



GO LONDON HIKING

Your Adventure Starts Here

HOW TO START HIKING

A no-fuss beginner's guide

Hiking is for anyone.

You don't need to be super-fit, own expensive equipment or know everything about navigation. Start with a suitable route, a backpack, water, food, good footwear and a map or navigation app - then get outside and walk.

NEW FRIENDS • NEW ADVENTURES • NEW YOU

From London's friendliest hiking group

01 START HERE

Hiking is simpler than you think

At its simplest, hiking is a good walk on a planned outdoor route. Your first hike doesn't need to involve mountains, specialist equipment or a huge distance. Pick something manageable, enjoy it and build up from there.

1

Choose a route

Look at distance, hills, terrain and transport. For a first full-day walk, flatter and simpler is better.

2

Pack the basics

Backpack, water, food, good shoes, a waterproof layer, charged phone and your route.

3

Start easy

Walk at a comfortable pace. As your legs and confidence improve, add distance and hills.

Do I need special kit?

In summer, not much. You do not need to turn up dressed for Everest. For an easy dry-weather hike, concentrate on comfort, grip, water and being prepared for a change in the weather.

- ✓ A small, comfortable backpack.
- ✓ Good walking shoes or trainers with decent grip. Hiking shoes or boots are better once routes get muddy, rougher or hillier.
- ✓ Water - enough for the length and temperature of the walk.
- ✓ Food and snacks for the day.
- ✓ A light waterproof and an extra layer - even in summer.
- ✓ A charged phone plus your map or navigation app. A power bank is useful on longer days.
- ✓ On sunny days: sun cream, sunglasses and a hat.

Buy gradually. Decathlon and Mountain Warehouse are good places to start for straightforward, reasonably priced hiking kit; specialist outdoor shops are useful when you want to upgrade.

02 FIND YOUR LEVEL

Do I have to be fit?

Not necessarily. You don't need to be an athlete to start hiking. The important thing is matching the hike to your current level and progressing gradually.

A good first target

If you're reasonably active and comfortable walking for a few hours, around 16 km on fairly flat terrain can be a good first full hiking day. If that sounds like a lot, start shorter - there is no minimum distance you have to achieve.

Our hikes are graded

GO London Hiking events tell you the distance, hiking time, ascent, terrain and pace so you can make an informed choice before booking.

BEGINNER

The place to start - easier terrain, manageable distances and a steady social pace.

BEGINNER +

A little longer and/or hillier once you have a few walks under your belt.

INTERMEDIATE

A fuller day with more distance, ascent or uneven terrain.

HARDER DAYS

Longer, hillier challenge hikes for people who have built up hiking fitness and experience.

WHO JOINS GO LONDON HIKING?

Our groups are usually around 12-18 people, with many hikers in the 25-60 age range. The common thread isn't age - it's wanting to get outdoors, meet people and enjoy a good day on the trail.

Progress, don't prove.

Choose the hike you can enjoy. Once 16 km feels comfortable, try a little more distance or ascent. Fitness comes from hiking - you don't need to arrive with all of it on day one.

03 FIND A ROUTE

Where can I find hikes?

There are hundreds of walks within reach of London and you don't need a car to get started. A surprising number begin and finish at railway stations.

KOMOOT

Useful for discovering routes, seeing elevation and following a route on your phone.

GOOGLE

Search for terms such as "walks from [station]", "circular walk [place]" or "best hikes near London by train".

SATURDAY WALKERS CLUB

A great source of detailed, public-transport-friendly walks from London.

GO LONDON HIKING

Prefer someone else to plan and lead the day? Join a sociable guided adventure with qualified leaders.

How do I get to hikes from London?

Use the railway network as your trail map. Choose a route that starts at a station and either loops back to it or finishes at another station. The Chilterns, Surrey Hills, North Downs, South Downs, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire and beyond all have excellent rail-accessible walking.

- ✓ Check the start and finish stations before choosing the walk.
- ✓ Check train times and engineering works before leaving home.
- ✓ Allow enough daylight for the route, breaks and any delays.
- ✓ For a first independent hike, pick a route with easy transport options and clear paths.
- ✓ Download the route before you travel so you are not dependent on mobile signal.

Want the easy option?

With GO London Hiking, the meeting point, recommended train, hike grade, distance, terrain and finish are set out before the event - then the leader guides the route on the day.

Beginner hiking FAQs

What if I have never hiked before?

Start with a Beginner event or a shorter, flatter independent walk. Let the leader know you're new if you're joining a group - everyone starts somewhere.

Do I need hiking boots?

Not always. On an easy, dry summer route, comfortable supportive shoes or trail-style trainers with good grip may be fine. Boots or hiking shoes become more useful in mud, rough ground and colder or wetter conditions.

How much water should I carry?

It depends on distance and weather. Carry enough for the whole walk and more on hot days. For a typical day hike, many people start with around 1-2 litres and adjust to the conditions and their own needs.

Can I come on my own?

Yes. Many people join hiking groups because they want to get outdoors and meet new people. You won't be the only person arriving solo.

Can I join a GO London Hiking weekend away?

Yes - choose a weekend whose grade suits your fitness and experience. A weekend is a great next step once you're comfortable with full hiking days.

What about international trips?

Yes. Our international adventures range in difficulty. Read the trip grade and requirements carefully and build up through day hikes and weekends first if the itinerary is more demanding.

What if I am worried I will be too slow?

Choose a Beginner hike and read the event details. Our descriptions include the expected pace. If you're unsure, WhatsApp Gary before booking and ask whether a particular hike is right for you.

The simplest answer

You don't need to know everything before you start. Pick an achievable route, take the basics, check the weather and transport, and go for a walk. Experience comes one hike at a time.

05 READY TO GO

Your first-hike checklist

Before you leave home, run through these simple checks. They take a few minutes and make the day much easier.

- 1 Pick the right route**
Check distance, hills, terrain and likely walking time.
- 2 Check the weather**
Pack for the conditions and be ready to change plans if necessary.
- 3 Plan the trains**
Know your start, finish and return journey; check engineering works.
- 4 Pack food + water**
Bring enough for the day plus a waterproof and extra layer.
- 5 Save your route**
Download your map/navigation route and charge your phone.
- 6 Start easy**
Choose a distance you can enjoy and build up gradually.

READY TO START?

Join GO London Hiking for well-planned, sociable adventures led by qualified leaders. Choose a grade that suits you, pack your day bag and turn up ready to walk.

[WHATSAPP GARY](#)

[VIEW OUR HIKES](#)

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VISIT WEBSITE

NEW FRIENDS • NEW ADVENTURES • NEW YOU

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