

# 10 Things to Know About Being a Mountain Hiker

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1. A person must be in good physical condition to mountain hike. The altitude and going vertical makes it strenuous. Endurance is a must as hikes for us ranged from 5-21 miles in length. Training and walking beforehand is very important.
2. You need comfortable hiking boots and cushioning socks for the many miles walking over rocks and roots and across streams. If you have a place on your foot that often gets a blister, wrap that spot as a precaution. Bring extra socks if needed.
3. For sun protection a wide brimmed hat is needed. Dress in layers for the changes in temperature during the day. As the day heats up you can easily remove clothing. This prevents sweating and getting a chill at the top of the mountain where it is usually cooler.
4. A good backpack is needed to carry essentials, water, food, poncho, compass, pocketknife, small first aid kit, binoculars, matches, and trash bag. Hikers can share these items so everyone does not carry the same things. Backpacks need to be kept as light as possible.
5. A supply of water to last the hike of the day is a must. When doing a long trail like Mt. Whitney (21 miles) several containers of water are

needed to hide along the trail on the way up to have on the way down. Water is very heavy to carry. With a good supply of water, plenty of high energy food is needed, such as energy and candy bars and lots of protein.

6. With mountain hiking an early start is needed to be at the top around noon. Mountains often have afternoon thunderstorms and above tree line is not a safe place to be.
7. Always sign in at the trailhead so that you can be found if any problem arises. Take a good map of the trail, and if there is a fork in the trail, mark the way you need to go to get back down.
8. Hiking in high altitudes makes you have to use the bathroom very often. One can't be squeamish when out in the wild. Pit stops are inevitable.
9. Never hike alone and if you are in bear country, always travel in groups. We were told by rangers that bears had never attacked a group of four or more.( My friends say they only need a friend to get behind.) We buy bear spray, too.
10. We all have a love and respect for mountains and for all the flora and fauna found there. Hiking with dear friends, sharing the awesome views, sharing that "mountain high" fills our souls. We can't wait to get back out there.