



Welcome to MWS! We look forward to help you prepare for your expedition. Please take the time to read the following information before making any equipment purchases. Proper equipment selection is an essential backcountry skill and is critical to enjoying your expedition.

1. In an effort to keep costs down for students and their families, **MWS provides all the technical equipment (climbing or paddling gear) for an expedition, in addition to backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, shelters, and group cooking gear.** We ask you to provide, if possible, the “clothing” and “personal gear” items listed below.
2. Already have a your own wilderness gear? Bring it along and your instructors will go through it with you and decide what is suitable for your expedition. Any item not needed for the expedition can be left in secure storage until after your course.
3. We understand that buying new clothes or gear can be overwhelming so feel free to call or email us and we can answer your questions and give you advice if needed. If you need financial support with acquiring the necessary gear, we maybe able to loan you some items of clothing or gear. Please call or email to discuss this possibility.

MWS Backpacking Packing List

CLOTHING

Please do not bring cotton or cotton-blend clothing as they are not appropriate for wet weather conditions and perspiration.

Footwear

- 1 pair of **sturdy backpacking boots:** "Light hikers" are NOT acceptable since they do not provide sufficient ankle support when you are carrying a heavy pack, especially when hiking off-trail. Make sure your boots are waterproofed and have a longer and stiffer shank (metal or hard plastic).

Please contact our office if you do not own a pair of boots yet for your backpacking expedition:

1-We partner with some **local stores** throughout Montana and you might be able to get a significant discount in your area.

2-If you want to buy a pair on your own without taking advantage of our partner brands/stores, we can guide your boot model selection!

3-Please read the “MWS Boots List & Discounts” we will email you for more details

- 1 pair of comfortable camp shoes that are closed around the toes: lightweight tennis shoes are best. It's nice to have shoes that are easy to get on and off.
- 3 pairs of hiking specific socks- synthetic or wool; Thicker and well fitting
- (optional) 2 pairs of liner socks (synthetic or silk) if you are used to a sock/liner combo

Top Layers

- 2 base layer tops: poly-pro/synthetic or technical wool: 1 long sleeved, 1 t-shirt
- 1 middle layer top: synthetic fleece, or technical wool top that goes over your base layer, is comfortable, low profile, warm, and covers well your upper body and arms
- 1 warm insulating jacket: down or synthetic material (synthetic recommended), puffy, well covering, for colder days and camping time; Hood recommended.
- 1 raincoat: 100% waterproof, breathable recommended
- 2 sports bras (women): make sure you have proper support for athletic activities. Silk or synthetic materials are best. Can double as swimwear.
- (optional): 1 windshirt/windcoat, lightweight and breathable

Bottom Layers

- 1 pair of shorts: comfortable, loose fitting nylon shorts are best (quick drying) can double as swimwear.
- 1 bottom base layer (long underwear): poly-pro/synthetic, technical wool or silk
- 1 warm middle layer pants: expedition weight fleece bottoms that fit over your base layer for extra warmth at camp that will always stay dry.
- 1 pair of synthetic long hiking pants (sturdy, quick-drying, comfortable)
- 3 pairs of underwear - we recommend men wear synthetic underwear or better yet go without underwear, and use nylon shorts with liners. Women can wear what's comfortable: cotton, silk, or synthetics are fine.
- 1 pair of rain pants: 100% waterproof, breathable recommended. Should fit comfortably over bottom layers. Side zippers recommended to fit over boots.
- (optional) 1 nylon wind pants: should fit comfortable over bottom layers. Side zippers recommended to fit over boots.

Head and Hands

- 1 baseball hat for shade
- 1 warm hat (wool or synthetic for chilly backcountry evenings)
- 1 pair of thin wool or synthetic gloves
- (optional-if you easily get really cold hands) 1 pair mitten shells: should be waterproof and fit over your thin gloves

PERSONAL GEAR

- 1 lightweight headlamp with spare batteries
- 1 pair of sunglasses- with retainer such as Chums© or Croakies© so you don't lose them. (Good quality sunglasses with 100% UV protection are recommended. If you wear prescription lenses and have limited vision without them, bring your own prescription sunglasses or look for a quality pair of clip-on polarized shades at a fishing store. Lenses should be dark and block 100 percent Ultra Violet light.)
- 1 small notebook/journal and pencil: waterproof paper is an option
- 2 cotton Bandanas: helpful for hygiene, can be a washcloth, and good for sun neck protection
- 1-2 small bottles of Insect repellent: Please no aerosol spray cans

- 1 tube of zinc based Sunscreen: 3 to 6 ounce tube with sun protection factor (SPF) 15 or greater
- 1 Lip balm: Stick or tube type moisturizing balm with sun factor (SPF) 15 or greater
- (optional) 1 lightweight camera with water proof bag/box
- (optional) 1 set of trekking poles
- (optional) 1 lightweight pocket knife
- (optional) 1 watch: (with an alarm function). Phones and smartphones will not be allowed on your course but can be kept secure in your luggage at our office while you are on your expedition
- (optional) 1 small compact lightweight book you want to read or share with others (can be a book of quotes, poetry, a novel, or an educational resource)

Toiletries

- (optional) Towel for showering after your course (you will leave it with your luggage)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste (travel or trial sizes are enough)
- Feminine supplies: please bring a week worth of supplies (tampons/pads/etc.) as changes in diet, altitude and fitness can un-expectantly induce menstruation.
- Prescription medications – bring enough to last the duration of the program
- Prescription glasses/contact lenses: Please bring a spare pair of prescription glasses or extra contact lenses. Also, bring contact lens solution cleaner if you wear contacts (in 1 or 2 small bottles to reduce packing weight and volume)- and an extra case
- (optional) skin lotion; (optional) small size comb or brush

MWS SUPPLIED GEAR

In an effort to keep costs down for students and also to supply quality gear equally between all participants, MWS provides the items below for all expeditions:

- Backpacks (or waterproof bags & daypacks for paddling courses)
- Tents and shelters, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads
- All Cooking gear: stoves, fuel, pots, and assorted cooking utensils
- All technical gear (depending on expedition type: climbing gear, harnesses, helmets, ropes, ice axes, or paddling gear: packrafts, canoes, paddles, life-vests, paddling helmets & special gloves)
- All navigation gear: maps, compass', GPS; Notebook and pen
- First aid kits & equipment repair kits
- 1 pair of gaiters and 1 mosquito head net
- Mugs, bowls, and spoons for each student
- Water treatment and hand sanitizer
- 2 water bottles: wide-mouth quart or liter-size plastic bottles, like Nalgene® bottles