THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

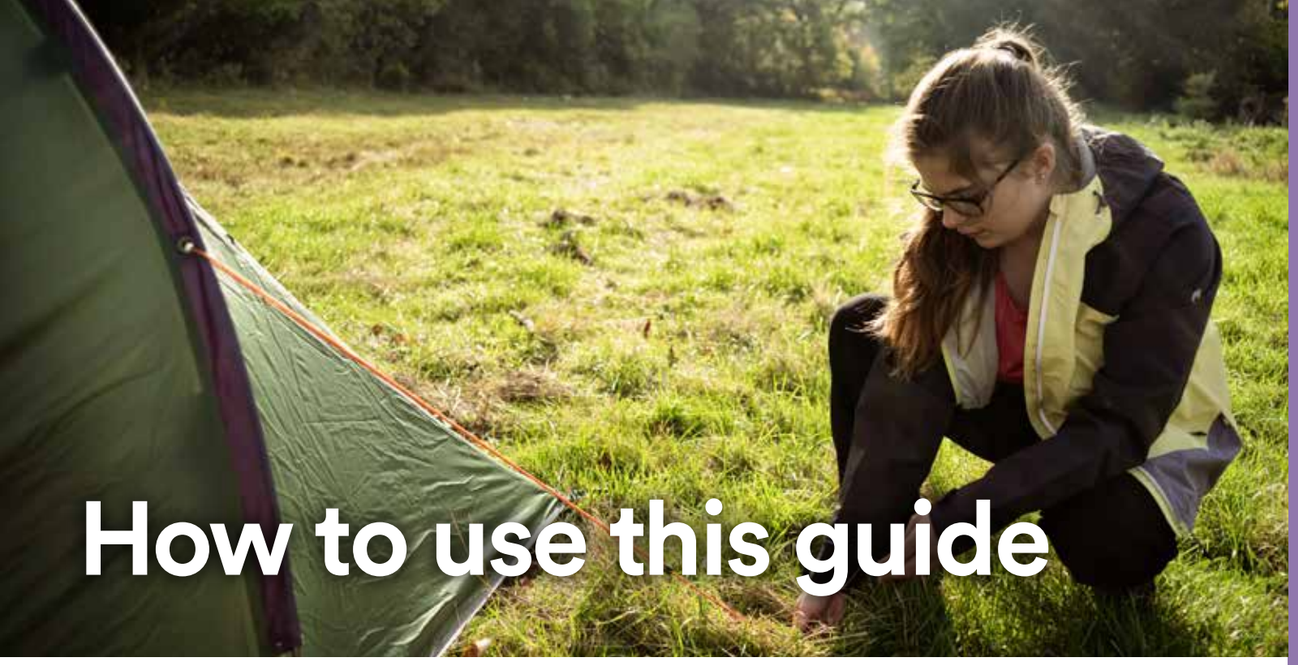
2019/2020

Expedition Kit Guide

For participants and parents

Contents

4 How to use this guide
5 Ten questions you should ask
6 Your DofE Card
7 DofE expeditions – an overview
8 The DofE Kit List
9 How to save money on expedition kit
12 Walking boots
14 Walking socks
15 Head/neckwear
16 Waterproof clothing
18 Rucksacks
20 Sleeping bags
21 Sleeping mats
22 Technical clothing and layers
24 Expedition food
25 Campcraft and cooking
26 First aid
27 Waterproofing
30 Tents
32 Buying tents for DofE expeditions
34 Burners and fuel
35 Navigation
36 Rucksack packing tips and advice
37 Looking after your feet
38 Making your kit last



How to use this guide

The Expedition Kit Guide is aimed at helping participants and parents to choose and then find the right kit for their expeditions. Each category includes key information, expert tips and money saving ideas, as well as directions towards online resources packed with additional advice.

This guide is aimed at those doing UK expeditions on foot, but some information will still be useful across all methods of transportation.

Whether you are doing a Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE programme, this guide is just a summary; the best place you can get advice is from your DofE Expedition Supervisor who will check your kit. For more expert advice, find your nearest DofE Recommended Retailer. GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso are all outdoors specialists and their staff can answer all your expedition kit questions.

What does DofE Recommended Kit mean?

The DofE has great relationships with expert expedition kit suppliers and manufacturers. We test and recommend their kit based on their design and suitability for the kinds of expeditions usually completed by DofE participants. We don't look for the most high end or expensive kit, but kit that is fit for purpose and good value for money. Remember, these are recommendations only and not kit that you must use. The DofE charity receives a royalty from all sales of Recommended Kit items, which helps to support our work with young people.

All equipment must be checked by the Expedition Supervisor (who is responsible for the safety and welfare of participants) before being used for any DofE activities.

For more information about what DofE Recommended Kit means, visit **DofE.org/shopping/reckit**

DofE RECOMMENDED KIT

Look out for this logo

All DofE Recommended Kit will feature this logo, so you can easily see if something is recommended by the DofE.

> "Having good kit can make the difference between a successful and enjoyable expedition and one that is remembered for all the wrong reasons. This guide will help participants and parents choose kit that is right for them."
>
> ALASDAIR OFFIN,
> ASSESSOR NETWORK CO-ORDINATOR, LOWTHER HILLS

Ten questions a DofE participant should ask...

Answer these ten questions to help you get the kit you really need for your expedition.

Have I got my DofE Kit List?

From day one, the Expedition Kit List is the one thing that will be invaluable. Download at **DofE.org/shopping/kitlist**, or access our Interactive Kit List for when you are out and about – it's a great checklist for shopping and packing.

What's already in my wardrobe?

Check what kit you already have that you could use (but avoid denim and cotton items).

What can I borrow?

Ask around and see what people have and would be happy to lend, particularly small items like hats, sun cream and water bottles.

Am I still growing?

If you are, you may want to spend less as you will quickly grow out of your clothing, boots and some kit.

What's the climate like?

Find out what the normal temperatures are, particularly at night, for the time of year.

What's the weather likely to be like?

You must have waterproofs but check the forecast. Will you need dry-bags and extra waterproofing? Or sun cream and sunglasses?

How long am I going for?

Making do with basic/alternative kit for two days is very different to three or four days.

What else would I use the kit for?

Would you use the boots every day walking the dog or take the rucksack on your gap year? It might be worth spending more if you'll get that value back over time.

What's my budget?

Think about what you can afford and what kit you have to get. Also, remember to use your DofE Card or Digital DofE Card to save at least 10% at GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso (Scotland only).

Where can I get a professional boot fitting?

The range of expedition boots is vast because people's feet are so different. If you want a boot to last, make sure you get a professional fitting to find a pair that really fits you. The five Recommended Retailers of Expedition Kit are GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso and they all provide a free boot fitting service.

Your DofE Card

RECOMMENDED RETAILER OF EXPEDITION KIT

Save at least 10% on your expedition kit and more.

Every young person involved with the DofE is able to save money on expedition purchases at five leading outdoor retailers. Claim your discount in over 200 stores and online with these five DofE Recommended Retailers of Expedition Kit.

GO Outdoors	Blacks	millets	Ultimate Outdoors	Tiso
GOoutdoors.co.uk	Blacks.co.uk	Millets.co.uk	Ultimateoutdoors.com	Tiso.com
Extra 10% off the GO Outdoors Discount Card price.	**15%** off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items.	**15%** off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items.	**15%** off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items.	**15%** off the retail price.
Inspiring everyone to get outdoors, for less… and love it as much as we do.	Proud to be a part of your outdoor life.	The destination for family adventure.	The number one destination for all things outdoors.	Scotland's leading specialist retailer for outdoor clothing, camping equipment and climbing gear.

Save money on expedition purchases and everything you buy in store and online.

There are three ways you can claim your DofE participant discount at these retailers:

Use your personalised DofE Card in store

When you log into eDofE for the first time, enter your address and a personalised DofE Card will be sent directly to you directly to you with your Welcome Pack.

This will have your name and eDofE ID.

Download your Digital Card from eDofE

Use the online discount code

Online discount code: JDO-DOFE-PAR

Enter the above code on these websites:

GOOutdoors.co.uk
Blacks.co.uk
Millets.co.uk
Ultimateoutdoors.com
Tiso.com

Find your nearest store at **DofE.org/shopping/storefinder**

Visit **DofE.org/shopping/T&Cs** for details. Always show your DofE Card or Digital Card. You'll get the best savings and your purchases, whether it is expedition kit or else, will generate a donation to the DofE charity. Make sure you use yours to save money and support the DofE.

DofE expeditions – an overview

Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE expeditions are very different to each other.

Bronze

2 days, 1 night

Bronze expeditions, two days/one night, are all about young people enjoying the outdoors. Many Bronze expeditions are undertaken with kit which is older or borrowed and can be a lower cost than for Silver or Gold expeditions.

Silver

3 days, 2 nights

Silver expeditions are a step above Bronze. Participants may already have had an introduction at Bronze level, and now carry out a three days/two nights expedition. Your need to keep dry and comfortable becomes more important, and durable kit could help you have a more enjoyable experience.

Gold

4 days, 3 nights

Gold expeditions, four days/three nights, are a comprehensive challenge of teamwork, self-reliance, isolation and risk management. Lightweight, modern and durable kit will have much more value on these adventures. At Gold, always think lightweight and waterproof.

Expeditions whatever the weather

Waterproofs need to work whatever level your expedition. However, at Silver and Gold, keeping dry becomes more important due to longer days and (usually) distance. Even in the summer, dew in the mornings on long grass can drench socks and trousers. Pack according to the weather. Do you need thermal gloves and a winter hat or sun cream, a sun hat and sunglasses?

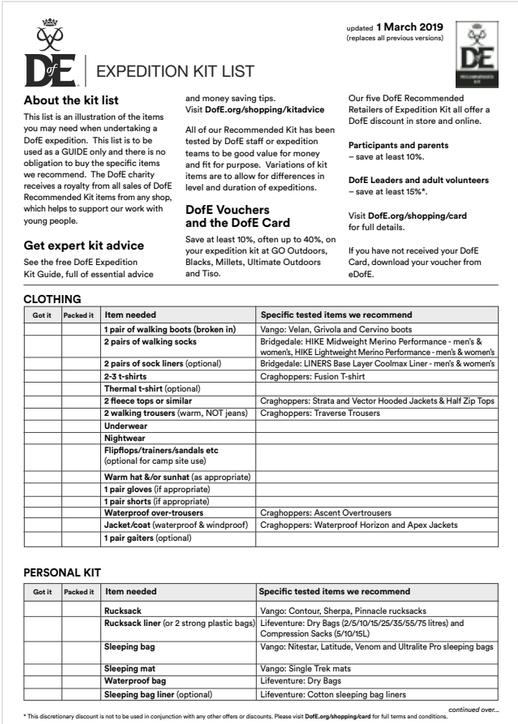
The DofE Expedition Kit List

The DofE Expedition Kit List is your essential checklist when preparing the kit needed for your DofE expedition. All DofE Recommended Kit is tried and tested, so you know it's fit for expeditions.

Participants can use it to be sure they haven't forgotten anything. It also tells you what kit the DofE recommends to help when shopping for items. Remember, the kit list is a guide – you should always check with the DofE Leader that your kit is suitable for your particular expedition.

You can download the kit list or use the Interactive Kit List online to plan and personalise your expedition kit list on the go.

Get your DofE Kit List at DofE.org/shopping/kitlist



updated **1 March 2019**
(replaces all previous versions)

EXPEDITION KIT LIST

About the kit list

This list is an illustration of the items you may need when undertaking a DofE expedition. This list is to be used as a GUIDE only and there is no obligation to buy the specific items we recommend. The DofE charity receives a royalty from all sales of DofE Recommended Kit items from any shop, which helps to support our work with young people.

Get expert kit advice

See the free DofE Expedition Kit Guide, full of essential advice and money saving tips. Visit **DofE.org/shopping/kitadvice**

All of our Recommended Kit has been tested by DofE staff or expedition teams to be good value for money and fit for purpose. Variations of kit items are to allow for differences in level and duration of expeditions.

DofE Vouchers and the DofE Card

Save at least 10%, often up to 40%, on your expedition kit at GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso.

Our five DofE Recommended Retailers of Expedition Kit all offer a DofE discount in store and online.

Participants and parents
– save at least 10%.

DofE Leaders and adult volunteers
– save at least 15%*.

Visit **DofE.org/shopping/card** for full details.

If you have not received your DofE Card, download your voucher from eDofE.

CLOTHING

Got it	Packed it	Item needed	Specific tested items we recommend
		1 pair of walking boots (broken in)	Vango: Velan, Grivola and Cervino boots
		2 pairs of walking socks	Bridgedale: HIKE Midweight Merino Performance - men's & women's, HIKE Lightweight Merino Performance - men's & women's
		2 pairs of sock liners (optional)	Bridgedale: LINERS Base Layer Coolmax Liner - men's & women's
		2-3 t-shirts	Craghoppers: Fusion T-shirt
		Thermal t-shirt (optional)	
		2 fleece tops or similar	Craghoppers: Strata and Vector Hooded Jackets & Half Zip Tops
		2 walking trousers (warm, NOT jeans)	Craghoppers: Traverse Trousers
		Underwear	
		Nightwear	
		Flipflops/trainers/sandals etc (optional for camp site use)	
		Warm hat &/or sunhat (as appropriate)	
		1 pair gloves (if appropriate)	
		1 pair shorts (if appropriate)	
		Waterproof over-trousers	Craghoppers: Ascent Overtrousers
		Jacket/coat (waterproof & windproof)	Craghoppers: Waterproof Horizon and Apex Jackets
		1 pair gaiters (optional)	

PERSONAL KIT

Got it	Packed it	Item needed	Specific tested items we recommend
		Rucksack	Vango: Contour, Sherpa, Pinnacle rucksacks
		Rucksack liner (or 2 strong plastic bags)	Lifeventure: Dry Bags (2/5/10/15/25/35/55/75 litres) and Compression Sacks (5/10/15L)
		Sleeping bag	Vango: Nitestar, Latitude, Venom and Ultralite Pro sleeping bags
		Sleeping mat	Vango: Single Trek mats
		Waterproof bag	Lifeventure: Dry Bags
		Sleeping bag liner (optional)	Lifeventure: Cotton sleeping bag liners

continued over...

* This discretionary discount is not to be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts. Please visit **DofE.org/shopping/card** for full terms and conditions.

How to save money on expedition kit

What's in your wardrobe?

The best way to save money on expedition kit is to use what you already have or borrow kit from other people.

Most people will have some clothes they need, a torch, plastic plate and so on and it's amazing what kit people have if you ask around. Some kit, like boots and socks, you often cannot borrow.

Get the full value

Remember to shop wisely and buy items you'll use again for other activities.

Walk the dog every day? Then get some good boots!

If you are going travelling, get a rucksack suitable for both activities.

Buy a waterproof jacket which can also be used as a coat too.

Hand it down

If you have a large family, you might want to buy kit in neutral colours so that younger siblings can use it when they are old enough.

A rucksack with an adjustable back system will also help with this.

DofE Expedition Kit

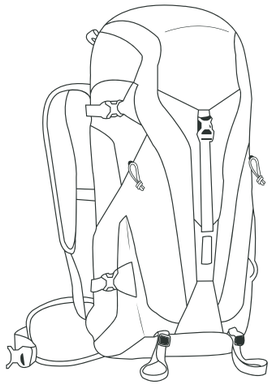
Rucksack & Boot Fitting

All DofE participants are different, and expedition needs vary by Award level, time of year, mode of travel and it's location. As two essential kit purchases, it is important to get your walking boots and rucksack fitted to you. Speak with the staff in our DofE Recommended Retailers who can offer advice and a free fitting service.

They offer a wide range of outdoor clothing and equipment for expeditions in over 200 stores nationwide and online.

Exclusively available at

GO Outdoors | Blacks | millets | Ultimate Outdoors | Tiso – Geared up for the outdoors



The Perfect Rucksack

Making sure your rucksack fits properly is really important to avoid getting aches in your back and shoulders.

Their expert staff can help you find the right rucksack for your height and build, and adjust it to the correct size so it is fitted correctly and comfortably on you.

The Best Boots

Finding the right pair of boots is an essential part of preparing for your expedition. Buy your walking boots early so you have time to break them in and for best comfort on your expedition.

Go in store to try out and test your new boots on the in-store slopes and dips.

Find your nearest store at

DofE.org/shopping/storefinder

RECOMMENDED RETAILER OF EXPEDITION KIT

Save on your expedition kit with our DofE Recommended Retailers **GO Outdoors | Blacks | Millets | Ultimate Outdoors | Tiso**

Personal Kit

Every member of the expedition team will need to carry their own personal camping equipment.

Walking boots

What to look for

Most DofE expeditions are on foot, so getting the right walking boots and having them fitted for you will make a big difference to your journey. Feet come in all shapes and sizes, so different boots may suit different kinds of feet. When choosing your walking boots, you'll find a huge range of different fabrics, styles and sole units.

Leather boots are soft, durable and waterproof and highly abrasion resistant, making them long lasting. Fabric boots are lighter, cheaper and a good option if your feet are still growing.

Before you buy

1. Try on boots while wearing expedition socks and walk around in them.
2. The boots must have ankle support to protect you while walking with a heavy rucksack, and check there is a deep tread for grip.
3. Think about how often you'll use your boots and spend money appropriate to that use.
4. You need to get your boots well before your expedition as you will need to wear them in to reduce rubbing and improve comfort.

Money saving tips

1. Often you can get last season's boots in the sales and still get a professional fitting.
2. If you decide the boots don't fit, some retailers will allow you to return boots if you have only worn them indoors.

Find out more about walking boots at DofE.org/shopping/boots

HI-TEC®

Expert advice

1. Use additional padding like a foot bed to help to get the best possible fit.
2. There are several ways to lace boots, with each giving a slightly different fit, so get yours fitted professionally.
3. Take lightweight trainers or flip flops etc. to wear at the campsite to rest your feet.
4. The DofE only recommend walking boots, not walking shoes, as participants need ankle support when carrying a heavy rucksack.
5. Treat your boots properly – before and after expedition. To ensure longevity of your boots, make sure you clean them regularly and dry them away from direct heat.

Walking socks

What to look for

Good walking socks can be the key to an enjoyable expedition and help to avoid blisters. The best walking sock for you depends on the type of footwear you'll be wearing.

For thick leather boots, more protection around the toe of the sock offers warmth and padding. For a lighter weight boot, a lighter weight walking sock may be an option.

Look for walking socks that have padded areas that act as a cushion on key zones of your feet which are prone to get tired or sore.

Before you buy

1. Try on your socks with your boots before you buy to ensure a perfect fit combination.
2. Look for moisture-wicking qualities in socks.
3. Be sure your socks have padding where your feet need them.
4. Choose your socks before you buy your boots. You can then wear them when trying out walking boots to get a realistic fit.

Money saving tips

1. If you need to, buy one outer sock pair and two liners. Liners can be easily washed and dried overnight, keeping fresh socks next to your skin.
2. Wash your socks inside out as the water reinvigorates the underfoot cushioning. Avoid wearing your socks on carpet; they act like Velcro and create a bobbling effect.

Find out more about walking boots at DofE.org/shopping/socks

Bridgedale

Expert advice

1. Break in your boots whilst wearing your expedition socks before your expedition.
2. Never wear standard or all cotton socks on expedition as they can cause blisters.
3. As soon as you feel a hot spot while walking, sort it out immediately with blister plasters before a full blister develops.
4. Don't wash your socks with fabric conditioner.
5. Always wash your walking socks inside out to reinvigorate the cushioning.

Head/neckwear

Before you buy

1. Look for items that can serve more than one purpose.
2. Try to avoid anything that holds moisture when wet. It will weigh you down and won't keep you warm.
3. Every bit of space counts in your rucksack. Make sure whatever you take is lightweight and packs down small when not needed.

Money saving tips

1. You may already own or can borrow suitable head or neckwear. Check your winter wardrobe for items such as fleece hats and scarves.
2. Depending on the weather and when and where your expedition is, think about what you should bring. It's unlikely you'll need a winter hat for July or August expeditions, but make sure to check the weather forecast.

Find out more about head/neckwear at DofE.org/shopping/headwear

What to look for

You never know what weather you'll experience on expedition.

Warm hats, sunhats, scarves or multi-functional headwear are all items that can provide comfort and protection from the elements, whether its rain, wind or sunshine.

Look for kit that will wick away moisture from the skin to keep you cool when it is hot and keep you warm in the cold. Fleece or microfibre materials are best.

BUFF

Expert advice

1. A sunhat can offer both face and neck shade.
2. Fleece headbands can keep ears warm and can be used as a scarf.
3. Consider a multipurpose piece of head/neckwear.
4. Use your headwear to cover your eyes to keep out light while sleeping.
5. They're not just for the daytime. Wear at night to keep warm in your tent.
6. Protect your neck and face from sunburn.
7. Use neckwear as a facemask to protect against midges at camp when cooking.

Waterproof clothing

What to look for

Choose a decent waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers to ensure you are comfortable on your expedition, in any weather. Key features to look out for are waterproof and breathability, lightweight, adjustable hood and plenty of pockets. If there is reflective trim that's also a great safety feature.

For waterproof overtrousers, look for zips at the ankle, for ease of getting on and off – especially over muddy boots and ones that can pack down into a stuff sack to then stow in your rucksack.

Before you buy

1. Talk to store staff about what activity you are doing and get a jacket designed for expeditions.
2. Look out for waterproof zips – down the centre and on pockets. This helps keep you and your essentials dry!
3. Check that trousers are wide at the bottom or have zips/poppers to the knee to let them go over expedition boots.
4. Knee darts in overtrousers are great for ease of movement, especially on an ascent.

Money saving tips

1. Think "multi-use" when buying your jacket so that you get the best out of it. Choose a jacket that you'd wear for other outdoor activity or every day use.
2. A good proofer will help you get the most out of your waterproofs.

Find out more at
DofE.org/shopping/waterproof-clothing

CRAGHOPPERS

Expert advice

1. Always choose "waterproof" over "water resistant" for better protection against the elements.
2. Choose a bright colour for your jacket to help you stand out.
3. One handed hood adjusters are quick and easy to use – even under pressure!
4. Make sure your overtrousers fit over your walking trousers and boots.
5. Make your waterproofs last much longer by using a waterproofing cleaning product after an expedition.

Rucksacks

What to look for

Your rucksack will be carrying everything you need throughout your whole expedition, and you'll be carrying it on your back for hours at a time.

Modern rucksacks are made from lightweight fabric, with lots of padding and pockets. For a DofE expedition you'll want at least 60 litres.

Get a rucksack with a strong waist strap and wide well-padded shoulder straps.

All DofE recommended rucksacks come with an adjustable back system that tailor the fit to your back. This gives a better load transfer from the back and shoulders to the hip area.

Money saving tip

If you are borrowing a rucksack, it may not have a waterproof cover. Put a dry bag or a new thick garden waste bag into your rucksack before you put in your kit.

Find out more about rucksacks at DofE.org/shopping/rucksacks

Before you buy

1. Rucksacks are measured by their litre capacity (internally and expansion), e.g. 60:70 means a total capacity of 70 litres.
2. Don't go too big. Get the right size rucksack for your expedition. 60L should be fine for Bronze, but Gold will often need 70L.
3. Some rucksacks are designed for women and smaller men with narrow shoulder straps and back.
4. Most rucksacks aren't waterproof, so yours needs to include a rain cover.

Vango

Expert advice

1. Look out for a load transferring, adjustable back system and ensure your rucksack is fitted to you.
2. Make sure your pack transfers the weight of your kit to your hips and not on your shoulders.
3. Line your rucksack with a rucksack liner or strong rubble sack to keep everything dry.
4. Carry no more than 25% of your body weight at all times on expedition.
5. Try out packing your rucksack before your expedition. This allows you to check you have everything and it will fit in the rucksack properly.

Sleeping bags

What to look for

To get a good night's sleep on your expedition, you need to have a sleeping bag designed to give you comfort at the lowest temperature it may get to.

Sleeping bags come in seasons 1 or 2 = summer, 3 = spring/autumn and 4 = winter. Consider when and where your expedition is taking place when picking one.

Synthetic sleeping bags are lower cost although bulkier and heavier than down but retain better heat insulation when wet.

Down offers the best insulation, is lightweight, easily compressed and very warm but more expensive than synthetic and must be kept dry.

Before you buy

1. A mummy-shaped sleeping bag helps keep the warm air close to your body, especially your feet and head.
2. Be sure what sure season bag you need. Having a four season for the summer is extra weight and uncomfortable but using a two season in March or October may not keep you warm. Find temperature and season ratings on the inside of the zip on most sleeping bags.

Vango

Expert advice

1. Invest in a bag designed for the outdoors with a compression stuff sack to reduce size.
2. Always pack your sleeping bag in your rucksack and in a waterproof bag to keep it dry.
3. It is often worth investing in a three season bag to see you through your Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE programmes and beyond.

Money saving tip

You can use a sleeping bag liner if the temperature is colder than expected or you have borrowed a sleeping bag.

Find out more about sleeping bags at DofE.org/shopping/sleeping-bags

Sleeping mats

What to look for

Sleeping mats are a DofE essential, giving you extra insulation and comfort for a good night's sleep.

Traditional closed-cell foam mats are low cost, lightweight, durable and give enough insulation. However, they often tend to be bulky and not very comfortable.

Self-inflating air mats cost more but insulate better and are much more comfortable.

Before you buy

1. Think about how tall you are. A ¾ length mat might be all you need and saves on weight/bulk.
2. Use a sleeping mat designed for outdoor use. Yoga/roll mats do not have the same durability or insulation.
3. If you know you need a good night's sleep to be motivated the next day, a good quality self-inflating mat is a wise investment.

Money saving tip

Foam roll mats last very well, so it's usually easy to find one to borrow.

Find out more about sleeping mats at DofE.org/shopping/sleeping-mats

Vango

Expert advice

1. Store self-inflating roll matts rolled out with the valve open.
2. Keep the elastic straps that came with the mat, or other elastic, to tie up. Don't use string to tie it up.
3. If your mat is outside your bag, don't risk keeping tent poles in the middle. If you choose to store spare clothes in it, ensure they cannot fall out or get wet.

Technical clothing

What to look for

Layering is key to feeling comfortable on your expedition. A base layer made from moisture control fabric with mesh panels will keep you comfortable, even under exertion.

A mid layer, such as a fleece, offers warmth and can be added or taken off as required.

For expeditions we recommended walking trousers in a comfortable fabric. Functional pockets are perfect to stash easy to reach essentials.

Before you buy

1. Use multiple layers not one expensive item. Layers allow flexibility to regulate body temperature and stay dry.
2. Avoid cotton hoodies, tracksuit bottoms or jeans as they all retain moisture when wet and will weigh you down.
3. Choose garments with zipped pockets so that you can stash valuables.
4. A full zip mid layer fleece instead of a zip neck is always a good choice as it is easier to get on and off.
5. Think about what other clothes you'll need for your expedition, such as gloves and nightwear. You'll probably own these already.

Money saving tip

Look at what you already have in your wardrobe before going shopping for expedition kit. You can substitute technical clothing for loose-fitting long sleeve tops or long lightweight trousers.

Find out more about technical clothing at DofE.org/shopping/technical-clothing

CRAGHOPPERS

Expert advice

1. Always choose wickable fabrics over cotton. Cotton holds moisture and takes a long time to dry. If moisture is held next to the skin, it is unpleasant and can contribute to a drop in body temperature.
2. Heel tape on trousers gives extra durability where they rub against your boots.
3. At Silver and Gold level, have a separate set of clothing for use at camp. You can then air or dry your day kit.

Expedition food

What to look for

Getting the right food will help you enjoy your expedition. It's a chance to be creative, and to understand more about rationing and outdoor survival.

Dried, cured, smoked or vegetarian foods usually last well. Avoid tinned food or items that require refrigeration or can be easily crushed in your rucksack.

What makes a great expedition meal?

Your DofE diet should be compact and easy to carry. It needs to be high in slow-release energy. To meet your expedition aim, you need to plan, prepare and cook a meal as a group but ration packs are great for breakfast or when journeying.

Get creative with cooking to have the most fun possible.

Before you buy

1. Pack as many calories into the least weight/volume as possible while still having a balanced diet. You'll need 3,000 to 5,000 calories each day.
2. Choose food you like to eat, that will keep and is quick and easy to cook.
3. 'Waterproof' food bags (Ziploc bags work well) and ensure it can withstand being squished.
4. Think about keeping weight and litter down by removing packaging and cooking as a team.
5. Mars bars, boiled sweets, jelly cubes or Kendal mint cakes are just a few everyday foods ideal for that extra energy hit.

WAYFAYRER REAL FOOD FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

FIREPOT EAT WELL IN THE WILD

Expert advice

1. Pack plenty of snacks to graze on.
2. Ready to eat meals are designed to be high energy, low weight, easy to cook and easy to fit in your rucksack.
3. Save food from other trips such as your practice expedition. It might come in handy again.
4. Choose food that is high in sugars, carbohydrates and fats.
5. Take food you like and enjoy that everyone in your team can eat. Pick food that is quick and simple to cook and will keep for the duration of your expedition, even in hot weather.

Money saving tip

Some meals you will need to cook from scratch. Try to plan meals your whole team can share. Split the ingredients, cost, packing and effort between your team.

To download the DofE meal planner and find out more about expedition food, go to DofE.org/shopping/food

Campcraft and cooking

What to look for

Using specially designed camping utensils can really cut down on weight and space. It's also more robust than regular cookware, which is useful on longer Gold expeditions. Weight can quickly build up so using plastic or titanium camping gear will help reduce weight in your rucksack. Each participant should be able to carry at least two litres of water, so get large water bottles or a bladder. Choose items with handy integrated hanging loops for quick drying and easy transportation.

Before you buy

1. Plan meals you can cook and eat as a team. Save a treat as part of your emergency rations.
2. Don't use the same utensils or containers for raw and cooked food.
3. To help you cook, mugs can be converted into handy measures by scratching lines in the right places on the inside.

Money saving tip

Look for robust gear that will copy with the exertions of expeditions. You won't need to buy it again and avoiding cheap one-use plastic helps to save the environment.

For more information about campcraft and cooking, visit DofE.org/shopping/campcraft

LIFEVENTURE

Expert advice

1. Sip water little and often and don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. By then it is too late.
2. 'Tank up' with fluid before each morning and drink as much as possible as soon as you arrive at the campsite in the evening.
3. Buy a water bottle that is leak-proof yet easy to open and one that you can drink easily from with one hand.

First aid

What to look for

Every DofE participant needs to have some kind of first aid kit, a whistle, emergency rations and a survival bag. The DofE recommends all participants have their own personal first aid kit in case they get separated from their group. Check that the first aid kit has plenty of plasters, blister plasters and disposable gloves; they are the most commonly used items. It should also include bandages for sprains or fractures and treatment for bites and stings. Check the weather forecast. Make sure you have sun cream and after-sun if it is needed.

Before you buy

1. Take a blister kit. Prevention is better than cure so put some plasters on where you have had blisters before to protect your feet from the start.
2. Include specific items for conditions, allergies or medicinal needs you might have on your journey, e.g. hay fever, insect bites.
3. Talk to your Leader and find out how much first aid kit you need. Gold expeditions will need more than Bronze ones.

LIFESYSTEMS®

Expert advice

1. Familiarise yourself with your first aid kit before you head out on your expedition. Check all the contents are there and are clearly labelled.
2. Before you go on your expedition, practice applying a bandage or simple dressing.
3. For more serious injuries, always carry the contact details of a hospital or rescue service for the area you are in.
4. Never take unnecessary risks that may results in injury to you or others.
5. Blisters are common. Stop them when you feel a heat spot by cleaning with a hygiene wipe and cover with a blister plaster or dressing.

Money saving tip

See if your school or centre kit store has safety gear you can borrow like survival bags.

For more advice on first aid and safety, go to DofE.org/shopping/first-aid

Waterproofing

What to look for

Keeping your kit clean and in good condition helps you stay dry on expedition and makes your kit last longer, saving you money. With wear and tear over time, the waterproof barrier on expedition clothing and equipment can get clogged with dirt. This means your clothing and kit won't perform properly and will stop repelling water. When packing, it's worth taking precautions to waterproof your kit, so it doesn't weigh you down when it's wet. If the weather is going to be very wet it's a good idea to invest in dry bags for spare clothes and your sleeping bag to ensure they stay dry.

Before you buy

1. Group and pack kit into separate dry bags to keep everything dry and organised.
2. Check what fabric your clothing/kit is before buying waterproofing solution. Some products are designed specifically for fabrics e.g. down wash.
3. Use a bin bag or garden waste bag as a cheap alternative to dry bags.
4. You can renew the water repellency to new and existing waterproofs yourself at home.

Money saving tips

1. Don't wash your waterproofs with normal washing powders. They will damage your kit and won't be as effective. Use as specialist waterproofing solution such as Nikwax Tech Wash.
2. If you borrow clothing or kit from a friend or kit store, treat it with Nikwax to ensure it's waterproof before your expedition.

For more advice on cleaning and waterproofing go to DofE.org/shopping/waterproofing

NIKWAX WATERPROOFING

Expert advice

1. If you can see dark patches appearing on your waterproof jacket or trousers, then it's wetting out. This is when you need to re-proof your kit.
2. Practice putting up and taking down your tent so you can do it very quickly if it's raining.
3. You can improve the water resistance of your rucksack and tent by treating them with waterproofing products and letting them dry naturally.
4. Nikwax products can be applied on wet or dry material – no need to wait until your gear is dry to reproof it.

Equally at home in the countryside and the Himalayas, Wayfarer meals have been tried and tested at the ends of the earth. Wayfarer meals provide a substantial meal and satisfy the heartiest of appetites whilst camping and will give you all the energy you need for a big day out.

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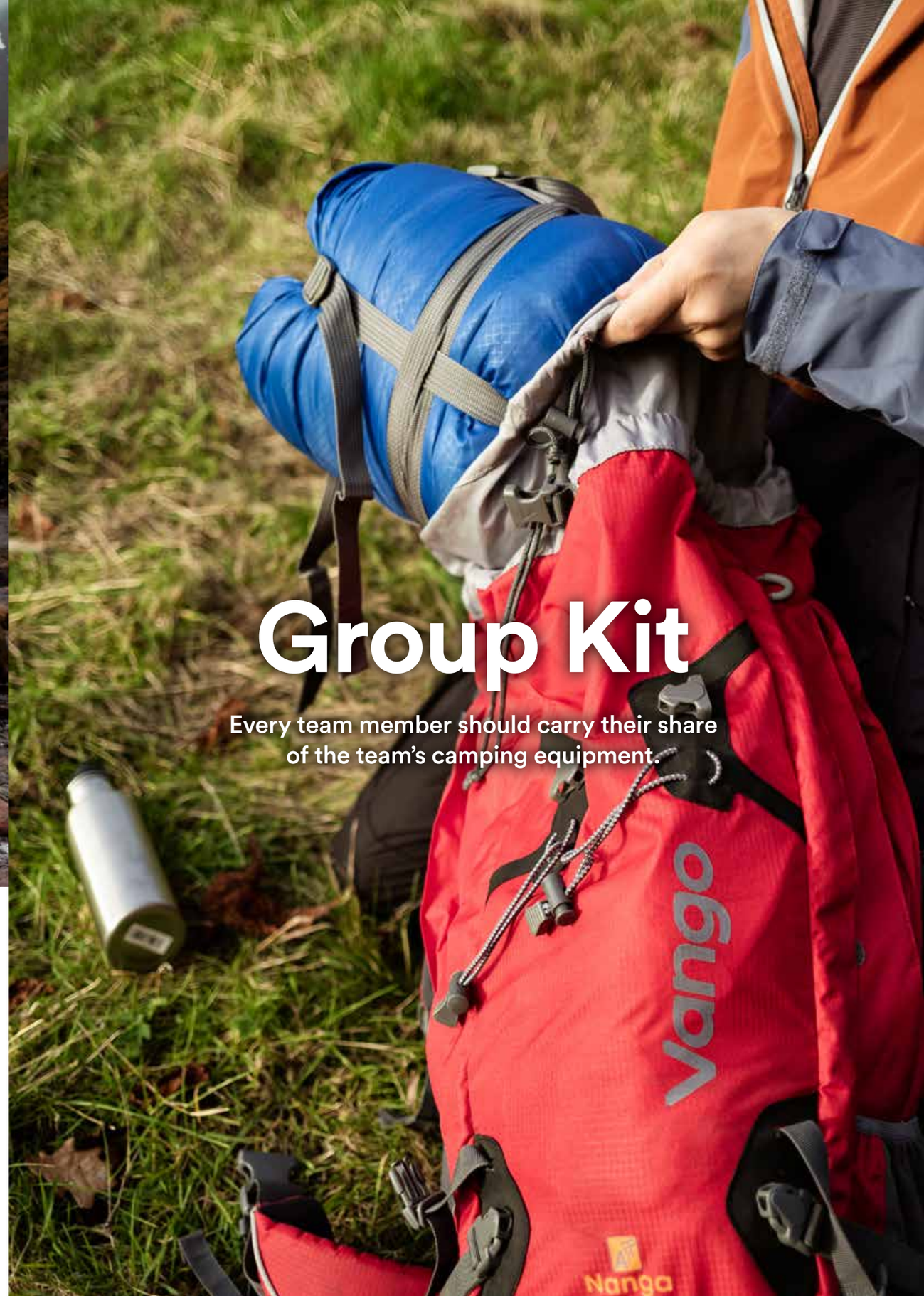

Group Kit

Every team member should carry their share of the team's camping equipment.

Tents

What to look for

It's best to use two to four person size tents for DofE expeditions. This allows for two or three tents per expedition team and flexibility for mixed gender teams.

Tents with porches to store rucksacks might allow an extra participant inside the tent and save weight.

Colour coded poles make the tent easier to put up, saving you time.

Tent bags with oversized openings offer easy packing, and compression straps control pack size.

All DofE recommended tents are lightweight, strong and waterproof.

Before you buy

1. Similar tents can have different prices. You pay for double stitching for strength, covered stitching for waterproofing, lighter material, strong/pre-bent poles and better tensioning.
2. Check the tent elements can be split so several people can carry it.
3. If the tent is only for backpacking, focus on it being lightweight. If it might also be used for general camping, focus on the size/space. If you're camping in exposed areas, go for strength, water resistance and insulation.

Money saving tip

Tents are usually supplied by your DofE Leader. Make sure you check in advance to see what you can borrow.

For more information about tents, visit DofE.org/shopping/tents

Vango

Expert advice

1. If possible, dry your tent before packing it away during the expedition. This will save weight and stop the tent from getting mouldy and smelly.
2. On hot days, ventilate your tent by opening the doors and vents to prevent condensation building up. Leave vents open at night.

Buying tents for DofE expeditions

The amount of features and differences between tents can seem daunting.

Semi-geodesic:

Uses a minimum of three crossover poles which ensure a free standing, rigid structure. Good for exposed areas.

Hydrostatic head:

This is a standard measure of water resistance. It tells you how many mm of water can be applied before it permeates the material. DofE recommended tents have 5,000mm HH.

Tunnel tent:

Three similar height arched poles to create long and spacious tents, great for lots of kit.

Geodesic:

Fully geodesic tents have a minimum of five interlocking poles. Very strong mountain tent ideal for Gold expeditions. The extra pole and strength does add weight.

What size to choose

100, 200 or 300? Vango tents come in different sizes. 100 means it will fit one person, 200 means a two person tent and 300 means a three person tent.

Snapped cords in the tent poles are easily replaced. Tie a knot in the new cord, thread through all the poles and pull to add tension, but not so it is tight, and then tie another knot.

Find spares for your tent at DofE.org/shopping/spares-repairs

Burners and fuel

What to look for

You'll need to cook a hot meal during your expedition and show you can use a cooking stove effectively in the open. Your stove will use gas or methylated spirits (meths) as fuel.

The Trangia is the classic DofE stove. Compact, lightweight, easy to clean and cheap to run.

DofE groups use them as they last for many seasons and can be used by a whole team. Trangias can use both gas and methylated spirits. Whichever you have, you must be trained before you use one on your own.

Before you buy

1. Many DofE centres provide stoves and fuel, so remember to check with your Leader first.
2. Like all specialist kit, buy what you will use. The more regularly you use it, the more it might be worth spending.
3. Make sure you get expert advice on how to transport and store fuel. You must have the right fuel container.
4. Check cheaper gas burners for infrequent use. A burner that sits on the ground next to its fuel is a good option.

trangia

Expert advice

1. Keep your Trangia burner in the yellow plastic bag provided to stop meths tarnishing and corroding your stove.
2. Leave your stove to go completely cold before packing it away.
3. Remember to adjust your lower windshield to allow optimum flow of air to get to the burner.
4. Always use a purpose made fuel bottle with a safety valve to carry your methylated spirits in.
5. Take some time to pick the cooking location. A firm level surface at ground level where the stove will not be knocked over is ideal.

Staying safe

Always be familiar with the stove and fuel before setting out on expedition. Be confident in how to use the stove and what dangers are associated with it and the fuel.

For more information about stoves and fuel, and to download the DofE stove safety instructions, go to DofE.org/shopping/stoves

Navigation

What to look for

Learning to use an Ordnance Survey (OS) map is a central part of your expedition. A compass is essential, and it's important that you can trust it to guide you on unfamiliar ground.

Most teams travelling on foot use a 1:25000 scale map, but cyclists may prefer a 1:50000 scale one.

Always try to use a map case, even if using laminated maps and route cards. It keeps everything together and provides the best protection against rain.

If your expedition runs over two maps, you can have a custom one made by Ordnance Survey **DofE.org/shopping/os-custom-maps**

Before you buy

1. Many DofE centres provide maps, map cases and compasses, so talk to your Leader before buying.
2. UK walking expeditions need to use OS maps, usually 1:25000. You can get laminated water resistant 'active' maps which are durable.
3. Compass work is inevitable so, try to have one each, three per team is probably the minimum.
4. When buying compasses, look for reliability, accuracy and toughness.

Money saving tip

Tie your compass to your pack or jacket to avoid losing it. This string can also be used to measure distances.

For more information about navigation, visit DofE.org/shopping/navigation

Ordnance Survey

Expert advice

1. Before setting out, check your compass has not become depolarised (points S not N). You can do this by comparing it to which direction in your home is north.
2. Polarised compasses can be fixed by running a strong 'south' magnet along the 'north' length of the needle.
3. Keep your compass in a soft case to protect it.
4. Do not store compasses near anything magnetic.

SILVA

Rucksack packing tips and advice

Follow some basic tips and you'll find your expedition easier and drier.

Line your rucksack with a strong rucksack liner or new rubble sack to keep everything dry.

Group and pack kit together into separate dry bags, e.g. each day's food or spare clothes.

Keep heavy items close to your back to help keep your centre of gravity.

Try to get all your kit inside your rucksack. Attach anything on the outside securely.

Pack everything the same way each time, then you'll find and pack your kit quickly.

Pack your rucksack in the order you'll use things. Remember: last in, first out.

Dry anything before it goes into your bag if you can to save weight.

The total weight of your rucksack should not be more than 25% of your body weight.

Use any method to keep kit dry. Big bags with elastic bands, carrier bags and freezer bags are all useful. Be thorough and plan ahead for rain.

To download the 'how to pack your rucksack' poster and more rucksack packing advice, visit DofE.org/shopping/how-to-pack

Look after your feet on expedition

Tips on foot care before, during and after your expedition.

Before your expedition

Protect your ankles
Look for high ankle support and high grip soles to help protect you whilst walking with a heavy rucksack.

Invest in good walking socks
Wear the socks you will use on expedition when trying on boots to buy.

Get the right boot for you
Feet are different shapes and sizes. Go in store for a free boot fitting and to try out and test your new boots on the slopes and dips.

Break in your boots
Buy your walking boots early so you have lots of time to break them in and for best comfort on your expedition.

During your expedition

Campsite footwear
Bring a pair of flip flips or lightweight sandals/trainers. It will let you air and dry your feet, socks and boots once in camp.

How many pairs of socks?
Always take a least two pairs of socks and ideally one set for each day.

Double up
Wearing two pairs of socks (one pair of liners, one pair of outer socks) can significantly reduce friction in the boot and help prevent blisters.

Walking boots
Leather boots are soft, durable and waterproof and highly abrasion resistant, making them long lasting. Fabric boots are lighter, cheaper and a good option if your feet are still growing.

After your expedition

Clean up
Clean your boots well and let them dry naturally ready for your next walk or adventure.

Storing your boots
Store your boots in a dry, well aired place. If your boots are still damp, stuff them lightly with newspaper to absorb moisture.

Wash your socks inside out
The water reinvigorates the underfoot cushioning.

No other piece of kit affects the enjoyment of your expedition more than what you put on your feet.

To download the 'how to look after your feet' poster and more foot care advice, visit **DofE.org/shopping/boots**

Making your kit last

Follow some simple tips to look after your kit before and after your expedition.

- Don't store sleeping bags in their stuff sacks, it crushes the filling and reduces insulation. Store hanging up or in a bin bag.
- Use a material enhancer (like Nikwax Tech, Tent or Direct washes) on boots, waterproofs, tents and rucksacks to maintain water resistance and material integrity.
- Dry and air tents (and dry bags) completely before storing.
- Re-wash stoves and cooking equipment when you get home to make sure they are completely clean.
- Keep small items together in a Ziploc bag in the top of your rucksack so you know where they are for next time.
- Most rips and tears can be professionally fixed for much less than buying a new product.
- Clean your boots (and rucksack) immediately after use to prevent acidic materials from damaging them.
- For ad-hoc DIY repairs use a product like Tear Aid rather than duct tape as it won't damage the tent if removed for a more permanent repair.
- Don't machine wash tents. Store all parts together. Count pegs after the expedition and replace damaged ones.
- Fully clean and dry any drinking pouches and store in a freezer to stop mould growing.
- Keep your compass in a case to prevent scratches and cracks.
- Don't use normal washing powders on your waterproofs.

Take care of your kit. Clean and dry it after use and store it in a dry location. Thoroughly check your campsite before departing so that nothing is left behind and have a checklist for valuables.

For kit spares and repairs, visit DofE.org/shopping/spares-repairs

> "Having the right kit can make or break an expedition, particularly in wild country. This guide should be used for all participants preparing for their expedition to ensure that being in the hills and mountains is a safe and enjoyable experience."
>
> HELEN BARNARD,
> PLAS Y BRENIN COURSE DIRECTOR/INSTRUCTOR

> "This guide is a 'must have' for parents – or indeed anyone purchasing expedition equipment for the first time! A common sense approach and full of good advice."
>
> MARY HARPER,
> DofE MANAGER, DORSET

> "The Expedition Kit Guide has been an outstanding success. The information and advice in it is excellent for participants and parents. It has proved to be an excellent resource when training participants and especially useful when training new Leaders, Supervisors and Assessors."
>
> NORRY BARBER,
> DOFE MANAGER, KENT

Thank you

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is grateful to our partners below for their support of the publication of this Expedition Kit Guide:

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