

The Ten Essentials for Hiking

A Seattle-based hiking organization called the Mountaineers, recommends everyone carry the following ten essential items.

This is a systems based approach. An individual wouldn't carry all of these items, but would select those that are appropriate for the wilderness trip. That said, each of the ten categories should be considered.

1. **Navigation.** Topographic map and assorted maps in waterproof container plus a magnetic compass, optional altimeter or GPS receiver.
2. **Sun protection.** Sunglasses, sunscreen for lips and skin, hat, clothing for sun protection.
3. **Insulation.** Hat, gloves, jacket, extra clothing for coldest possible weather during current season.
4. **Illumination.** Headlamp, flashlight, batteries. LED bulb is preferred to extend battery life.
5. **First-aid supplies,** plus insect repellent.
6. **Fire.** Butane lighter, matches in waterproof container, tinder, firestarting kit.
7. **Repair kit and tools.** Knives, [multi-tool](#), scissors, pliers, screwdriver, trowel/shovel, duct tape, cable ties.
8. **Nutrition.** Add extra food for one additional day (for emergency). Dry food is preferred to save weight and usually needs water. NOTE: In desert conditions, it is recommended that additional water be carried rather than extra food.
9. **Hydration.** Add extra 2 liters of water for one additional day (for emergency).
10. **Emergency shelter.** Tarp, [bivouac sack](#), [space blanket](#), plastic tube tent, jumbo trash bags, insulated sleeping pad.

The Mountaineers recommend supplementing the *ten essentials* with:

- [Portable water purification](#) and water bottles.
- Signaling devices, such as a [whistle](#), [mobile phone](#), two-way [radio](#), [satellite phone](#), unbreakable [signal mirror](#) or [flare](#), laser pointer.
- Toilet paper & trowel (toilet paper doubles as tinder for starting fires).
- [Ice axe](#) for glacier or snowfield travel (if necessary).

Many experts recommend having duplicates of the *ten essentials* in different sized kits: in pockets, on key rings, in pocket kits, belt pouches, [belt packs](#), day packs, and [backpacks](#). This provides backup protection should you become separated from your pack.