



OUTDOOR SAFETY

NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN  
SAFETY COUNCIL








# MULTIDAY TRAMPING

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Multiday tramping can take you into the heart of New Zealand's great outdoors, where you'll experience some of the country's best scenery. It's a great way to share an adventure with friends and family.

It doesn't take long to plan a tramp. This guide is intended to help people with some tramping experience who want to extend their skills and knowledge.

### The Outdoor Safety CODE

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At the back of this guide is the 'while you're tramping' checklist to use on your tramp.

SAFER PLACES, SAFER  
ACTIVITIES, **SAFER PEOPLE** ▲





## CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING?

- ? Where are you going?
- ? Who are you going with?
- ? Where will you stay at night?
- ? Where can you seek local knowledge?
- ? Do you have a trip plan?

# ① PLAN YOUR TRIP

Planning your tramp and considering where you're going, the track conditions and skill-level of your group increases your chances of staying safe. Taking a collective approach to trip planning ensures everyone is prepared, and that the group has the right gear, skills and expectations to have a safe and enjoyable trip.

*"The biggest lesson I learnt was to take more time planning the trip."*

### Sara's story

My boyfriend wanted to try out his new tent, so we decided to do an easy overnight tramp. We did a quick search and found a track not far away. Looking at some maps online, it didn't look that long – we estimated six hours walking each day. We arranged for his sister to drop us off and then pick us up the next day at the other end.

We started the tramp nice and early. By midday we were making good progress. But after lunch the track started to change and become more difficult. It was slow-going and it felt like we were going in circles.

We made camp just before dusk, more tired than we expected. When we looked at the map, we saw we were only a third of the way along.


We were up early the next day, in a rush to get out on time for our ride. We barely stopped for breaks, we just had to keep going. Even so, it took us twelve hours instead of six. We were two hours late for our ride and my boyfriend's sister was not happy. Neither were we!


The biggest lesson I learnt was to take more time planning the trip. What looks like a short tramp can end up taking a lot longer, once you factor in the terrain and the gear you have to carry. If something else had gone wrong, we easily could have spent another night out but without enough supplies!





## WHERE ARE YOU GOING?


Carefully consider your planned route and how it will affect your trip experience:


 **How long will it take you?** It's essential to have a good idea how long it will take your group – make sure you factor in everyone's ability and fitness. How many hours each day can your group realistically walk for? Also think about how much food you will need to carry for the time you will be away. You don't want to take five days to walk a track when you only have food for three days.

 **What's the terrain like?** A trip could take much longer than expected if it's on rough, challenging terrain. Consider the terrain in relation to your group's ability, experience, and how much equipment you're carrying. This is especially important when you are carrying supplies for several days.

 **Are there rivers?** Plan trips that use established bridges where possible. If you encounter an unbridged river, you need to know specific river safety information. See **Section 4 Know Your Limits** for more information on river crossings.

 **How will you get there?** Don't forget to factor travel time into your trip planning. If you're coming out at a different point than where you went in, make sure you know how you're getting home.

 **Will your phone work?** Mobile phones have limited coverage in most outdoor locations. You need to have another plan of what to do if something goes wrong. Consider carrying another kind of communication device, such as a Personal Locator Beacon. See **Section 5 Take Sufficient Supplies** for more information on communication devices.

 **The average speed for a group tramping in New Zealand is approximately 3km/h. This would vary depending on fitness of group and track difficulty.**



### TOP TIP

**Seek local knowledge to help plan your route and the amount of time you can reasonably expect to take. See page 3 for where to seek local knowledge.**

## WHO ARE YOU GOING WITH?

Be aware of the abilities and needs of everyone in your group:

- **How experienced and fit is each person?** Make sure everyone in your group is physically fit enough to enjoy the trip. The trip time can also change depending on the abilities of your group, so make sure you have an idea of the slowest person's pace and stamina. Has everyone done a multiday tramp before? Has anyone walked this particular track before?
- **Does anyone have any pre-existing medical conditions?** This is a really important thing to know, partly to make sure each person can cope with the trip, and partly to know how to deal with any medical situations that may arise while you're away.
- **Are there any kids going?** Depending on their ages, this can have an effect on how challenging a trip should be or how long that trip might take. Remember, children need more regular breaks so factor this in.
- **Does everyone have the right clothing and equipment?** Have they considered what they will need for the amount of time you will be away for? Make sure everyone has the appropriate clothing and equipment for the track, terrain and weather.
- **What does each person want from the trip?** Tramping through dense, unmarked bush for multiple days is a great challenge for some but won't be everyone's idea of fun. Make sure you all have the same expectations and plan a trip to meet those expectations.
- **What skills do we need before we go?** You need to have someone with relevant navigation skills in your group. If you are planning on crossing any rivers, everyone must be familiar with river-safety techniques, and if not, only used bridged river crossings.

### TOP TIP

**If you're going with a group, get them involved in the planning. They might think of things that you don't.**



## TOP TIP

When you're not required to book a hut, there is a chance the hut could be full at any time of year. So always consider a back up option such as taking a tent.



## WHERE WILL YOU STAY AT NIGHT?

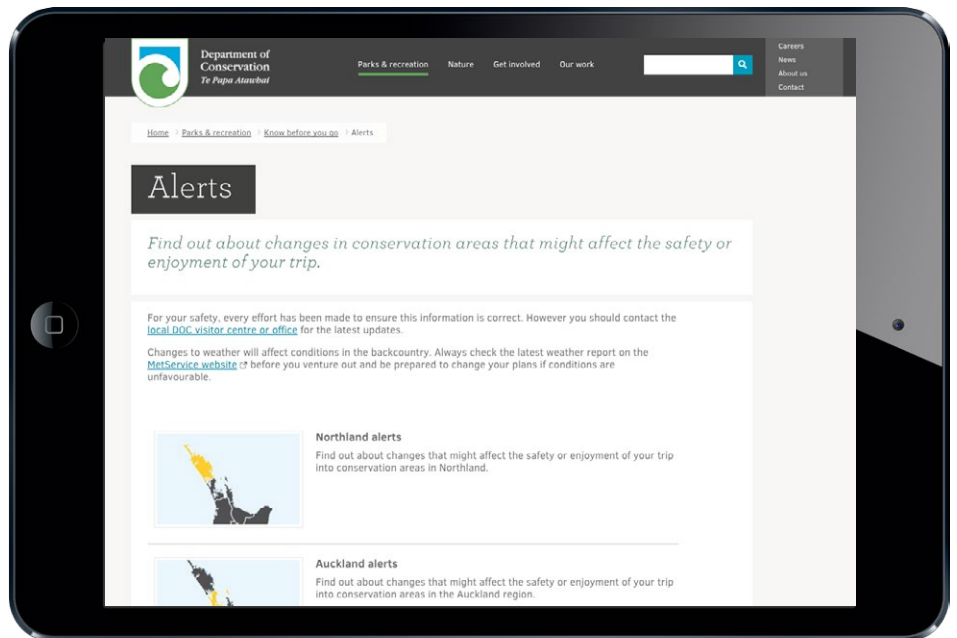
Decide if you are staying in a hut or camping or both:

- Be realistic about how far you can travel in a day. Don't plan to stay in a hut or campsite you won't make it to.
- Do you need to book huts or campsites in advance?
- Is there a fee to use a hut or campsite? If there is, do you know how to pay this?
- What facilities does the hut or campsite have? Do they change depending on the time of year?
- If camping, do you have places on your trip where you plan to stop and set up camp?
- Do you know how to use all your overnight gear? Practise pitching your tent and using your cooker before you go.

## WHERE CAN YOU SEEK LOCAL KNOWLEDGE?

There is plenty of information to be found locally and online. Check out these great sources before you go:

- **Department of Conservation (DOC).** Their website and Visitor Centres are packed with specific knowledge about tracks, huts, activities and important things to know about the areas you're going. It's a great place to start your trip planning. See [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).
- **Information centres.** Local information sources such as regional tourism websites and i-SITE centres often have great information on tracks in the area.
- **The locals.** People in local tramping clubs will know the area in detail, and can help you find the type of trip you're looking for. You can find local tramping club contact information on the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand website, [www.fmc.org.nz](http://www.fmc.org.nz).
- **Guidebooks.** There are lots of great books covering many of New Zealand's best multiday tramps. They often have recommendations for specific areas of New Zealand, so you'll likely find something in your area suitable to your group's experience.



## Walking Access Mapping System.

This is the best way to identify land access information, that is, whether the public has general access to a particular tramp. See [www.wams.org.nz](http://www.wams.org.nz).

## Looking for a map for your trip?

Most outdoor retailers stock them, along with all DOC Visitor Centres. You can also try online sources such as [www.topomap.co.nz](http://www.topomap.co.nz) or the Land Information NZ website, [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz).

## TOP TIP

Before you go, check the DOC and relevant local council websites for any alerts and notices on the condition of the track.



## CREATING A TRIP PLAN

For a multiday tramp, it's a good idea to create a trip plan. This will help you make sure you've covered all the important details, that your trip is suitable for the group and that everyone knows what's happening. Your plan should include:

- ☐ **Transport plans:** How you are getting to the start of your tramp and how you will get home after your tramp.
- ☐ **The start and end points** of your trip.
- ☐ **The specific route** you plan on taking and any possible alternatives. Consider 'emergency exits' in case you need to get out quickly.
- ☐ **Points of interest:** Any potential river crossings or notable features you'll pass.
- ☐ **A breakdown of each day:** Include where you're starting from, where you want to end the day, and possible rest or campsites. Work out the distance of each day and ensure this is achievable given the fitness level of your group, the terrain and the potential weather you could experience.
- ☐ **What to take and who is taking what:** What equipment and clothing you will need and how this will be carried by everyone.
- ☐ **Weather forecasts:** Check for up-to-date forecasts as you get closer to your trip. Start thinking about what the weather will mean for you.

## ASK YOURSELF:

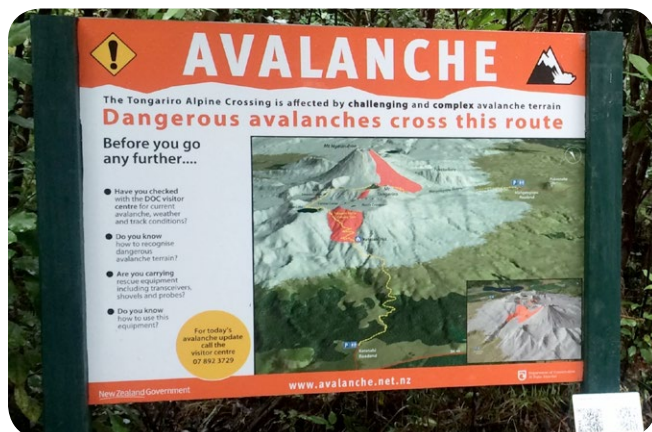
Ask yourself: 'what?', 'where?', 'who?', 'how?' 'when?' and 'why?' – you'll cover everything you need to plan for your trip.

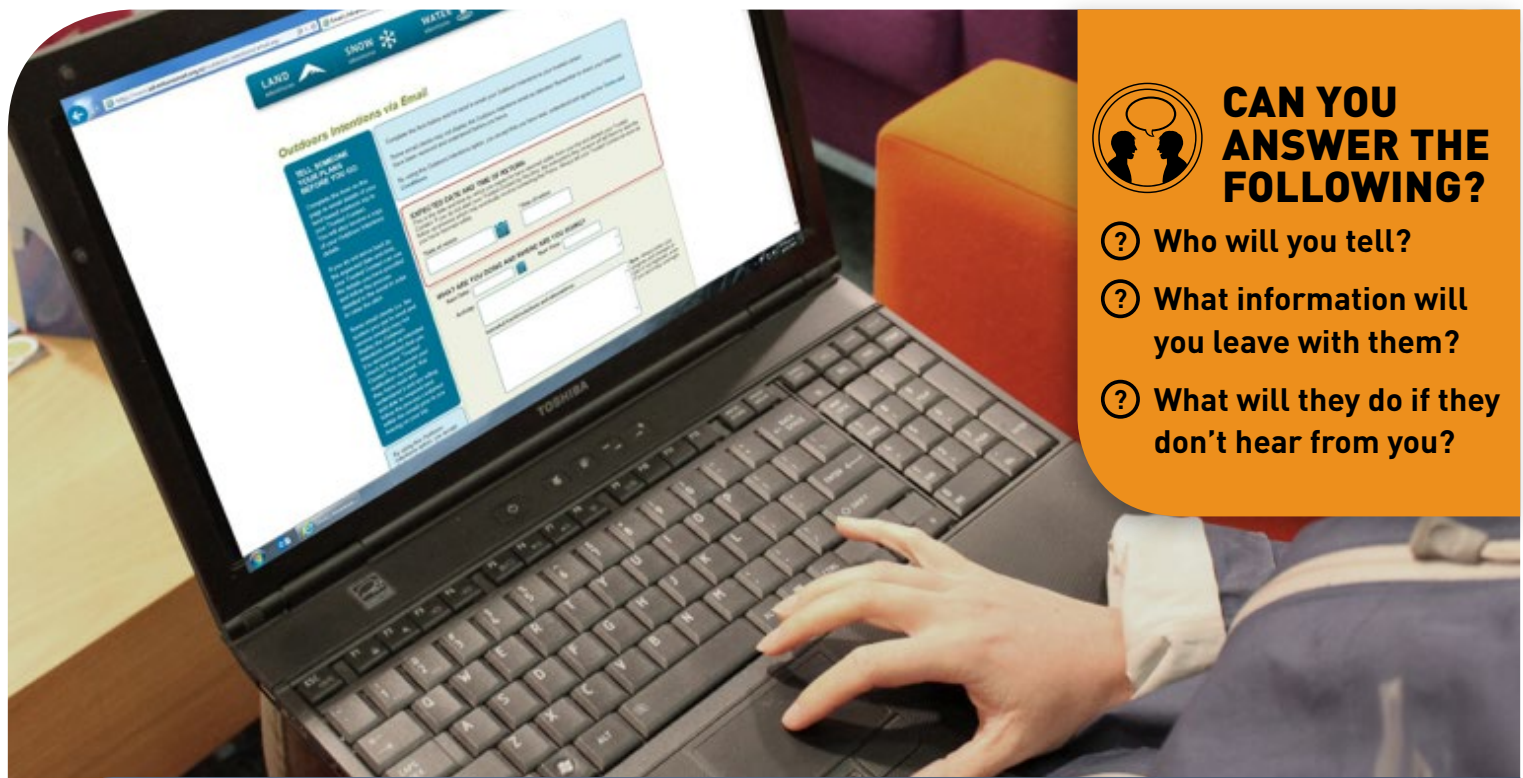
## ANTICIPATING HAZARDS AND MANAGING RISKS

There are always hazards in the outdoors, so think about the types of hazards you could encounter. These could be river crossings, avalanche paths, major track erosion or extreme weather such as heavy rain, strong winds or snow.

Managing risks is all about identifying these hazards, communicating them to the people in your group (or others you meet) and making good decisions. Think about what you can do to identify and manage risk. Thinking about this now means you're better prepared to prevent things from going wrong.

While on your tramp you may encounter warning signs that are there to advise you of dangerous hazards in the area. Make sure you stop to read these and consider what they are telling you. They will help you make smart decisions and reduce the risk of a potential accident.





## CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING?

- ② Who will you tell?
- ② What information will you leave with them?
- ② What will they do if they don't hear from you?

# ② TELL SOMEONE YOUR PLANS

Telling someone your plans is essential, no matter what or where the trip is. There's always a chance that things could go wrong and you won't get any help if no one knows where you are.

Leaving your intentions with a trusted contact is a small act that will significantly increase your chances of a safe return if you get injured or lost.

*"I'd totally failed to tell anyone I was even going on a trip, let alone where I was going."*

### Mateo's story

I needed a break from work so took some time off and planned a three-day tramp, by myself, for a bit of an adventure. Going alone, I made sure I was well prepared.

I had a lot of time to think on that trip, and on the second night it suddenly occurred to me – if I didn't come out when I planned, how long would it be till someone worked out I was missing? I'd totally failed to tell anyone I was even going on a trip, let alone where I was going. That "what if?" stayed with me for the rest of the trip, and I was glad to finish it without anything going wrong.

Since then, I've made sure I've always told someone the details of my trip. It's so important to realise that if no-one has that information, help may not come when you need it.





## WHO TO TELL

Tell your plans to someone you trust. A family member or a close friend is ideal for your trusted contact – you need to know they will act if you don't return from your trip when you say you will.

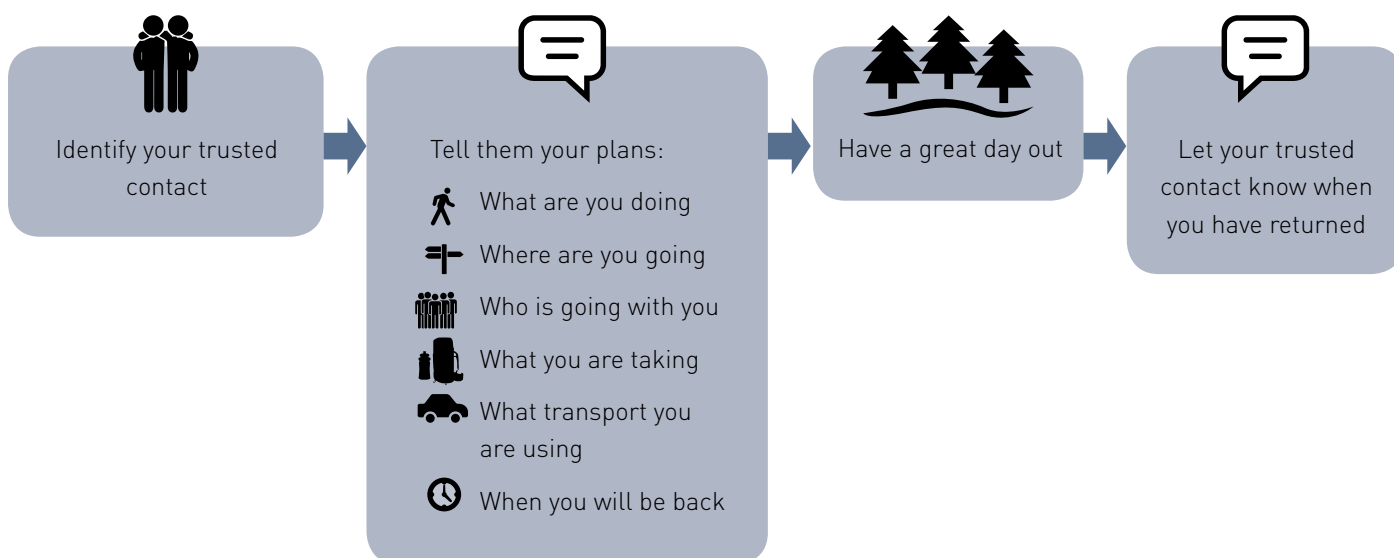
### TOP TIP

Use the online outdoors intentions form on the AdventureSmart website. Once completed, this is sent to your trusted contact by email.

## WHAT INFORMATION TO LEAVE

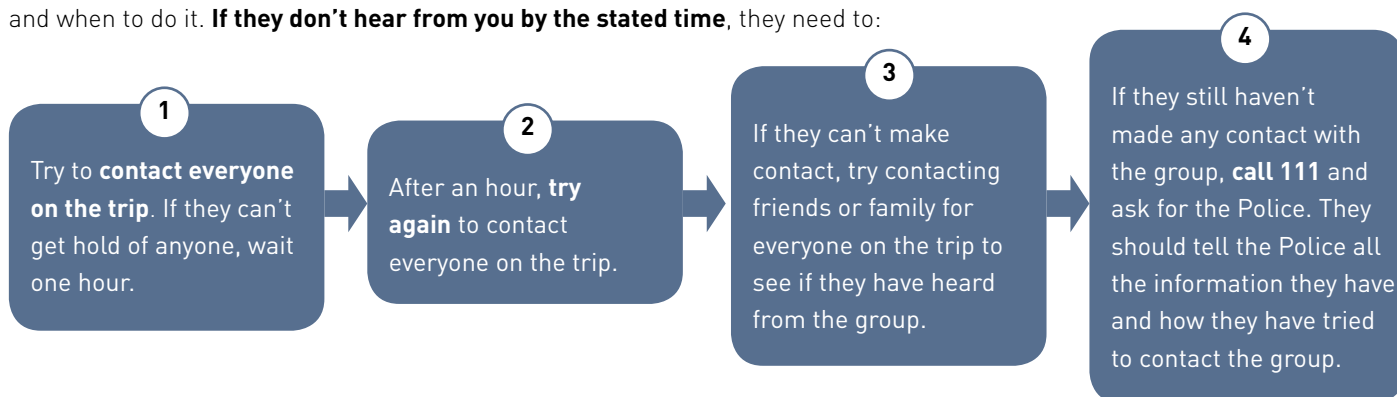
Telling someone your plans for a multiday tramp is more than just letting them know where you're going. You need to leave specific information with your trusted contact. You can write this down for them or use the quick online intentions process on the AdventureSmart website.

If you change any of your plans you must let your contact know. For example, someone might bring a friend or decide not to go, or you might decide to take a different track. If something does go wrong, it's essential that people know exactly where to look and who they're looking for.



## WHAT YOUR TRUSTED CONTACT SHOULD DO IF THEY HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU

Your trusted contact needs to know exactly what to do if they don't hear from you, and when to do it. **If they don't hear from you by the stated time**, they need to:





## CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING?

- ① What will the weather be like while you're tramping?
- ② What impact will the weather have on your plans?
- ③ What will you do if the weather changes while you're tramping?

# ③ BE AWARE OF THE WEATHER

Knowing what the weather is likely to do while you're tramping means you can pack the right gear or change your plans. But weather can change quickly, so you need to be prepared for all conditions.

## Kyle's story

"We'd been there five minutes when the weather changed for the worse – torrential rain, howling wind."

A group of mates and I were planning a big tramp as a kind of reunion. We planned it for January as most of us would be on holiday. Plus, middle of summer should mean amazing weather.

The first morning was brilliant. We were hyped up to see each other and the sunshine was icing on the cake. By mid-afternoon the sky was starting to cloud over but we weren't worried.

We got to the hut we were staying at for the first night. We'd been there five minutes when the weather changed for the worse – torrential rain, howling wind. While it raged outside, we were fine inside, catching up, having a laugh. We had the place to ourselves too – really lucky for that time of year.

The next morning the rain was still bucketing down. We looked at the sky and couldn't see an end to the rain clouds. So we took a vote and decided to change our plans – we would stay where we were and head back the following day. We had plenty of food, someone had brought cards, we were happy just to hang out together.

Later that afternoon, some others turned up freezing cold and completely soaked. This just confirmed we made the right call. Next day, we tramped back the way we came. It was still raining and we were cold and wet but at least we knew we were on our way out to a change of clothes and a hot shower.





## HOW TO CHECK THE WEATHER

There are lots of sources for weather information in New Zealand. The MetService website ([www.metservice.com](http://www.metservice.com)) and mobile apps are a great place to start. They have the following helpful features:

- **Weather warnings and weather watches.** If there's any serious weather around, you'll get a message at the top of your forecast. If this happens, you should seriously consider whether it's a good idea to go on your tramp. Can you go somewhere else that isn't affected by the bad weather?
- **Mountain & Parks section.** Check here if you're heading to a specific park or outdoor area. You'll see more information directly relating to tramping and walks.
- **General forecasts for towns, cities and rural areas.** Searching for the area you're tramping in will give you an overview of the weather.
- **Maps & Radars section.** This features 3-day and 5-day rain forecasts, so you can see what's likely to happen over the next few days.

**The weather can often change from what was forecast a few days ago. Regularly check the forecast right up until you go.**

### ASK YOURSELF

What will the tramp be like if I go in this weather? Am I prepared and will I have a good time?

### TOP TIP

Expect the weather to change and be prepared for all conditions

### Checking the weather forecast while you're tramping.

Groups carrying a mountain radio can listen to a mountain weather forecast at scheduled times.

## WHAT IMPACT WILL THE WEATHER HAVE ON YOUR TRAMP

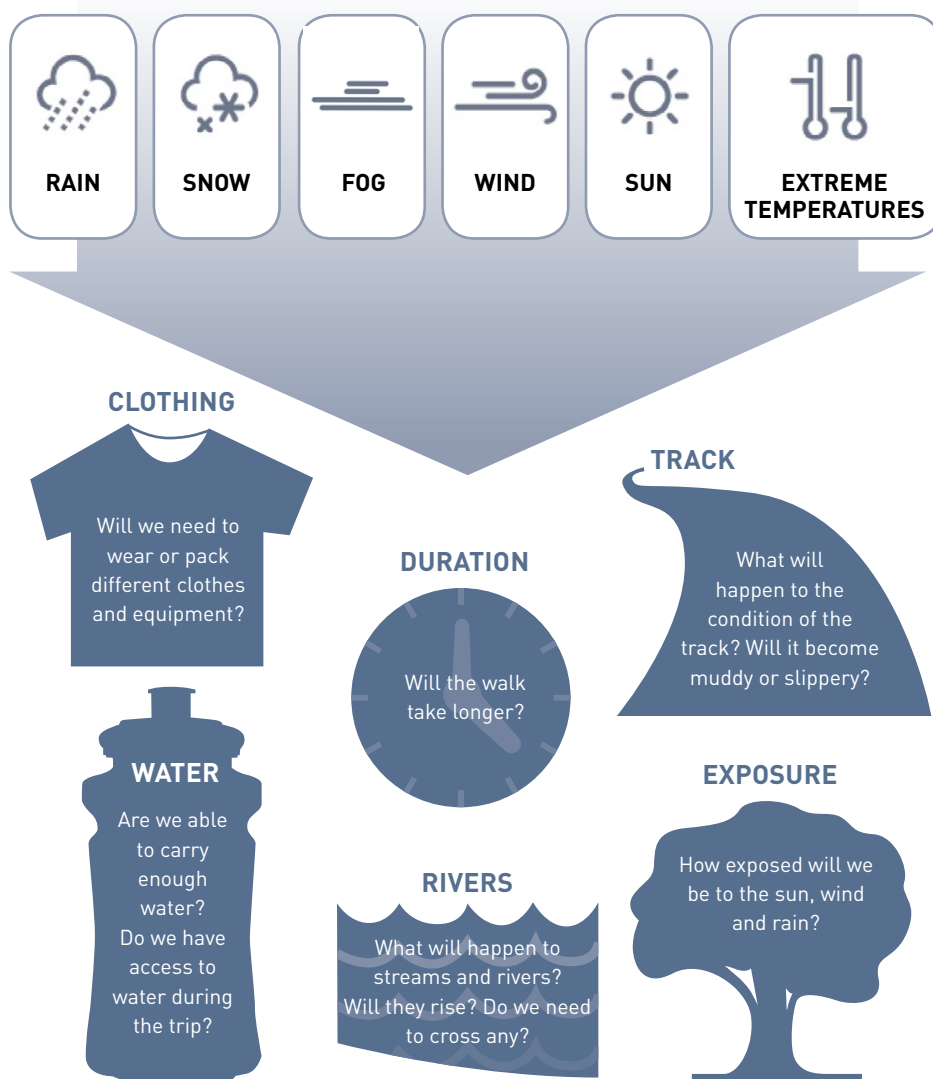
If the weather does change for the worse, you need to decide if it's significant enough to alter your plans. Consider:

- Moving the days of your tramp.
- Changing where you will stay each night.
- Going to a different area that is less affected by the bad weather.

Make sure you talk these options through with everyone in the group and consider everyone's experience and comfort.

### TOP TIP

The weather doesn't just affect your enjoyment of your trip. The chance of accidents increases dramatically if the weather deteriorates.





## CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING?

- ① What are my physical limits?
- ② What are the limits of the other group members?
- ③ How challenging is the tramp?
- ④ What skills do we need before we go?
- ⑤ How can I ensure I'm making smart decisions?

# ④ KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Considering the limits of yourself and your group means you can pick a tramp that meets everyone's expectations and fitness levels. It means you are less likely to get into potentially dangerous situations beyond your experience and skill, especially when you may be days away from help.

## Kahu's story

"If they're unsure if they can make it we're always happy to talk to them or point them to a different trip."

I lead a regular tramping group. In our group, we make sure that everyone is honest about their fitness and abilities. Then we run tramps about once a month, making it absolutely clear about the purpose and the level of trip.

I've had amazing feedback from the group. Everyone appreciates knowing up front what's going to happen. If they're unsure if they can make it we're always happy to talk to them or point them to a different trip.

It's great to see people challenging themselves in a safe way. One member, Tanya, started with beginner trips about two years ago. She was eager to learn from more experienced members, and even did some navigational training on her own. Now she's running more advanced tramps and helping others. It's amazing what challenging yourself with support can do.





## CONSIDER THE GROUP

You considered the abilities and needs of your group while planning your tramp. You also need to do this while you're tramping:

- **Stay together.** Make sure your group stays together or arranges set places to stop regularly and wait for everyone to catch-up. It's important that no-one is left to walk on their own. If the tramp is becoming more difficult, stay together as a group.
- **Keep an eye on each other.** Regularly check in with each of your group members; that way you're more likely to notice if people are out of their comfort zone or unwell. Pick up on cues like people stumbling or grumbling.
- **Pace yourself.** Schedule five-minute breaks about once an hour and more frequently if you have children.
- **Stay alert to your surroundings.** Are people starting to get cold or wet? Do you still know where you are and where you're going? If things are changing, take early action and consider turning back, picking a different route or finding shelter.
- **Avoid crossing rivers.** If you're not experienced, select tracks that use bridges to avoid crossing rivers.

## MAKING SMART DECISIONS

We make decisions every day, sometimes without a moment's thought, other times with careful planning and consideration. No matter how experienced you are, there is always the potential for something to go wrong. In most cases it's the decisions you make that will have the greatest influence on the outcome of a situation.

### Tips for smart decision making

- **Stop and think.** Don't rush, take your time and consider the options.
- **Assess.** What options are available and what's your gut instinct? For example, if a situation looks dangerous it most likely is – trust your judgement.
- **Communicate.** If you're in a group, talk about it together.
- **Future proof.** Think ahead. What are the possible outcomes if you do this? Consider both positive and negative consequences.



#### TOP TIP

**Remember, if the circumstances change you can always alter your plans by turning back, picking a different route or by finding shelter.**

## FIND THE RIGHT LEVEL OF TRACK

New Zealand uses a national system to identify the difficulty level of a track, there are six different levels. Remember, the weather has a huge influence on how challenging your trip might be. Even an easy, well-graded track can be difficult in extreme weather.



**Easiest: Easy access short walk.** Up to an hour, well-formed track, for people of all abilities, wheelchairs, buggies and strollers



**Easiest: Short walk.** Up to an hour, well-formed track, for people of most ages

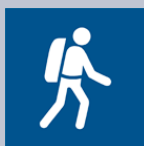


**Easy: Walking track.** Up to a day, well-formed track, for people with low to moderate fitness



**Intermediate: Great Walk/Easier tramping track.**

Up to multi-day, some sections rough, for people with low tramping experience



**Advanced: Tramping track.** Up to multi-day, track is rough, unbridged stream or river crossings, for people with moderate tramping experience



**Expert: Route.** Up to multi-day, track is rough and challenging, unbridged stream or river crossings, for people with high-level tramping experience

## OUTDOOR SKILLS FOR CHALLENGING TRAMPS

Depending on the difficulty of your chosen tramp, consider whether there are special skills that your group needs to have.

### Navigation

It's important to know what navigational skills you will need for your trip before you go. Intermediate tracks should be well sign-posted, so you'll just need to follow the marked trails and have basic navigational skills – be able to identify and follow the track, look for signs along the way, and be able to work out where you are on your map.

For advanced or expert tracks, you'll need to know more. There may only be a few track markers, rock cairns or route poles to help guide you. You may need to use more complex navigational techniques like getting a bearing, using a compass, or using a GPS.

For all multi-day tramps, the following tips will help you find your way:

- **Carry the right 1:50,000 topographical map** for your trip.
- **Understand grid references.** It is important to know how to read a grid reference if you need to tell someone where you are.
- **Be aware of your location at all times.** This means knowing where you are as you move. Look out for key features like track junctions and rivers, and use them to see where you are on the map.

See [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz) to learn more about grid references and topographical maps.



#### TOP TIP

If taking a GPS device make sure you take spare batteries as they can run out quickly. **Note: a GPS is no substitute for a map and compass.**



## GOING IT ALONE

Tramping by yourself means there are a few extra things to consider:

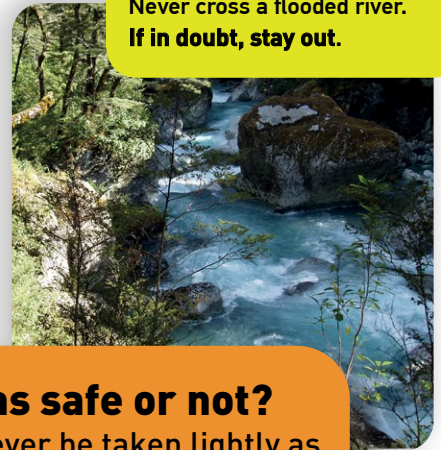
- **You need to be experienced.** You must have all the skills necessary to look after yourself, including navigation, river crossing and first aid.
- **It's just you out there.** This means you don't have other people to share your ideas, thoughts or concerns with, and you'll need to make all the decisions. Make sure you take extra time to consider your decisions, such as whether it's safe to cross a river or better to stop and wait for a storm to pass.
- **You must be able to call for help.** You need to have a suitable communication device just in case things go wrong and you need outside help. If you're tramping alone, carrying a personal locator beacon is a necessity.
- **Telling someone your plans is absolutely essential.**



## River safety

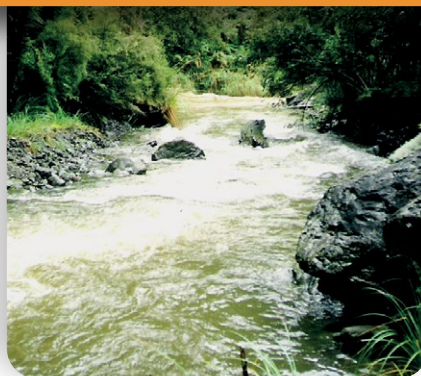
### TOP TIP

Never cross a flooded river.  
If in doubt, stay out.



### Could you identify whether a river was safe or not?

It's not a simple answer. River crossings should never be taken lightly as the risks are too great. Even experienced trampers can get into danger.



## Stop before you cross

Rivers are a significant hazard in the New Zealand outdoors, and you'll come across one on most tramping trips. Rivers are affected by the weather and snow melt, and can rise and fall very quickly.

If you're not experienced in river crossings or identifying unsafe rivers, then avoid crossing rivers by selecting tracks that use bridges and always be prepared to change your plans to avoid crossing a river.

If you're experienced in river crossings, you can always seek shelter and wait for the river level to drop.

### Warning signs of an unsafe river include:

- Water moving faster than normal walking pace.
- Discoloured, cloudy, surging water.
- Visible debris in the river such as tree branches.
- The sound of rolling boulders on the river bed.

Because of New Zealand's unique geography, many New Zealand rivers rise quickly and also go down quickly. Never cross a river with any of the signs listed above. Remember – **if in doubt, stay out**. Seek shelter and consider changing your plans.



There is a right way, and many wrong ways, to cross a river. The best way to cross in a group is the Mutual Support Method that provides back-up in case anyone loses their footing.

For more river safety information see the safety tips section of [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz) or consider taking a river safety course.

**STOP  
BEFORE YOU  
CROSS**

**IF IN  
DOUBT  
STAY OUT**





## CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING?

- ① What clothing and footwear will you need?
- ② What food and drink will you need?
- ③ What equipment will you need?
- ④ What communication devices will you need?

# ⑤ TAKE SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES

Having the right supplies for any conditions means you are more likely to have a safe and enjoyable tramp.

## Joe's story

"I can't believe I'd forgotten to use a pack liner. My brother lent me his spares so I didn't get hypothermia."

I go on an annual tramp with my younger brother and sister – it's a tradition for us, and a real highlight of the year. I've had a bit more experience than them so I tend to lead.

On our last one, we get to a river. It's a good, safe one to cross – no flooding, nice clear water, and it's moving at a gentle speed. I get us to link up to cross safely. While I'm giving instructions, I slip and fall on my butt. They help me up. I'm not hurt – but my pack, my pants, and my shirt are soaked. Nice one, big brother!

We get to the other side and I start digging through my pack for my spare stuff – but everything is wet. I can't believe I'd forgotten to use a pack liner. My brother lent me his spares so I didn't get hypothermia, but I had to carry my wet stuff all day until I could dry it in the hut. Such a small thing, but it made everything so much worse. And they sure don't let me forget about it!





## CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Here are the key things to consider when deciding what to wear on your trip:

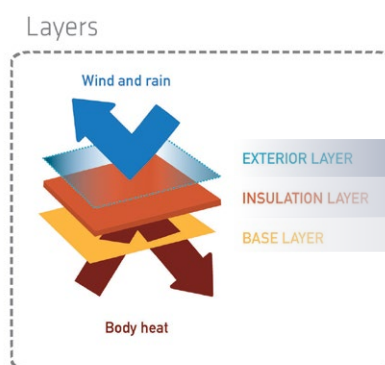
- **Wear and pack layers.** Light layers are the key to having options when you're out. You can take one off if you're too hot and it won't be too heavy to carry, and if you're cold you can put another one on. It's much more effective than taking bulky or heavy clothing. Take at least one spare top and bottom layer in your backpack.
- **Keep your core warm.** There are parts of you that are more important to keep warm. Focus on your chest, head, feet and hands. Always carry a warm hat that covers your ears, full-finger gloves and warm long socks.
- **Pack for all conditions.** Weather is changeable. The weather on the morning of your tramp might be completely different by the afternoon. Make sure you take rain protection and extra layers you can put on if it gets cold.
- **Always take wind and rain protection.** A good outer layer that will protect you from rain and wind is essential. This will reduce the chance of hypothermia. Be smart about when you put this on as well – don't leave it until you're already wet or cold.
- **Wear the right footwear.** This is essential for a tramp. You should consider tramping shoes or boots. They'll give you strong support, especially in the ankles, and have a better grip in wet and muddy conditions. Most importantly your footwear should be comfortable, so try them before you set off and ensure they will be comfortable to walk in for several days.
- **Take long socks.** Long socks are best as they come higher up your leg to provide greater comfort and protection. They're also less likely to slip down into your boot after walking for a few hours. Include a few pairs of long socks, one for wearing and the other as a spare pair or to wear in the evenings.

- **Wear gaiters.** These go around the top of your boots and keep things out of your footwear. They save you having to stop to remove all sorts of things from your boots, help to keep water out and protect your lower legs.
- **Take a change of clothes.** When you're out overnight, think about what you're going to wear around the campsite or at the hut and to sleep in. Having warm, dry clothes can be a life saver and will ensure you have a comfortable evening.
- **Wear the right fabrics.** Clothing only retains what heat your body

produces. Certain fabrics draw moisture away from the body and retain warmth. Avoid cotton clothing – when cotton gets wet it ceases to insulate you. Wet and cold clothing significantly contributes to hypothermia.

### TOP TIP

**Clothing doesn't create heat – the right fabrics keep in the heat your body makes.**



#### External layer

- Wind and waterproof

#### Insulation layer

- Breathable
- Warm when wet
- Light weight
- Insulating

#### Base layer

- Not irritating on skin
- Absorbs moisture



## FOOD AND DRINK

Tramping uses a lot of energy, so you need to stay fuelled and hydrated:

- **Plan regular stops for food and drink.**
- **Take a 2L bottle of water per person**, depending on the length of your trip and your access to water along the way.
- **Take a mix of food types and take more food than you usually eat.**
- **Take snacks that are easy to prepare.** Scroggin and muesli bars are classic snack choices. You don't want to be getting your cooker out at every rest stop.
- **Make it pleasant.** Food has real emotional and psychological value, and this can make a big difference to your trip. Make sure you take a few treats like chocolate, cheese or coffee.
- **Take emergency food.** Make sure you have some extra lightweight food in case you are delayed. Rice, packets of soup and concentrated foods like jerky are good examples.
- **Be cautious when sourcing water.** Water from streams might not be safe to drink. Always follow any signposted recommendations. If in doubt boil, filter or treat water before drinking. You must treat water if you are close to farms or towns. Water treatment tablets are light to carry and easily available.



### TOP TIP

Take all your food and drink scraps out with you. We want to preserve our natural environment and discourage pests.



### TOP TIP

Try not to carry things on the outside of your pack as they can get wet easily, can get caught on trees and won't give you the best balance or comfort.

## EQUIPMENT

Having the right equipment with you is essential to a good tramp. You need to think about what you'll eat, where you'll sleep, what you'll need to keep yourself safe – all the things we take for granted at home. You can get this equipment from most outdoor stores.

What you need depends on your trip, but our suggestions for essentials are:

- **A comfortable tramping pack.** The size will depend on how long you're out for and how much you have to carry. A good estimate is 60L per person for a 2–3 day trip. Test your pack to make sure you can fit everything in, that you can carry it, and that it fits well!
- **A pack liner.** This is one of the simplest yet most important pieces of equipment. It keeps everything in your pack dry. An elasticated, fabric pack cover over your pack will not keep your things dry in rain.



- **Shelter.** Even if you're planning on staying in huts, an emergency shelter is a good idea, just in case. Consider taking a tent fly or a bivvy bag - you may be grateful for them at rest stops if the weather is particularly bad. If you plan on camping you'll need an appropriate tent. Make sure you know how to use it before you go!
- **Sleeping bag.** What kind you need will depend on the type of trip you're taking and the time of year.
- **Insulation mat.** These are essential if you're camping as they protect you from the cold ground. The ground can steal heat from your body much more effectively than air can. Without an insulation mat your body heat will seep into the ground, leaving you cold and miserable. If you're planning on sleeping in huts there may be mattresses provided, but you'll want to check before you set off.
- **Cooking equipment.** You'll need a stove or cooker, fuel and utensils suitable for your planned meals. There are lots of stove types available, so check with your local outdoor store. Test it before you go to make sure you know how it works and some basic fixes if things go wrong.
- **A first aid kit.** Consider the size of your group and how long you are out for. You may also want smaller personal kits for your own medication.
- **Navigation equipment.** A map of your trip is the minimum you'll need to carry. Depending on your trip you may also need a navigation device such as a GPS or compass. Make sure you know how to use them before you go.
- **Walking poles.** Even one can save you energy on a long tramp. Many fold up small so they won't be in the way when you don't need them.
- **A torch or headlamp with spare batteries.**

## PACKING TIPS

Packing right can really make a big difference to your trip. A heavy pack is not only energy sapping but also potentially dangerous. It will alter your centre of gravity, which could cause a fall. Here are some suggestions:

- Put your pack liner in first and make sure everything else goes inside that. No pack is fully waterproof, no matter how nice it is. Without any dry clothes, you'll increase your chances of getting hypothermia.
- Put the heavy items that you won't need during the day in the bottom of your pack - such as your sleeping bag, tent and cooker.
- Keep lighter items you may need during the day at the top of your pack - such as a warm hat and gloves, raincoat, sunscreen, lunch, snacks and your communication device.

### Using cooking equipment safely

Cooking can be one of the most dangerous activities on your trip. The key things you need to be aware of are:

- ☐ **People.** The biggest hazard when cooking in the outdoors is other people. Make some camp rules to encourage safety and make sure as few people as possible are near the cooker.
- ☐ **Ventilation.** Inadequate ventilation around the cooker can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Always cook outside or near a window, and give your flame room to burn. Never cook inside a tent.
- ☐ **Refuelling.** Make sure you do this in safe place away from others, and let the cooker cool down before refuelling.
- ☐ **Burns.** Those little cookers can get very hot, so make sure you use pot grips to move your pot, and let the cooker cool down before you touch it.
- ☐ **Placement.** Put the cooker on a stable surface away from dry materials, where it won't fall over or catch other things alight.
- ☐ **Overheating.** Overheating can cause explosions, so make sure you protect the fuel canister from direct flame, and give your cooker a rest every so often to let it cool down.
- ☐ **Fuel storage.** Keep your spare fuel clearly marked and in a cool place, away from sunlight and the cooking area.

### TOP TIP

**Aim at getting your pack as close to your back as possible. This will be more comfortable and keep you balanced.**

## COMMUNICATION DEVICES

It's essential to have the right communications device for your trip, and each type has advantages and disadvantages. Some devices will only provide your location to emergency services, and some will provide two-way communications. Consider your choice of device carefully. At a minimum you should carry a Personal Locator Beacon in case of an emergency. You can hire these from various outlets across the country. Ask at your local i-SITE or DoC Visitor centre, or visit the **Mountain Safety Council website** for a list of national hire outlets.

Ask yourself:

- If something went wrong, what device would give me the best possible chance of contacting outside help?
- How long will I be away for – will battery life be an issue?
- How many people are in the group – will one device be enough?
- How easy is the device to use – can I set it up and use it myself?

If you do have to use your device, you should provide as much of the following information as the device allows. Write it down first if possible to make sure you are clear.

- **Reason for communication.** For example, to get updated weather report or request emergency help.
- **Your location.** Use the map number and six-digit grid reference plus any notable features such as hut name, stream name or obvious terrain features.
- **Number and names of group members.**
- **Anything else you think is relevant to your situation.** For example, medical details, urgency, or the terrain you are in.

For more information on communication devices, see the Useful Websites section at the back of this guide.

DON'T RELY ON YOUR

**MOBILE PHONE**

FOR COMMUNICATION

- Never rely on your mobile phone
- It's unlikely you'll have coverage in the backcountry
- Carry as back up only

Features	Personal Locator Beacon (PLB)	Mountain Radio	Satellite Messenger Device	Satellite Phone	Mobile Phone
Works almost anywhere in backcountry	✓ (requires line of site to sky)	✓	✓ (requires line of site to sky)	✓ (requires line of site to sky)	
Waterproof models available	✓		✓	✓	
Does not require recharging in the field	✓**	✓**	✓**		
Easy to be activated by a solo, injured person	✓		✓	✓	✓
Small, compact and lightweight	✓		✓		✓
Two-way communication		✓	✓*	✓	✓
Readily available for hire/loan at reasonable cost	✓	✓		✓ (plus additional call costs)	
Sends alert directly to NZ rescue authorities	✓		✓ (via the International Emergency Response Center)		

\* Some models only

\*\* Batteries have limited life. Check and replace when necessary.

The information in the above table is intended to provide basic information about some of the pros and cons of these communications devices. It is not intended as an exhaustive list of communication devices or their benefits and limitations. The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council recommends you undertake further research to determine the device that is right for you and your trip.



# ? CAN YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING?

Can you answer the questions in the orange boxes at the beginning of each section of this guide?



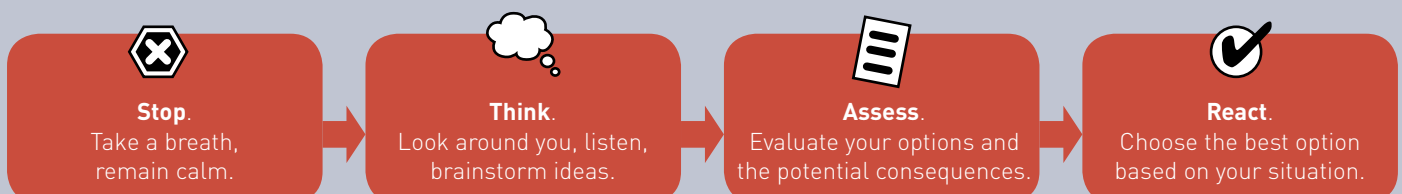
## WHILE YOU'RE TRAMPING CHECKLIST

These are things to remember while on your tramp. We recommend printing this page and taking it with you.

- ☐ **Make smart decisions.** Don't rush, take your time and consider the options. Acknowledge your gut instinct. Think ahead, identify potential issues before they become a problem. If something doesn't feel right, talk about it with your group.
- ☐ **Stay together.** Make sure your group stays together or arranges set places to stop regularly and wait for everyone to catch-up. You could have the slower members of your group at the front to set the pace. It's important that no-one is left to walk on their own. If the tramp is becoming more difficult, stay together as a group.
- ☐ **Stay alert to your surroundings.** Are people starting to get cold or wet? Do you still know where you are and where you're going? If things are changing, take early action and consider turning back, picking a different route or finding shelter.
- ☐ **Keep an eye on each other.** Regularly check in with each of your group members. That way you're more likely to notice if people are feeling out of their comfort zone or unwell. Pick up on cues like people stumbling or grumbling.
- ☐ **Avoid crossing rivers.** If you're not experienced, select tracks that use bridges to avoid crossing rivers.
- ☐ **Pace yourself.** Schedule 5-minute breaks about once per hour, and more frequently if you have children. Use these as opportunities to have a drink and refuel, and check in to see how everyone's doing.
- ☐ **Keep an eye on the time.** Keep an eye on your clock and ensure you have enough time to make it to your next stop or turn back to your last. It's a good idea to leave yourself some extra room at the end of the day in case you're delayed or you move slower than planned.
- ☐ **Write in hut books.** If you pass or stay in a hut on your trip, record your visit in the hut book provided. If something does go wrong, there'll be a clear record of where you've been.
- ☐ **Respect other people's property.** Ask permission before accessing private land, leave gates as you find them, and don't damage fences. Take extreme care with fires.
- ☐ **Leave no trace.** Minimise your impact on the environment: take your rubbish with you, avoid damaging natural areas, and respect wildlife and farm animals. If you are camping, make sure you camp on durable ground.

### IF THINGS GO WRONG, THINK STAR

If you find yourself lost or separated from your group, **remain where you are** and **call out for help**. Do not keep walking, as this will only make the situation worse. To help you remember, think of STAR:



## USEFUL WEBSITES

For more information about the topics in this booklet, check out the following websites:

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)

Department of Conservation [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

MetService [www.metservice.com](http://www.metservice.com)

New Zealand Walking Access Commission [www.walkingaccess.govt.nz](http://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz)

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand [www.fmc.org.nz](http://www.fmc.org.nz)

Leave No Trace [www.leavenotrace.org.nz](http://www.leavenotrace.org.nz)

Land Information New Zealand [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz)

Personal Locator Beacons [www.beacons.org.nz](http://www.beacons.org.nz)

Canterbury Mountain Radio Service [www.mountainradio.co.nz](http://www.mountainradio.co.nz)

Wellington Mountain Radio Service [www.wmrs.org.nz](http://www.wmrs.org.nz)

Central North Island Mountain Radio Service [www.cnimrs.org.nz](http://www.cnimrs.org.nz)



**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**  
**The Outdoor Safety**  
**CODE**

**Before you go into the outdoors,  
get familiar with New Zealand's  
Outdoor Safety Code**

**5 simple rules**  
to help you stay safe:

- 1 Plan your trip
- 2 Tell someone
- 3 Be aware of the weather
- 4 Know your limits
- 5 Take sufficient supplies

For more information about how you can prepare for your outdoor activity, visit [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)

 **OUTDOOR SAFETY**  
NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL

[Click here to watch a video on the Outdoor Safety Code.](#)



Visit AdventureSmart for the following helpful resources:

- Outdoor Safety Code in multiple languages
- Boating and Water Safety Code
- Online Outdoors Intentions Form



This resource is intended to help people gain enjoyment and be challenged safely in the outdoors. However, individuals must take responsibility for their own safety to ensure safe participation in the outdoors.

We value your feedback and we would love to hear what you think of this resource. Please send your feedback to [info@mountainsafety.org.nz](mailto:info@mountainsafety.org.nz)

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