



Important Hiking Tips for Beginners

Beginner hikers and advanced adventurers alike can benefit from reviewing and sharing this list.

Disclaimer: *The information provided on this page serves as general recommendations for visitors to the White Mountains region. The White Mountains Attraction Association and its employees are not experts or professionals in the outdoor recreation field, and are not liable for any accident, injury, or fatality resulting from outdoor recreation.*

- ✓ Always file your hiking plan with a friend or family member, including your chosen route and return time. Don't change your route or extend your trip partway through your travels. Set a firm time for when your point of contact should alert authorities if you have not checked in with them.
- ✓ Study your route ahead of time: know your mileages, trail difficulty and junctions, trailhead location, and more.
- ✓ Check the forecast OFTEN. The weather in the White Mountains is always changing, and the conditions you see at the trailhead are not what you will encounter as you ascend in elevation. Snowstorms and other harsh weather conditions are a regular occurrence in the mountains, even during the summer months.

If you do have cell service, text the Mount Washington Observatory at 603-356-2137 with the words "weather forecast" to receive the latest high elevation forecast.

- ✓ Don't depend on your cell phone. Many trailheads and peaks in the White Mountains have little to no cell service.
- ✓ Always pack the 10 Hiking Essentials, even for shorter excursions.
- ✓ Plan your hike according to the least experienced hikers in your group. If numbers allow, have your strongest hikers serve as leaders and trail sweeps. Place beginners in between. This ensures that no one gets left behind!
- ✓ Remember this quote from mountain climbing legend Ed Viesturs: "Getting to the top is optional. Getting down is mandatory." Don't let summit fever cloud your judgement – the mountains will always be there. Turn back when in doubt.
- ✓ Respect the resource. Our mountain summits are filled with beautiful, fragile ecosystems. The lichen and other flora found there can take hundreds of years to grow. Stay on trail and take only pictures during your travels! In other words, [LEAVE NO TRACE](#).

- ✓ To-die for photos are not worth dying over. Evaluate your surroundings before taking out your camera/phone, and never move past barriers, ignore signage, or otherwise put yourself in a dangerous position to get “the shot”.
- ✓ Hike with humility and empathy. All hikers are subject to injury or worse when out on the trail. Tread carefully and respectfully, and remember that your potential rescuers are put in just as much danger (if not more!) if/when they come to your aid.
- ✓ Even in this modern era, rescue isn’t always an option. Don’t rely on a safety net that might not be there due to communication failures, dangerous weather, or worse.
- ✓ Have fun and applaud yourself along the way! Even hiking a mile into the woods or up a mountain is a major accomplishment.