

Hillwalking Program (*from home*)

Activity Summary

A 4-week plan to Hillwalking Adventure Skill. Can be completed individually from home or as set tasks completed throughout 'Online' program period.

Rationale

To keep active physically and mentally during a lockdown period, and for future planning of activities at home

Equipment

Laid out separately for each activity. General 'Hill-walk' gear.

Link to PPS

- Covering aspects from the SPICES (physical, intellectual, character).
- Developing the Hillwalking adventure skill to cover areas from all stages through packing equipment, preparation of your hike, safety on the hills, and getting outdoors.

Additional Notes

A good reference for hillwalking would be the [MPC handbook](#). We would suggest that members get notified of how to find this and understand elements of it too.

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Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (*Equipment Prep*)

As part of the Scout Method of Plan, Do, Review everyone should do a check on their Hiking Gear when they finish their Hike. Did all parts do what they were supposed to do? Are they still the right size? Do they still hold out water, rain, keep me warm or cool when necessary? Was I missing anything I should have brought or would be nice to bring in case? Or did I bring too much and the weight was too much? During this lockdown period is an ideal time to go through your hiking gear in detail. Clean, repair, replace what is necessary (and to what you can afford!). Try packing your Rucksack & fitting it on you properly to start.



What clothing do I require.

Boots: Wear comfortable worn-in leather boots with good laces, ankle support and sewn-in tongue. It is best not to wear a new pair of boots, without wearing them in for a couple of weeks around the house or on short walks. Wearing fashionable type boots may be allowed if they hit the mark on the above (although you'll miss them when they're filthy..) but under no circumstances should runners, wellington boots, or other unsupportive footwear be worn, they're just not suitable for the task ahead. Wear thick, or two pairs of woollen socks. Avoid wearing socks of synthetic material. If you know you're going to get a blister in a sensitive spot of your foot then prevention is the best cure; put a plaster there from the word go! Make sure you wear two pairs of socks when buying any boots. If you are going to grow out of your boots before wearing them out, **don't buy a very expensive pair.**

After a hike always check to ensure they did not leak along seams or cracks. Wash off any dirt from the outside and dry naturally. Do not put on a radiator or in front of a fire to dry rapidly. This will cause cracks in the leather. When dry, with a piece of cloth liberally run a product like Dubbin Wax and allow to dry. This will prevent the leather from drying out.

Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (*Equipment Prep*)

What clothing do I require.

Raingear: This consists of a reasonably waterproof jacket, with a hood, that comes down to the top of your legs (not just your waist) and a pair of rainproof bottoms. They both need to be waterproof and not too heavy to carry. We highly recommend they also be more than single layered to allow your skin to breath! It is important to buy a set that will keep heavy rain out, particularly along the zip and sewn joints.



Go for a walk in your gear on a wet & windy day to test them out. In cleaning your coat always read the washing instructions fully. Do not wash with other clothes. Most camping shops sell special products to wash good wet weather equipment (rainproof) in.

Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (*Equipment Prep*)

What clothing do I require.

Other equipment tips:

Gaiters are also handy extra to keep your boots or lower legs dry. They're good for boggy conditions or in high grass and heather.

Do not wear jeans, that's worth repeating, **DO NOT WEAR JEANS!** They do not hold in warmth, they take too long to dry out, when they're wet they're like cardboard and are useless for hillwalking in Irish weather.

Wear lots of lighter layers of clothing rather than one or two heavy garments. This will give you more flexibility as weather conditions change.

Be sure to bring a fleece jumper if it gets very cold. A fleece will be the better option the majority of the time compared to a hoodie. If you don't believe us, soak an arm of each clothing in a basin of water and watch how much faster the fleece will dry up!

You are better to wear long sleeved upper garments that are light and keep out the cold. Remember as you go up a mountain the temperature drops about one degree with every 300 meters and there is always a bigger breeze up there.

Always wear long bottoms to prevent you from catching such things a "Limes Disease", which will have serious health implications for you. These ticks can be found in woods and in high grass.

A pair of gloves and a woolly or fleece hat are also **MUST BRING** items. (In survival situations you would not last long without them).

Lastly, Bring a very small wash kit (don't forget toilet roll!), and a small personal first-aid kit with plenty of plasters in case you get a blister.

Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (*Equipment Prep*)

What Gear do I require.

Sleeping Bag: Sleep is essential to revive the body after a hard day in the open and perhaps one of the most important items of equipment you require is a sleeping bag. Warmth is the key word to remember and with regard to sleeping bags you must spend some money to achieve it. The Mummy shaped bag is the best and always check what temperature or season rating it has. The best general type is 3-4 season. It should also go into a stuff bag with straps to minimise the size of the bag.

Always air or wash the bag after each use. Follow washing instructions to the letter of the law. If a bag is stored with dampness or dirt on it, this will lead to mould growth and the bag will become useless. Bring a thin or self-inflating ground mat as well.

Rucksack: When you embark on an adventure into wild countryside everything you need must be carried on your back. Rucksacks are sold in various sizes and are measured in litres (55 litres, 65 litres, 85 litres). A suitable size for Scouts is a sack of from 55 - 65 litres. Remember when you have a rucksack on you a heavy load is best carried vertically above the centre of gravity of the body. Modern rucksacks are designed with this principle in mind. An internal or external frame helps to align the rucksack to your line of gravity. Always have the bottom of the rucksack at about waste height and the straps adjusted to bring the sack in line with your back. With height you will take the weight off the shoulders. Also become knowledgeable on [HOW to pack correctly](#).

Bivvy Bag: Carry a bivvy bag (survival bag) in case you run into difficulties. It can be used to store excess gear outside the tent at night (be sure it is secure from rain). It can be used as an improvised stretcher for emergency use. It can give you emergency shelter. It can act as an additional groundsheet. It can be used as an emergency signalling device (as they are usually bright orange and big!)

Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (*Equipment Prep*)

To follow of from what we learned above, use page 10 of the [MPC handbook](#) as an example equipment list to be ready for your next trip and refer back to it each time you plan a new trip!
Add items should your trip require it (but bare in mind the weight).

When you have a list complete for your patrol, make sure to get a copy ready for your patrol corner so as you can all be prepared for every trip!



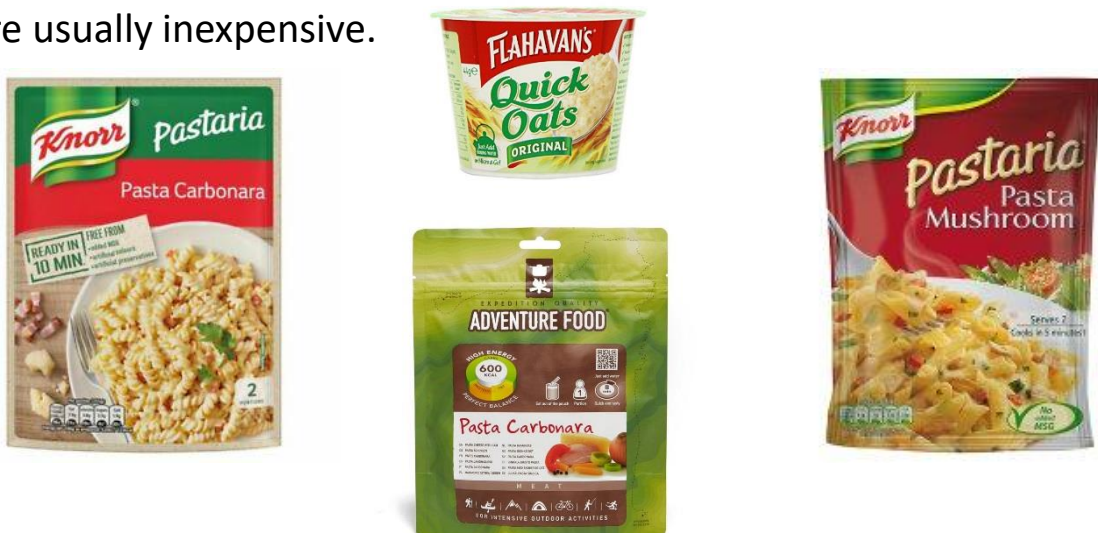
Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (Food)

An essential part of any hillwalking trip or expedition is what you eat. Food is fuel for our bodies, so what we eat before and during the expedition is very important and should be thought out carefully. There are a number of elements to consider when choosing what food should be used on an expedition.

What foods to bring:

For a hillwalking expedition, you want to bring food that is quick and easy to prepare and foods that can be packed easily and are not going to increase the weight of your rucksack too much. You also need to think of what cooking equipment you will be using, for example will you have a Jet Boil or a Trangia. You won't be carrying a fully stocked kitchen on your back, so meals that use the least amount of equipment are usually best.

Food items such as Freeze dried pasta and rice dishes, Porridge pots, easiest food items to bring. They are lightweight and can be packed easily and usually only require boiling water to cook them thoroughly. These can be found in almost every supermarket and are usually inexpensive.



Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (Food)

What foods to bring:

For snacks while on the go, fruit and cereal bars are always a good thing to have in your rucksack. Some boiled sweets and chocolate are also useful as they give you a good burst of energy when required.

It is also very important to remain hydrated while on the hills. Depending on where you are holding your expedition, water should be readily available. There is no need for you to have more than one water container for cooking with. When using water from a stream or river, ensure that it has been boiled before use, you can never be too careful.

Whatever food items you decide on, make sure to have a taste test of them prior to your expedition. You don't want to be up a mountain after spending all day walking to realise that you absolutely hate the food you have brought! Make sure to bring something that you enjoy.

Maybe try a menu now for a weekend hike so as you and your patrol can be prepared for the hills! For added difficulty and only if possible, co-ordinate with your adult scouters for circulation of equipment from your scout hall for cooking (ie; Trangias, Jetboils, etc)

Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (Food)

What foods to bring:

Another idea is to bring a pre-cooked meal, such as a curry or a pasta dish that you like that only requires reheating on your cooking equipment. This might be more to your taste and it is also relatively easy to pack as it could all fit into a single container and be stored easily in your rucksack.



Hillwalking Program (*from home*) (*Weather & Emergency prep*)

Weather

Before setting out on any expedition it is important for scouts to check the weather forecast. Scouts need a more detailed weather forecast of the chosen area they are hiking in. This weather forecast should include temperature change and wind chill factors. Cloud cover, mist, fog and snow can considerably change the safety aspect of a hillwalking adventure.

Weather can affect the equipment we need. Checking the weather helps us to be prepared for any situation that might arise.

Sun

If the weather is warm it is important to pack sunscreen, extra water, sunglasses and a peaked hat. Wear light colour clothing because black can attract the heat.

Rain

The correct equipment will help keep you safe and comfortable while hiking. Choose lightweight, breathable and loose fitting clothing. Try not to wear cotton. Cotton when wet becomes heavy and does not dry quickly. Rain gear is a necessity.

If the weather is wet or stormy you may need to bring extra pegs to peg down your tent. An emergency shelter might be useful to protect you from the elements. If the weather is particularly bad you may need to postpone the event.

Hillwalking Program (from home)
(Weather & Emergency prep)

Creating a Weather Forecast











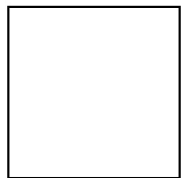
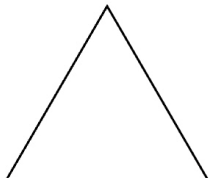
First explain what a weather forecast is. Create a two day weather forecast. You can use the template below to guide you. You can add or take away from the template. Try to find information specific to the location that you are navigating through. Weather forecasts are more accurate when they are are completed close to the time of the event. Finally, discuss how to travel to safety in these conditions.

Wind	
- direction	
- speed	
Temperature	
- high	
- low	
Precipitation	
- mm	
Cloud Cover	

Ground to Air Signals

Ground to air signals need to be made in big open spaces. They should be large in size so that they are visible. They can be made using materials such as survival bags and branches or by lighting fires, turning over a sod, digging trenches etc. Distress signals are used to signal for assistance that is required immediately.

Clear a space in your house and make different distress signals using materials you can find at home such as survival bags, clothes, towels... Here are a few to try below. These can be done using an online meeting. Try to see how you can make yours first and post a photo once finished.

		
Require doctor	Require medical supplies	Unable to proceed
		
All is well	Do not understand	Please indicate direction to proceed
		
Am proceeding in this direction	Yes	No
		
Require food and water	Require map and compass	Safe to land here

Morse Code

Morse code is a communication system that uses a series of dots and dashes to create a code. While using an online meeting platform you can use online interactive whiteboards such as [JamBoard](#). Send a link to the whiteboard to the members of the online meeting. You can split into teams or go one by one. See who can crack the code first.

International Morse Code

1. A dash is equal to three dots.
2. The space between parts of the same letter is equal to one dot.
3. The space between two letters is equal to three dots.
4. The space between two words is equal to seven dots.

A	• —	U	• • —
B	— • • •	V	• • • —
C	— • — •	W	• — —
D	— • •	X	— • • —
E	•	Y	— • — —
F	• • — •	Z	— — • •
G	— — •		
H	• • • •		
I	• •		
J	• — — —		
K	— • —	1	• — — — —
L	• — • •	2	• • — — —
M	— —	3	• • • — —
N	— •	4	• • • • —
O	— — —	5	• • • • •
P	• — — •	6	— • • • •
Q	— — • —	7	— — • • •
R	• — •	8	— — — • •
S	• • •	9	— — — — •
T	—	0	— — — — —

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Activity: Getting Outdoors

So, we have covered elements of our preparation for a walk. Now it is time to get outdoors. During the periods of covid-19 restrictions, we may have to keep our plan scaled back and within our distance allowed to be travelled.

Whether you have a mountain range on your doorstep, access to a park, use of your stairs at home, or a staircase outdoors in your area – you will still be able to get practicing.

Mountain Range/Hill walk

If your plan is to tackle a mountain or hill, be mindful to be well prepared. On top of what we have already covered, you will need to have your route card completed along with an emergency contact ready at home with a copy of this route card.

Make sure you can keep warm & dry, as well as your map and compass being readable, up to date, and in good condition.

If you are unsure about any of the above, you should be careful as to not take on this adventure without first contacting someone experienced and able to attend with you. Maybe work on some of these elements first such as getting experienced with route cards. Give notice to your Scouter of this and make sure each of you have the same map to work off during your online meeting (or when restriction levels have reduced for face-to-face contact).

An example of a route card is linked below:

[Route Card Burren 2009.xls \(scouts.ie\)](#)

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Local Park/Area

If your plan is to get out walking in your local area, use elements of what we have already covered and practice the preparation of your equipment for a hike.

For added difficulty you could pack your equipment and carry it when covering your distance.

Depending on your level of work completed previously, and your experience of hillwalking – try set a goal with your Scouters of a distance to travel and build up on this (take into account the weight being carried also so as to not overdo your first outing).

If you are looking for an extra challenge, why not work on your pacing skills while out:

[Pacing \(scouts.ie\)](http://scouts.ie)

Hillwalking Program (*from home*)

Stairs

If you're currently in an area where getting to a park or hills would be too difficult due to restrictions, why not tackle a challenge using your stairs at home or a set of stairs/steps in the area?

Just this past year (2020) we saw people tackle this similar challenge through 'Hike4Hope'.

Set yourself a goal with your Scouters of reaching a certain height and do the work using the stairs! Again, for added difficulty this can be done with your equipment on. But be mindful of the heat while indoors.

Some goals are set out below for you to aim for:

Mountain	Height	Steps to summit	# of climbs up the stairs
Brandon Hill	515m	2,575	184
Croagh Patrick	764m	3,820	273
Slieve Donard	850m	4,250	303
Lugnaquilla	925m	4,625	330
Carrauntoohil	1038m	5,190	371
<i>Or aim for the highest mountain in the world. (Prepare to do this in stages)</i>			
Mount Everest	8848m	44,240	3160