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## About the Author

Chester Mallory said many people have the idea walking in bush is tiring, dangerous and boring.

So, Chester wrote his [book](#) about walking in the wild to help people to save money, tone themselves up, and find the other benefits of walking closer to nature.

“When they try a walk in the wild, they start to learn how to enjoy whatever other walking they do much more!”

Chester said,“ Friends tell me they walk a lot but it just makes them tired.”

“That’s because they are focused on whatever stressors are ruling parts of their lives and don’t enjoy the beauty around them or the people and sights they see as they walk!”

“After they try walking in rural and even wilder areas a couple of times, they start to feel better right through every day.”

“It’s easy to do and much less expensive than a course at the [gym](#).”

“But, it takes some preparation, like anything worth doing.”

“The benefits are that most walkers become more relaxed, breathe better, and [sleep](#) better and start to enjoy their routine walking which used to just be a grey background blur!”

They can do a real wild walk, which is a lot easier if they’ve read my book first, almost anywhere in the world. That usually becomes a regular part of their spare time activities. And there are even companies which organize group walks in various countries which have a guide, booked accommodation and last several days!”

‘My aim is to help all readers become more relaxed and more aware of their surroundings.”

“That will improve their enjoyment of each day for the rest of their lives!”

## Introduction

“Walking in the Wild” is most suitable for a new walker or hiker but many others will find some suggestions to increase their enjoyment of hiking. It will also help any hiker that is trying to help other people who are just starting their enjoyment of hiking.

Wild walking is a well-established activity that helps to increase our [fitness](#), makes us more aware of our surroundings, and allows us to meet new people and appreciate the places where we walk.

It’s a lot cheaper than many gym [programs](#) and you are in control.

You choose where and when you will walk, who with (if anyone), how often and for how long.

Preparing for a wild walk takes some preparation to ensure you are as safe and comfortable as possible.

But, you will find many benefits from the [exercise](#), the new people and experiences you have which you would never have had the chance to enjoy if you just kept moving between work and home with your [mind](#) full of worries every day!

And, this activity doesn’t have to cost very much to do. The escorted walks with booked accommodation are great value, not just because of the quality of the services including the experienced guide. But, you will probably make friendships during your group walks and get information which you might never have learned as a lone walker with no experience of that area.

I always recommend buying quality gear and explain, from my experience, research and, yes, some mistakes, why that actually saves you money and [stress](#) later in the book.

I will give suggestions for different kinds of walks and some popular (and some less well-known) methods of keeping safe and comfortable, whichever type you embark on.

***Chester Mallory***

## How to Start

If you were lucky enough growing up to have access to a [club](#) which gave you some experience of hiking and camping, you have a head start.

If you haven't done your first hike yet, you need to do some research and get some help.

You might know someone that does hike. Ask them about local hiking groups which you might join.

### *Hiking Groups and other Sources*



There are a few groups listed in the resources section of this [book](#). They are nationwide and have connections with groups in other countries.

But, a local group is always worth checking out.

If you don't know anyone socially, camping stores will

probably be able to connect you to some members who work or buy there.

Many libraries, tourist [organizations](#) and parks' departments have lists of social and [sports](#) groups in their area as well.

The local knowledge and interaction with hikers in your area through the clubs will probably be worth the joining fee. Also, most clubs can get discounts for members with local or Internet-based suppliers.

The feedback from users of equipment or services you are thinking of buying can also be valuable.

And all that is before you even start your next hike!

Always check the Internet for up-to-date information if your source is more than a couple of years old.

Be careful about sites which you have not heard of before.

Don't try to set records for your first couple of hikes.

You're preparing to learn and enjoy years of healthy, [fun](#) activity.

### *Other Clubs*

There are clubs for various types of walking and hiking. Some have their own programs of group hikes and walks. Some groups have other common interests such as bird-watching or social activities.



## Get all the Information

Before you start a hike, get as much information as you can about the conditions and feedback from people that have experience hiking in that area.

### Some important points:

- ✓ What are the main points of interest in the area of the walk?
- ✓ Do you need any special [clothing](#) or equipment.
- ✓ Are there any particular hazards?
- ✓ What is the distance and the height needed to be done during the walk.

Be aware that you may think that downhill hiking will be easier. But, you need to check how steep or stable the path is. Or, whether there is actually a path at all.

### *Stick to Your Timetable*

Start toward your night base at the [time](#) you agreed even if you haven't reached the place you most wanted to see.

Unless you are very familiar with the area and conditions, you may misjudge how much time you need for your return and how much [energy](#) you still have.

The site can wait for another day when you will not have to rush.

Always allow extra time than you think will be needed for your return trip.

### *Be Wary of the Weather.*

Any experienced hiker can tell you about people who did not recognize the risk from a change of weather conditions.

Weather patterns are changing and even experienced people can be caught.

Don't take risks. Give yourself more time and less challenges until you gain some experience walking with other more knowledgeable hikers.

## Hints for Better Hiking

### *Follow the Path*



Many hills have paths which go in a zig-zag up them. They make your task easier because you walk a gentler slope than on a straighter path.

Please don't try to save time by scrambling upward from one section to the one above.

You won't usually save much time, but expend some valuable energy and risk [injury](#) for little benefit.

This tactic also will damage the vegetation and loosen the soil between those sections.

Over time, more people will do the same thing you did and greater damage will occur.

Then, more maintenance will be required.

### *Listen to Nature, not Music*

Some people feel undressed if they don't have earphones on.

The problems of people walking around city streets, watching the screen on their phone or listening to tunes and being hit by [cars](#) are well-known.

But, people keep doing it!

When they do it in the wild areas, they face a lot more risks.

The best precaution for avoiding unexpected encounters with unfriendly wild life is listening and enjoying your surroundings.

Bears and other creatures make some noise and we need to listen to them because we will usually lose any head-on encounter.

There are other hazards such as holes, falling [trees](#) and hidden pools which are much easier to avoid if you keep alert and not distracted.

When you are walking in an unfamiliar area, you should notice and remember landmarks which you pass, in case you need to come back over the same area.

That’s a great way to improve your [memory](#) which will repay you in other areas as well.

But, the main value is that concentrating on your surroundings, including the people with you, will make the whole experience better for everyone and you’ll find that increases with each hike you do together.

***Take a Camera Instead!***

A [camera](#) is always an asset. You always have some opportunities for great shots thqat somehow don’t happen again, however many times you hike the same area.

## Watch Your Water

You must carry your water with you when you are outside suburbia.

According to the U.S. National Parks' Service, an active person needs about a gallon (4 liters) of water each day.

### *Your Water is a Sign of Your Health Level*

Circumstances vary, but you can get some indication of your present hydration level from watching for any change in your water intake and output.

This can show up before you start to feel excessively thirsty, weak or have other more obvious symptoms.

Change in color of your urine may indicate that you need to take in more water and maybe rest for a few minutes. Stay awake - just give your [body](#) and your circulation a few minutes to adjust internal levels and refresh yourself a little.

As you will be walking in areas which are often new to you, you need to keep drinking [water](#) frequently even if you don't feel thirsty so you have a reserve to maintain your body systems.

Don't wait until you start to feel ill or disoriented. You need your wits about you all the time.

For any long hike, carry some means of checking water purity and doing some [treatment](#).

Don't take risks with water which seems safe.

When you find and check a safe source, drink some water as well as filling your containers to make sure that you have reserves when needed.

## Hiking Poles



Hiking Poles are not just for older people or people with physical limitations. They help all hikers keep their balance better.

They also keep our arms mobile instead of being attached fairly motionless to the straps of our

packs.

This exercise help our breathing and [blood](#) circulation in the upper body.

This will help any hiker to extend the distance which we can move over even when the terrain is fairly difficult.

Testing shows they help relieve the pressure on your back and legs when you use them properly.

Hiking poles are a great help when you have a steep decline to walk down. The poles mean you have up to 4 points at a time to distribute your [weight](#) over and maintain your balance.

They can also help when you are moving through water to keep your balance and check whether there are unseen rocks or even holes where you are going.

Even when using poles, you will probably have a few slips, so be prepared.

They can also help fend off [dogs](#) but are no defense against real wild animals.

Carbon fiber poles are probably best because of their toughness and lightness.

Poles that can be dismantled in pieces or collapsed to a smaller space for packing make packing a bit easier too.

You have to decide whether the concerns some have about them outweigh the possible benefits for you. Some things which reduce their appeal to

some hikers are:

**Their cost:** [Light](#), strong and extendable poles cost more. But, a regular hiker or someone that does longer hikes will appreciate the support they give over the longer distance.

**Their size:** This can be a concern if you are walking over very rugged areas. If you are facing heavy [vegetation](#) or steep climbs, poles can seem a liability. The only thing I can suggest is check what sort of country you will be hiking over most of the time. Use poles which can be collapsed where single piece poles would be awkward if you judge their extra cost worth it.

**Energy drain:** using poles for an extended period or using them incorrectly will take some extra energy when you really need it.

If your whole body is strained from what you’ve already done, poles won’t really help you until you let your body rest for a while and get some [nourishment](#).

They also will not compensate for a lack of [exercise](#). The [Health](#) Chapter gives some suggestions for conditioning and strengthening those parts of your body which get extra strain when you hike.

**Your Hands are unavailable for other tasks:** When you are holding poles, getting a drink or brushing flies off your face mean you have to stop, put the poles carefully aside, do whatever and then pick up the poles.

Then, it will take you a little while to get back to your rhythm.

### *Pole Etiquette*

When you are using poles, always be aware of possible inconvenience or even injury to other hikers you encounter.

You need more space on tracks because of the poles, but remember to give way to hikers going up when you are going down (that’s an unofficial rule) and be considerate at all times.

If you don’t need to use the poles for a while, be careful where the points are while you are just carrying them. Don’t stab other hikers!

If you are in a sensitive natural area, avoid dragging your poles along.

Over time, with lots of hikers doing it, the tracks are gouged away.

## Safety

### *Your Safety is YOUR Responsibility.*



You are most responsible for your safety and expected to avoid getting into trouble by proper preparation and research of your planned trip.

I strongly advise that you get a first aid course from a qualified and experienced local organization before you do your first major hike. Even when you are in a group with experienced leaders, someone

may be separated and, if that's you ...

The number of ill-prepared people who have to be rescued from their own mistakes has almost overwhelmed the capacity of the services to help everyone and the authorities to pay for them.

Another important factor is the risks faced by rescue workers are mounting. So, we need to prepare and do what we can.

In many places, people may be required to pay for their rescue, especially where they were not prepared or capable of handling the hike or other activity they were on.

Some of the most common causes of hikers getting into trouble are over-exertion, staying out too late, and poor preparation.



## Stay Healthy

Hiking can be exhilarating and fun but you need to be sure your [health](#) is at a level which can handle the particular hikes you do.

Your physical condition will not stop you hiking but you must be realistic while you are gaining experience and knowledge to prepare for later and bigger hikes.

As we have seen with people overcoming physical challenges to climb mountains and [travel](#) to the ends of our planet, we set many of our own limitations, some just with our minds.

But, the successful hikers do it a step at a time and keep getting checks from their doctors.

This is important for their own safety and the safety of the other people they will be hiking with.

Start with a thorough physical examination.

Then, give your doctor details of the sort of hike you will be doing.

Hiking can also help to improve your physical health and improve your [confidence](#).

Just give yourself the time you need.

### ***Check any Health Warnings***

In the excitement of preparing for a new hike, it can be easy to ignore small problems or signs in your daily activities.

But, you can put off a hike long enough to get everything checked so that you have the best chance of making a successful hike and getting back home to tell everyone about it.

A sore shoulder at home can be a nuisance but it can be a much more serious limitation when you are committed to your hike and the others in your group and miles from home.

### ***Speech problem.***

If you start to garble your [speech](#) as you walk, you are either starting to become exhausted or you are walking too fast for your body's current state.

### *Mix Up Your Exercises*

Hiking puts more kinds of pressures on all parts of your body than you may experience in your other regular activities.

So, a wide range of exercise activities is a good precaution for anyone, whatever their physical capacity already is.

Systems like [yoga](#) can help with your physical and mental abilities.

Meditation is also something which is helpful.

[Breathing](#) exercises can help you relax and also help improve your breathing so you can bring more oxygen into your system and make better use of it.

Discuss with your [doctor](#), a professional trainer or a friend who is more experienced with hiking about what exercises you should try to improve the strength and general condition of your body.

You don't have to just use exercises; some sports can help.

Roller skating and [cycling](#) will help with your [knees](#).

Swimming will help with your breathing and general condition.

## Proper Packing saves Problems

There are many ways to make your whole hike more enjoyable when you do your packing with some care.

Put the items you may need while you hike where they can be got easily.

Use **strong** resealable plastic bags. Cheap [bags](#) can leak and cleaning up during the hike can be difficult.

### *Dispose of Your Garbage*

It is now good hiking etiquette to take your garbage out of the hiking area with you and dispose of it properly.

This is obviously going to benefit us all because the wild areas will be less degraded in future.

But, it is another thing to keep in [mind](#) when you are planning your trip and what you will take with you.

Many areas will impose fines if anyone is caught leaving unwanted garbage.

Disposing of human waste and [food](#) scraps is forbidden in many places unless strict guidelines are followed.

That means you have to bring out what you take there.

That will reduce the [health](#) risks in those areas over time.

Be sure to check with the relevant Park Service or other authority so you don't risk penalties.

## Travel light

This is a major factor in making a success of your hike. You must continue to reduce the [weight](#) and bulk of your pack without leaving any essentials behind.

After each hike, empty the garbage into your garbage can.

Then, sort the stuff you took with you into three groups.

The first group are the essentials which you used and will need for all trips.

Put these items aside until you finish this basic sorting process. Then, you go through everything carefully and refill anything which is partly used, replace anything you've used up, and repair or replace other items.

The second group are the items which you used and will need for trips to the same area. Do the same for these.

The next group are items which you leave behind in future. Maybe you could get them as needed during future hikes or just do without.

Light hiking is these days with hikers reducing their loads and sharing their successes.

Just be careful that you don't get too enthusiastic and discard the wrong items.

Use [checklists](#) and have them beside when you pack your gear and also when you do your 3-pile [exercise](#) when you get back.

It's hard for some people to get the keep it light mindset.

Some are used to travelling to a permanent camp area with a car-load of stuff.

They probably swear they will cut back before their next hike but forget their good intentions in their enthusiasm starting the next trip.

But, it's not only better for your hike with a lighter pack, it's healthier, especially for your back.

While lightness is important, you have to also balance your pack so it does not put undue pressure on some sensitive areas.

At the same time, you have to have the essentials and the most important safety items too.

You need to do a review of your clothing choices and also get items which you don't need now but will when the seasons change.

You can save [money](#) by thinking ahead and buying summer gear when the season finishes and stores drop prices so they make space for winter items.

## What to Wear and What Not to Wear!



Choosing and buying the most appropriate gear will cost you a little more sometimes but it could make your hikes a bit safer and a lot more comfortable or even save your [life](#)!

Remember that layers of clothing are better than a couple of thick garments. You can adjust your comfort level by removing or adding a layer more easily and you don't have to make as much room for the thinner garments.

I have not mentioned particular brands because availability varies and personal choices depend so much on your own physical condition, experience and [goals](#).

Even many regarded as experts have different views about which are best in particular areas and circumstances.

### *Denim, Cotton, Polyester or Wool?*

Denim clothing is popular with campers and many walkers but it, like any cotton-based gear, is not a good choice for any sort of serious hiking.

Cotton draws moisture in (called "wicking").

Polyester and wool are more suitable.

But, even experts will have varied preferences, so check with reliable local hikers.

### *Underwear*

This could be thermal underwear in cold conditions or a non-cotton T-shirt and shorts when it's fairly warm.

### *Hats*

Protect your head. Keep the sun off it and out of your [eyes](#).

Your hat should have a [sweat](#) band and not be too tight.

Wear a hat with a brim to keep sun, dust and other stuff off your [skin](#).

The effects of sunlight can creep up on you if you let it.

### ***Pants***

You want light pants which are strong enough to resist ripping on the thorns, branches and stones and not so heavy that they become uncomfortable as you hike.

### ***Jacket***

You need a jacket which is as water-proof as possible and keeps the wind out.

A bright color can be safer if you are hiking in areas where hunters may be looking for a trophy to put on their wall.

## Look after your Feet!



The feet are the most undervalued part of the body. They take enormous pressure and punishment but we mostly ignore them until they start to ache.

The fit is very important. So think about getting them from a local

store which has someone that really knows how to fit shoes to feet. This may be more expensive but you won't need to replace the shoes as often as cheaper choices and you probably won't get as many [foot](#) problems either.

Get footwear which is suitable for the conditions where you will be walking.

Anything which is claimed to be water-resistant will eventually let some water in if you are in a lot of water, rain or snow for an extended period.

The best recommendations are from people you meet at clubs or on hikes that have used the particular brands.

When you try on boots, check there is some room between your toes and the front of the shoe so your toes won't be squashed if you are walking a fairly steep downward slope.

Also, try to move your heel upward. If there is a lot of movement, try a different pair. A little movement is needed but not too much.

Get innersoles to cushion your [feet](#) but still let them breathe.

Sneakers and slip-on shoes are only comfortable when they are on smooth level surfaces.

Hiking boots are only comfortable when you wear quality socks (wool for preference). Your feet will have to get used to the restrictions when wearing boots and the pressure from each step.

Cheap socks are like wearing no socks and you pay for the damage they do later.



If you can handle them or are used to work boots of some kind, like me, you should be okay.

But, be sure to check your feet after each hike and each night of a multi-day trek so that you’re aware of any signs of [injury](#) or other trouble.

Before you set on a particular type and price-range, consider what sort of hiking you will actually do.

## **Your Pack**

Choosing the most suitable pack is not always easy.

But, you can afford to get a pack at the beginning with the expectation you could need to buy another after a few short hikes.

You could also think about a couple of different packs if you are doing different types of hiking or encountering widely different conditions on some hikes.

If you are doing a lot of hiking, it will be worthwhile to get some expert advice.

A badly fitted pack worn for long periods can cause problems or perhaps aggravate other problems you have.

## Dealing with Wildlife

When we walk through the wild areas, we are visitors and many animals see us as trouble.

Although a lot of people fear encounters with animals, most are not waiting to harm us, they are trying to protect themselves and get on with their constant quest to survive.

Most of the trouble people have with wildlife is caused by us.

The advice that follows is general but as current as possible.

Try to avoid trouble.

Don't fraternize with wildlife. Many people's thinking about the [animals](#) they encounter is skewed by stories of friendly encounters others have reported.

Those which actually happened may have been exaggerated in the telling for promotional purposes.

Always treat wildlife with respect for their rights.

They can be even more dangerous if you get near their young.

Feeding wild animals can affect their ability to survive, especially if they start to annoy or even attack other visitors to the area while looking for food.

Also, many of our foods can be directly harmful to animals and [birds](#).

I don't give advice on dealing with snake bites etc., because I am not qualified, and current professional help is essential.

Unqualified people can cause more problems doing things which they have not been shown or which is out of line with current practice.

Tourniquets were standard advice but they are now not to be used. Only qualified, experienced people should make any incisions or there is a risk of greater damage.

Your club or a first-aid organization will know where you can get that advice in your area.

Check with the Park Service for local information.

You can be fined or face other penalties for interfering with wildlife or habitat.

Check with the State Park's Service. Don't move or damage plants or animals.

Make sure you have any suggested [vaccinations](#).

Wear protective clothing.

## Bears

Bears are inclined to avoid encounters with humans because the bears



mostly lose.

People have caused problems by feeding bears (much of what we eat is too unnatural or too [sweet](#) to be good for them.)

And, bears have started raiding camp sites to get more of that stuff because it's easier than hunting.

Check the Regulations about getting near animals and storage of [food](#).

Many areas require that food be stored in bear-resistant metal containers. That means your pack weight is higher but don't blame the bears.

Apart from those who have a taste for our food, bears mostly will avoid contact if they can.

You can reduce the risk of encounters by realizing that bears can't always see smell or hear us due to wind, water or changes in the terrain.

If you see a bear, back off. If you haven't seen a bear where they are common, making a little noise may help avoid them.

All bears have their own unique reactions. They are unpredictable. Even experienced handlers treat them with extreme wariness and some are still attacked each year.

Don't feed them, don't approach them, and never leave food scraps or garbage in their environment.

## Snakes

Snakes are probably the most common dangerous encounter for hikers.

A little education will help reduce the fear and give you a good chance of avoiding trouble.

Most snake bites seem to occur when the snake is just protecting itself. We are not their prey, but intruders.

Spring is when snakes are most active and hungry after the hibernation period. So, give them room.

Don't try to kill a snake. You will probably come off the loser. Also, snakes are good for the environment, eating [mice](#) and other pests. You are the intruder in their [home](#) range!

Keep alert. If you are in snake country (most everywhere), listen to your surroundings, not your iPod.

Their preference is to avoid trouble. Most will slither away if you stop when you see or hear them. Give them time to move and be prepared to go around if they don't.

If you read about using ice or a tourniquet in the event of a bite, drop that advice and look for more up-to-date information.

This article gives broad advice as at 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000031.htm>

But, contact your local Red Cross or other First aid organization to see if they have classes you can get hands-on experience with.

## Resources

The resources here are not connected with the author or publisher. The details are from the sites of those organizations. They are provided without warranty as a service to readers of "Walk in the Wild". All users of this information must accept full responsibility for any use they make of it.

**Everytrail.com** – Plan trips, share experiences and maps for hiking in several countries.

<http://www.everytrail.com/>

From their web site: “EveryTrail is a global web2.0 platform for geo-tagged user-generated travel [content](#) that’s changing the way millions of people share travel experiences and plan trips. EveryTrail makes it easy to share travel experiences, through interactive maps that include [photos](#) plotted along your trip route.

The site serves people around the world. It can be read in German, French, Italian, Dutch and English.

## Hiking Groups

### *U.S.A.*

#### **American Hiking Society**

[www.americanhiking.org/](http://www.americanhiking.org/)

From their [site](#): “AHS is the leading national hiking organization with a network of tens of thousands of diverse members and partners who strongly advocate for healthy living and recreation through the use, stewardship, and enjoyment of trails and urban pathways.

As the national [voice](#) for America’s hikers, American Hiking Society promotes and protects foot trails, their surrounding natural areas, and the hiking experience.

## *Canada*

The Hiking section of the Canadatrails Directory

<http://www.canadatrails.ca/hiking/>

covers hiking and many related areas.

[http://www.canadatrails.ca/hiking/hk\\_clca.html](http://www.canadatrails.ca/hiking/hk_clca.html)

## *U.K.*

### **Ramblers**

[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

**From their site:** (slightly edited) -As Britain's walking charity we promote walking in lots of ways by maintaining footpaths, campaigning for more access and encouraging more people to take up walking. - See more at:

**<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-do>**

### **British Walking Federation**

<http://www.bwf-ivv.org.uk/>

**From their site:** "The British Walking Federation's member clubs organise events designed for people of all ages and abilities.

You don't have to be a member of a club to take part, all you need to do is come to an event and register and take the opportunity to have fun, make friends."

## **Information and Products**

### **Safe Water and sanitation.**

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/travel/>

Risks and advice about water and sanitation in the wild.

### **Trails.com**

<http://www.trails.com/>

A paid membership site with trail guides and maps, articles, etc.

They have a free 14-day trial before you need to pay for an annual membership.

### **Backpacker (Magazine)**



<http://www.backpacker.com/>

## **Snakebite Advice**

### **Mayo Clinic**

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-snake-bites/basics/art-20056681>

## Happy Hiking!



I hope you get as much enjoyment and other benefits from hiking as myself and the hikers I’ve met through the years.

Hikers are optimistic and forward-looking – the best kind of people to share some time with.

Thanks for getting my book.

It’s a first step for new hikers and has some useful reminders for the more experienced.

Good Luck and have a great life!

*Chester Mallory*

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