



Senior

# Trail Adventure



**A**n outdoor challenge is the ultimate test. In this badge, you'll decide whether you want to challenge yourself by taking part in a trail race or a backpacking trip. Take a leadership role by choosing an adventure, planning it, setting goals, and making it happen. Surround yourself with those who bring out the best in you. And while you're out there, let nature clear your mind and feed your soul! It's your choice—so get started by exploring both of your options with your Girl Scout friends or family members.

## Steps

1. Choose your outdoor adventure
2. Plan and prepare
3. Gather your gear
4. Set a goal and train for your adventure
5. Go on your outdoor adventure

## Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will have planned and learned the skills to compete in a trail race or to take a three-day, two-night backpacking trip.





## STEP 1 Choose your outdoor adventure

Do you want to test your physical limits in the great outdoors on a competitive trail run? Or would you rather spend quality time with nature while hiking on a multiday backpacking trek? In this step, explore both options and then make your choice.

### ADVENTURE OPTIONS

- ◆ **Competitive Trail Running:** You will train and compete in a trail race. Aim for a 5K/10K distance.
- ◆ **Backpacking:** You will plan, prepare, and complete a three-day, two-night backpacking trip. Aim for hiking at least ten miles on your trip.

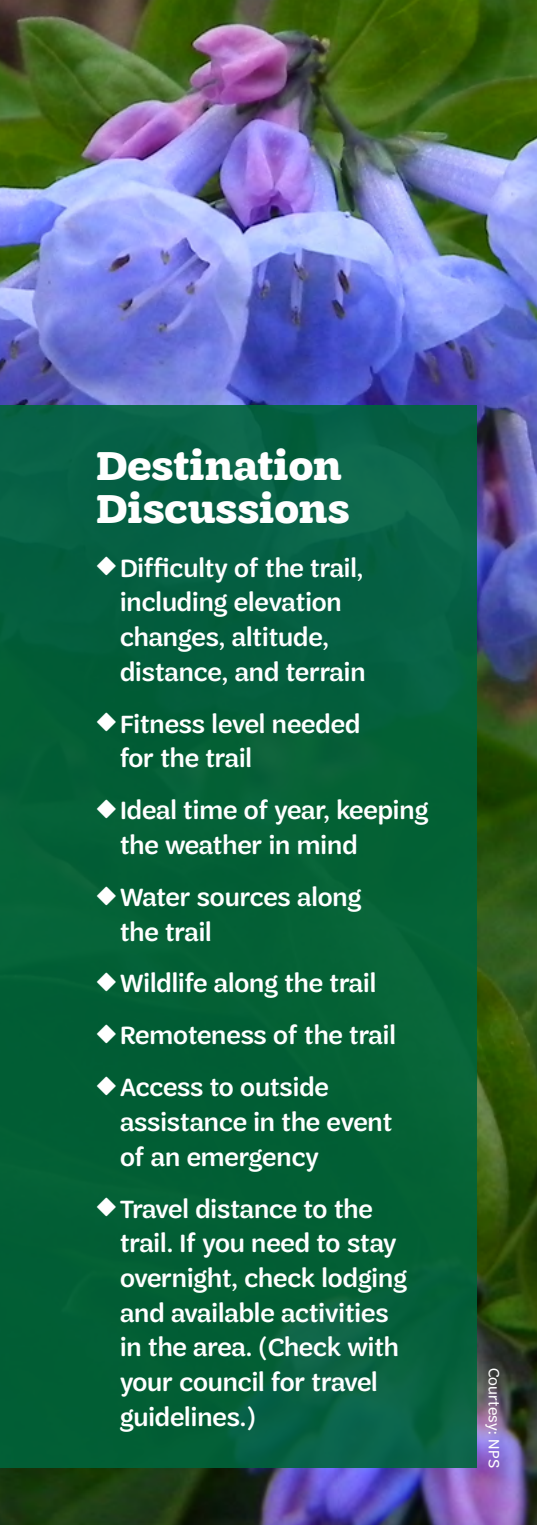
### CHOICES-DO ONE:

- ☐ **Talk to a competitive trail runner and an experienced backpacker.** Find out what they like best about their sport. Which one are you more interested in trying for yourself? Share your thoughts with your family or Girl Scout friends.  
  
**OR** -----
- ☐ **Watch videos or read books about competitive trail running and backpacking.** Find a story about one female competitive trail runner and one female backpacker. You can watch videos or read books. Outdoor organizations and retail websites are excellent resources for videos featuring women with inspirational competitive trail-running and backpacking stories. Which one are you more interested in trying for yourself? Share your thoughts with your family or Girl Scout friends.  
  
**OR** -----
- ☐ **Explore what you will do for competitive trail running and a backpacking trip.** (See “Adventure Options” above.) Do your own research too! You might find out about competitive running events in your area, pick up a trail guidebook from your library, or visit a nearby park to look at a topographical trail map. Decide on the activity that sounds most intriguing to you. Then pitch why you selected it to your family or Girl Scout friends.









## Destination Discussions

- ◆ Difficulty of the trail, including elevation changes, altitude, distance, and terrain
- ◆ Fitness level needed for the trail
- ◆ Ideal time of year, keeping the weather in mind
- ◆ Water sources along the trail
- ◆ Wildlife along the trail
- ◆ Remoteness of the trail
- ◆ Access to outside assistance in the event of an emergency
- ◆ Travel distance to the trail. If you need to stay overnight, check lodging and available activities in the area. (Check with your council for travel guidelines.)

Courtesy: NPS

## STEP 2 Plan and prepare

You decided on a competitive trail running or a backpacking adventure. Now take this step to make it happen!

### TO COMPLETE THIS STEP, MAKE SURE YOU:

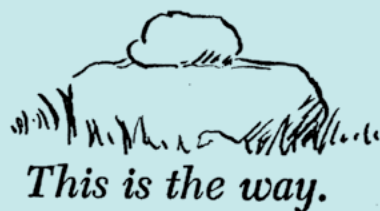
- ◆ **Pick your destination.** Once you've done that, think through the list on this page.
- ◆ **Explore your destination.** Look online for trail reports from fellow hikers and trail runners. Reach out to the land management agency overseeing the area, such as the Bureau of Land Management or National Park Service. The more you know about your destination, the better your experience will be.
- ◆ **Come up with a budget.** Make a list of all the expenses for your outdoor adventure. What will you need for food, travel, and gear? How will you pay for it? You and your troop or group may want to use Girl Scout Cookie™ earnings.

### CHOICES-DO ONE:

- ☐ **Know the language for your adventure.** We've given you some basic terms to know for your outdoor adventure; add more to the list.  
**OR** -----
- ☐ **Talk to an outdoor expert to get planning tips.** This could be an adventure travel planner, an outdoor retail expert, or an experienced runner or hiker.  
**OR** -----
- ☐ **Find out about common trail injuries.** Research what injuries can happen on your outdoor adventure. Some possible options are: frostbite if it's cold, heat stroke if it's hot, a sprained ankle, or dehydration. What can you do to avoid injuries or respond to them if they happen? Take this knowledge and apply it to safety in your training plan in Step 4.

## WORDS TO KNOW for Trail Running and Backpacking

- ◆ **Backcountry:** An isolated area without roads
- ◆ **Blaze:** A colored marker, usually painted or nailed to a tree, used to help guide runners/hikers along the trail



- ◆ **Cairns:** A human-made pile of rocks found along a trail, marking the trail's path

- ◆ **Chafing:** Skin that becomes irritated, usually from rubbing against clothes. To prevent, apply a thin layer of lubricant on these areas, wear longer shorts, or use talcum powder.
- ◆ **Ditty Bag:** A small bag with smaller gear you might take, such as spare matches/lighter, ear plugs, spare eyeglasses/contacts, or duct tape





## Think Big

If you're in a location where there are few trails to run on or places to backpack, why don't you and your troop save up your Girl Scout Cookie money and plan a trip together?



- ◆ **DOMS** (delayed onset muscle soreness): Pain or stiffness you feel in your muscles one to three days after a run or hike. Light training or going for a walk can help you feel better.
- ◆ **Hitting the wall/bonking:** Feeling very fatigued
- ◆ **Privy:** An outhouse along the trail; used for solid waste only.
- ◆ **Pronation:** Natural side-to-side movement of your foot as you run or hike. Overpronation (rolling your foot inward) and supination (rolling your foot outward) can lead to injuries. Having the right running/hiking shoes and inserts can help you reduce injury.
- ◆ **Switchback:** A steep trail that zigzags
- ◆ **Time control plan (TCP):** Determining where you should be on the trail at certain points of the day, taking into account elevation changes, fitness level, weather, and terrain
- ◆ **Taper:** To cut back on training intensity one to two weeks prior to your outdoor adventure in order to let your muscles rest



## Before You Begin: Ten Essentials for Outdoor Adventures

Use this list to help create a checklist of things you need for your outdoor adventure. And add things too! For example, for competitive trail running you may want a specialized running vest-pack. For backpacking, you will need a backpack, tent, sleeping bag, and a portable stove to prepare food.

- ◆ Proper clothing and footwear
- ◆ Sun protection
- ◆ Water
- ◆ Food
- ◆ First-aid kit
- ◆ Navigational tools
- ◆ Lightweight portable shelter
- ◆ Light source
- ◆ Fire starter
- ◆ Repair kit

## STEP 3 Gather your gear

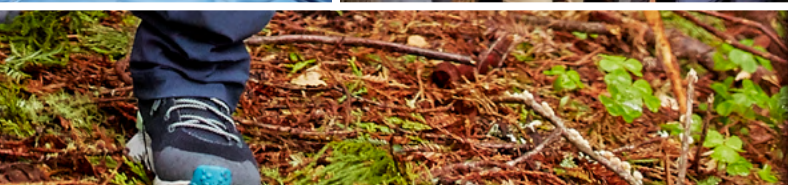
**Be prepared with the right gear for your adventure! Do you have the right shoes for a run? Are you prepared for any kind of weather while backpacking? What will you need to help achieve success? What can you borrow instead of buying?**

### CHOICES-DO ONE:

- ☐ **Visit an outdoor adventure retailer.** Ask someone who works there to go over your list of essential gear and find out how and why each item is used. Make sure to ask what else should be on the list. Do you need any special gear or equipment for your adventure?  
**OR** -----
- ☐ **Go online to find out the gear you will need.** Make a list of essential gear, learn what everything is used for, and then find where and how to get it.  
**OR** -----
- ☐ **Compare and share.** Bring essential gear to a troop meeting to share and compare. See if you can borrow some things from friends and family. Do you know an adult with experience in your outdoor adventure who could help guide your meeting?











## Nutrition Tips for Competition



**Carb load.** Before a race, eat regular meals of cereals, fruits, juices, bread, rice, baked potatoes, or pasta with tomato sauce.

**Eat nutrient-rich food.** Eat protein for muscle stamina, antioxidants to keep your heart pumping strong, and vitamin C to protect your immune system and to ward off any last-minute bugs before race day.

**Drink lots of fluids.** Drink juices and water. Save sport drinks for the actual event. You will have more stamina and endurance if you are well-hydrated before and during your event.

**Eat some fiber.** You can find fiber in whole wheat bread, bran cereal, fruits, and vegetables.

**Eat a light breakfast the morning of your event.** This might be cereal, a bagel, toast, fruit, energy bars, and/or juice.



**Eat and drink during your event:** Sport drinks, water, bananas, and dried fruit.

## Training Tips

- ◆ Aim for doing cardio workouts (walking, jogging, running, hiking, cross-training) two to three times a week for six weeks before your outdoor adventure to help build endurance.
- ◆ Practice good form for trail running and hiking. Keep your eyes on the trail ahead of you, hold your body tall (try not to slouch), swing your arms up and down, keep your feet under (not in front of) your body, and use a shorter stride.
- ◆ Make sure to train in different weather conditions—cold, rainy, hot. You never know what the weather will bring the day of your adventure!
- ◆ **For more fun:** Find an app to log your workouts and keep track of your progress.

## Training Tips for Backpacking

- ◆ Complete a day hike for about four to six hours covering at least four miles. Do it with a weighted hiking backpack, no more than a quarter of your body weight.
- ◆ Test out your footwear and backpack for comfort—a slight strap or hip belt adjustment can make a huge difference.
- ◆ Show your Girl Scout friends or a family member that you know how to use your gear, like your water purifier, tent, and stove.



## STEP

# 4 Set a goal and train for your adventure

Training and preparation are keys to success in any challenge. Put together a training schedule and stick to it!

### TO COMPLETE THIS STEP, MAKE SURE YOU:

- ◆ **Use the training tips.** Referring to the list on page 8, come up with a training plan and put together a schedule.
- ◆ **Follow safety tips.** Train only with a trusted adult or friend. Make sure another adult (one who is not with you) knows your route and the estimated time you should return home.
- ◆ **Practice your navigational skills.** See some suggestions on page 11.
- ◆ **Practice your first-aid skills.** Know how to treat injuries such as sprains, cuts, and sunburn.
- ◆ **Set a goal for what you want to achieve.** Write it down.

### CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Learn how mental imagery can help you with your outdoor adventure.** This means visualizing your competitive trail run or backpacking trip. Find an experienced trail runner or backpacker and ask how they use mental imagery on their outdoor adventures. Incorporate mental imagery into your practice trail runs or hikes.

OR

- ☐ **Do a trail run with an experienced trail runner, or take a day hike with an expert backpacker.** Observe what they do, ask for tips about your form, and find out about their best practices.

OR

- ☐ **Get expert training tips.** Ask a running coach or experienced hiker to give you tips on goals and training. Or go online to search outdoor organizations, publications, and retail websites that offer valuable information and advice.





## Outdoor Adventure Careers to Explore

Adventure education professional

Biologist (marine, wildlife)

Camp administration professional

Collegiate outdoor recreation professional

Conservationist

Environmentalist

Geologist

Landscape architect

Naturalist/environmental educator

Oceanographer

Park and recreation professional

Park/forest ranger

Recreation guide or instructor

Wilderness counselor/therapist

Wildfire firefighter

Zoologist

## STEP 5 Go on your outdoor adventure

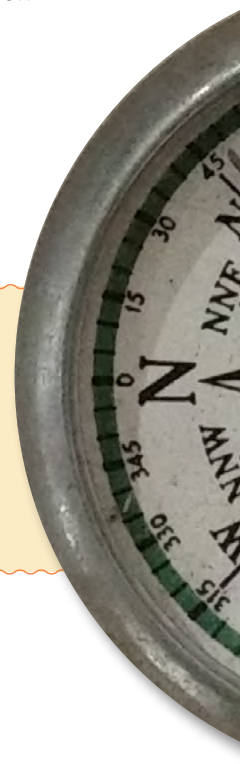
Now it's time to get outside and face your challenge! Everything you've worked for has brought you to this day, to this moment. If you think you can do more, take it up a notch. Aim to be the best you can be!

### BEFORE YOU TAKE THIS STEP, REVIEW THIS:

- ◆ **Safety:** Always run or hike with a buddy. Leave behind with an adult:
  - ◇ Emergency contact names and numbers of everyone going on the adventure
  - ◇ Where you are going, including trail names
  - ◇ How to reach you in case of an emergency
  - ◇ What time you're expected to return.
- ◆ **Permission:** Get permission slips, if needed, from your Girl Scout council, parent, or guardian.
- ◆ **Gear check:** Make sure you have all the gear from Step 3 with you, including snacks and water in reusable containers and a first-aid kit.
- ◆ **Weather:** Always check the weather before leaving. Be sure your gear and clothing choices are right for the weather.
- ◆ **For Competitive Trail Running:** Review race day details on the race organizer's webpage.
- ◆ **For Backpacking:** Obtain permits, if required. Check with the land management agency for the area of your adventure for updates on trail conditions.
- ◆ **For Backpacking:** Do a test run: Set up tents, check zippers on tents and sleeping bags, try out your water purifier, test light sources, and light your stove before your trip.

### Wilderness Navigation

Combine orienteering with your love of trail running! With a map and compass in hand, race through the woods looking for checkpoints along the way. Search "orienteering races" or "wilderness navigation races" online.





## CHOICES-DO ONE:

- ☐ **Create your action portfolio.** Have a friend or family member take action photos or videos of you from your training sessions and on your adventure. Afterward, analyze your technique and form to see what you would improve. You can also use the images or videos to show others how it's done.

OR

- ☐ **Engage and explore.** Your outdoor adventure is about more than just accomplishing the activity. While you're on your adventure, try something new—like exploring nature, trying out a camping skill, or doing an activity a different way.

OR

- ☐ **Keep an adventure journal.** How far did you run or hike? What did you like most about running on the trail or hiking? What do you want to improve for next time? Write your notes in a journal or find a free app where you can document your journey, including how you felt at each phase of your adventure.



## Navigational Skills

- ◆ Review how to use a compass and GPS with a trail map.
- ◆ Learn the trail sign markings for the trails you'll be using.
- ◆ Find out about magnetic declination, the difference between true north and magnetic north. Magnetic declination changes over time and with location so make sure to adjust your compass when taking your bearings.

*“I like to bring two sleeping pads—one lightweight foam one to insulate from the cold ground, and one lightweight air mattress on top. A friend also taught me to bring a small sponge to wipe up condensation from inside the tent in the morning before it gets things wet.”*

—Ingrid Backstrom,  
professional skier



## Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Teaching a group of Girl Scout Juniors or Cadettes how to stay safe on a trail run or hike
- Helping a friend or family member create a nutrition plan for competitive trail running or backpacking
- Acting as a mentor for a girl who wants to start trail running or backpacking

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*I'm inspired to:*

This outdoor high adventure opportunity is brought to you by The North Face®.

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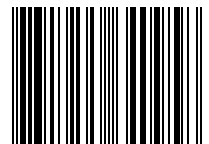
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