

Hiking

Hiking is one of the best things the great outdoor has to offer! Be it on the trails of fabled Mt. Makiling in Los Baños or on the busy streets of Quezon Boulevard in Quezon City, there is nothing more exciting than seeing our environment up close and personal.

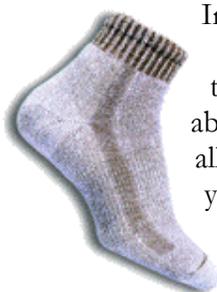
Taking Care of Your Feet

One of the most important things you have to remember is that a “hiker is only as good as his feet”. The condition of your feet determines how pleasant your hiking trip will be.



Selecting good shoes that provide good support and protection for your feet and ankles are the best way to have a pleasant hiking trip. Your shoes should be good fit so as your heels would not slide back and forth too much.

New hiking shoes should be broken-in, by taking short hikes, before they are used in real hiking condition. Let your feet and shoes settle all their differences before you take them to battle. Short hikes may consist of 2 kilometers or less for inexperienced hikers and you should increase your distance as necessary. Real hiking conditions may be as short as 8 kilometers or as long as 80 kilometers. Your conditioning hikes need not be boring walks; it can simply be doing an all-day window shopping at the local SM mall.



In combination with your shoes, a good pair of socks is important. Socks provide the extra cushion for your feet to stay comfortable and dry. Wear thin pair of socks under modestly thick pair. The thinner or inner sock will absorb moisture away from your foot, while the thicker or outer sock will allow the thinner sock to slide a bit as you walk. This lessens friction of your feet against the shoe that may cause blistering. It is recommended that you wear socks inside-out, since almost all socks have seams on the inside, normally right above to toes, that may rub against your toes as you hike and can cause blistering.

Should your feet began to tire, change into a fresh pair of socks. Changing will refresh you from your feet up. Hang your used sock on your pack to air out and dry.

Dress Up Right

Wear something that makes you as comfortable as possible. The Philippines has generally warm temperature weather, so it is recommended to wear light colored short-sleeved shirts. Short pants can give you more flexibility as you walk uphill or downhill, however should you

expect to go through some brushes it is good to wear long pants to protect your legs. Wear a brimmed hat to keep your head away from the direct heat of the sun.

Although Philippine weather is generally warm, we also have places with cool to cold weather, such as Baguio City. Hikers should dress right for cold weather conditions by wearing warmer clothes (long-sleeved shirt and long pants).

Eating and Drinking Right

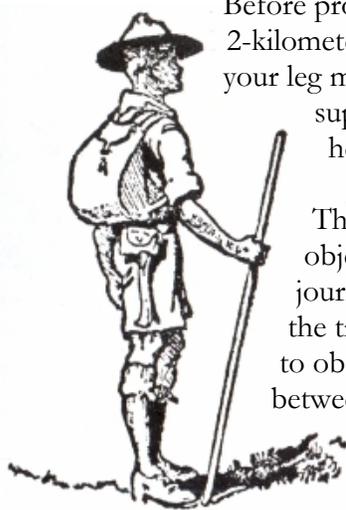
You lose a lot of energy when you are on a hike, especially when exposed to warm weather conditions. Getting those lost electrolytes is the key to keep your engine running. Try snacking on banana chips (potassium), mildly salted nuts (sodium), and raisins (sugar). Don't snack on junk foods such as salty potato chips and very sweet candies.

Mealtime (lunch or dinner) along the trail should be reasonable and healthy. Remember that you cannot carry a whole lot of things while on a hike. Remember not to bring food that says, "Keep Refrigerated" on the label, you still have a large selection of food, but you shouldn't have to worry about food stuff getting spoiled during your trip.

Sandwiches are good when you hold the mayonnaise, hard-boiled eggs, beef jerky, carrot sticks, and celery sticks.

Keep yourself hydrated by drinking enough water as you hike, but not too much as water will come out of your body as sweat bringing with it your electrolytes. A liter of water is close-to-enough for an 8-kilometer hike on warm weather. It is also helpful to bring sports drink such as Gatorade or Powerade to replace lost electrolytes due to sweating. But you must not use sports drink as a replacement for water due to their sugar content.

Tips for Pleasant Hike



Before proceeding to a hike, condition yourself by taking short hikes of 2-kilometer or less. By conditioning yourself, you prepare and build up your leg muscles to take longer hikes. Hiking sticks provides additional support to lessen the burden on your legs. It is most especially helpful to provide support on uphill and downhill hikes.

The slowest member of the group should set the pace. The objective of a hike is not to race each other, but to enjoy the journey and learn along the way as you go. Going slowly through the trail helps you enjoy the scenery more and gives you more time to observe your surroundings. Give yourself regular rest time in-between long hikes as well; a five-minute break for every half-hour is a good guide. Taking too long rest however may cause your muscle to stiffen, so make it a habit to take short rests. Never remove your shoes when you feel your feet are so

sore, there is a possibility that you might not be able to put it back on.

Make it a habit to travel light. Bring only the things that will be really useful to you on your hike. The more you bring the more weight your legs have to carry and the less pleasant the hike will be.

Although it is part of hiking to endure hardships, there are times when the condition gets too rough. Bad weather or sore legs are simply some of the things that can make your hike very unpleasant. The best way to deal with rough conditions such as these is to learn when to turn back and go home. There will always be a next time. Learning that you're way above your head is also part of good hiking know-how.

Low-Impact Hiking

A good general rule for the outdoors is to take good care of it so you and other people can continue to enjoy it, so will future generations. Going on hikes with a party of 50 or more is generally not a very good idea. Not only is it hard to manage such a large party, it also creates a larger impact on the environment you are trying to enjoy and destroys the outdoor experience for everyone.

Also, forego the want to build a fire for cooking or warming up. Cook using a portable stove and wear warm clothes. Only build a fire that scorches the ground when truly necessary observing low-impact practices.

**“Take Nothing but Pictures;
Leave Nothing but Footprints;
Kill Nothing but Time.”**