

Hiking Safety Tips

More Americans, now than ever, are taking up a hiking hobby due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While hiking may be safe in terms of social distancing, we've also seen a rise in the number of injuries on the trail, according to a [New York Times](#) article.

Read on to find out more about common injuries on the trail and hiking safety tips.

What are some common injuries on a hiking trail?

- Sprained ankle
- Scrapes and Abrasions
- Blisters
- Reaction to poison ivy
- Exhaustion

What are some safety and prevention tips to prevent emergencies and injuries on the trail?

Supportive Footwear

Wearing appropriate hiking shoes can make a dramatic difference on your hiking adventure. Hiking boots absorb shock better and offer greater support to the arch of your foot.

Invest in hiking shoes, especially when you are hiking uphill or on rocky terrain. You will find you can go further distances because your feet and joints won't get tired and worn out as quickly. It also helps prevent common hiking injuries like a sprained ankle or blisters.

Stay Fed and Hydrated

According to [the Clymb](#), the physical exertion of a hike burns a lot of energy, meaning your body will need extra fuel than it usually does for your day-to-day life.

Prepare for this by packing plenty of snacks and water. Pack calorie-dense and protein-rich foods that are easy to pull out and munch on the trail. Pack enough water to last the entire trail, or plan where you will stop to refill. Eating and drinking enough along the way will prevent muscle cramping and total exhaustion.

Pack a First Aid Kit

While we certainly never want them to happen, unexpected injuries can occur on the trail. Pack a first aid kit to prepare for those unexpected incidents such as scrapes or a broken bone. Ideally, a first aid kit should include:

- Absorbent compress dressing
- Adhesive bandages
- Adhesive cloth tape
- Packets of aspirin
- An emergency blanket
- Instant cold compress
- Sterile gauze pad
- Tweezers

Refer to [this resource](#) by the American Red Cross for a complete list of first aid supplies.

Choose a Trail at Your Skill Level

In the excitement of the moment, you may be tempted to sign up for a hiking trail that is much longer or more difficult than any you have done before. Take a moment to evaluate whether you're up to a more challenging hike. [National Park Service](#) suggests that it's a good rule of thumb to increase your stamina by leveling up incrementally, one hike at a time. However, once you've weighed the difficulty and your skill level, go for it, and enjoy the challenge!

Don't Go Alone

Call that friend you know who enjoys a good hike. Get connected with hiking groups in the area and make new friends in the process of pursuing your love for hiking. Not only do group hiking trips create good adventures and great stories to tell later, but they also prevent you from facing injuries or challenges on the hike alone. If you do decide to take a trail alone, make sure you let a friend or family member know when and where you are going on your hike and when they can expect you to be back.