



GUIDE TO OUTDOOR GEAR FOR VENTURERS & PARENTS

(Adapted from A Parents Guide to Outdoor Gear for Troop Activities, Boy Scout Troop 1, Acton, MA)

Getting Started

Shop wisely. Keep the following points in mind when shopping for any kind of outdoor gear:

- Focus on getting the required clothing and equipment for trips. Raingear, proper seasonal footwear, and a few other items are necessary for most trips. Get these items first. Other gear can be borrowed or substituted with makeshift items depending on the trip.
- Equipment will be used in wide variety of activities. Car camping, backpacking, canoeing, winter camping, etc. Environment will be sunny, wet, muddy, dusty, cold, icy, windy, snowy, hot, & humid. Initial gear investments should be basic items that can be used on most every trip.
- Venturers will grow out of clothing and gear.
- Clothing and gear will be abused and mistreated.
- The interest factor is important in deciding how much of an investment to make. Do you really like camping and outdoor activities? Do you plan to stick with it?
- Some camping items are worth buying top notch and others are not. ASK! Crew leaders, and store employees are valuable resources and will steer you toward the best value.

Role of Parents

Parents should help make sure that your son/daughter is prepared for an outdoor activity, with the following points in mind:

- Stay informed! Your questions, feedback, and participation make a huge difference!
- Work with your son/daughter: Help prepare for event, help shopping, help packing.
- DO NOT PACK FOR YOUR THEM!!!!!! Help make this is a learning experience.
- Venturers should practice using gear at home. Make sure clothes fit, gear works, before you hit the trail.
- Make sure your son/daughter is fully prepared for the activity. His or her life may depend on it!

Quick Gear Checklist

Outdoor gear used on most campouts falls into 6 categories:

- Storage & Transport – A pack, External or Internal frame. Should be appropriate size. Pack for every overnight as if you were backpacking.
- Do not carry food or gear in your hands or in shopping bags.
- Appropriate clothing – Cover your head, torso, legs, and feet. Stay warm and dry. Extra clothing can make up for high tech clothing. Remember required seasonal clothing/footwear.
- A place to sleep – Tent/ shelter, sleeping bag, sleeping pad.
- Something to eat with – Plate/bowl, utensils, cup, water containers, snacks. This may vary depending on type of trip.
- Hygiene and cleanup – Everything from trash bags and toilet paper to soap.
- All the little things – Flashlight, matches, compass, zip lock bags, first aid kit, knife, extra batteries, etc.



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Outdoor Equipment is an Investment

Invest in gear just as you would invest in the proper equipment for any other sport or hobby. Take time when buying gear and invest wisely. Prioritize your gear needs. Do some research. Get several opinions before making a purchase. Shop around prices can vary widely.

- Immediate needs gear – Pack, sleeping bag, foam pad, water bottles, etc. This is gear that you will need immediately. You do not need to buy the top brand gear to have fun and comfort on campouts. Often gear swaps and second hand equipment can be a great way to start out.
- Long term investments – Tents, stoves, High tech clothing (Gore-Tex), specialty gear. This is gear that you will not need in the beginning, but may wish to purchase if you find you enjoy these types of activities and plan to do more of them in the future. This gear is expensive and should last a long time.
- Stocking stuffer gear – Stuff sacks, compass, pocketknife, first aid kit, utility cord, etc. This gear while not always essential makes camping life easier. These items are somewhat inexpensive and make great gifts.
- Buyer beware items – Survival gear kits, hot spark kits, glow sticks, large knives, etc. These items are not needed for most camping activities. Check with the Crew leaders to see if they are appropriate for a crew activity.

Where to get outdoor gear

- Basic Supplies – K-mart, Wal-Mart, BJ's, Costco, Spags are often less expensive than similar products in specialty stores.
- Specialty Outdoor Stores – Eastern Mountain Sports, REI, LL Bean, Kittery Trading Post, Campmor, Sam's. Most have knowledgeable staff that can help you sort through your options
- Forget It – Promotional gear (Marlboro gear, the free backpack you got for selling candy bars), these are typically low quality and won't hold up to rigorous use.

Take care of your gear

- Mark it – Use an indelible marker, engraving tool or some other means to identify your gear from someone else's.
- Store gear clean and dry – Putting gear away wet will result in things like rust and mildew and will greatly reduce the lifespan of your gear. Find a place to hang tents and sleeping bags to dry them overnight before packing them away.
- Store gear open, not packed away – Compressing sleeping bags and ground pads for long periods of time reduces their loft and cuts down on their ability to insulate. Follow the manufactures instructions.