**10 ESSENTIALS FOR HIKING**....As listed in the Eleventh Edition of the [*Boy Scout Handbook*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boy_Scout_Handbook), they are:

1. A [**pocket knife**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pocket_knife) (presumably more than just a [knife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knife), a [Swiss Army knife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_Army_knife) for example) can come in handy in a wide variety of situations. It is useful for tasks as large as building an emergency [shelter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hut_%28dwelling%29) or lighting a [campfire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campfire) with poor [fuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuel), or as small as repairing a damaged [backpack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backpack). In order to use a knife in Scouting, you must have your [Totin' Chip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totin%27_Chip) award or [whittling chip](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Whittling_chip&action=edit&redlink=1) award.
2. A [**first aid kit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_aid_kit) can be a lifesaver. A basic kit for [first aid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_aid) might include [adhesive bandages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sticking_plaster), [medical tape](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surgical_tape), sterile [gauze](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gauze), [moleskin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moleskin), [soap](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soap), [antiseptic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiseptic), a mouth-barrier device for [CPR](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardiopulmonary_resuscitation), scissors and [band-aids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Band-aids).
3. **Extra clothing** to match the weather. Multiple layers are superior to a single massive [jacket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacket), because [layered clothing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layered_clothing) is adaptable to a wide range of temperatures.
4. **Rain gear** is very important. Being wet from rain may result in [hypothermia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypothermia), a potentially fatal condition.
5. A [**flashlight**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flashlight) is, of course, important for finding one's way at night.
6. **Trail** [**food**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food) is good for maintaining your energy. Hunger and low blood sugar can interfere with concentration and coordination.
7. **Water** is probably the most important of the Essentials. [Dehydration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dehydration) may develop into [heat exhaustion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat_exhaustion) and [heatstroke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heatstroke). The human body may only survive for a few days without water. Portable [water purifiers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_purification) and [water stills](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Water_still&action=edit&redlink=1) may be used to obtain potable water from virtually any source. If a water-source is unavailable the use of a [dromedary bag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dromedary_Bag) should be considered.
8. [**Matches**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Match) **and/or a fire starter** may be used to light [fires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire) for heat, or for signalling purposes. (Publicly owned forests in the United States often have lookout stations for forest fires and signal fires.)
9. **Sun protection** may include [sunblock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunblock), [sunglasses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunglasses), [lip balm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lip_balm) and a wide-brimmed [hat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hat). Used properly, it will prevent [sunburn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunburn) and possibly [heat exhaustion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat_exhaustion).
10. [**Trail maps**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trail_maps) **and** [**compass**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compass) are probably the most important tools one can carry in case of getting lost, along with the basic skills to use them. In knowledgeable hands, they can be used to determine one's location and the best route to reach another location.

**Beyond the Top Ten**

Here are a few other add-ons to consider:

**Insect repellent:** Your most effective options are: lotion or spray repellents containing DEET or picaridin, and/or clothing that has been treated with permethrin.

**Whistle:** For summoning help, it will outlast your vocal cords.

**Personal locator beacon (PLB):** A PLB can help search-and-rescue workers find you in an emergency.

**Communication device:** Two-way radios, a cell phone or a satellite telephone can add a measure of safety in many situations.

**Signaling device:** Some compasses come with sighting mirrors. If yours does not, consider taking a small mirror to signal rescuers in an emergency.

**Knowledge:** Having items in your pack has no value unless you understand how to use them. As one search-and-rescue leader told us, “People talk about the Ten Essentials, but the most important essential is between your ears.”