

Appalachian Mountain Club

Winter Day-Hiking Equipment Checklist

Use of the following equipment and clothing by each winter hiker is essential to the safety and enjoyment of the trip. Contact the leader(s) if you have questions or wish to make substitutions. Any hiker not properly equipped at the trailhead may be disqualified from the trip by the leader. **The trip leader's decisions on equipment for a given trip will be final.** *All gear should be tested and adjusted prior to the trip.*

Feet

- **Winter hiking boots:** Plastic mountaineering double boots (such as Koflach or Scarpa) are almost always acceptable. Single layer winter hiking boots with adequate insulation (generally 400g) are generally acceptable for many day hikes. Felt-lined pac boots (such as Sorel) are acceptable for hikes that do not require crampons.
- **Socks:** Wool or synthetic. No cotton! Always bring an extra pair. Some also use wicking (e.g., polypro) inner socks. In extreme cold, some use vapor barriers or neoprene socks.
- **Gaiters:** Knee high, required.
- **Snowshoes:** Sturdy metal-frame (such as Atlas, Tubbs, or MRS Lighting) or plastic (such as MSR Evo) snowshoes, with built in snowshoe crampons.
- **Traction:** Microspikes may be used in place of snowshoes on some early season trips before deep snow, and may be brought in addition to snowshoes on trips where hard icy snow is expected. Ask your leader what is required.

Head and Hands

- **Hat:** Wool or synthetic. Many often bring a heavy wool cap plus a lighter-weight fleece cap or headband.
- **Gloves/Mittens:** Wool or synthetic. Most use a thin polypro glove liner under mid- or heavy-weight gloves or mittens. Always bring extra gloves/mittens. No leather!

Body

- **Underwear/base layer:** Either synthetic, such as polypro (or one of its commercial names), nylon or spandex, or wool long-sleeve top and bottoms. No cotton!
- **Light Upper Body Insulating Layer:** At least one lightweight insulating layer (such as a shirt, pullover or sweater) for hiking: either wool or synthetic.
- **Pants:** Synthetic (such as nylon or softshell) or lightweight wool, which can be worn over long underwear. Side zips for ventilation recommended. Some use windpants over a base layer for below treeline hikes (in addition to use above treeline, where they are required). No jeans or sweatpants.
- **Extra Insulating Layers:** Fleece or other synthetic, wool or down. Bring enough extra insulating layers (such as thick fleece or pile jacket or synthetic or down parka) in your pack to keep warm if standing around in the cold for an extended period
- **Rain/wind gear:** (outer shell layer): Waterproof jacket with attached hood (large enough to fit over your insulating layers).

Food and Water

- **Water:** At least two quarts/liters in wide-mouth, leak-proof, shatterproof bottles. Insulate bottles in foam or sock. Hydration bladders are not acceptable in Winter.
- **Lunch/munchies:** High calorie, quick-burn energy food – dried fruit, candy, bagels, bread, preserved meats or cheese (diced in advance), fruitcake, small sandwiches, nuts, cookies. No food which freezes. There is no extended lunch stop – prepare to munch along the way. Always bring extra.

Other Gear

- **Trekking or Ski Pole(s):** Recommended.
- **Backpack:** Large enough to contain all your gear plus your share of group gear and comfortable to wear with weight.
- **Straps/cords:** To attach snowshoes and other gear to the outside of your pack as needed. Bring extras.
- **Headlamp:** Always required. Always bring extra batteries. Many prefer lithium batteries in Winter.
- **Personal first aid kit:** Know what to do with it!
- **Trail map and compass:** Know how to use them!

Above Treeline Gear (required for some trips)

- **Full Crampons:** Generally with 8-14 points. Fit to your boots beforehand. Microspikes are not a substitute for full crampons.
- **Ice Axe:** Generally 65-75 cm long, with a strap. Shorter technical ice climbing axes are generally not acceptable.
- **Facemask and Ski Goggles** for wind protection are required.
- **Wind pants:** Breathable nylon or Gore-Tex. Full side zips strongly recommended.
- **Mitten wind shells:** Required (with "idiot" cords).

Recommended Gear

- **Sunglasses.**
- **Sunscreen and lip balm**
- **Repair kit** for equipment and clothes – might include wire, pins, duct tape, pliers, screwdriver, knife or multi-tool, etc.
- **Emergency kit:** 50 feet of strong nylon cord, Mylar tarp, matches in waterproof container, etc.
- **Toilet paper:** And bags to pack it out (doggie bags work well).
- **Spare glasses**
- **Insulated foam pad:** Either a foam sleeping pad or a piece of foam pad about 20" x 20"; insulation for sitting, also good for emergencies.
- **Hand and/or foot warmers**
- **Thermos** and warm beverage
- **Fun Stuff:** Camera, cell phone, wildlife guides, altimeter, etc.
- **Dry clothes** for ride home