

Expedition Kit & Clothing Guide



Clothing and Equipment Guide for Participants

There is a great deal of outdoor kit and equipment on the market. **Outlook Adventures**, an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) for the expedition section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, has put together this guide to explain some of the key considerations when choosing clothing and kit for DofE expeditions.

Your feedback and suggestions are always most welcome.

Please do contact us if you have any questions.

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THE LAYERING SYSTEM

Lots of layers are much better than one thick jacket or jumper. Utilise the layering system with items of clothing that are warm, quick-drying and light, to ensure a comfortable expedition.

The layering system:

- Base layer
- Mid layer, and
- Outer layer.



Layers allow flexibility to regulate body temperature and stay dry but use breathable fabrics that move sweat from the skin.

Base Layer



A base layer is worn next to the skin for maximum wicking of sweat and to keep your body heat at a regulated temperature.

Synthetics or fine wool (Merino) would be best suited for DofE expeditions. Merino wool is odour resistant and best worn in cold conditions. Synthetics are lightweight and perfect for spring/summer use but less efficient at resisting odour.



AVOID cotton t-shirts as these are not ideal on expedition. They absorb moisture and do not dry quickly, reducing thermal effectiveness (they will not keep you warm) and become uncomfortable to wear and heavy to carry.

WHY NOT TRY:

Wicking t-shirts used for sport
Icebreaker^(R) t-shirts



Putting a dry bag of your spare clothes inside your thicker, fluffy fleece makes for an ideal pillow.

Mid Layers, including Walking Trousers



Mid Layers provide warmth. The mid layer is worn over your base layer which traps heat in. Micro fleeces are ideal for the mid layer because they are great at resisting moisture and retaining heat.

AVOID cotton jumpers and hoodies as these will get very heavy and uncomfortable if wet and highly likely to stay wet for the duration of the expedition!

Walking trousers should be quick drying. Some participants find synthetic sports trousers or leggings comfortable.

In the summer we advise lightweight trousers as shorts can expose you to sunburn and chances of getting ticks.

AVOID cotton bottoms and avoid jeans!



Spare clothing

You will most likely walk wearing underwear, thermal base layer, and thin fleece. Spare clothing, ideal to sleep in and for emergencies, might include spare base layer, underwear and socks. Some participants also bring spare fleece and trousers but remember, every extra item will just add weight to what you carry. Whatever you bring, make sure they are kept in dry bags in your rucksack so they do not get wet.

Outer Layer



Waterproof jacket

The **outer layer** is designed to protect you against the rain, wind and cold, keeping you keep you comfortable on expedition. **Jackets must have a hood.**

A waterproof jacket and waterproof overtrousers are essential items for all DofE participants.

It is important to get a waterproof that is also windproof and breathable enough so you don't overheat inside your jacket.

Many jackets state the term 'waterproof' on their labels but be careful. We expect a waterproof rating 10,000mm or above **with taped seams.**

Avoid pac a mac style jackets as these tend to get sweaty and will 'wet out'. And tracksuit tops/bottoms are unlikely to be waterproof enough.

A pair of gloves and a hat are also essential items and great for evenings and cooler days. Participants should consider waterproof gloves if they are travelling to a more remote, mountainous region.



Waterproof trousers

You must have both waterproof jacket and trousers for expeditions. Both are essential.

They must be waterproof. Ensure they have taped seams to stop water leaking through. You can check this by looking at the seams on the inside of your jacket.

Outer layer clothing also includes:

- Hats (Essential! Woolly hats and sun hats).
- Gloves (Essential! But make sure they are waterproof).
- Gaiters (Ideal for some wild country expeditions).
- Buffs (Try one! You won't be disappointed).

Hats and gloves are needed even in the summer as it can get very cold on the hills at night. And protection from the sun is very important so ensure you have the right hat and sun protection.



Weather

Please refer to all the items on your kit list whatever the weather forecast. However, do check the forecast so you know what to expect!

Some participants pack far too many clothes in their bag so think carefully about what you really need. **Pack smart.**

You will need spare clothes if you get wet during the day. Your rucksack and rucksack cover **are not waterproof** so ensure they stay dry inside dry bags in rucksack. Bring a spare base layer. They can double up as night wear too.

Footwear



You are going to be on your feet for most of your expedition, so keeping your feet comfortable is key to making them happy. **Low cut walking shoes, trainers and wellies are not suitable.**

Make sure you pick a pair of boots that are robust, have good tread pattern, are waterproof (either by liner/membrane or leather wax applied) and high enough to protect your ankles.

Your boots need to fit as a sloppy boot will give you blisters and a boot too small will bruise your toes. Always get your feet measured and try on a few pairs before committing to a purchase.



Check your boots have a good sole and heel.



Walking shoes, approach shoes or trainers are NOT suitable and you will not be able to take part in the expedition. Also avoid fashion boots, including DMs.

Your walking boots must cover the ankle bone to provide adequate support. And make sure your laces are always done up properly.

Break in your boots before the expedition so they feel comfortable when you are walking and help reduce the likelihood of blisters.

Socks



Socks are the first area of contact next to both your skin and boots so getting the correct socks is important.

Liner socks are great to help prevent blisters. They are worn like a base layer, underneath your standard hiking sock. As well as wicking away sweat, moisture and bacteria they won't rub or irritate feet due to being designed without seams.



WHY NOT TRY:

WoolFusion Trekker Socks
Men's sizes 6-12
Women's sizes 3.5-8



We suggest a padded walking sock to provide cushioning against the new boot liners, as well as keeping your toes toasty.

Packing



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Sleeping

Sleeping bags differ in many ways from size, comfort rating, season rating and different types of insulation, so making sure you pick the correct one is very important for a good sleep.

A three season sleeping bag will be suitable for DofE expeditions within the UK. This should be marked as having a comfort rating of around 0 degrees Celsius.

Comfort ratings are important to note when selecting an appropriate sleeping bag. The extreme ratings represent a survival temperature and using a bag close to its extreme rating will mean a very poor night sleep.

You may notice that sleeping bags mention whether they have a left hand or right hand zip. If you are left handed then go for a right handed zip and, if right handed, go for a left handed zip. Its also important to look at pack size and weight as you will need to carry the sleeping bag in your rucksack.



Use a stuff sack or compression bag to pack and compress your sleeping bag. We highly recommend you then put your sleeping bag in a dry bag to ensure it always stays dry on rainy days. Rucksacks and rucksack covers are not waterproof.

A sleeping mat is an essential piece of kit as it puts a layer of insulation and comfort between you and the ground when sleeping.

A sleeping mat can be made of foam or self inflating. A simple foam roll mat won't look much but it will make all the difference under your sleeping bag, plus it is lightweight to carry. A self inflating mat is a great choice if you are looking for a little more comfort.



WHY NOT TRY:

Multimat Foam Roll Mat

Optional extras



Sleeping bag liners will add warmth to your sleeping bag but it will be another item to carry. Cotton liners are the cheapest but not the warmest. Fleece liners are warm but bulky. Silk liners are warm and light, but the most expensive.

Pyjamas are often packed at Bronze level, but participants soon realise that their spare clothing can be used for sleepwear. **Pack smart!**

Rucksack



Perhaps the most important item you will need on your expedition. Your rucksack **MUST** be suitable for carrying everything with you for the expedition.

Size: A rucksack between 50+10 and 60 +10 litres (+10 means it can extend a further 10 litres) in size is required. **Rucksacks with a capacity of 30-50 litres are not big enough.** Your rucksack must have a padded hip belt and an adjustable back system.

Make sure your hip bone is in the middle of the hip belt, if too high the weight will load onto your spine. The correct position will transfer the weight through your pelvis to your legs. The aim is to get 70-80% on the hips and 20-30% on your shoulders. The pack should be comfortable, stable and sitting close to your back.



WHY NOT TRY:

Lowe Alpine Axiom Atlas 65
Vango Sherpa 60+10 Litres

Make sure your rucksack is big enough so no items are tied to the outside of your rucksack, perhaps with the exception of a roll mat. If you cannot fit all items inside your rucksack then you have packed too much. Items on the outside can cause a 'sway' of the rucksack when walking which, over time, can cause blisters.



Order of putting on and fitting your rucksack

The strongest muscles in your body are in your legs, so you want to carry the weight of your rucksack through your legs **AND NOT** your shoulders.

1. Adjust the back length so when the rucksack is on with hip belt around hips, the shoulder straps come over the shoulder with no gap between shoulders and shoulder strap, otherwise the back length on the rucksack needs to be shortened.
2. Tighten hip belt but keep it comfortable with hip bone touching the middle of the belt.
3. Next fit the shoulder straps and tighten.
4. Shoulder stabilizers should be adjusted to balance the pack. Do not over tighten the shoulder stabilizers as this may create a gap between the shoulder and the strap which can cause rubbing and cause overbalance.
5. Now clip and adjust the chest strap. You can slide the strap up and down, but make sure the strap fits level with the front of the shoulder joint and tightened until it takes the pull off the front of the shoulders.



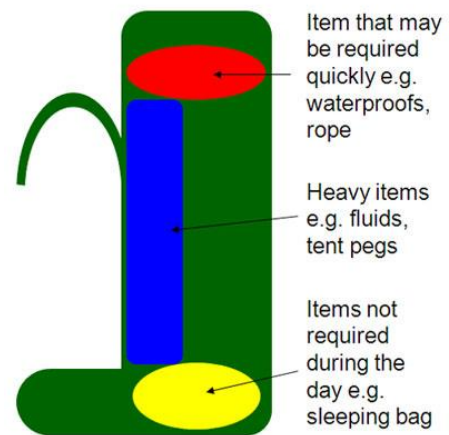
A correctly packed and fitted rucksack can ensure an enjoyable and safe expedition.

Packing a Rucksack

Everyone packs their rucksack slightly differently - personal preference. However, there are some guiding principles that will help with more effective load carrying and ease of managing your kit and equipment on expedition.

Basic Principles:

- ❑ One recommendation is to aim to carry no more than 25% of your body weight. We feel that even this is too much for some people. You should aim for your rucksack, fully packed with all items, including all team equipment, food and water, to weigh no more than 15kg, even 12-13kg for a 2-day expedition.
- ❑ Keep things dry! Line your rucksack with a rubble bag or large dry bag. Pack clothes and sleeping bag into separate dry bags to keep them dry and this helps to compartmentalise your equipment.
- ❑ Items you need most often, or might need in an emergency, should be in a very accessible place like the top of your pack or side pockets (eg water bottles, map, compass, first aid kit, waterproofs, snacks, lunch, hat, gloves, torch and any other emergency kit).
- ❑ Be consistent so that each day items are in the same place and therefore easily found.
- ❑ Pack the sleeping bag at the bottom of the rucksack in a stuff bag, and in a separate dry bag too.



Do not have items hanging on the outside of rucksack as this will:

- ❑ make you unbalanced
- ❑ create sores and blisters on your back with the swaying motion that will occur when walking, and
- ❑ items will get lost.

If items cannot be packed inside your rucksack then you are packing too much! The only exception might be your sleeping mat.

Each participant will normally carry approximately 2kg of team kit once it is shared out equally. These items include tents, Trangia stoves, gas canisters, shelters, maps and compasses. Leave enough room in your rucksack to pack these items.

Packing Order

1. Rucksack liner.
2. Sleeping bag in a dry bag in the bottom compartment.
3. Spare clothing in a dry bag at the bottom of the rucksack.
4. Food. Pack main meals individually, removing unnecessary packaging. Food for the day to be easily accessible, with the rest of the food stored safely in rucksack. Be careful of leaks.
5. Team kit: Tent and stove/trangia. Be careful trangia doesn't have liquids inside. Wrap it inside rucksack but not in liner. Tent inner must be protected at all times. Keep dry and clean. The heavy parts of the tent to be up against the back. Make sure poles and pegs are secure inside.
6. Gas/trangia fuel. Tucked inside rucksack and away from sunlight and edges of rucksack.
7. Easily accessible items (pens, notepad, torch, first aid kit, map, compass, hat, sun cream, snacks, water, etc) now to go at top of rucksack or side/top compartments of rucksack.
8. Make sure waterproofs are accessible at the top of the rucksack before closing the top.



Weight distribution

Weight distribution is important to help with balance whilst walking and reduce the pull on shoulders.

- ❑ Heavy items should be close to your back, evenly weighted (side to side) and near the top.
- ❑ Pack evenly and firmly and try to foresee problems with sharp/delicate objects and rattles.

Remember: Last in, first out!

Safety



Every participant will need a **first aid kit**, a **whistle**, **emergency rations** and a **survival bag** whilst on expedition.

Your group will need a larger '**group**' first aid kit which will carry extra items e.g. burns kit, triangular bandages, wound strips and strapping tape. Details on the **contents of first aid kits** can be found on the DofE Kit List.



WHY NOT TRY:

Lifesystems Survival Bag and Lifesystems Trek First Aid



Ticks

Make sure you read about tick prevention, symptoms and treatment.

Mobile phones

The use of mobile phones on expeditions is strictly for emergencies only. Phones should not be used as a camera or as a music player. Please **do not** expect participants to call home until they have finished the expedition. If you need to contact them please use the emergency contact number provided to you in your expedition information. Participants will be asked to repeat the expedition if they use their mobile phone in any non-emergency situation, this includes calling home at any time.

Other items for safety

Watches are an essential and each team must have at least two. Mobile phones are not to be used for timekeeping or morning alarms. A cheap watch is ideal. The watch is needed to record timings on route cards and to let instructors know if you will be an hour late or early into any checkpoint.

Head torches are essential for safety around camp. Better than hand held torches too.

Personal toiletries for basic hygiene. Toothbrush and paste, deodorant, toilet tissues and hand sanitiser are required. Wet wipes are useful.

Camping Cutlery and Food



Cutlery does not have to be expensive but do get robust kit. Think about weight. Will you need a plate and a bowl? Or could you use a bowl for your main meal and breakfast saving on weight and washing up.

You must carry **at least two litres of water** so make sure you get water bottles like the 1 litre **Lifeventure Tritan Flask**. Camelbak/Platypus style systems are popular but be careful, they can leak and it's harder to keep track of how much water you have left if you use these bladder systems. **If you do use one, you must pack a 1 litre water bottle as a back up.**

AVOID plastic water bottles as they are likely to leak.

Expedition ready meals are high in energy, low in weight and easy to cook.



Don't forget a team tea towel, a small amount of washing up liquid, a scrubber and bin liner for rubbish. Brillo pads are ideal.

Frequently Asked Questions

List of Shame

Do I need everything on the kit list?

The official DofE Kit list is very extensive and covers all levels of DofE expeditions (Bronze, Silver and Gold). You will not need every item on the list. We suggest reading through our Adventure Seekers Kit Guide to gain a better understanding of what you need to bring.

Do I have to wear walking boots?

Yes. During your expedition you will be carrying your expedition rucksack and walking over rough ground meaning that your ankles will need more support than usual. Your boots must come up over your ankle to provide support and prevent injury. Boots should also have good tread on the soles to give good grip over the type of ground you will be walking on. You will not be able to take part in the expedition without proper walking boots.

Should I bring another pair of shoes for the campsite?

This is up to you. Your boots should be comfortable to wear for the full day and an extra pair of shoes will only add extra weight to your bag. It is important that you wear shoes at all times on camp when outside your tent.

In summer can I wear shorts and vest tops?

In the summer your expedition may be very hot and sunny. While shorts and vests may keep you cool they also expose more of your skin to problems such as sunburn, insect bites, scratches from long grass and ticks. We advise wearing lightweight trousers and tops which cover your skin.

Can I wear cotton t-shirts and hoodies?

Cotton can absorb a lot of water and takes a long time to dry out once wet so is not a good fabric if you will sweat a lot or if it rains. Wearing wet clothing will be cold and uncomfortable so we would suggest fleece tops and synthetic or thin wool layers which are lightweight and dry quickly.

Do I need a hat and gloves in summer?

Weather on expeditions can vary and temperatures can drop substantially even in the middle of summer and especially overnight. Hats and gloves are essential whatever the weather. Hats are great to sleep in if chilly overnight.

How many sets of clothes do I need?

This depends on the level and length of your expedition. As a minimum you should have 1 complete set of spare clothing in case one gets wet. Try to double up items to save space and weight, for example, use your clean set of clothes as pyjamas until the last day.

How many pairs of socks should I take?

Again dependant on the length of expedition but as a minimum two. A new pair every other day is fine but always ensure you have a spare in case it rains

Some participants bring unnecessary items on expedition. Here is a list of the most common mistakes:

Clothes (don't pack these!)

- Excessive spare clothes
- Jeans, denim and cotton clothes
- PJs and onesies

Food (you'll regret it!)

- Tins (and tin openers)
- Jars
- Pot noodles
- Crisps
- Fizzy drinks
- Excessive packaging
- Tupperware

Equipment (absolute no!)

- Phone chargers
- Music players
- Pen knives
- Pillows
- Anything electrical

Hygiene (no need!)

- Shampoo and gel
- Towels
- Hair brush
- Makeup

PACK TO LOOK AFTER YOUR BACK!

Equipment for participants and leaders!

Visit www.outlookadventures.co.uk/contactus

We also hire the essentials for expeditions. Do you need a quality rucksack, roll mat or walking boots? Email info@outlookadventures.co.uk to request a hire form.

