

**Walking in the Yorkshire Dales
and northern Pennines**

*Essential and optional equipment
for walkers & walk-leaders*

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Scope and Introduction

Scope

This document focusses on the essential and optional equipment for urban and rural walks in the Yorkshire Dales and the northern Pennines. It takes account of a wide-range of ‘typical’ weather conditions and covers group and solo walking during all four seasons, although it **EXCLUDES**:

- walking in remote upland areas when the ground is (or may be) covered in snow or ice; and
- walks that will or may involve scrambling / climbing or caving / pot-holing.

Additional equipment will also need to be considered for walks that involve scrambling, climbing, caving and / or pot-holing – all of which are beyond the scope of this document.

Introduction

For comfort and safety, it is **essential** that all walkers are suitably dressed and equipped. The nature and amount of clothing and equipment will need to be adjusted to suit:

- personal needs & experience;
- the expected duration of the walk;
- the nature of the terrain being covered; and
- the forecasted / foreseeable weather conditions.

Reasonable provision will also need to be made in order to cover potential emergency situations.

Please note that the weather can change very quickly: the arrival of a cold-front can turn a warm, dry and calm day into a cold, wet and windy day in as little as three or four hours and the same dramatic change can occur in just a few minutes on a typical ‘sunshine and showers’ day. Also, temperatures and wind-speeds can vary significantly with changes in location (both vertically and horizontally). For example, an effective temperature difference of as much as 10°C is common between sheltered valleys and exposed hilltops and the wind-speed in exposed areas can be significantly higher than that encountered in valley bottoms and other sheltered locations. All walkers are therefore advised to carry a selection of clothing that will allow them to remain safe and comfortable, despite these variations.

It is a good idea to wrap spare clothing (and other vulnerable items) in plastic bags to keep them dry.

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How much should you take?

Taking the right equipment, and the right amount of equipment, can make the difference between having a safe and comfortable day-out and having an uncomfortable, exhausting and / or potentially dangerous day-out. The difficulty is to strike the right balance between making sure that you have everything you are likely to need and ensuring that your rucksack will be light & comfortable enough to carry around all day. The following principles will help you to achieve this balance:

- 1) **Use the layering principle for clothing** – i.e. use several relatively thin and lightweight layers rather than a single thick and heavy layer. Individual layers can then be easily added or removed if you need to warm-up or cool-down. For most hill-walkers, a thin body layer (short-sleeved on warmer days, long-sleeved on cooler days), a slightly thicker mid-layer (e.g. a walking shirt), a warm fleecy layer, plus an outer layer that is both windproof and waterproof will suffice on all but the coldest / windiest of days. (**NB:** An *additional* warm layer should also be carried for use in emergencies.)
- 2) **Choose lightweight, flexible and functional clothing:**
 - **Lightweight** clothing almost always means clothing made from modern man-made materials such as polyester. Clothing made from traditional materials such as wool or cotton tends to be very heavy when dry, and even heavier when it gets wet.
 - The **flexibility** comes from choosing clothing that can be layered; has legs that can be zipped-off or sleeves that can be easily rolled-up / let-down; with open necks, fronts, or sides which can be closed with fasteners such as zips, buttons or poppers. This flexibility allows you to warm-up or cool-down without needing to stop and change clothes too often.
 - The **functionality** comes from choosing clothing made from materials that are relatively light when wet, quick-drying, breathable, and wicking (i.e. they move moisture away from the body).
- 3) **Carry only what you are likely to need and keep weight to a minimum.** Ensure that all equipment is relatively lightweight, but still strong enough and durable enough to function properly and to last a reasonable length of time.

Please note, it is not necessary to spend a fortune on specialist clothing, at least, not initially. Clothing that meets the criteria listed above can be purchased for a reasonable price in most High Street stores. However, where walking boots are concerned, it is generally true that you get what you pay for: i.e. cheap boots purchased from a fashion-oriented High-Street store will rarely be as safe, comfortable or durable as a reasonably priced pair of purpose-designed walking-boots purchased from a specialist retailer (i.e. a shop specialising in walking equipment). When buying walking boots, you are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to choose a retailer that offers a free consultation and fitting service, supported by a no-quibble money-back guarantee.

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Footwear & clothing

Essential items

All walkers are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to wear or carry the following as a minimum, regardless of the season (time of year) or forecasted weather:

- **Adequate footwear:** In almost all circumstances, this means wearing purpose-designed, well-fitting, comfortable walking boots and comfortable padded walking socks. The boots should be ‘worn-in’ by wearing them around the house for a while, then wearing them on a few short, easy walks before wearing them on progressively longer walks. Wellington Boots, ‘Doc-Martin’ style boots, fashion-footwear, open sandals and other normal street shoes are NOT suitable for a day’s walk in the hills. Training shoes and sandals are also inappropriate, although specially designed walking trainers and walking sandals offer a reasonable alternative to walking boots when the ground is dry and when good weather is forecast for the duration of the walk.

Note: For public guided walks, you may NOT be allowed to join the walk if the leader considers your footwear (or other clothing / equipment) to be inadequate.

- **Adequate clothing:**

- A hooded jacket that is both wind- and waterproof. This will be much more comfortable if it is made from a modern, synthetic breathable material. Waxed-cotton jackets are not recommended as they are heavy and rapidly become too warm when you are working hard. Feather / down jackets are also unsuitable as they are rarely designed to cope with wet weather (they tend to lose their insulating properties when they get wet).
- A separate hat or cap to suit the season. In summer, a wide-brimmed sun hat is recommended to provide shade and to reduce the risk of sunburn. In winter, a warm hat that fully covers the top, back and sides of the head (including the ears) is recommended.

Note: Hoods on waterproof jackets tend to be poorly insulated (and therefore cold). They also restrict both visibility and hearing. Furthermore, they tend to become uncomfortable when worn for a prolonged period of time.

- At least one warm body layer. You may need two, three or possibly more body layers to stay warm during cold and / or windy conditions, even in summer.
- Leg-wear appropriate for the expected conditions. Comfortable short-trousers or walking skirts are appropriate when warm, dry weather is forecast, but a pair of full-length trousers should then be carried in case the weather changes (and for use in an emergency). Jeans and corduroy trousers are NOT recommended: when they get wet, they become heavy & cold and jeans in particular often shrink when wet, which can severely restrict movement and could seriously reduce blood circulation to the legs.

Note: The legs of anyone wearing shorts or short-skirts will be particularly vulnerable to scratches (from vegetation, fences, stiles, etc.) and to bites (from sheep-ticks and other insects). **Either can be dangerous** as the scratch or bite could become infected. Bites from ticks can result in Lyme disease, which is becoming increasingly common - see <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

Optional items

In addition to the above, the following items are **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**:

- Waterproof trousers. These will be much more comfortable if they are made from a breathable material; and they will be quicker and easier to put-on and take-off if their design allows this to be done without the need to remove your walking boots.
- A pair of gloves. A thin, warm inner pair plus a slightly larger windproof & waterproof outer pair will offer the most protection and flexibility, although this 2-layer design is not essential.
- At least one *spare* warm body-layer (in addition to those that you would normally expect to wear). This is for use if the weather deteriorates beyond what was expected, or for use in an emergency when the extra layer will help keep you warm and alert.

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Other equipment

Essential items

All walkers are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to carry the following as a minimum:

- **Sufficient food & drink for the day**, plus a little extra in case of delays / emergencies.

Notes:

Food: An average adult will use between 200 and 500 kilocalories of energy per hour during a walk in hilly or mountainous terrain (depending on body-weight & metabolism, equipment weight, the pace of the walk, the nature of the terrain, and the air-temperature). Individually-wrapped sandwiches are ideal for the main meal(s), as are securely lidded plastic tubs containing pre-prepared pasta- or rice-based salads. As energy expenditure will vary considerable (both from walk to walk, and throughout the day), you may find that you need an energy-boost between breaks. It is therefore wise to carry a few high-energy, snack-type foods in an easily accessible pocket. These should be things that can be consumed relatively safely and easily while walking or during a brief pause while enjoying the scenery. Flapjack, a cereal / seed bar, a handful of nuts, or a bar of chocolate are all firm favourites among regular walkers. (NB: chocolate will melt during warm weather and / or if kept in a warm pocket.) During hot weather, or when participating in a particularly strenuous walk, it is a good idea to pack a bag of salty crisps or salted nuts as consuming salty snacks can help reduce the risk of cramp by replacing some of the salt that will be lost through perspiration.

Drink: Two litres of liquid is the recommended minimum for most people for most walks. Some people will need more than this, especially during hot weather and / or when participating in strenuous or very strenuous walks. During extremely hot weather, 3 litres or more may be required. During cold weather, many walkers like to carry a pre-prepared hot drink in an unbreakable flask.

- **Sun & insect protection.** This includes sunglasses (which may be needed at any time of the year, not just in summer), cover-up clothing (including a sun-hat and a long-sleeved shirt and / or long-sleeved light pullover), sun-block cream, and (during Spring, Summer & Autumn) a suitable insect repellent.
- **Personal healthcare, medication & hygiene / sanitation items.** All walkers are advised to carry a small personal healthcare / first-aid kit. As a minimum, this should include a few aspirin or similar (in case of headaches) together with a few antiseptic wipes and sticking-plasters of various sizes. It should also contain any prescription medicines etc. that may be required (bring enough to cater for an unexpected delay). Some walkers also like to carry a blister treatment kit, some lip-balm (to help prevent chapped lips), and a chemical heat pack (for warming cold hands during cold weather). As proper toilet facilities are not usually available during a walk in the countryside, it is also essential to carry any sanitary supplies that you may need, including some toilet paper / tissue (just in case you need it). These latter items should be packed in 3 or 4 thick plastic bags so that you will be able to take your waste home with you for safe disposal.
- **A waterproof insulated sit-mat** or something similar to sit-on during breaks and / or in an emergency situation.
- **A rucksack** will be needed to put all this in and to make it safe and relatively comfortable to carry. A rucksack with a fitted waist-belt and chest-strap will be more comfortable than a rucksack that only has shoulder straps. As very few rucksacks are truly waterproof, a waterproof rucksack cover and / or a waterproof rucksack liner is also advisable.

- **Specialist equipment:** For those considering walking in snowy / icy conditions in mountainous terrain, four-season boots, crampons, an ice-axe, and / or a safety rope will become ESSENTIAL items. However, these conditions (and this equipment) lie beyond the scope of this briefing document.

Optional items

In addition to the above, the following items are **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**:

- **Gaiters.** These can be useful when walking through soft snow and long wet grass, bracken or other vegetation. Muddy gaiters can also be easily removed at the end of the walk (and placed in a plastic bag carried for the purpose) to avoid transferring mud inside the train, bus, car, pub, etc. and to quickly smarten-up one's appearance should this be desirable.
- **Trekking poles / walking poles.** Some walkers like to use these for stability / support during all or part of a walk. There is an interesting article exploring the benefits and downsides of these at: <http://www.ukhillwalking.com/articles/page.php?id=3375>
- **A camera.** This will allow you to take a photograph or two as a memento of the day. However, ensure that it is waterproof or stored in a waterproof bag or case.
- **Map / compass / GPS.** If you are **participating** in a guided walk (i.e. NOT leading it) and want to follow or track the route for future reference, it will be useful bring the appropriate map(s) (either laminated or in a waterproof map-case) and possibly a compass, and / or a handheld GPS device. (NB: A map and compass are ESSENTIAL items for solo-walkers and those leading walks.)
- **Source of heat:** In cold, wintry conditions, it is advisable to carry a source of heat, e.g. a flask of hot liquid and / or a heat-pack.
- **Emergency equipment.** If you plan to do a lot of hill-walking, a personal survival bag, an emergency whistle, and a small torch are wise additions to your rucksack.

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Additional equipment for solo walkers and those leading a group

Essential items

In addition to the personal items listed above, solo walkers and those leading a group are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to carry (and know how to use):

- A map (covering the entire route, including alternative and emergency routes)
- A compass (NB: if a GPS or similar is carried, a traditional compass should also be carried as electronic equipment can fail all too easily at a critical moment.)
- A mobile phone (with charged battery and topped-up credit where applicable)

Note: Mobile phones have become an invaluable part of everyday life for most people and they may be extremely useful when walking, especially in an emergency. However, signal coverage in rural areas is extremely patchy: some areas are only covered by one network / service provider and many of the more remote areas have no mobile phone service at all. In short: **DO NOT RELY ON BEING ABLE TO USE YOUR MOPBILE PHONE** while walking in the Yorkshire Dales and the northern Pennines

- A first-aid kit (appropriate to the nature and duration of the walk)
- A survival bag (if leading a group, a survival bag **plus** a group shelter of some kind)
- A torch (with charged battery and tested bulb)
- A whistle
- A reliable and accurate watch
- Timetables for the trains, local busses, etc. as appropriate for the walk
- For those leading public guided walks, it is **HIGHLY ADVISABLE** to carry **additional** spare clothing including: a spare mid-layer (e.g. a pullover or light jacket), a hat, and a pair of gloves. These items are primarily intended for emergency use by members of the group, so they should be carried in addition to the leader's personal spare items.

Optional items

In addition to the above, the following items are **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** for solo walkers and those leading a group:

- A signalling mirror
- A pen or pencil and some blank paper.
- Duct tape (1 or 2 metres)
- Strong cord (a 1m length + a 2m length + a 5m length will cover most eventualities)
- For public guided walks, a handful of the current leaflets and / or other publicity items.

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