

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR EXPEDITION

Below you will find some guidelines on preparing for your course, purchasing clothing items and supplies, and packing your bags. Please call the Wilderness School prior to the course start if you have additional questions.

Getting in Shape

Your Expedition will be both physically and emotionally demanding. We recommend that you begin to exercise daily, beginning today, so that you will be as strong as possible when your course begins. Ways to get in shape include:

1. Long walks, especially on trails or hills
2. Bicycling
3. Swimming
4. Aerobics, dancing
5. Jogging
6. Stretching (helps to reduce muscle injuries)
7. Sit ups, pushups, weight training
8. Fun sports games such as basketball, ultimate Frisbee, soccer, etc.



The best exercises develop cardio-vascular capacity and increase lower body strength. Increasing the distance and duration of the workout, not increasing the speed, will develop your endurance.

Start your program slowly and be careful not to over-train. Be patient and don't expect dramatic results. You will see the difference when you are on your course (compared to students who did not train). Gradually increase the amount of your exercise. Look at your eating habits – begin to reduce your intake of junk foods, soda, candy, etc. and eat regular, balanced meals. If you smoke, reduce your smoking beginning today, because there is no smoking or use of tobacco products allowed at the Wilderness School.

Personal Hygiene

Life on the Expedition will require you to adapt to wilderness living. Many of the luxuries that we all take for granted at home are not available out in the woods: a hot shower every day, a refrigerator, stove, music, electric lights, telephones, and all of the other things that make our lives more comfortable. You will experience a return to basic living that will reduce your material needs to only the essentials. You can live comfortably in the woods, and your Instructors will teach you how to do this. Some of the skills you will learn include:

1. How to prepare meals and clean pots and utensils
2. How to wash up and keep yourself clean
3. How to keep your clothes clean and dry and how to wash clothes in the woods
4. Various first aid skills
5. How to prevent sunburn and other heat-related injuries
6. How to manage your bathroom needs

Ultimately, your comfort living in the woods will depend upon you and how you apply the skills that you have been taught. The harder you work at it the more enjoyable your course will be!

The Clothing List

There is a clothing list posted in the "Forms" section for your convenience. You should print out the list appropriate to your expedition (20-day or 5-day/7-Day). Pack all of your belongings in a duffel bag or suitcase and write your name on everything.

Here are two very important links to check out!

1. Contains videos that explain what to purchase, and what to pack for the expedition. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmqqH3yIIGpZYoyWI-YI1qMD_H9WFviOu
2. And a link with shopping suggestions: <https://youtu.be/RAdT2AWeggo>

Proper Footwear:

- **Hiking boots:** These are one of the most important items that you will need to purchase for your expedition. It is very important to try them on and select boots that fit your feet well. Light weight hiking boots with ankle support and rubber soles are required. Stay away from steel toed boots and leather work boots.
- **Old sneakers:** if your expedition includes a canoeing phase, these are an important item. It is required to wear shoes at all times and this includes during canoeing. Old sneakers that you do not care about are the best shoes to pack for this purpose.
- **Sandals with heel strap:** This item is optional and if you choose to bring this type of sandal, make sure that they are sturdy and durable.
- **Socks:** Wool or synthetic socks are the best. We discourage the use of cotton clothing on Wilderness School expeditions and this includes cotton socks. A local department store (Wal-Mart, Target etc.) should have these in the hunting or camping section.

Specialized Clothing Items

Even though it is summer you will need to bring warm clothing to your expedition. Wool, polypropylene and other synthetic fabrics such as nylon, polyester, Orlon and non-cotton fleece are essential because they will keep you warm when they are wet. They also allow for ventilation and will dry easier. Read the tags when packing items.

Think Small

For packing purposes, travel sizes are best. Two or three small tubes of toothpaste are better than 1 large tube. Here are some examples of things that can be purchased in travel sizes: toothpaste, biodegradable soap, shampoo, body or foot powder, sunscreen, etc.

Other items to consider:

- A small flashlight and extra batteries
- Small hand towel
- Small containers (bring 2) of insect repellent - we allow lotion and pump spray, but no aerosol spray

Cup, Bowl and Spoon

Cup - plastic travel mug or other plastic cup suitable for hot liquids.

Bowl - Tupperware bowl that is big enough for a decent sized serving of food (students get hungry at the Wilderness School. Other durable plastic or metal bowl will suffice.

Spoon - Metal spoon works best.

Medications

All medications **must arrive at the Wilderness School 96 hours in advance of the course start.** A copy of the [Medication Checklist](#) will be distributed with Acceptance Letters and can be printed now for an idea on how to prepare medications for the Wilderness School. If you have questions on our medication policies or procedures, please contact the Wilderness School Enrollment Office.

Student Mail

You can send and receive mail at the Wilderness School. To send mail while you are on course, you must bring paper, envelopes, a pen, and stamps. Peel and stick stamps work well. You can even pre-address your envelopes at home, or buy stamped envelopes and post cards. Carry these items in a heavy-duty zip lock bag. You can send mail whenever your crew is visited by a staff from base camp.

To receive **mail**, have family and friends use the address listed below:

(Your Name)
C/O Wilderness School
240 North Hollow Road
East Hartland, CT 06027

Mail can also be **faxed** to 860-653-8120 or **e-mail** sent to: wildernessjourney@ct.gov

Mail received by either of these methods will be printed by program staff, put into an envelope and sent out to the field during the next course transition.