

TIPS FOR HIKERS

What to Bring

- >Comfortable hiking shoes or hiking boots. Waterproof footwear is more comfortable in wet conditions.
- >Two pairs of socks will reduce rubbing and potential blisters. Wear a thin, smooth, inner pair of socks to wick perspiration or water away, and an outer, thicker pair for cushioning. Avoid cotton socks. Bring a spare set of socks in case your feet get wet.
- >Layers of clothing, to add or remove with changes in air temperature or your activity level. Synthetics keep you dry better than cotton. Hat, scarf and gloves make a big difference in cool weather, and don't take up much room in a pack.
- >Rain jacket/poncho and rain pants. Plastic bags to protect camera, cell phone or other equipment from rain.
- >Sun hat, sunglasses. Put sun-screen on exposed skin. These are wise precautions, even in winter.
- >Drinking water. At least one litre; two or three litres on a hot day. Drink before, during, and after your hike.
- >Lunch, snacks, and bag for your garbage.
- >Comfortable pack.
- >Whistle, radio or cell phone, to send signals or to call for help.
- >Personal first aid kit, with band-aids, and treatment to prevent or protect blisters.
- >Hiking pole(s). A pole helps you to balance on slippery ground. Using two poles on downhill will reduce stress on your back and leg joints.
- >The relevant trail map(s) from the current Trail Guidebook. Trail changes are published in ORTA's Trail Talk newsletter.
- >Compass. Know how to use it to orient yourself.
- >Cellular phone is useful in case of emergency.
- >Insect repellent may be useful in May through July.
- >If you bring a camera, please share your photos with ORTA for use in our newsletter, web site, Guidebook and slide-shows.

Hiking With Friends or Family

- * It is safest to hike with a group, and not alone. Stay together.
- * Plan a route according to the time you have, the weather, and the abilities of the weakest member of your group.
- * Tell someone where you are going, who you'll be with, and when you expect to return.
- * Bring flashlights with strong batteries if there is any possibility you could be out after dark.
- * Park at a location that is safely off the side of the road and that does not interfere with property owners.

Hiking With an ORTA Group

- * Check the hike description in ORTA's "Trail Talk" newsletter for important details about the hike. Be prepared to hike the published distance, terrain, and pace. By ORTA's definitions, Slow pace means 2-3 kilometres per hour. Moderate pace means 3-4 km/hour. Fast means 4-5 km/hour. Very Fast means 5 km/hour or faster.
- * Call the leader ahead of time if you have any questions about level of difficulty, duration, dropout points, what to bring, meeting place, car shuttle, bringing a dog, etc.

- * Bring the name and phone number of someone the leader can call in case you are lost or injured.
- * Allow plenty of time to find the meeting place and arrive before the scheduled time.
- * Have enough fuel in your vehicle for any car shuttling that may be necessary.
- * Follow the instructions of the hike leader and “sweep”.
- * Stay with the group - behind the leader and ahead of the “sweep”.
- * Tell the hike leader or sweep immediately about any problems.
- * Never leave the group without first notifying the leader or sweep.
- * If you need to stop for a bathroom break, tell the leader. If you cannot reach the leader, leave a friend, or your pack or jacket on the trail as a signal to the sweep that you have left the trail and gone off into the woods. The sweep will wait for you nearby. Point the pack to the direction you were hiking, so that if there is no one in sight when you return, you won't forget which direction to hike. Place it on the side you have gone into the woods, so that the group knows which side of the trail to search if you don't return.

Newcomers are always welcome to join one of the guided hikes of the Oak Ridges Trail Association. We offer a variety of group hikes - short or long, slow or fast, flat or hilly. We hike weekends and weekdays all year long, and with over 200 hikes a year, so you're sure to find some just right for you. You'll discover beautiful new areas, learn from knowledgeable leaders, meet friendly people, and get any help that you need.

ORTA members receive the full schedule of hikes in our quarterly Trail Talk newsletter. You can also learn about upcoming hikes at our web site www.oakridgestrail.org, or by leaving a message at our phone number: 905-833-6600 / 1-877-319-0285.