

## Advice for New Hampshire Hikers

*Many summits in White Mountain National Forest look so close, and they really are. But they're also quite deadly to those who underestimate them and the rugged, rock-strewn trails that lead us to them. Especially those peaks that rise above "treeline" into the alpine zone. This desolate, wind-scoured, crazy weather zone is beyond surreal in its beauty, laden with rare and delicate species of flora and fauna, but there winter can happen on any day. It's okay to turn around.*

### 1. Do your homework

In addition to buying a hiking map, which are available through various outlets, do consider a guidebook. The AMC White Mountain Guide and its maps are a good place to start covering pretty much all there is. Without a map and some basic info about the trail and mountain you're on, you're setting yourself up for failure, or worse. Get trained.

### 2. Gear up right

Make sure you're properly prepared for the day, and beyond. From what you wear on your person to what you bring with you. When hiking one must consider the possibility of staying in the mountains longer than expected and be prepared for this eventuality. Also, as it says above, up there winter can happen on any day so you need to be ready.

### 3. Go with others

One common problem we see a lot in search and rescue is people going it alone (or groups splitting up). Which is never a problem until something unexpected happens, such as a minor injury. Even a simple twisted ankle can be a big problem when you're miles from the safety of the trailhead; delay is inevitable. It's always best to hike with others, and stay with them.

### 4. Know your limits

Try not to push yourself beyond your physical or experiential limits. Perhaps at the gym you can work yourself half to death and crawl to your car afterward, but that's not so easy in the mountains. You need to have reserves.

### 5. Respect the mountains

It is said that the mountains will be there another day. Thus, if weather closes in — which can happen with frightening speed in the mountains — or the hour is getting late, or you're simply not feeling 100%, turn back. Come back another day. Don't succumb to "summit fever."

### 6. Keep track and enjoy

We have come to learn over the years that hiking in the White Mountain National Forest can be addictive as one tries to pursue various "peakbagging" lists. We suggest, early on, that hikers be thorough and keep track of everything. Also be sure to enjoy the experience to the fullest. We'd like to tell you to slow down and smell the flowers along the way, so to speak, but there is a overriding sentiment that will prevent us from doing so and that is HYOH — hike your own hike. If you like speed and challenge, go for it. If you like to dawdle, then go for that, instead.

## The Good Hiker

*Since many people share the use of the mountains and the trails on them, there are certain things you should and probably shouldn't be doing. Much of this, we hope, is common sense.*

### > Reduce impact

Reduce impact by staying on trails, camping and having fires where allowed, not building cairns, etc. Also reduce impact to others by not shouting, keeping groups small, etc.

### > Leave no trace

Littering is unacceptable. Carry in, carry out. Includes fruit peels, nut shells, even toilet paper. Feces may be buried, but remove bagged poop. Ref: [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

### > Leash your dog

Verbal control is not enough. Since some people are scared of dogs, no matter how "friendly" they are, it's considerate to physically control them.

### > Yield to others

Since you will have better oversight, yield to hikers coming up when you're descending a narrow trail. Large groups should yield to others, regardless.

If you're unsure, being guided is always an option. Call 603-617-8788

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On most hikes, in addition to the layering of purpose-built **non-cotton** hiking clothes and having **good footwear**, please bring the following gear:

# The Essentials 13

**1. Map\* and compass** (Items marked with \* are required.)  
A hiking map at the least.

**2. Extra clothing\***  
Mountain weather is unpredictable and typically a lot colder.

**3. Extra food\* and water\***  
Food's energy, water's life, and it'll take longer than you think.

**4. Headlamp\***  
Spare batteries or better yet, a second headlamp.

**5. First aid kit**  
Think aspirin, Benedryl, medicines, and items to treat for trauma.

**6. Whistle, noise maker**  
Keep handy while hiking; check for sternum-strap buckle whistle?

**7. Knife/multitool**  
Stuff breaks, needs arise, people use tools and have for a while.

**8. Lighter, metal match, firestarter**  
Fire can satisfy so many basic needs, be able to create it.

**9. Cord or rope**  
For building, improvising, mending a break, and more.

**10. Rain pants/jacket (or a poncho)\***  
Staying dry is extremely important. Proper rain gear will help.

**11. Tarp or bivy**  
To create shelter, a simple tarp can be a useful thing to have.

**12. Foam sleeping pad**  
The ground is colder than you, and hard. A pad is the solution.

**13. Sun protection\***  
SPF 30, UV-protected sunglasses, and even a floppy hat.

## Notes About Self-Care

Having all of the gear above won't help you if you don't take care of yourself and others in your group. Be **rested**, stay **covered**, continue to **eat** and **drink** water. Try to remain **self-aware**.

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**Stay Safe**

FREE TAKE ONE

## Information for safe hiking in the White Mountain National Forest

We want you to enjoy your time in the White Mountains safely. This booklet can help. In it you will find helpful tips and safety information. To begin, here are a few useful phone numbers:

- Emergencies: **9-1-1**
- US Forest Service: **603-536-6100**
- NH Fish and Game: **603-271-3421**
- AMC Trails Desk: **603-466-8116**
- Leave No Trace: **800-332-4100**
- Mt Wash Observatory: **603-356-2137**

To access several useful websites, please scan the QR code shown or point your web browser to:



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