



Leeds YHA Walking Group

“Leading the way.....”

Guidance for walkers participating in group walks

Please come correctly prepared

For your own safety, please ensure that you are adequately dressed and equipped for walks. That means:

- Proper walking boots, unless the walk is short and on good paths when trainers may be appropriate.
- Clothing should not be too tight fitting and it should be appropriate for the weather conditions. It is **vital** to wear clothing that will keep you **warm** and **dry** in all weather conditions. Cotton clothing gets **damp** easily e.g. from sweating and will retain the moisture. You can chill easily on hilltops. A thin synthetic base-layer will take sweat from your body and keep you warm and dry. Denim clothing is totally unsuitable for walking as it takes a long time to dry out, so is likely to make you **cold** as well as wet. A few thinner layers are better than one thick layer as they can be added and removed as appropriate.
- A **windproof** and **waterproof** (but breathable) jacket. Brightly coloured clothes are sensible in bad weather. You should always carry waterproofs, even if the weather looks good. Hills and open areas give no protection from the elements. The British weather can turn bad very quickly and without warning. Leather jackets, duffel coats and denim jackets are not designed for several hours of outdoor use in bad weather
- A **hat**. Half of your body heat is lost through your head.
- A mobile phone if you have one. Keep it dry in a bag in your rucksack. Dial 999 in an emergency.
- A **rucksack** that is comfortable for the whole day and is big enough to carry the above equipment.
- Sufficient **food** for a day's walking. Bread and high carbohydrate foods are good. High-energy foods like chocolate and cereal bars and Kendal mint cake can provide a quick source of **energy**. Few mountains have caf s! **Spare food** should always be carried on longer walks. The walk may take longer if you get lost or if bad weather conditions or injury slow the group down. You should always carry enough to drink. Even in cold weather your body perspires and uses water. If you become dehydrated this will affect your ability to walk through reduced energy levels. For longer days you need at least a litre of liquid and even two on warm days.
- A **torch** (& spare batteries) for longer mountainous day walks, especially in wintertime. You may run out of daylight on a walk, because of unforeseen events or underestimating the length of the walk.

Hypothermia can kill: it arises in **cold** and **damp** conditions. It is your responsibility to ensure you are correctly equipped for a walk. Damp clothes from perspiration and a cold day can be dangerous. Warm clothes and clothing that takes the perspiration from your skin, together with a windproof can save your life. You may be putting yourself and others at risk if you wear or fail to carry the correct type of clothing and protection from the elements.

If you have any questions about suitable dress or equipment please see an experienced walker or a committee member before the event. Walk leaders are entitled to turn away people who they consider to be unsuitably equipped, or who they consider will hold the group back excessively.

Please be on time

In the past some walks have started significantly later than the advertised start time; mainly because of late arrivals. This is unfair on those who have made the effort to be on time. It can compromise a planned walk, e.g. if available daylight is short or walkers must catch return public transport.

Please consider your ability and what the walk involves

Some walks are intended to be difficult, in order to provide a challenge to the stronger, more experienced walkers in the group. We provide walk descriptions in our programmes. If you see a walk described as 'hard' or grade 4 and 5 then unless you can cope with walking up and down steep hills for 2-3 hours non-stop at a time, it is probably not for you. People on this type of walk are entitled not to have to keep waiting for much slower walkers. If in doubt about your ability then please consult a committee member or try one of our grade 1-3 walks before a harder one.

Backmarkers

Each walk should have two backmarkers and they will know the route planned by the walk leader. Members of the committee will organise who the backmarkers are but if walk leaders know of anyone then this would prove useful. The group has purchased 4 walkie-talkie units to help the walk leader and backmarkers communicate. On a Tuesday walk with many people, the walk leader, both backmarkers and an extra person can use the walkie-talkies to keep in contact. On weekends away where there are fewer people but maybe two independent walks, each group can have two walkie-talkies. The walk leader should find it easier to lead a walk as they will have assistance from the backmarkers.