

SURVIVING ^{IN} THE OUTDOORS

HIKING WITHOUT HYPOTHERMIA

Many times inexperienced hikers are hypervigilant to all those strange little creatures scurrying around in the wilderness without giving much thought to obvious dangers of hiking such as hypothermia. Hypothermia is a condition of lower body temperature caused by exposure to the cold. We erroneously believe hypothermia only happens in the winter time, in truth, it can happen anytime of the year. The weather conditions for hypothermia can occur in the 40's or 50's if a person is exposed to wind and/or wearing wet clothing.

With the knowledge that hypothermia can happen at any time of the year, it is extremely important to bundle up with the proper hiking attire. This is essential in maintaining a constant body temperature. Many thin layers of clothes are more versatile than a few heavy layers. A number of easy to put on and take off layers will allow you to regulate your heat build up or loss so that you can maintain a comfortable temperature, neither too hot, nor too cold. The major environmental elements you should be prepared to protect yourself from

WIND, WETNESS, and COLD.

Upon exposure to cold temperature, the body responds by constricting the blood vessels in the skin and underlying tissues, especially in the extremities. This constriction reduces blood flow, and therefore, heat flow to the skin, and helps maintain core temperature to the torso and head. As the body temperature falls all the body processes slow down. Symptoms of hypothermia in progressive order are:

1. Uncontrolled shivering.
2. Impaired ability to perform complex mental and physical tasks.
3. Progressive mental slowing occurs with difference in speaking, thinking, remembering, and using good judgment as the body temperature drops below 95 Fahrenheit.
4. Eventually unconsciousness may develop.
5. Muscular coordination decreases.
6. Shivering stops and muscular rigidity develops as temperature falls below 90 degrees.
7. Skin may turn blue or puffy.
8. Pulse, respiration, and blood pressure all decrease, as does the metabolic rate.
9. Below about 90% Fahrenheit, the body is unable to produce heat and will die unless an external source of heat is provided.

If a hiker is unaware of the symptoms of hypothermia, many times a hiker will excuse the beginning symptoms as just being a little tired and chilly as they are trying to "discipline themselves". This can be a fatal mistake. If a person shows symptoms of hypothermia stop, get some shelter, move the person into dry clothes and get them warm by putting them into a sleeping bag. It may even be helpful for the second hiker to strip and share body warmth with the victim.

This spring as your hiking around in the mountains, don't worry so much about those little creatures and keep in mind the obvious dangers like Hypothermia. It can kill!

-Kathryn L. Holmes

Cool the Heat

by Ingrid Streeter

Are you ready to come out of sedentary hibernation and looking forward to getting into shape this spring?

With warmer weather arriving remember the possibility of heat illness. Insufficient water replenishment can result in several types of sudden heat illness which include heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and the most serious, heat stroke. Warning signs are easy to see, if you know what to look for, and should not be ignored. According to the National Safety Council, heat cramps are muscle spasms occurring in the arms and legs after exertion. This is the most painful, but least dangerous heat related injury. This should be treated with one-half glassful of salt water solution (one teaspoon per one quart of water) every 15 minutes for an hour. The activity that brought on the cramps should be avoided for the following few days.

Heat exhaustion, which is not as dangerous as heat stroke, is usually accompanied by headaches, weak, slow pulse, profuse sweating and chills or shivering. In this case, activity should be stopped and the body cooled right away. This can be done by ingesting cool liquids, applying cool liquids or objects to the skin, and exposing the skin to air. If left untreated, heat exhaustion can progress into the most dangerous heat related emergency, heat stroke.

Heat stroke symptoms include: headaches, a full rapid pulse, little sweating, and bizarre behavior or convulsions. Most

heat stroke victims are unconscious. Cooling the victim as rapidly as possible and obtaining medical care is the most effective treatment. Even with appropriate therapy, death from this condition is close to 50% (Thygerson, 1987).

According to the College Student's Health Guide, these simple preventative measures should be taken to avoid heat related illnesses:

1. Get into shape before the hot weather arrives, then allow your body to acclimate by taking it easy the first few hot days.
2. Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise. Plain water is the ideal fluid replacement. Commercial "sport drinks" are expensive and unnecessary and may impair performance with regular sugar content. Caffeine and alcohol drinks work as diuretics and can promote dehydration. Don't let thirst be your guide, make deliberate attempts to consume small quantities of water (3-7 ounces) every 10-20 minutes during prolonged, intense activity. Cool water (40-50 F) is more quickly absorbed than warmer liquids and won't cause cramps.
3. Don't push yourself. Stop if you feel weak and allow your body to rest a while and take in several ounces of water.

So as we say goodbye to gloomy clouds and rain and hello to warmth and sunshine, remember to take it slow on achieving your outdoor exercise goals. Most of all, remember to have fun!

Need to take a short study break? Try these short hikes:

- SKINNER BUTTE:** Located in downtown Eugene. Go north on High St. to Skinner Butte Park.
- SPENCER BUTTE:** Elevation: 2062 ft. Distance: 2 miles. Seven-and-a-half miles from Eugene town center. Take Willamette St. south to park sign on east (left) side of the road.
- MT. BALDY:** Take Hilyard St. south to West Amazon. Left on Old Dillard Road; look for park sign on left side of road.
- RIDGELINE TRAIL:** Trail: 4.6 miles. Accessible from four trailheads.
- Blanton Road: Take Willamette St. south to Crest Dr.; left on Stroy Blvd. to Blanton Rd.
 - 52nd and Willamette: Follow Willamette St. south to 52nd Ave.
 - Fox Hollow: Take Willamette St. south to Donald St. Left on Fox Hollow and look for trailhead marker and parking sign on left side of road.
 - Dillard Rd.: Take Hilyard St. to West Amazon. Left on Old Dillard road. Look for trailhead marker and parking sign. One-half mile past Mt. Baldy.
- MT. PISGAH:** Take I-5 south to 30th St. exit. Turn left on 30th crossing over I-5 and take immediate left. Go 100 yards and turn right onto Seavy Loop Rd. and follow Buford Park signs. Continue past Coast Fork Bridge and turn right. Four-tenths mile to parking lot. Trail length varies depending on route taken.

Enjoy your hike, stay on the designated trails and leave nothing behind but your footprints.

Adapted from AFGUT IN Lane County by Jerald A. Williams

by Barbara Penfold

HEALTHY HIKING TIPS

by Kathryn L. Holmes



The Four Essentials of Survival

1. Heat
2. Shelter
3. Water
4. The Will to Live

The Dos and Don'ts of Hypothermia

DO:

1. Handle the victim gently
2. Remove wet clothing immediately.
3. Protect the victim from the wind.
4. Rewarm the victim by applying external heat slowly.
5. Always have the hypothermic victim evaluated at a medical facility.

DON'T:

1. Do not give hot liquids by mouth.
2. Do not give the victim alcohol.
3. Do not allow the victim to move about, walk or struggle.
4. Do not stop resuscitative attempts until the victim has been rewarmed and preferably evaluated at a medical facility.

To Prevent Heat Loss

1. Wear several layers of clothes to trap air.
2. Protection of the head and neck with hat or hood greatly reduces heat loss.
3. Carry waterproof and windproof outer garments.
4. Extra food to provide fuel for heat production and water to prevent dehydration can be vital.
5. Physical activity and exercise increase heat production.
6. Being in good physical condition and avoiding physical exhaustion are helpful.

Ten Top Essentials for Your Backpacking Adventure

1. Map
2. Compass
3. Flashlight
4. Supplemental clothing (wool hat, socks and gloves)
5. Emergency food and water
6. Sunglasses and sunscreen
7. Knife
8. Matches
9. Firestarter
10. First Aid Kit