

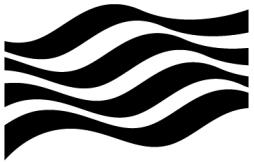


Planning your trek

Whenever you go out in the mountains it's essential to have good general hill skills so you can enjoy your walk and return safely without any problems. Now in this video we're going to explain those general skills needed as well as give you some advice on how to use your map and compass effectively and how to determine distances, timings and fitness required in order to stay safe on the mountains.

First of all you need to consider planning. Always sit down with your walking partner the night before and decide on the route you will take. You can get this information from guidebooks, maps or websites. You can also speak to National Park Wardens or outdoor activity centres to find out the most up to date news about conditions on the mountains. When planning your route, be sure to understand how to read the distances and contours on the map and work out how long it will take to do your chosen route. It's a good idea to know your and your partner's fitness levels so you can accurately work out how long your route will take. For fit active people, allow an hour for each 4 km travelled plus an extra 30 minutes for each 300 metres of height gained. Also factor in time for rests and breaks on your journey. Always know your limits and make sure your partner knows if you're anxious about doing a route and work out an alternative. Paths are not pavements up in the mountains and they can be uneven, slippery, exposed and with steep drops and can be physically demanding. Consider training walks on coastal or low level paths and know your limits. It's also important to consider parking and any traffic problems, which could delay your planned start time. Further reading can be done by the use of technical navigation books, such as 'Navigation in the mountains' and 'Hill walking', which are available from Mountain Leading Training.

The weather on the mountains can be very changeable so check weather forecasts the day before you set off as well as on the day itself. Keep an eye on the weather throughout the day and consider how it may affect your route. Don't be afraid to turn back should the weather turn nasty, the mountains will always be there for another day!



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Good navigation is key, and to be able to use a map and compass will make sure you stay safe on the mountains. Be sure that you know how to read and understand maps and how to use a compass. A GPS can aid your navigation, but practiced map and compass skills are essential. Accurate large scale OS type maps are good to use so you can easily see the contours and features on the map. The compass ideally should have a good sized base plate so it's easy to hold whilst wearing gloves and for taking bearings. The scale on the compass needs to match the scale of your map. During the day, keep an eye on the time and make sure you keep to your planned route. If you're going slower than you anticipated then either find an alternative route or head back.

These are just some of the skills and equipment needed if you're up in the mountains. For further details please visit the [British Mountaineering Council website](#). And remember, if you have these right skills then you will be able to remain safe, enjoy the experience and return to the mountains time and time again.