

# THE TEN ESSENTIALS OF HIKING

The Ten Essentials appeared in the newsletter of the Mountaineers (Seattle-based outdoor club) in the 1930's. There are many versions floating around, so your ten essentials really depend on you and what you intend to use them for. Your ten essentials should be composed of items for survival. These items could be useful if you get lost or hurt while hiking. These items will not ensure survival if you are lost, the only thing that can do that is you! Remaining calm and reasonable is your best chance for survival. Stay where you are if you are completely lost (hug a tree). To survive humans need three things, food, water, and shelter. The ten essentials you choose should provide at least those three things.

- Food** – long shelf life, high calorie food or trail mix; emergency food rations from camping or military surplus stores
- Water** – always carry plenty of water; 32 oz. or more; purification tablets
- Fire** – water proof strike anywhere matches and container to keep them dry; fire starter can be helpful in wet weather
- Knife** – or multipurpose tool is useful in many situations
- Light** – flashlight and extra batteries; if night overtakes you, you'll be able to see your way out
- Extra Clothing** – polyester or wool (no cotton), or a space blanket can help keep you warm if you have to stay overnight
- Rain Gear** – jacket and pants will help keep you dry in wet weather
- First Aid** – bring a basic first aid kit; bandages, sterile alcohol prep pads, etc.; take a first aid class
- Navigation** – take a map and compass and learn how to use them; GPS's are useful but can be expensive and difficult to use
- Signaling Device** – when lost and tired a whistle can be louder than your screams; mirrors or reflective objects are also useful for signaling

Survival kits are limited usually to what you can carry into the woods. The more you take the more prepared you will be. If you take too much you could hinder or make your trip less enjoyable because of the weight and bulk of your kit. Choose wisely.

*If you had to survive in the wilderness for a few days*

*and could only carry ten things with you, what would those ten things be?*

