

Equipment Guide

for

Weekend Hikes



Boy Scout Troop 849
Manhattan Beach, California

Introduction

Troop 849 has prepared a Weekend Hike Personal Equipment Checklist which reflects over 50 years of backpacking experience. This checklist is used as a final check before each hike to insure that you are properly outfitted. Some things on the checklist are self explanatory, others are not. This guide is intended for the use of new Scouts and their parents to get ready for the Scout's first weekend backpacking hike.

The format of this guide is to repeat the checklist verbatim and add descriptions of each piece of equipment. Also included is a brief description of how each item is used as well as things to look for when shopping for it.

At the end of this guide is a list of local stores that provide quality backpacking equipment and a copy of the actual checklist.

We hope this guide answers many of your equipment questions and helps get you off to a good start. Suggestions for future revisions are welcome.

Note: This guide pertains only to weekend hikes and does not address the additional equipment and considerations for longer (week long) hikes or winter hikes.

Forward to New Scouts



This guide describes the equipment that will assist you in having an enjoyable hiking experience. The most important piece of equipment is *you*. If you have not been hiking a lot recently, be sure you get your feet, legs, and shoulders ready. Start with a 1 or 2 mile walk several times a week. Then do the same walk with a 15 to 20 pound pack. Wear your hiking shoes or boots. Increase the pack weight or length of the walk until you are ready. **BE PREPARED.**

Forward to Parents of New Scouts



Your Scout will need your help in selecting and purchasing backpacking equipment. Most of the items can be improvised and should not require a major investment. There are three exceptions; the backpack, the sleeping bag, and a good pair of boots. The backpack and sleeping bag, although expensive, can be used for a lifetime. Comfortable shoes will be fine for the first few hikes but eventually a good pair of hiking boots will be needed.

There is a natural tendency to want your Scout to be fully equipped for his first hike. Experience shows us that almost everyone bring things on their first hike that they do not need. Please avoid packing things like multiple changes of clothes and other items that are not on the checklist. The extra weight does more to spoil a weekend than having to live without a luxury.

Clearly lower weight and less bulky volume make backpacking more fun. Reducing weight and size can become very expensive. The ultimate low weight is not needed for a good time. Safety and comfort will be compromised if one does not bring the required gear or brings low quality or poor repair or wrong sized items. This troop equipment list is structured to ensure safety while achieving a fun comfortable experience at a reasonable cost. As your Scout grows and gains hiking experience anything that is really needed will be added. In the meantime, *lighter is better!*

Note: You can use this guide to equip yourself but realize that an adult's needs for backpacks and sleeping bags are a bit different than those listed here.

Format

Starting on the next page is the checklist. The items are shown in large bold type. Information about each item follows it in smaller type.

Throughout this document, you will find little icons to the left of some of the paragraphs. These icons denote various tips, weight saving ideas, money saving ideas, product suggestions, and various cautions. Here is what each icon means.



The target indicates a little tidbit of information that might be helpful. Use the ones that you like and ignore the rest.



The exclamation denotes caution. Experience has shown over and over that some things do not change. Pay attention to these. Enough said.



The scales represent little things that you can do to keep the weight of the backpack down. An ounce here, an ounce there - before you know it, it's real pounds.

Note: Smaller Scouts or those new to hiking should avoid extra weight at all cost.

Larger, stronger Scouts with more experience can tolerate a little extra weight.



The dollar sign suggests ideas that can help keep the cost down, especially if you are not really sure backpacking is for you.



The UPC symbol denotes brands items that stand out from the rest. Sometimes one brand or make of an item has proven to be superior. Choose alternate items with caution.



Thumbs down indicates that an item is so bad that it should be avoided. Be very careful in selecting these items.

Weekend Hike Personal Equipment Checklist

Troop 849 - Manhattan Beach, CA

To Be Worn Leaving Trailhead

___ **Shirt**

Almost any shirt is acceptable. A short sleeve shirt is cooler but long sleeves provide better sun protection. Scout shirts are never worn on the trail.

___ **Long trousers**

Long trousers protect the legs from sun and thorns. Start with long pants and change to shorts if need be.



Stay away from jeans with metal rivets in the hip area as the belly band can rub on them.

___ **2 pair socks (1 thin inner & 1 thick outer)**

Two pairs of socks are needed to minimize friction on the feet, hence blisters. With two pair of socks, the movements of the foot within the boot tend to occur between the socks. Thus the socks take the abrasion.

The inner pair should be silk, thin nylon, or polypropylene. The outer pair should be the thickest wool (or synthetic) sock that you can find. Socks should fit snugly at the heel.



Using only 1 pair of socks invites blisters.



Avoid socks with thick ribs in the toe area.

___ **Hiking boots (lug sole preferred)**

Backpacking hikes start out easy at the beginning of the year and gradually get harder. Comfortable shoes will be fine for the first hike. As the distances get longer and the terrain gets tougher, good footwear becomes more critical. Eventually you will need to get a good pair of hiking boots. (Good high quality hiking boots are required for hikes longer than a weekend or for hiking in the Sierra Mountains.)

When selecting boots, the three most important things to look for are comfort, comfort, and comfort. Quality comes next. Try on various boots of about the same quality and pick the one that fits your foot best. Be sure to use two pairs of socks as discussed previously. Comfort cannot be compromised.

Generally, boots rated for backpacking and multi-day trips will give the best foot support and the best durability. The troop has accumulated a lot of information and experience with hiking boots. Consult with the senior hikers before looking for that perfect pair of expensive boots. Here are some of the things to look for in boots:

Height: 6" minimum as measured from the floor to the top of the boot. This will provide ankle protection and keep you from sinking below mud, sand, loose gravel, etc.

Sole: A Vibram® rubber lug sole gives the best grip on loose soil, snow, wet rocks and other trail terrain. Consider a replaceable type that can be resoled and reheelled as required.

The sole should be reinforced and very stiff. There should be steel or some addition to the sole in the arch area. The sole should bend across the toes. The sole must take the pounding of your weight plus pack weight. It must hold foot contour under weight and unexpected holes in the trail.

Ankle: There should be foam padding or doubled up leather in the ankle area for protection from banging. Protection from turned ankle comes from a stiff upper tied to a stiff sole. High tops by themselves give no ankle stiffness.

Tongue: The tongue must be padded for downhill hiking, the load will be carried by the top of the instep of the foot against the upper part of the boot. A gusset between the tongue and boot upper will keep water and pebbles out.

Lacing: The lace should go all the way to the toe. That way you can adjust upper or whole foot by lace tension. (It is also easier to get the boot on.)

Heel: The boot must be snug across the heel. The foot must not slosh in the boot during walking. The upper lacing should keep the heel in the pocket. It should be tight on the sides of the heel.

Toe: Toe fit should be ample. The toes must not touch the top of the boot. If the toes touch, then downhill blisters will develop. Test toe fit by walking on a downhill ramp. The toe also needs to bend for comfort. The foot can swell a half size on the trail. The width of boot will break into the width of the foot. The length won't.

Water: Ventilation features are desirable. Waterproofing helps during a snow or wet grass hike, but it keeps water in during creek walking.



Wearing new shoes or boots on a hike without breaking them in is an invitation to a disaster.



Smaller Scouts can get away with a boot of a lower rating due to the lower body weight.

___ **Wide brim hat or cap with brim**

We can be out in the sun for extended periods at higher elevations where there is less atmosphere to cut ultra violet (UV) radiation. A sun hat is needed that can block the sun from the face, ears, and neck. It should have a wide brim that goes all of the way around. Baseball caps do not do the job.



The wind will blow, especially on peaks, so find a way to secure the hat, such as a hat with a chin strap.

Back Pack Equipment

— Backpack

Some of the theory behind the design of the pack frames relates to getting the center of gravity of the pack over the center of gravity of the body. This accounts for the high frames that are bent forward at the top. By leaning a little forward while hiking the centers of gravity can be aligned. A belly band keeps the pack tight to the body and transfers the pack's weight to the hips. The belly band should be comfortable with lots of padding. The shoulder straps are intended to keep the pack forward and should not transmit the pack weight to the shoulders. Padded shoulder straps ease chafing of the shoulders.

The frame provides a rigid structure connected to the suspension system (belly band/hip belt, shoulder straps, and adjustment straps) while holding the needed volume and weight of gear for the trip. The size of the gear is equally important. So choose a pack size suitable for the size of the Scout and the type of trip.

When selecting a backpack there are four main areas where you'll need to make choices.

Volume Capacity: The capacity of the pack you'll need is tied to the length of your trip. Initially you'll be out for just overnight. Eventually you'll be out for a week or longer. Choose the largest pack that can be managed as the extra room will be required later for longer trips.



Just because you have the volume you don't need to use it. As you grow and the trips are extended, you can use the extra space to carry more food and gear.

A 60 liter capacity is likely the minimum size that will work easily for weekend trips and with careful loading even week long trips. While larger packs can carry more weight and stuff, they also increase the carried weight. Stay smaller for small Scouts.

Weight Capacity: The suspension systems of packs have a maximum recommended weight that they can carry. A Scout pack should only be 30-40 pounds. Make sure the pack is rated to at least 40 pounds. Older, larger Scouts on week long trips may be in the 50 pound range.

Fit: The most important thing is "Fit". A pack should fit snug with a little room for movement. Too tight and it will pinch and rub, too loose and the weight of the cargo can shift as you walk.

Torso length, not your height, is what matters most. Have someone familiar with backpacks measure your torso length and help you select the right size. Also consider shoulder width to select a pack so that the straps fit well.

Features: Backpacks differ in what features they provide. All of these options affect how the pack works for you.

Nice but not required features:

- Mesh back panel
- Sternum strap - nice to have
- Sleeping bag compartment
- Pack access panels - very nice to quickly get at gear

- Extra pockets - nearly an essential for quick access to small items
- Attachment points - will be very helpful for bulky items like a sleeping pad

Unnecessary but fine if the backpack has it:

- Removable daypack
- Rain cover (we use large plastic trash bags instead, see below)



Most packs today are manufactured for adjustability in the torso length. This adjustability feature will enable you to use the same backpack as you grow.



Try the pack out in the store by putting some weight in it and walking around for a while. Almost all of the weight is carried on the hips so a cushy hip belt is essential. For smaller Scouts, make sure the belly band will close enough to be tight around the waist.



The troop has a several backpacks for temporary loan.

___ Sleeping bag in stuff sack (rated to +20°F)

Nighttime temperatures generally range in the 40's but occasionally it gets cold enough overnight to freeze water in a water bottle. It is better to unzip and let warmth out than to be cold. Here are some things to look for when selecting a sleeping bag:

Style: Mummy bags work well. Semi-rectangular (modified mummy) bags are more comfy but about a pound heavier.

Fill: The bag should have a men's temperature rating of +20°F and should have a synthetic (polyester) fill. Avoid bags with even lower temperature ratings (unless you are a cold sleeper) because they weight more.



Goose or duck down provides superior warmth per pound but is much costlier. It loses almost all of its insulating power when wet and it dries slower than the synthetic fiber bags. Down sleeping bags also need more care. It is therefore not recommended for young Scouts.

Shell: The inner and outer shell should be made of nylon.

Size: Be sure to climb into the bag before you buy it. Zip it up. Be sure it is not too tight around the hips and feet. Make sure you can turn over in it. Leave growing room.

Construction: Box or slant construction (no sewn through seams that bring the inner and outer shells together).

Zipper: The zipper should zip from both the top and bottom so that you can let excess heat out. The bag should also have a zipper draft tube to help keep heat in and so that you will not touch a cold zipper.

Hood: The bag should have a hood with a draw cord. Climb in and try it. The air hole should be near your mouth.

Weight: A regular size mummy bag should have a total weight between 3 and 4 pounds.

Rather than to roll the sleeping bag, nylon stuff sacks are used with good, lightweight modern sleeping bags. (If it does not come with a stuff sack, then it probably is not the bag you want.) The stuff sack can also get used for making a pillow or for bagging food at night to keep it away from the critters.



Do not buy or bring a pillow. They are not needed as you can fashion one out of a stuff sack or jacket stuffed with spare clothes. (Wrap the stuff sack with a sweater to make a softer, more comfortable pillow.)



You can rent sleeping bags at recreational equipment stores until you determine what you want.

___ Closed cell foam pad

A pad is needed for both comfort and warmth. The ground is a good conductor of heat so you need something under you just to keep warm. A 3/8" (or 1/2") thick closed cell foam pad works best and is also indestructible. Choose a length (72" is popular) that keeps your entire body off of the ground.



Both blue foam and RidgeRest® pads work well.



Therm-A-Rest® sleeping pads work well but are more costly, weight more, and are not as reliable. A small pin hole can make it go flat and ruin a nights sleep.



Younger Scouts should avoid Therm-A-Rest sleeping pads as they weigh more (typically over 1 pound heavier) and are not as reliable.

___ 50 ft. of 1/8" nylon cord

Nylon cord is used mainly to hang food in trees so squirrels, raccoons, marmots, and bears cannot get to it. Other uses include as a clothes line, making lashings, or even holding a tent up.

Parachute cord is ideal but any 1/8" nylon cord is fine. Length is not critical with 50' being the most popular length. 40' is a bit too short. The optimum length is about 60'. Even longer lengths are ok but they tend to knot up more (and weight more).



A thicker cord like Dacron weighs more, costs more, and does not provide any extra function. Occasionally a cord will get stuck in a tree and have to be abandoned. Stick with the more economical 1/8" nylon cord.

___ Small day pack (for peak climbs)

Day packs are used for peak climbs in lieu of the normal backpack. A lightweight nylon pack is best but school book backpacks also work.

Day packs need to hold the 10 essentials, lunch and emergency clothing. Note that this is actually a lot of stuff - first aid kit, headlamp, 1 or 2 quarts of water, lunch, poncho, rain pants, jacket, wool hat, and trail snacks. Make sure that there is enough room to fit all of the above and that the pack is rugged enough to withstand the weight.



If you are handy, you can make a day pack from a stuff sack. Simply recycle pack straps from an old worn out (school style) day pack by sewing them onto a stuff sack.



Scotchguard™ the day pack to enhance rain repellency.



Avoid packs that you sling over one arm as they can throw you off balance when scrambling over rocks. Stick with a backpack that has two straps.

___ Large plastic trash bag (for pack cover)

You need to keep your pack dry. A large 30+ gallon plastic trash bag can be put over your pack at night to fend off morning dew. It is also used to keep the pack dry during a rain storm. It should be large enough to cover the entire pack.

While it is possible to purchase a nylon pack cover, and it is convenient, the plastic bag can provide additional benefits. Not only does it work well for keeping the pack dry, it can be used to carry excess trash out at the end of the week and some Scouts have been known to use it as a float while swimming.



Thicker bags withstand the usage better and are worth the extra weight.



If rain is possible, bring a second smaller trash bag to put over your sleeping bag to make sure it will stay dry.

___ 1/2 share: tent, rain fly, poles & stakes (will be supplied)

The tent will be supplied by the troop. The troop has good 3 season tents. Each tent is shared by two people (tent buddies). Each person will be given half of the tent to carry.



Good lightweight tents are expensive. Use the tent provided by the troop and avoid buying a tent. Take the money saved and spend it on other equipment. In fact, personal tents are not encouraged because we need to know that the tents will stand up to significant rain, wind, and hail. (If you insist on a personal tent it must be of good quality and it must be pre-approved by the Scoutmaster before it is used.)

___ Bear canister (will be supplied if needed)

If we are going to be in bear country then we will bring bear resistant containers to store our food in. Not everyone will need a bear canister. Do not buy one. If a canister is required a suitable canister will be supplied by the troop.

Eating Gear (marked with name or initials)

We wash all eating gear at the same time so they get all mixed together. Be sure to mark all of your eating gear and water bottle with your name or initials. Indelible marker and carved names work well. Check periodically that the marking has not worn off.



When washing eating gear, we wash the metal items last as they tend to cool the wash water faster than the plastic ones. Choose plastic eating gear to get the cleanest wash water.

___ Spoon or fork

A spoon or possibly a fork is all that you will need for meals. Knives are not needed as none of the food needs cutting. Polycarbonate and acetal utensils work well and are very durable.



You only really need a spoon for soups, cereal and dehydrated foods. If you really think you need a fork, consider a spork.



Metal is heavy, use plastic utensils instead. Avoid cheap plastic as it will not hold up.



Definitely avoid the official Scouting issue metal knife/fork/spoon set.

___ Plastic bowl

Everything can be eaten out of a bowl. Do not bring a plate. Cooking occurs in stages so only one bowl is needed. Get a soup bowl that is about 6" in diameter and that has rounded corners so it is easy to clean. Anything much smaller will not hold big enough portions. Anything much larger is harder to clean as it will not fit in the wash pot.

There is both soft plastic (like Tupperware) and hard plastic (like Melmac®). The softer plastics work out best as they are less likely to crack when dropped.



A plastic bowl will not conduct heat from hot soup to your hand as fast as a metal bowl. It also keeps food warmer longer.



Avoid the official Scouting issue metal utensil set. It is heavy and contains too many pieces that you do not need.

___ Plastic cup

A cup is need for drinking Kool-Aid®, Tang®, hot chocolate, etc. Any strong plastic cup with a handle is fine as long as it is not tall and skinny and therefore hard to clean (no tumblers). Something the size of a coffee cup is about right. A single cup can be used for the whole meal for most breakfasts.



Avoid collapsible cups. They leak and are hard to clean.

Toilet Kit

___ Soap & lightweight towel

A small bottle of biodegradable liquid soap does double duty as both hand soap and shampoo. (No we do not usually shampoo on weekend hikes.) Put your soap bottle in a zip lock bag so if it leaks it will not get all over your pack.

A lightweight towel is used to dry your hands after washing. A cloth diaper makes an ideal towel. It is light, just the right size, and can be easily rolled up into a tight area. Any hand towel can also be used. Expect whatever you use to come home dirty.



Campsuds is biodegradable and works well.



The standard 4 oz. bottle of Campsuds is an overkill. Repackage about 1 oz. of soap into a small motel size plastic shampoo bottle. Refill as required before each hike.

___ Toothbrush & paste

Get a standard toothbrush and a small travel size tube of toothpaste. You can also use an almost empty regular size tube of toothpaste as there is no need to pack around more toothpaste than you will need.



Put your toothbrush and toothpaste in a zip lock bag to keep them together and clean. As a bonus, if the toothpaste tube should leak it will not get all over your pack.



Optionally: Cut off the end of the toothbrush handle to save weight.



Avoid the classic 2-piece camping toothbrush as it is extra weight.

___ 2 Kleenex packets for toilet tissue

Kleenex performs double duty for both sniffles and as toilet paper. Two pocket packs will suffice for a weekend hike. Replace it as required before each hike.



Placing them in a small zip lock sandwich bag ensures they will stay dry if it rains.

___ Plastic wash basin (bottom of gallon water, milk, or bleach bottle)

We do not pollute streams by washing in them. Our dirt and soap may very well end up downstream in another hiker's water bottle. Instead, a plastic basin is used to carry water away from the stream before we wash. A basin is also used by the cook crew for washing hands before each meal.

Each person should have their own plastic wash basin. Wash basins can be made by cutting about 4" off of the bottom of a plastic 1 gallon water, milk or bleach bottle.

(Bleach bottles are the sturdiest of these and last longer.) The resulting basin is cheap and very light. It does need to be replaced every year or two before it leaks.



Put your towel and bowl in the basin before putting it in your pack. The basin will not get crushed as easily and will last longer. This also makes getting ready for a meal a little quicker if things are packed together.

___ Sunscreen

A small container of sunscreen is needed. The higher the SPF number the better (30 minimum). Do not bring any more than you can use in a weekend of fun in the sun.



The small 2 oz. travel size is adequate for a weekend hike. Be sure to replace or refill it before each hike.

___ Chap Stick or Blistex

Without protection, the lips tend to get chapped in the mountains. Bring along a small tube of your favorite lip balm.



Get the kind that has built in sun protection.

___ Insect repellent (in summer)

Mosquitoes can be a real nuisance and make your life miserable. They can be plentiful in certain areas during the summer months.

Get a small spray, squirt bottle (no aerosols) or a bottle of liquid repellent. You should not need over 1 oz. for a weekend hike.



Products that contain DEET (like Jungle Juice) seem to work well. Dilute with water, if necessary, to get a concentration of not more than 40% DEET.



Consider not bringing repellent on your first few hikes to save weight. You can borrow some if the need should arise.



Liquid repellents can be repackaged into a smaller container like a motel size plastic shampoo bottle. Make sure to clearly label the bottle.

Miscellaneous

___ Large zip lock bag for trash

We pack out all of our trash (and even other people's trash). Get a 1 gallon zip lock bag or two to contain the trash and keep it from getting all over your pack. (Regular plastic trash bags can be used in a pinch.)



Zip lock bags can be quite handy. They are very light and provide good utility. They come in various sizes: sandwich, quart, and gallon. Consider bringing a spare bag or two. (Be careful not to get the kind of zip lock bags that have air holes in them.)



Use zip lock bags to replace pouches and other containers.



Your spare zip lock bags can be used to keep your extra clothes dry, clean and organized. Squash the bag before closing to vacuum seal your clothes.

___ Pad of paper or small spiral notebook

A small amount of paper is handy for taking notes, keeping a journal, writing messages, etc. This item is not required for your first hike but should be added after you have been on a few hikes. Get either a small pad of paper or a 3"x5" spiral notebook.



To save a little weight, remove all but a couple of dozen pages from a spiral notebook. You will not need that much paper.



Recycle an old small spiral notebook.

___ Pencil

Any pencil or pen will do.



Sharpen an old pencil down to 3" and slide it into the top of the spiral notebook. It takes no more room, is always handy when you need it, and stays sharp.

Ten Essentials

The ten essentials are kept with us at all times. If we leave camp to climb a peak then these will be put in a day pack and taken with us.

1 ___ Compass

A compass can be used to locate where you are on the trail and, of course, for emergency situations.

Get a basic compass. It should be liquid filled, have a clear rectangular plastic baseplate so you can see through it, and have a rotating compass dial. Other features such as a mirror or case just add cost and weight while providing no practical benefits.

2 ___ Map of area (will be supplied)

Adult leaders will have detailed maps of the hiking area in their possession at all times. Scouts are encouraged to consult these maps before and during the hike. Copies are available on request.

3 **Headlamp** **Spare battery**

A LED headlamp needs to be simple to operate - you won't have a manual in the wilderness. Usually there will be multiple brightness settings: low, medium and high. Low is the standard mode used for most tasks. Medium and high for occasions when more light is needed (e.g. washing dishes). Note that using high light output is not necessarily good as it means less battery life.

Run time in low mode is important and is typically 100 hours.

The battery (or batteries) will likely fail at night when you need it the most. So the battery needs to be easily replaced. For weekend hikes you will need one battery in the headlamp along with a spare fresh battery. Always bring a spare battery (or set of batteries).



Do not buy a headlamp with an internal battery that you can't physically swap out.

Nice but not required options:

- The ability to tilt the headlamp unit up and down
- Regulated light output

Unnecessary options but fine if the headlamp has it:

- More than three brightness settings
- A spot/beam mode
- Red light

Most headlamps, with batteries included, weigh less than 3 ounces.



Choose a headlamp with a common battery type (e.g. AAA). That way your batteries are interchangeable with others in the group.



If your headlamp uses alkaline batteries you might consider using non-rechargeable lithium batteries instead - they last longer, won't leak causing corrosion in your headlamp, and weigh a bit less. They do cost more.



When in the store make sure to see how easy it is to operate. And try replacing the battery.

4 **Sun glasses (required over 9000')**

Sun glasses are absolutely, positively required over 9000'. The sun gets bright at altitude with less atmosphere to cut the light and UV. Rocks and snow compound the problem.

Sun glasses should be dark enough that other people cannot see your eyes. For travel on snow, it is desirable to also have side shields to keep light from coming in from around the edges. UV protection is very highly recommended.

Avoid cheap "supermarket" sunglasses. They may claim UV protection but not provide any. Look for "UV Certified" sunglasses or have your optician check them. If the glasses do not have UV protection they can make the problem worse as your eyes will dilate open and let in all of the UV.

5 ___ Matches in waterproof case and 3" long candle

The candle can be used to start a fire when dry tinder is not available. It provides enough heat to ignite damp tinder which can then get a fire going. The candle is not used to provide light and should never be used inside of a tent.

Get an old table candle and cut it down to about 3" in length. Get the strike anywhere kind of match with both red and white on the tip. Put the matches in a small watertight plastic case to protect them.

6 ___ Personal first aid kit

Make up a personal first kit with the following items. Note that the troop may not dispense any medications so you must bring your own.

- * Personal prescription medications (3 day supply)
An adult leader must know the following about each medication:
 - 1) What is it and what is it for?
 - 2) How and when is it to be taken?
 - 3) What are its reactions with other things (i.e. dairy products or elevation effects)?
 - 4) What are the possible side effects or danger signs to watch for and what actions to take if necessary?
 - * 10 pain relievers (whatever you prefer; i.e. aspirin, Tylenol®, etc.)
 - * 10 assorted adhesive bandages (Band-Aids®, etc.)
 - Moleskin (6 square inches)
 - 3 sterile gauze compresses (3" X 3")
 - Cotton adhesive tape (1" wide roll)
- * Minimum required for your first hike



Put your first aid kit in a zip lock bag rather than a pouch or box. It makes it easier to see what you have and it keeps it dry.

7 ___ Pocket knife

A simple pocket knife will do. Choose a high quality simple knife of reasonable cost. (They are also easily lost so there is no need to buy the best.) Keep the blade sharp and lubricate it to keep rust at bay.

The most useful blades, in order, are:

Knife A knife is used to spread peanut butter, deviled chicken, etc. on sandwiches. (This is the major use for pocket knives.)

Scissors Scissors can be used to cut moleskin. This blade is optional as the troop always has scissors available.

Can opener Once in a while we will bring along a can of something. This blade is very optional.



Simple pocket knives (about 2 oz.) weight a lot less than complex ones (up to 6 oz.).



There is a natural tendency to want the super deluxe Swiss army knife with 20+ blades (or even a Leatherman Tool). In reality, most of the blades do not get used. A “Tinker” Swiss army knife is about as complicated a knife as could ever be used. Anything bigger is a definite waste of money.



Knives with blades over 3" are not allowed. Sheath knives are also unacceptable and must be left at home.

8 ___ Trail snacks

Nuts, dried fruits, raisins, dry cereal, jerky, etc. make good high energy trail snacks (gorp). A few hard candies are also good for a quick energy boost. Only bring what you can eat in a weekend. Start with a handful or two.



Avoid chocolate as it melts. M&M's are the exception to this rule as they make a nice addition to your gorp.



Put your trail snacks in zip lock bags or a small plastic peanut butter jar.

9 ___ Wide mouth plastic quart bottle

A wide mouth water bottle is used mainly for drinking water but it also serves as a mixing container and measuring cup. It should have a wide mouth to facilitate filling from streams and adding ingredients like Kool-Aid and iodine for purification. A wide mouth also makes it easier to clean. Occasionally we will need to measure cooking water so marks every 4 oz. are useful. Be sure to mark your water bottle and its lid with your name or initials as water bottles all tend to look alike.

The one quart size (32 oz.) is just right. You would need too many smaller bottles and anything larger is hard to fit in a backpack pocket. Get a water bottle that does not leak, even when upside down. Clear bottles are easier to inspect for dirt in the water.



1-23456-7

Nalgene® wide mouth 32 oz. bottles work well. They are rugged and do not leak.



Nalgene® wide mouth 32 oz. bottles come in both hard plastic (various colors and logos) and soft plastic (white with blue cap). The soft plastic, HDPE, is preferred as it weights less (3.75 oz vs. 6.25 oz) and is less likely to crack if dropped on a rock.



You need one water bottle to start with. A second one can be added later as it can be very handy. (e.g. drink from one bottle while purifying water in the other. That way you always have drinking water.) A second water bottle is required for unusually dry hikes.



Canteens are not acceptable because they can not be cleaned. Bottled “spring water” bottles will crack if dropped.

10 ___ Jacket (see below)

See Additional Clothing in Pack.

Additional Clothing in Pack

We use the layering system to regulate body warmth. If you are hot, then take a layer off. If you are cold, then add a layer. A simple but very effective system.

Weekend hikes run the gamut in southern California temperatures. We can be hiking (working hard) in mid-day sun when the temperature is 90°. Likewise, we might wake up before sunrise with frozen water bottles (high 20’s). Having a variety of layers available makes adapting to the current conditions quite easy.

___ Nylon windbreaker

The windbreaker is used as an outer shell over all of the other warm clothes including the jacket. Make sure the windbreaker is large enough to fit over all of the other layers.

___ Warm jacket, or sweater and jacket



One of the best jackets is an unlined down parka. They are expensive but you may already have one for skiing. They are light weight, can replace a sweater and other layers, and make excellent pillows.

___ Poncho with rain pants or full rain suit

The weatherman is not any better at predicting rain in the mountains than he is here at home. In fact, the weather is more unpredictable due to localized storms. Rain can and does occur at the most unpredictable times. We must be prepared for the worst once we are on the trail. Eventually the odds catch up with us.

Rain gear must be capable of taking the worst southern California can dish out and keep us dry. You should never be without at least a poncho or light weight plastic raincoat, even on the sunniest of summer days. If rain is likely, then a full rain suit or poncho with rain pants is in order. (Hiking in the rain is actually a neat experience if you are prepared for it. If you’re not, then it’s the pits!)



Choose raingear made from coated nylon. It is durable enough to withstand the wind and the rain. Avoid cheap PVC raingear.

___ Long sleeved shirt

A lightweight long sleeved shirt can keep the sun off, or it can be used to add an additional layer for warmth.

___ Long or short trousers



Old polyester slacks work well, especially those that do not require a belt. The belt gets in the way of the packs belly band. Expect them to come back very dirty and possibly torn.



Stay away from jeans with metal rivets in the hip area as the belly band can rub on them.

___ Under shorts, 1 pair

One extra pair of under shorts will do for a weekend hike.

___ 2 pair socks (1 thin inner & 1 thick outer)

This second set of socks is for the second day or if first set gets wet.

___ Watch cap or ski cap

Bring a watch cap as nighttime temperatures can dip, even in the summer. A watch cap is absolutely, positively required in winter.

Once you have bundled up well, 1/3 of your body heat will be lost through your head. A watch or ski cap will reduce this heat loss and keep you much warmer. This is even more critical while sleeping on cold nights when only your head is exposed.



One of the things your body will do in response to cold is to reduce blood flow to the extremities. The result is cold feet and hands. Hence, if your feet get cold, put on your hat!

___ Mosquito head net (in summer)

Seldom “needed” but sometimes nice to have, especially if mosquitoes love you. There have even been a few times when a head net was essential!



Skip the head net for your first few hikes and then bring it only if mosquitoes are likely.

Optional

Do not bring any of the optional items (except your Handbook) on your first hike. Add them later as needed.

___ Tennis shoes or “Aqua Socks”

Sometimes after a long day on the trail, it is nice to change out of your hiking boots and give your feet a rest. That's where a lightweight pair of shoes comes in handy. These are used only around camp and must give good foot protection. Not wearing shoes is not an option. (Except in your tent.)



Extra shoes are NOT recommended for small Scouts due to the added weight.



“Aqua Socks” provide foot protection, collapse into a small space, and are very handy for fording streams.

___ **Additional pairs of socks**

___ **Gloves or mittens**

___ **Winter underwear**

If cold weather is expected, bring along a pair of long johns.

___ **Camera**

Cameras, if brought, should be light and easy to use.



If you bring a camera that uses batteries, be sure they are fresh before you leave home.

___ **Handbook (leave in car)**

Bring your handbook along for signoffs. Some things can only be done outdoors so hikes are natural times to work on them. If you complete a requirement it is good to have your handbook handy to get it signed off. Leave your handbook in the car and get the requirement signed off when you first arrive back at the trailhead. If you should forget, get the signoff at the next troop meeting before memories start to fade.



Make a copy of the appropriate page(s). Bring the copy along as a reminder of what is to be done.

NO CARDS, MAGAZINES, BOOKS, RADIOS, or ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We hike to enjoy the outdoors and experience what nature has to offer. This is a time away from civilization. The above items only detract from the experience. If any of the above are items are found, they will be confiscated.

Where to Shop

The following businesses are currently providing quality backpacking equipment. Members of the troop have been buying from them for an extended period of time and have been happy with the products and services. The troop, of course, does not officially endorse any business enterprise.

Local Stores

REI www.rei.com
1800 Rosecrans Avenue, Suite E
Manhattan Beach
310/727-0728

Note: For a nominal fee you can join and will then get about a 10% refund at the end of the year. If you decide not to join, then please use the troop's membership number (00112072-V) so we can get your 10% refund! Thanks.

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS www.dickssportinggoods.com
770 S Pacific Coast Highway
El Segundo
310/726-9123

Mail Order

CAMPMOR www.campmor.com
810 Rt. 17 North
Paramus, N.J. 07652
800/CAM-PMOR

Note: CAMPMOR is a good reliable mail order outfit. They have friendly, helpful personnel and a liberal return policy. The troop has bought equipment from them for many years and even has an account with them.

Credits

Many thanks to the dedicated individuals of Troop 849 whose experience and wisdom are summarized in this publication. Also, thanks to Mike Vahey for his invaluable contributions to the early development of this material. A special thanks is also due to the master of long-terms, Dick Rose, for his review and help to insure the accuracy and completeness of this information. Without these two amazing men and the many that have preceded them, this guide would not be possible. Thank you one and all.

Tom Thorpe

©2025 Boy Scout Troop 849, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266
Original draft May 1996
Third printing April 2008
Fourth printing January 2023

Permission to duplicate and use for Scouting purposes is hereby granted to all Scouting organizations. Please give Troop 849 credit as may be due them.

Weekend Hike Personal Equipment Checklist

Troop 849 - Manhattan Beach, CA

To Be Worn Leaving Trailhead

- Shirt
- Long trousers
- 2 pair socks (1 thin inner & 1 thick outer)
- Hiking boots (lug sole preferred)
- Wide brim hat or cap with brim

Back Pack Equipment

- Backpack
- Sleeping bag in stuff sack (rated to +20°F)
- Closed cell foam pad
- 50 ft. of 1/8" nylon cord
- Small day pack (for peak climbs)
- Large plastic trash bag (for pack cover)
- 1/2 share: tent, rain fly, poles & stakes (will be supplied)
- Bear canister (will be supplied if needed)

Eating Gear (marked with name or initials)

- Spoon or fork
- Plastic bowl
- Plastic cup

Toilet Kit

- Soap & lightweight towel
- Toothbrush & paste
- 2 Kleenex packets for toilet tissue
- Plastic wash basin (bottom of gallon water, milk, or bleach bottle)
- Sunscreen
- Chap Stick or Blistex
- Insect repellent (in summer)

Miscellaneous

- Large zip lock bag for trash
- Pad of paper or small spiral notebook
- Pencil

Ten Essentials

- 1 Compass
- 2 Map of area (will be supplied)
- 3 Headlamp
- Spare battery
- 4 Sun glasses (required over 9000')
- 5 Matches in waterproof case and 3" long candle
- 6 Personal first aid kit
- 7 Pocket knife
- 8 Trail snacks
- 9 Wide mouth plastic quart bottle
- 10 Jacket (see below)

Additional Clothing in Pack

- Nylon windbreaker
- Warm jacket, or sweater and jacket
- Poncho with rain pants or full rain suit
- Long sleeved shirt
- Long or short trousers
- Under shorts, 1 pair
- 2 pair socks (1 thin inner & 1 thick outer)
- Watch cap or ski cap
- Mosquito head net (in summer)

Optional

- Tennis shoes or "Aqua Socks"
- Additional pairs of socks
- Gloves or mittens
- Winter underwear
- Camera
- Handbook (leave in car)

NO CARDS, MAGAZINES, BOOKS, RADIOS, or ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal First Aid Kit

Troop 849 - Manhattan Beach, CA

Weekend hike

- * Personal prescription medications (3 day supply)
An adult leader must know the following about each medication:
 - 1) What is it and what is it for?
 - 2) How and when is it to be taken?
 - 3) What are its reactions with other things (i.e. dairy products or elevation effects)?
 - 4) What are the possible side effects or danger signs to watch for and what actions to take if necessary?
- * 10 pain relievers (whatever you prefer; i.e. aspirin, Tylenol®, etc.)
- * 10 assorted adhesive bandages (Band-Aids®, etc.)
 - Moleskin (6 square inches)
 - 3 sterile gauze compresses (3" X 3")
 - Cotton adhesive tape (1" wide roll)
- * Minimum required for your first hike

Additional for Long-term

- Additional personal prescription medications for up to 10 days
- Antibiotic ointment (1 small tube of about 1/8 oz.)
- Elastic bandage (Ace type, 2" wide roll)
- 1" roller bandage (prefer 5' to 6' strip of clean cloth material)
- Triangular bandage (homemade from old sheet with 30" on the short side)
- 6 to 8 butterfly bandages
- 3 cotton balls

Optional (bring these if you need them)

- Molefoam (6 square inches)
- Small folding scissors (used to cut Moleskin, etc.)
- Nail clippers
- Tweezers
- Needle and thread