

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Selecting the right gear for any particular outing can be difficult for even the most experienced of outdoorsmen. It's hard to know what any particular outing will demand, what the weather will be, what the terrain will be like. You must be prepared for whatever the adventure might bring, but not weigh yourself down unnecessarily. Here are a few hints about principles to follow in selecting your gear.

1. Pack light. Weight is the enemy. Every outing involves carrying your gear, whether on your back, on a bicycle, or in a canoe. If you don't need it, don't bring it. If you can make it lighter, do it.
2. Value simplicity. Simple equipment is easier to use, and, as often as not, works better than fancy gadgets. It has fewer ways of failing. A plethora of zippers and flaps and vents looks great on the model in the catalog, but will you really use all that stuff on the mountain? Would two plain pockets work just as well?
3. Make a single item of equipment do multiple duty. A single cooking pot can handle all your cooking tasks. All you need for eating is a cup and a spoon.
4. Bring spares of critical items. You must have two hats. You must have a spare pair of mittens. If your only pair of gloves blow away in the summer, it means clumsy fingers that make disastrous mistakes. In the winter it means frostbite.
5. Aim to be well prepared for the most likely conditions, but be at least minimally prepared to survive the worst weather or conditions that are possible. Always be prepared for rain, no matter what the season or the forecast.
6. Select your clothing carefully with an eye toward insulation value and moisture retention properties. Even in summer, the New England wilderness environment is cold, wet, and windy. Select wool (or a suitable synthetic wool substitute) rather than cotton. Wool is a better insulator, absorbs less moisture, and retains more insulating value than cotton when it gets wet. Sweatshirts and blue jeans are out. Really. Many experts claim that you are actually better off naked than wearing wet cotton. The classic shivering Boy Scout is wearing blue jeans, two flannel shirts, and a sweatshirt. Acrylic wool substitutes like Orlon and Polartec work very well.
7. Dress in layers, mixing and matching to suit the conditions. In cold weather, the innermost layer should be polypro (not cotton!) longjohns. Middle insulating layers are things like wool shirts, sweaters, fleece jackets, wool pants (or polyester blend pants in warm seasons). The "warm layer" is major insulation like a down parka in winter, or a thick sweater in summer. The final layer is the wind shell or rain shell. The wind shell must be breathable and windproof; the rainshell must be waterproof. A lightweight nylon parka is good for wind; a rain parka or a cagoule is better than a poncho for rain. Gore-Tex and similar fabrics make it possible to combine waterproofness and

breathability into a single garment (if you can afford it). Don' t forget leg protection in the form of wind pants, rain pants, or both. Gaiters will keep water and snow out of the tops of your boots.

8. Protect your head. Always bring two hats: your favorite for the season plus a spare balaclava for full head coverage. Even in the summer. Really.

9. A pair of light knitted gloves is great for general purpose hand protection. In colder weather you will need mittens. Always (even in summer) have a spare pair of mittens stashed away somewhere. Mitten shells are essential for winter and often very useful in summer.

10. Waterproof your boots. Wear at least two pairs of socks: a lightweight wool, acrylic, or polypro liner sock; and a heavy wool sock. Don' t wear cotton socks. In winter beware of wearing too much sock: your boot must fit comfortably so as not to restrict circulation to your feet. In cold weather, vapor barrier liners (plastic bread bags work fine) keep foot perspiration from wetting your heavy socks.

11. Be organized. A place for everything and everything in its place. Remember that losing a tiny piece of critical gear can put you in a jam. Put most of your little stuff in a "junk bag" kept near the top of your pack. Assemble other categories of equipment and food into other drawstring bags to keep them unlost.

12. Use a checklist. The checklist below is for a typical summer overnight outing. For a day trip, you can leave off or simplify the cooking and camping gear. For a winter trip you will want to beef up your clothing and sleeping gear and add items from the winter supplement checklist. By all means, develop your own personal system of technique and equipment, but think it through--and make a checklist!

Basic Overnight Outing Equipment Checklist

CLOTHING

Hat (for the season)
Spare Hat (wool or polypro)
Gloves or Mittens
Rainshell (eg, Poncho, Rain Parka and Pants)
Windshell (lightweight, with hood)
Wind Pants
Sweater or Fleece Jacket (No Sweatshirts!)
Long Pants
(Something wind resistant.
No Jeans or Sweatpants!)
Long Sleeved Shirt
Wool Socks (two layers plus a spare pair)
Boots

COOKING EQUIPMENT

Stove (one per tent)
Fuel (one bottle per tent)
Cook Pot (2-3 quart; one per tent)
Cup, Spoon
(No Forks, Knives, Bowls, Plates...)
Food (as planned with your buddies)
Detergent (one-ounce squeeze bottle)

CAMPING EQUIPMENT

Tent (one per buddy group)
Sleeping Bag (in stuff sack)
Sleeping Pad
Backpack (Nothing in your hands!)

PERSONAL STUFF

Toothbrush and Toothpaste
Toilet Paper (in a baggie)
First Aid Kit
Sunscreen
Insect Repellent

SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

Compass and Whistle (on lanyard)
Matches (in waterproof container)
Flashlight (*Small!* Preferably a headlamp)
Candle (emergency fire starter)
Sunglasses
Pocket Knife (*No Sheath Knives, Axes ...*)
Water Bottle
Garbage Bag (survival shelter)
P-Cord (25 feet or so)
Map

WINTER SUPPLEMENT

Wool (or Fleece) Pants	Adequate Warm Layer (!)
Wool Shirt	Winter Boots
Heavy Mittens	Vapor Barrier Liner Socks
Mitten Shells	Gaiters
Long Johns (<i>No Cotton!</i> Polypro is best.)	Enough Fuel (to melt snow)

DO NOT BRING

Electronic Equipment	Shovel
Saw	Glass Containers
Axe	Aerosol Cans
Sheath Knife	Weapons (including toys)