

# DAY HIKERS CHECKLIST

*Suggested for 3 season (spring, summer and fall) hiking in the Canadian Rockies.*

- day pack – lined with garbage bag for water proofing
- water bottles or water bladder system (2 L capacity recommended)
- water purification chemicals or filter (optional)*
- lunch and high energy snack food (enough for 24 hours)
- map and compass, *GPS (optional), guidebook (optional)*
- hiking poles (optional)*
- hiking boots – well broken in and water proofed
- synthetic liner socks and heavier hiking socks (wool or synthetic)
- gaiters
- waterproof (& breathable) outer layer – jacket with hood and pants
- warm, insulating layer (top and bottom) appropriate for weather
- wear quick dry, wicking (inner) layer top and bottoms
- toque, gloves or mitts, *rain proof over mitts (optional)*
- sun hat
- sun screen and lip balm – SPF 15 or higher
- sunglasses – UVA and UVB protection
- insect repellent (optional)*
- toilet paper and zip lock bags (for garbage)
- head lamp or small flashlight
- matches/ lighter, *firestarter (optional)*
- pocket knife
- ½ meter of duct tape – rolled onto itself or around water bottle
- tarp and cord (optional)*
- ‘sit upon’ - *small pad to sit on (optional)*
- personal first aid kit
  - blister supplies (compeed, moleskin, second skin, etc.)
  - bandaids, gauze and tape
  - antiseptic (alcohol) swabs
  - scissors, tweezers
  - triangular bandage
  - elastic bandage
  - anti-inflammatory (e.g. Advil) and pain killer (e.g. Tylenol)
  - personal medications
- bear spray (optional)*
- camera (optional)*
- binoculars (optional)*
- SKYLINE HIKERS YELLOW MEDICAL CARD (filled out and sealed in a zip lock bag)



**TIP** - You don't need your whole wallet and all of your keys! Just put critical items in a zip lock bag and then secure it in your pack.

## CLOTHING

Because of the variable and often extreme weather in the Canadian Rockies a system of LAYERED clothing works best. The layering technique will allow you to put on and take off clothing as needed to regulate your body's temperature while hiking. This minimizes the risk that your clothing will become damp and thus you becoming cold when you stop to rest or if the weather changes. The layers should allow for ventilation, insulation and protection.

NOTE for Skyline Hikers: This is a list of clothing suitable for your hiking activities during the week and does not reflect additional other clothing that you may want in camp. See the "Recommended Articles" provided with your registration package for a complete listing. For the hike into camp wear an inner layer appropriate for the weather forecast. Carry a suitable middle layer and your outer layer clothing in your day pack – DO NOT pack it in your duffel. This will protect you if the weather turns bad on the hike and will give you something warm to wear if your duffel is late arriving into camp.

### Inner Layer

The first layer against your skin must work in cooperation with your body's natural heating and cooling processes. The clothing you choose should provide wicking capability – where the fabric pulls moisture away from your skin and then dries quickly. This leaves a dry air space near your body which helps keep you warm when it's cold out, and cool when it's hot out. Generally you want your inner layer to fit close, but not tight, to your body. Wicking fabrics are synthetic fabrics, such as polypropylene, polyester and nylon; and natural fabrics such as merino wool and silk. They come in several weights (silk, light, mid, heavy and expedition) for use in response to various temperatures. Some brand names include Polartec, Windstopper, CoolMax, Thermadry, Capilene, HyperDry, MTS2, and Icebreaker.

The exact type of clothing and fabric you select will depend on your personal preference, budget, weather, and trail conditions. If you don't want to spend money on new clothes for hiking check your closet for clothing which is 50% cotton/50% polyester blend, polyester or nylon.

Skyline Hiker Suggestion:-

- 1 – 3 quick dry, light to mid weight, short-sleeved T-shirts made of wicking fabrics
- 1 or 2 quick dry, light to mid weight long-sleeved T-shirts or button up hiking shirts to protect from sun, bugs, branches or cooler conditions
- 1 or 2 pair quick dry shorts, pants or zip-offs (pants which convert to shorts)

### Middle Layer

In cool or cold weather one or several layers of clothing may be used for insulation – you are trying to keep the cold out and regulate how much of your body heat you retain. The insulating layer traps air which helps retain body heat – so select clothing which is neither too tight (no air spaces) nor too loose (drafty). With layering you can add and subtract insulating layers as required for the weather conditions and activity level. A light insulating layer in summer may include selections of mid, heavy or expedition weight inner layer clothing. Pile, fleece, wool, primaloft or down jackets or vests are good examples of warmer insulating layers. Cotton clothing is not recommended. Some brand names include Polartec, Windstopper, Wind Pro Fleece, Thermal Pro and Merino Wool. Don't forget that weather can be highly variable in

mountainous terrain, bringing everything from hot sunny conditions to snow flurries, sometimes in a single day.

Skyline Hiker Suggestion:

- 1 – 2 heavy weight inner layer long-sleeved shirt or long underwear top
- 1 mid weight insulating jacket (e.g. fleece or primaloft jacket)
- 1 – 2 light to mid weight insulating pants (e.g. lycra tights, long underwear bottoms, light weight fleece pants)
- light weight toque
- gloves or mitts

### **COTTON KILLS!**

Please remember this dramatic statement. While cotton is a very comfortable fabric on a hot sunny day it can quickly become your worst enemy when conditions turn cool and wet. Cotton has virtually no insulating value when it gets wet. Worse yet, it readily soaks up perspiration, takes forever to dry and will sap away your body's energy and warmth trying to do so.

If you want to hike in a cotton t-shirt please ensure you carry a non-cotton shirt to change into if the weather turns cool or if you get wet. Hiking in jeans, cotton sweats & hoodies, cotton canvas pants etc is not recommended.

### Outer Layer

In wet, windy, snowy or otherwise changeable and extreme weather an outer protective or shell layer must be worn over your inner (wicking) and middle (insulating) layers. Thus wear your inner and middle layers when trying on outer layers at the store. The goal is to protect your body from wind, cold and moisture. When choosing a shell layer consider its waterproofness, breathability and durability.

For downpours and prolonged wet conditions you may want a fully waterproof outer layer. Select garments made of polyurethane coated nylon which is fully waterproof but does not tear as easily as other fabrics such as poly vinyl. Remember though, that fully waterproof garments do not breathe, and thus perspiration will be trapped and absorbed by your inner and mid clothing layers when you are exerting energy hiking. Eventually you will get wet from the inside and then risk getting cold.

Thus a better option for hiking is to select a waterproof and breathable fabric made from microporous membrane materials such as Gore Tex, Entrant, Helly-Tech, Ultrex and H2NO. This type of fabric allows water vapor (perspiration) to escape from the inside, while preventing water penetration from the outside. When selecting a waterproof breathable garment consider the durability of the outer fabric compared to the hiking you will be doing. For example, a lighter weight outer fabric may be great if your hiking is on trails and in open country, but a heavier fabric may be preferred if you do a lot of walking in heavy bush.

Regardless of which type of outer layer you select, consider the following beneficial features:

- a hood on your jacket is essential – there are fully attached and detachable options, and some fold into the collar

- pit zips – under arm zipper system which can be opened to help with ventilation
- pockets – look at the size and location – lower pockets are often inaccessible and often uncomfortable under a hip belt so breast pockets may be preferred
- 2 way, full leg zips – this will allow you to get your pants on over your hiking boot and allow you to open the top zippers to help with ventilation
- storm flaps over zippers, pockets or other openings (note some new styles have sealed zippers negating the need for storm flaps and reducing bulk)
- seams are sealed
- openings like neck, cuffs, and waist can be sealed against bad weather (e.g. with drawcord)

#### Skyline Hiker Suggestion:

- 1 gore tex or similar waterproof breathable jacket with hood
- 1 gore tex or similar waterproof breathable pants, with full length zippers
- gaiters – make sure they fit over your hiking boots
- rain proof over mitts

#### Socks

The choice of socks seems to have the highest degree of personal preference of all hiking clothes. There are many brands and equally as much price range. Unless you know what you want the best approach is to buy one pair and try them out on a day hike.

A two sock system is good for blister prevention, as rubbing occurs between the layers of the socks, rather than on your skin. A thin liner sock should be worn against your skin. It will be made of a synthetic material which wicks moisture away from your foot, and then dries quickly. Liner socks are normally made of polypropylene, nylon or acrylic fabrics, or very light-weight wool. The outer sock serves two purposes – insulation and cushioning. There are many different brands of both wool and synthetic fabric, including SmartWool, Thurlo, Wigwam, EcoWash, Teko, New Zealand Sock Company and Fox River. If hiking for several days it is useful to have three pairs of outer socks – one to wear, one to dry (if needed) and one in reserve (always dry).

For day hiking the ‘so called’ light hiking or trekking socks are appropriate. Some styles have extra padding at the ball of the foot and heel, and provide support under the arch. Be sure to try your socks with your boots! Avoid wearing cotton socks for hiking. Cotton absorbs and retains moisture, thus increasing the risk of blisters and getting cold feet.

#### Accessories

Carry gloves or mitts to keep your hands warm in wind, rain, snow and cold weather. Look for quick drying materials with insulating properties such as fleece or polypropylene. There are a variety of very light gloves which are handy for cools and windy but not cold days. Gore tex is a good choice for overmitts.

If hiking in scree or other rough, rocky terrain a pair of leather, work-style gloves is strongly recommended to protect your hands in the event of a fall.

Protect your head in cool weather with a light weight toque of quick dry fabric such as fleece or polypropylene. A sun hat is equally essential to keep your head, face and neck cool and protected from the sun’s burning rays. A light bandana or tube can be useful to keep with wind off your neck and face when the weather is cool, and as sun protection when it is hot.

Gaiters are very useful, some would say essential, for hiking in wet rainy or snowy conditions. Recommended are full length gaiters (which come up to just below the knee) but shorties are also available (come up a few inches above the boot). Make sure you get the right size to fit over your hiking boot. Consider purchasing goretex or other waterproof gaiters as the nylon variety will get wet quickly. There are 2 main styles, opening in front or back. Most have a draw string or strap to tighten at the top, a hook to attach to your boot lace near the toe, and a tie or strap which loops under the boot. For summer hiking mud will often build up on the tie/strap under the boot so it is useful if this feature can be removed if desired.

- ☺ Note that most synthetic fabrics used in outdoor clothing are very flammable and melt easily. Thus caution is advised if you will be wearing it near a camp fire.

## FOOTWEAR

Footwear is the most important item for your day hiking activities. If your feet hurt due to improperly fitting boots you will suffer not only during your hike but probably for days afterwards. A hiking boot requires a good fit, to avoid blisters; a stiff sole to provide comfort and agility when hiking over rocks and roots and a lugged sole for good traction.

Select good fitting, light- or medium- weight hiking boots that have been well broken in and waterproofed before the first hike. These are typically called “day hiking boots” at your outdoor store. These boots are made for rough trails, they offer moderate support sufficient for carrying a day pack, and good traction. The sole will normally be Vibram - test how stiff it is by gripping the sole at the heel and toe, and try to bend and twist it. If it twists easily it is not stiff enough and your feet will be sore and tired by the end of a hike day. Alternatively avoid heavier and stiffer backpack boots as they will slow down your day hiking considerably. The boots uppers will be made of soft, split grain leather or of a combination of leather and fabric. Some styles are lined with a waterproof membrane, such as Gore-Tex. Full leather boots can be treated to provide waterproofness. Only select a combination leather/fabric boot if it has a waterproof membrane, and this type of boot cannot otherwise be made suitably waterproof for the trail.



In order to avoid blisters, foot cramps and toe nail bruising your boots must be a good fit – proper length, width and depth (bottom to top of foot). When buying boots be sure to spend a lot of time trying out various styles and sizes in the store. Don't be shy about trying on every pair of boots in the store if needed. Men's and women's boots are designed on a different 'last' which generally allows for a better fit for women than the 'gender neutral' boots which are designed on a men's last. Even when you think you have the right size, try a size up and down to see how the fit changes. If possible shop late in the day when your feet are most swollen; and wear the type of socks you expect to be using when hiking. Make sure to try the boots with any orthotics or special insoles you use. Also, only shop at a store which allows you to wear the boots at home (indoors) for a week or two and return them if they do not work out.

At the store walk around as much as possible in the boots, and especially up and down stairs and ramps (normally one is provided where boots are sold) checking to see if your foot slips forwards or backwards in the boot. You want the boot to feel secure but not tight, normally you will be able to just slide a finger in the back of your boot above your heel. Squat down a few times. Questions to ask yourself include: Is there any slippage? How does the boot feel around your ankle, and across the toes and instep? How is the width of the toe box and heel area? Is the arch support in the right place? Are there any pinch points? Does the boot cuff (around your ankle) press uncomfortably against your Achilles tendon? How easy is it to get the boot on and laced up? When you are walking can you feel a natural pivot or rock point under the ball of your foot? What does it feel like when you push off to the side, stand up on your toes, or stop suddenly? Remember, if it does not feel right when you put the boot on, then it's not right! Don't try to convince yourself that it will fit better when broken in.

When you get your boots home wear them indoors for a week or two, for as many hours at a time as possible. This will give you an idea of how they will feel after some time on the trail. Once you are sure they are suitable, follow any recommended care instructions that came with your boots, and then get out hiking – it's the best way to break your boots in. Start slow though, with short walks, so you can minimize the risk of blisters.

### Waterproofing

Check your boots and follow any manufacturer's specific recommendations for waterproofing.

Water-based treatments are popular for full-grain leather, nubuck, and suede boots, even if they have a Gore-Tex or similar lining. Waterproofing is best applied to damp (not wet) boots – as the boots dry the waterproofing agent is absorbed into the leather. Water-based wax and silicon treatments are available. Oil-based treatments are not recommended as they soften the leather and it may stretch or lose stiffness and support.

Waxes are the most frequently used treatments, although they can darken leather. Ideally boots will have been previously worn or buffed with a brush to remove factory applied protective materials. Waxes work best when the boot is room temperature warm, and they are applied thinly and evenly with your fingers. Once the wax has soaked in check the boots for 'bare spots' and apply additional coats as needed. Silicon treatments are best applied when your boots are new and unworn. Hand apply to boots at room temperature. Silicon allows better breathability for leather footwear than wax treatments, but may not condition as effectively. Wax-based treatments that contain silicon offer excellent water repellency and durability.

NOTE - Your boots should never be dried in the oven, close to a fire, by a heater or even in the very hot sun, as this dries out the leather and may shrink the boots.

## PACKS

Day packs, generally 20 – 35 L in size, are designed to carry light loads, supported mainly on the shoulders. Thus, it is important to select a pack with good shoulder padding that will last. Try the pack on when it is full and has a bit of weight. Think about how the straps feel – do they curve around your shoulders comfortably, and are the buckles below your arm pit but not rubbing on your arm. And think about how the pack feels against your back – contoured comfortably is best. Other useful features to consider include a waist/hip belt, some padding for your back, a chest strap and any mesh etc. designed to help keep your back as dry while hiking. Avoid book bags or travel packs which tend to be less comfortable and functional for hikers.

Packs are made with tough, abrasion resistant fabrics. Nylon is used because of its' strength but UV rays, dirt, perspiration, mildew and bug repellent can cause it to break down. Common fabrics include cordura (highly abrasion-resistant nylon; the heaviest and toughest or pack fabrics), ripstop nylon (very tough; lighter than cordura) and packcloth (lighter than cordura, has a smooth finish and shed moisture). Often packs will have lighter weight fabrics in low impact areas, and then more durable fabrics in high impact areas such as the base. Pack fabrics are normally waterproofed with a polyurethane coating bonded to the inside of the fabric. However, this normally makes your pack water resistant, and not fully water proofed. Pack colour is a personal preference but it is harder to see items inside a darker coloured pack.



When selecting a day pack you will have options such as top load vs front load, linear (rectangular) vs tear-drop shape, and various types of pockets and outside attachment points. Think about what you will be carrying and pack functionality. Women sometimes prefer tear-drop style packs because of their shorter back and narrower shoulder profile. Top loaded packs have some advantages over front loaded packs – no zippers to break, easier to waterproof with a garbage bag, and more expandability if you need to carry extra gear. On the other hand, it takes you longer to dig down and find something in the bottom of your pack. Consider minimal outer pockets – pockets add weight, zippers break, and items inside need to be in bags for waterproofing. However a few strategically placed outer pockets (such as the lid of the top load pack) are essential for quick access items like maps, sun cream and snacks. A few outside lash points and some mesh pockets make it easier to attach items such as hiking poles when they are not needed. Also, look for compression straps which can be tightened when carrying smaller loads. Some packs have specifically designed pockets for water bladders.

## OTHER GEAR

**Hiking poles** help with climbing, descending, and footing. They provide a third (and fourth) point of contact to give you balance in rough terrain and when crossing creeks. They will also help to significantly reduce stress on your knees. Select poles which are light weight but durable and which are telescopic. Ideally the poles, when fully collapsed, could be easily attached on the side or back of your pack and not stick up above your head height. Most poles come with a pointed tip, although some have a blunt end which is useful when walking mainly on firm surfaces (such as pavement or rocky trails). Make sure to try out the grip and ensure a comfortable fit with your hand and wrist. Ensure the adjustable wrist straps will fit over mitts.

**Head lamps** are useful to carry in the event that you get caught out after dark and are preferred over flashlights because they keep both hands free. Select a high-intensity LED light source – it will be compact, shock resistant and long lasting. For example a 3 bulb LED light provides about 10 m of trail illumination and lasts for 180 hours on 4 AA batteries.

A **compass** (and topographic map) are essential for off-trail back country travel, and are recommended for trail hiking. Of course you must also know how to use them for navigation. Select a sighting compass on which you can set the declination. A 'global needle' is only needed if you will use the compass overseas. Skyline Hikers don't generally need a compass but should carry the provided hiking map stored in a zip lock bag for protection.

**GPS** (Global Positioning System) units have become very popular with hikers and other back country enthusiasts. The GPS is a receiver that reads signals from overhead satellites to provide positioning. Most units have the same basic navigation features. When choosing a GPS think about the size and weight of the unit compared to your intended use. The smaller units have a smaller antennae and can lose satellite coverage in dense forests, narrow valleys or even heavy snow storms; but they are generally OK if hiking in open mountain terrain. Also important, think about the size of the screen and how easy it is to read, and see if you can work the buttons with your mitts on. Regardless of the unit you select remember that it should always be used as a navigation tool TOGETHER with a compass and topographic map.

A pocket **knife** (or multi-tool) is useful for a variety of purposes, from fixing lunch to first aid to gear repair. Be selective about features - lighter and more basic is almost always better. A single, good size blade is the basic need and then perhaps some fold away scissors (replaces scissors in your first aid kit). Optionally a small screw driver blade and pliers might be useful for gear repairs, especially if skiing or snow shoeing, and an awl is handy when repairing packs, straps or clothes. Unless you plan on carrying a bottle of wine the corkscrew is not very useful! Attach a bright colored lanyard (string) to your knife so you can secure it to your pack and for visibility.

A '**sit upon**' is a very useful item in your pack – it will keep your bum warm during lunch, provide against your back, and in an emergency can be slept on overnight or used as a splint for first aid. You can purchase ready made versions, such as a handy blow up style by Termarest. Or you can make your own from a variety of materials such as ensolite (sleep pad material) or carpet underlay. Select something with good insulation value, and that won't absorb water (or cover it with plastic). Make it big enough to sit on, but not so large as it's a pain to carry (say about 18x18").