CLOTHING LAYERING SYSTEM

Base Layers

Base layers are your first layer, to be worn next to the skin. The main purpose of a base layer is to regulate your body temperature by retaining heat and wicking away moisture - to keep you comfortable and warm in adverse conditions.
Many base layers are made from Merino wool. Synthetic base layers are ideal for high-intensity activities like running, climbing, and fast hiking as they are quick-drying in hot and cold conditions.

Mid Layers

Mid-layers provide your body with extra warmth when and where you need it. Mid-layers usually appear as a fleece, pullover, or as a down or synthetic insulated jacket. Like base layers, a mid-layer should always be highly breathable and able to retain heat to regulate your body temperature. In milder conditions, you may not need anything on top of your mid-layer, but in adverse weather conditions, an outer waterproof or windproof shell is necessary. Fleeces are an ideal choice for hiking. Available in a selection of thicknesses, they are usually quick-drying and breathable, offering warmth by retaining heat and removing moisture. The most important consideration is choosing the right level of warmth to suit your activity and weather conditions. As a rule, it's best to avoid cotton mid-layers as these are more likely to retain moisture that can lead to you getting cold.

Insulation Layer

In the winter and in more extreme tempretaures and environments, some people will choose to add an insulation layer underneath the outer layer of clothing. The insulating layer helps you retain the heat that's radiated by your body. The more efficiently this layer traps that heat, the warmer you'll be.

Outer layer

Your outer layer is your protection from the elements - wind, rain, snow, and everything in between. A good outer layer will protect you against wind and rain, while also allowing the moisture and heat from your body to escape so you don't overheat during high-exertion activities. Examples are hard shell jackets, waterproof jackets, soft shell jackets.

SOFT SHELL JACKET / INSULATED JACKET / HARD SHELL JACKET

Depending on weather conditions, your outer layer may not necessarily need to be fully waterproof. In this instance, **Soft Shell Jackets** offer a fantastic alternative with excellent comfort, stretch, flexibility, and wind resistance and are more breathable than waterproof hard shells.

An **insulated, synthetic, or down jacke**t is a highly effective outer layer to keep you warm. However, having a waterproof outer layer to hand is still important if there's any chance of rain or snow.

The waterproof **hard shell** is the classic outer layer that defends against the most adverse conditions. Features of these jackets include taped seams and suitably weatherproof zips to ensure rain stays outside, not inside.

Examples Of When To Use Your Layers...

A walk on a warm, dry day
You won't need to layer up on days like this. Simply wear a moisture-wicking base layer to help your sweat evaporate and keep you cool.

A hilly walk on a warm but rainy day
Wear a comfortable moisture-wicking base layer and pack a second layer with you to protect you from potential adverse weather. Choose a soft shell to protect you from the wind as you ascend, or a waterproof hard shell jacket for when the rain comes in.

A hilly or mountain hike on a cold/rainy/windy day
This is where you will need to pack and use all three (or four) layering pieces. Start with a moisture-wicking base layer next to the skin. Second, add your insulating mid-layer for warmth (in colder temperatures, this should be a synthetic fill or a down jacket if there's no chance of rain.). Add a Finally, add a breathable, waterproof outer shell to protect yourself (and your mid-layer) from the rain and snow.

Leather Walking Boots

Leather walking boots are very hard-wearing, therefore, they will not need to be replaced as often. Real leather boots have been tried and tested over decades, so they're widely known to be tougher and more resistant to abrasions.

Whilst leather boots do tend to be heavy, some high-tech modern leather such as those made from Nubuck are lighter. If you're walking long distances, you'll need a boot that is lighter to avoid your legs getting tired quickly.
Men's and women's leather walking boots tend to be naturally waterproof and will have additional protection if a durable water repellent (DWR) is added. They're easy to maintain using wax. Because leather is a skin it has breathable qualities which allow the moisture generated by sweaty feet to escape.

If you are looking for boots that will protect your feet as you walk up mountains and hills, more sturdy boots will offer support for your foot and ankle. Leather walking boots will be the best option for this, as the natural material creates a stable boot that provides a good level of support.

Fabric Walking Boots

Synthetic boots come in a wide range of styles and colours. They tend to be lighter and perhaps the more popular choice for those looking for something that's comfortable and durable for shorter walks. They're breathable and tend to be more lightweight than leather walking boots. They're comfortable to wear straight from the box, but they do tend to have a shorter lifespan than leather boots.

Materials such as Polyester and Nylon are commonly used to make synthetic walking boots because of their lightweight and quick-drying properties. Some boots are made from a combination of materials and may include leather in reinforced areas.

Synthetic walking boots tend to be cheaper because the materials used cost less to make. However, whether they prove to be cheaper in the long term will depend on how often you use them and the type of terrain you are walking on.

WHAT SIZE BACKPACK DO I NEED?

0-15 Litre Packs

1 Day – Fast-paced activities like running and mountain biking or shorter hikes and scrambles

These types of packs are close-fitting and streamlined to allow you to move unrestricted. They often balance weight around the body and include hydration sleeves and ports for use with hydration bladders. This capacity is big enough for a bit of water, some snacks, minimal survival kit and light, packable layers.

15-30 Litre Packs

1 Day - Packs for hiking and scrambling in warm-cool conditions, fastpacking and summit packs

These packs have enough space for carrying waterproofs, warm layers, food, water and a small amount of safety equipment for a full day out. They will often have lots of pockets to keep things you need handy throughout the day, and they will prioritise being lightweight to reduce the overall weight you're carrying.

30-45 Litre Packs

1-2 Days – Day packs for year-round use (including winter) or for overnight bivvies, bothy trips and wild camps

Hiking in winter or carrying a lightweight camping kit requires a larger capacity and more support. These packs are generally better padded and have more substantial hip belts. This allows you to carry extra clothing, crampons, and storm shelters in winter, as well as a sleeping bag, sleeping mat, cooking gear, and a backpacking tent/bivvy bag for overnighters in spring-autumn. 45L packs are often tailored towards climbing/mountaineering with a streamlined shape and attachments for carrying gear.

45-65 Litre Packs

2+ Days - Multi-day backpacking trips for self-sufficient adventures

Designed specifically for backpacking, these packs will have plenty of padding, support and ways of adjusting the fit for carrying heavy loads in comfort. Some have adjustable back systems, allowing you to tailor the lumbar support and strap positions to your own back length. Multiple pockets allow you to separate your equipment for better access. These packs have a capacity that is large enough to carry everything you need to stay self-sufficient for days. This size of the pack is often favoured for Duke of Edinburgh and Scouts expeditions, as well as for travelling backpacks.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Head Torch

The key things to look out for are the brightness (measured in lumens - 300 should be good enough for all but the most adventurous of activities), beam distance (ideally adjustable), a long battery life (essential), weight (the lighter the better), and ease of use (not too fiddly, especially when its cold).

Extra features such as red light night vision (less likely to scare off wildlife, or blind other members of your group), a dimmer function, a smart memory, a secure fit, and a tilt function for flexible beam focus are also worth considering

Dry bags

Dry bags keep your kit dry and free from damp, dirt and dust. Roll-top bags come in a range of sizes from 1-litre bags for valuables to 65-litre rucksack liners.

Personal First Aid Kit

While a first aid kit might add a little bit of extra weight and take up some space (unless you secure it to the outside of your backpack), they can make your journey back to civilisation much easier if you pick up a minor injury and could be lifesaving if you have a mjaor accident.

Hats / Gloves/ Gaiters

Gaiters are a useful piece of kit for walkers; keeping your feet and trousers dry, protecting your footwear and preventing your trousers from getting covered in mud. Hats and gloves keep extremities warm whereby you usually expel a lost of heat.