

## **Top Tips for Hiking in the Winter**

Winter is a fantastic time for hiking if you want to see some spectacular views and get a lot of fresh air and exercise. But when you're hiking in the winter you should be careful and adjust your hiking routine to accommodate the cold weather and potential for extreme temperatures and snowfall, especially if you're hiking in or near the mountains. The weather can change fast and you need to be prepared so that you can hike safely. Use these tips for safe winter time hiking to make every winter time hike a great hike:

### **Frostbite Can Happen Fast**

Frostbite can happen faster than you might think. In some conditions it can happen in 30 minutes or less and you may not even realize it's happening. Frostbite affects your extremities like your ears, fingers, and feet so keep those extremities warm at all times when you're hiking in the cold. Frostbite happens when the temperature and the wind chill combine to make freezing conditions so make sure you have dry socks and boots, gloves, and a hat or ear protection to ward off frostbite.

### **Layer, Layer, Layer**

Layering your clothes is the best way to keep yourself warm while accommodating your increased body temperature as you hike. You will get warmer the longer you're moving and you can easily remove layers and then put them back on as you cool off. Always wear heavy duty performance clothing next to your skin for proper air circulation and to wick away sweat so that your skin isn't damp and cold. It's a good idea to invest in a water proof, not water resistant, jacket to keep you dry if it snows.

### **Protect Your Face**

It's important to make sure that your face is protected when you're hiking in the winter. The cold temperatures and bitter wind chills can wind burn and other injuries because your face is often the only part of you that is exposed. Always wear high quality sunglasses to protect your eyes. The sun on snow can be blinding. And driving snow can cause eye damage if it gets into your eyes. A warm scarf or balaclava is a must when you're hiking in the winter.

### **You Still Need Water**

When you're hiking in cold weather you may not feel thirsty because of the cold, but you still need to be drinking water regularly and you need to make sure that you have plenty of water with you. Your muscles are still using water as you are being physically active and you are still sweating even though it's cold. Make sure that you stop and drink often even if you're not thirsty and have plenty of water with you to drink.

### **Pay Attention To The Weather**

Check both the temperature and the wind chill when you're going hiking in the winter. Even if the temperature is relatively mild if the wind chill is intensely cold you can be in danger. Pay attention to the forecast and be prepared for bad weather to come up very suddenly, especially if

you're hiking in the mountains. Winter weather can change on a dime and you need to be prepared for the worst weather.

Some Additional Reading:

The Highlands 3 Peaks Challenge

<https://www.hikethehighlands.com/3-peaks-challenge/introduction/>

Check it out! The Highlands Photo Gallery

<https://www.hikethehighlands.com/photo-gallery/>

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