breaker, heat reflector, and as a signaling device for air rescue. Wave the red side up when standing on snow; the silver side up when standing on dark grounds.
- 3 large plastic leaf bags. For quick rain and wind protection, put one bag over your head, the second around your legs, and the third over your backpack. Make a gap in the first for breathing.
- Low temperature electrician tape. This is handy for general repairs to space blankets, clothing, tents, boots, etc.
- Ensolite pad. Reduce body heat loss by sitting or sleeping on pad instead of cold ground.
- Head lamp with spare bulbs and batteries. A head lamp enables you to use both hands.
- Map and compass plus surveying (flagging) tape. Make sure that you remove the tape on your way out.
- Extra clothing.
- Metal cup to melt snow.
- Extra safe (boiled or filtered) drinking water.
- Extra food.
- Whistle and signal mirror and 100 feet of parachute cord.

- Sun glasses and sun cream.
- First aid kit.
- Toilet paper.
- Snow shovel on trips where snow is expected.

Minimum First Aid Kit

(No.)	Item	Use
(2)	Triangular Bandages	Hold compresses or splints in place.
(1)	"Ace" Bandage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports weakened limb joints. • Holds compresses or splints in place.
(8)	Sterile pads 4"X 4"	Dress large wounds.
(1)	4" bandage compress	Dresses large wounds.
(6)	Band-aids	Treat small wounds.
(1)	Roll of adhesive tape	Holds compress or splint in place.
(4)	Moleskin tape squares	Prevent and treat blisters.
(1)	Antiseptic soap	Cleans wounds
(1)	Tube of sunscreen	Prevents sunburn.
(1)	Tube of chapstick	Prevents dry lips
(1)	Insect repellent	Keeps insects away.
(8)	Aspirin	Relieves aches and pains.
(8)	Antacid	Relieves nausea.
(1)	Small scissors	Cuts moleskin and tape.
(3)	Safety pins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold compresses or splints in place. • Open blisters • Make arm sling from shirt sleeve.
(1)	Tweezers	Remove splinters and ticks.
(1)	Backpack medical guide	
(1)	CMC Accident Report form (To report accidents on Club trips.)	
(1)	Bag or box	Holds all of the above.

From the Summer [Activity Schedule](#) *Trail and Timberline*, No. 904, April 1995.

Backcountry Safety And Survival

The following are pointers for preventing hypothermia, which dulls the brain--the most important key to survival.

Seek and create shelter from cold, wind, snow, and rain.

If possible, retreat to timbered areas for shelter construction and fire.

Use natural shelters: the windless side of ridges, rock croppings, slope depressions, snow blocks, a snow hole at base of standing trees, dense stands of trees, or under downed trees.

Improvise a windbreak or shelter from: stacked rocks or snow blocks, tree trunks, limbs, bark slabs and evergreen boughs, or dig a snow cave or snow trench with a cover.

Use equipment in the emergency [equipment list](#).

Conserve, share, and create warmth.

Conserve body heat by putting on extra clothing. Replace damp undershirt and socks. Place damp wool clothing over dry wool clothing. Loosen boot laces to increase circulation. Place feet with boots on in a pack. Use ensolite pad or evergreen boughs to insulate body from ground. Place hands in armpits or crotch.

Share body heat.

Sit or lie front to back or back to back. Warm hands and feet of injured person or companions.

Create body heat.

Nibble high energy goods--candy, nuts, granola bar. Sip water kept warm with body heat. Use solid fuel hand warmer, igniting both ends of fuel stick, which is good for four hours of heat. Do isometric exercises to stir up body's circulation system.

Build a fire.

Find dry wood--dead lower branches and bark from underside of trees. Look under downed trees and inside dead logs for dry kindling. Wet wood will burn as it dries in a

strong fire.

Select a sheltered area, protected from strong winds, as the site for an emergency campfire. Under snow conditions build a fire base first, with large, four-inch diameter or larger pieces of wood (use your wire saw from your [Emergency Equipment](#) package). Put fire starter on the base, surround a fire starter with branches to hold kindling above the fire starter, then place a hatchwork of kindling and slightly larger wood on the branches. Light fire starter and blow lightly to help its flame ignite kindling. Add progressively larger wood to the flame area.

Prevent heat loss.

Remember the body loses heat by **respiration, evaporation, conduction, radiation, and convection.**

To prevent loss by **respiration**, cover the mouth and nose with loosely woven or knit wool.

To reduce **evaporation** through excessive perspiration, wear clothes that breathe and are in layers.

To avoid loss by **conduction**, use the ensolite pad-and/or other cover between the body and a cold, wet surface. This insulation is particularly important if you're already wet.

To prevent loss by **radiation**, keep the head, hands, and feet covered.

To prevent loss by **convection**, protect the body from the wind.

Look for hypothermia symptoms.

In stage one, the victim begins shivering, has poor coordination, slurs speech, and shows poor judgment. By stage two, when the body temperature is below 95 degrees, muscular rigidity replaces shivering, and the victim becomes more irrational and needs warmth immediately from external sources and protection from further heat loss. Know that the victim is the LAST to realize s/he's in danger.

Send for help.

If you need to send for help, review the situation and evaluate the facts as you outline information for a rescue group. If possible, send two who will mark the route on the way out and note the terrain, distance, and time from the accident site to the road.

Once the two reach a telephone, they should call either a park ranger, if in a national park, or the local county sheriff, who, in turn, will alert Rescue Groups. Be sure the Rescue Group gets the number of the calling telephone and a definite place to meet the

callers who will lead them back to the accident site.

Prepare for the worst and plan for the best.

Our hope is that you will not have to use this information, but with it and the regular hiking and emergency equipment and the minimum first aid kit, you will be prepared to survive.

From the Summer [Activity Schedule](#) *Trail and Timberline*, No. 904, April 1995.
