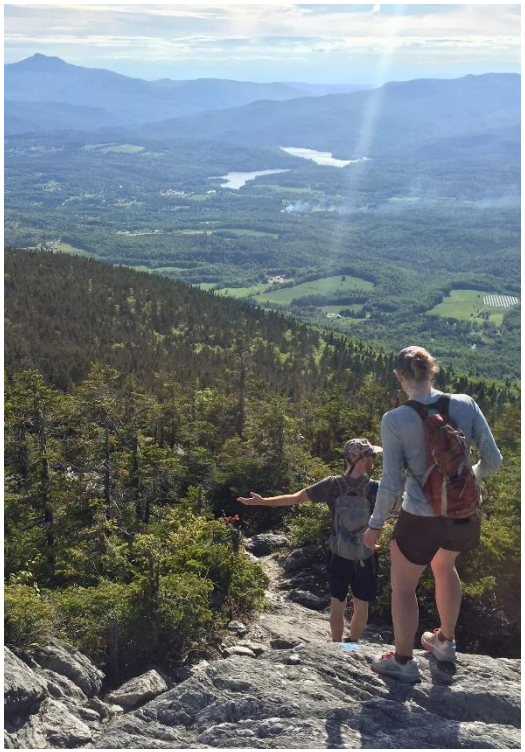
A print version of the "10 Essentials" first appeared in 1974, in *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* (3rd edition)

What are the "Ten Essentials"?

- A longstanding concept among outdoor professionals, with slight variations over time and regions
- Identifies items most critical for survival in the outdoors
- According to local Search and Rescue experts, many wilderness emergencies in Vermont arise in part from failure to bring some of these items into the outdoors



Pamphlet created by Nathan Dreyfus, MS-3 as part of UVM Larner College of Medicine's Family Medicine Clerkship, February 2019

All photos taken in Vermont. Photo of rescuers courtesy of Stowe Mountain Rescue, all others by Nathan Dreyfus.

Printed on recycled paper.

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www.hikesafe.com

"Ten Essentials" for the Vermont Outdoors

Backcountry safety is your responsibility

Vermont provides exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation. Responsible use of the backcountry benefits individuals, communities, and society as a whole – however, planning and preparation are critical for safety in wilderness areas.

Each year, well over 100 wilderness emergencies resulting in calls for Search and Rescue will arise in the state of Vermont.

Illness, injury, and death may occur among recreationalists pursuing high-risk and low-risk activities alike – hikers are among the most common user types to require rescue.

While it occurs rarely, several individuals in Vermont have died of hypothermia in recent years after becoming disoriented within 1-2 miles of a road, with subsequent exposure to the elements overnight.

A few items can significantly improve your safety and survival in the Vermont outdoors.

The "Ten Essentials"

1. Navigation: GPS unit, map and compass, or minimally, backup power for cell phone if relying upon it for navigation
2. Illumination: Headlamp or flashlight, with backup batteries
3. Insulation: Jacket, hat, gloves, long underwear; adequate layers for overnight conditions
4. Hydration: Water purification system (filter, UV or chemical) or an extra 2L of water

-Four Bare Necessities-

At a minimum, take the items above with you for every wilderness activity, every time.

"Ten Essentials" (continued)

5. Emergency Shelter: Tarp, bivouac sack, or tube tent. Minimally, a space blanket or jumbo trash bags
6. First Aid Supplies: Splinting materials, bleeding control, bandages, pain medication
7. Nutrition: An adequate amount of food for an unintentional overnight outside. Minimally, bring more than needed for the planned activity
8. Fire: Weather-proof fire starter – butane lighter, waterproof matches, flint or striking steel. Dryer lint and petroleum jelly are effective accelerants
9. Sun and wind protection: Sunglasses, sunscreen for lips and skin, hat. In cold or windy winter conditions, use dermatone or balm to prevent frostbite on exposed skin
10. Knife or multi-tool: Ideally, as part of a repair kit for equipment failure (i.e. ski or snowshoe bindings, bike components, pack buckles), along with duct tape (voile straps in winter)

The "10 Essentials" List described above was based upon long-established versions, with slight modification informed by local SAR experts, experienced Vermont outdoorspeople, and personal experience. No equipment can replace preparation, experience, or judgment, and no combination of these assets is capable of eliminating risk in the wilderness.

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