

NOTES ON EQUIPMENT FOR HIKING THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers what we have found to be essential for your safety and comfort. You may not use everything you bring, however, you need to come prepared for all possible weather conditions. You will be carrying a daypack that is large enough to hold your water, camera, rain gear, snacks, and an extra piece of warm clothing. Please line your daypack with a durable plastic bag to keep your belongings dry.

Daypacks: We recommend a daypack with a capacity of between 2100 and 3480 cubic inches. Before you leave home check to be sure that your daypack is comfortable to wear all day and that there is space for all of your items. Please note that a fannypack is **not** large enough to hold all of the items you will need for the day.

Footwear: Well-fitting, sturdy boots are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes *before* your trip. For general trekking in the White Mountains, lightweight cordura or leather boots work well. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they are lined with Gore-Tex. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, you'll find that leather boots give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain than cordura boots.

Clothing: Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. The layering procedure begins with a BASE LAYER of silk or "lightweight" synthetic long underwear and liner socks. These materials draw moisture away from the skin (this is called "wicking") and help keep you dry and therefore warmer. Some synthetic materials that we find work well include Capilene, Thermastat, polypropylene, Driclime, Helly Hansen, and Ultrawick. Over the base layer wear a second, MEDIUM-WEIGHT layer on your upper body such as "expedition-weight" Capilene or Polartec. Over the second layer, add a third HEAVY-WEIGHT layer. This should be a thick material such as wool, or fleece. The fourth and final layer is called the OUTER LAYER. This layer is for protection from wind and rain. You will need a parka or jacket made of a coated nylon or a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex, HellyTech, Membrane, H2No, or Ultrex. **Be sure it keeps water out.** Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put on your daypack; can you still raise your arms?

Fabric names: Synthetic fabrics are often specified on this equipment list: Capilene, Thermastat, Polartec and Gore-Tex. In addition, there are many other patented brand names used by different manufacturers, which can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities and having a variety of weights available to you as your layering system. They really *are* miracle fabrics. Wool is also a very good choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy. It also doesn't absorb the odors the way many synthetic materials do. You can also buy less expensive wool clothes at a second hand or Army/Navy store. Cotton is not a good choice! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

Hydration: For hiking trips it is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are hiking you will need to be able to drink water frequently without having to remove your pack. One method is to have a water bottle attached to your waist strap. Another option is to use a **HYDRATION SYSTEM** such as CamelBak, Platypus, and Gregory bladder bags which are simply a collapsible water bag with a hose attachment that you drink from. These fit inside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder where you can access your water without the use of your hands. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water. Instead of carrying 2 one-quart water bottles you could carry one 70 oz. bladder bag.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters. Here are three companies that offer mail order service and have internet "stores" (often with special deals):

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840 for catalogue
website: www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231 for catalogue
website: www.emsonline.com

Campmor
800-226-7667 for catalogue
website: www.campmor.com

Another company that often has discounts on seconds and discontinued items and also has an excellent return policy is Sierra Trading Post. Their number is 1-800-713-4534 and their web site is www.SierraTradingPost.com. **We have links to REI and Sierra Trading Post on our website on the affiliates page of our Resources section.** You may also want to visit your local Army/Navy surplus store and thrift stores such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army.