

THE TEN ESSENTIALS

Back in the 1930's a group of mountaineers drew up a list of Ten Essentials to be carried by every climber at all times. The list is absolute for climbers and should be considered the minimum essentials for all hikers who probe deep into the wilderness away from quick support should an emergency arise. The Ten Essentials listed here are items of equipment you should never be without beyond the end of the road. In an emergency these items would be difficult to improvise, and they could save your life. The standard Ten Essentials are listed first followed by additional essentials that are "nice to have."

To find your way

1. Map of the area
2. Compass
3. flashlight (with extra bulb and batteries)

For your protection

4. Sunglasses
5. Extra food and water
6. Extra clothing

For emergencies

7. Waterproof matches
8. Candle or fire starter
9. Pocket knife
10. First aid kit

Additional Essentials

whistle
toilet paper
sunscreen

bug repellent
comb
chapstick
daypack to carry it all in

mirror
plastic tube tent or trashbag
good attitude

1. The **MAP** is your guide to your wilderness experience. It helps you keep track of where you are, where you are going, and what there is to see. The map represents a large physical area in small printed form. Without it, and the knowledge of how to use it, your experiences may prove less than enjoyable. The most useful maps are the U.S. geological Survey Topographical maps (referred to as "topos") which show the horizontal features of the area (roads, railroads, trails, rivers, camps, buildings, mines, etc.) and the vertical shape of the terrain, or contour.

2. Without your **COMPASS** you can't be totally sure about your direction. The map is accurate, but do you have it orientated correctly? **MAP** and **Compass** together provide the necessary tools for finding your way.

3. A **FLASHLIGHT** is basically an emergency tool and should be maintained with that in mind. It's primary purpose is to permit continued travel when caught by darkness. Choose a flashlight with a switch that is not easy

to turn on accidentally. Carry extra batteries and bulb so that you have at least eight hours of emergency light at all times. Keep batteries warm in cold weather.

4. **SUNGLASSES** are an absolute must. The human eye is delicate and can be harmed by sun glare or excessive light such as occurs on snow, ice and in the desert. Carry an extra pair.

5. Carry **EXTRA FOOD** in a special container and place it away from your regular food supply. Carry food that keeps well and perhaps is not particularly appetizing so it will be saved for emergencies only. High energy bars (Power Bars, Tiger's Milk, etc.) and nut bars are suitable.

EXTRA WATER means carrying about half again as much water as you think you'll need on your outing. Generally, you should carry one gallon for each day of the outing. More if you know you will need it. For a day hike carry two quarts in your pack and one on your belt.

6. **EXTRA CLOTHING** should include something warm, something windproof and something waterproof. Seldom do you find clothing that satisfactorily incorporates two, let alone all three at an economical price. Each item has its place and should be carried at all times while hiking; you can never tell when the weather might change. EXTRA clothing should also include a HAT if you normally wear one while hiking. NOTE: cotton clothing (T-shirts, jeans) should not be carried as extra clothing. Cotton clothing WILL NOT keep you warm if it gets wet. Wool and many synthetics will hold the heat in and keep you warm even though they are wet.

7. **WATERPROOF MATCHES** should also be carried separate from your normal daily supply so they will be available when you really need them. Non - waterproof matches in a waterproof container are okay but if the matches then they become useless. Its better to have waterproof matches in a waterproof container.

8. **CANDLE, FIRE STARTER**, or fuel tablets are necessary to start a fire with damp kindling.

9. A **POCKET KNIFE** is a necessary, all - around tool. It is especially good for splintering wood to make kindling. A simple pocket knife is adequate. The more elaborate the knife the more tools that are available to you in an emergency.

10. A **FIRST AID KIT** can be called the most important essential. There are prepackaged kits on the market which provide a good start for the beginning wilderness traveler. However, most people find that a homemade kit to be sufficient. Use the list on page 183 of the Wilderness Basics textbook as a guide to make your own first aid kit.

11. What about those additional essentials? A **police whistle** is worth its weight in gold. Its high pitch and warbling sound carries quite well and is far more durable than the human voice. Rescue authorities wish every lost hiker had a whistle. The shrill blast carries farther than a yell and takes less effort.

A **signal mirror** is one of the most effective daytime signals available. Signal mirrors are inexpensive, effective, easy to use and take up little space. On a good day a mirror signal can be spotted over 20 miles away. Even on a hazy day you could use it to signal an aircraft that you could hear but could not see. Learn to use it and also learn some "dots and dashes."

Toilet Paper is considered by many to be the 11th essential. Human waste biodegrades in just a few weeks, but the toilet paper will last for years, and not always out of site where it was buried. If local greenery is unavailable as a substitute, use toilet paper. Burying or burning it are UNACCEPTABLE. Keep a few plastic bags with you to carry your used paper out with you. Its easy to do and the environment and other hikers will thank you for it.

Sunscreen and Chapstick should always be an essential part of your body protection equipment.

Toothbrush and toothpaste are nice to have for that “fresh” feeling everyday. **Bug repellent** is also nice to keep those bothersome pests at a distance.

A **plastic tube tent or trash bag** is a good supplement to your rain gear and nice to have on those trips where it never seems to never stop raining. Some hikers carry a lightweight nylon rain parka that is big enough to be used as a small tent if necessary. Others carry a “space blanket” to help reduce heat loss. These items could make bivouacking on the trail more warm and comfortable. Not to mention safe. staying warm and dry could make the difference between surviving or not in an adverse situation.

A **comb** has a few known uses and quite a few not so well known uses. Cover it with a piece of paper and it becomes a musical instrument with which to entertain the wildlife. It could also be used to remove pests from you hair. Among hikers, the most common use is to get those nasty stickums, cactus balls and other sharp plant life, off their body and clothing.

Well, the Ten Essential list has stretched into 20 or more items. You will need a Daypack to carry it all in. Make sure you get a daypack to carry your Essentials and your personal essentials: camera, binoculars, bird book and etc. When planning a day hike, plan on spending the night. Or at least be prepared if you should have to. **Your life may very well depend on what is in your pack.**