

2024 Basic Backpacking Course



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Basic Backpacking

Lecture 1 Agenda

Introductions

Course Overview

A Typical Backpacking Trip

BREAK

The Ten Essentials

Food and Nutrition

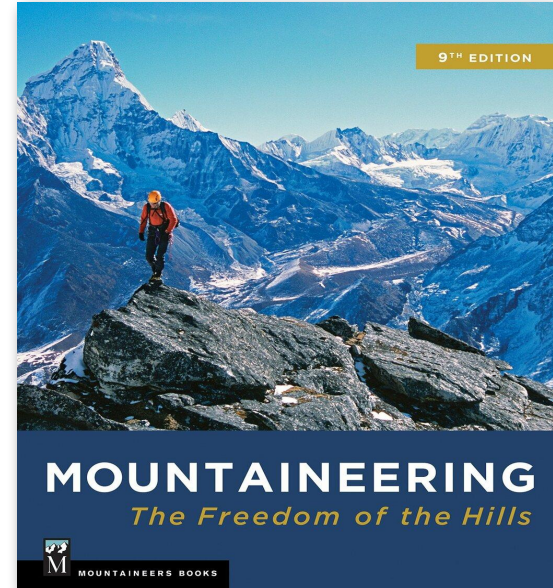
Questions



Who Are We?

The Mountaineers

- Founded 1906 in Seattle
- 15,000 members
- Volunteer run (mostly)
- Teach skills to explore outdoors
- Emphasis
 - Safety
 - Personal responsibility
 - Stewardship



Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills Paperback – Illustrated, October 5, 2017

by The Mountaineers (Author)

★★★★★ 4/5 ratings

#1 Best Seller in Rock Climbing



About Seattle Backpacking

- Enthusiastic volunteers who love backpacking
- Diverse experience
 - Newer members (6+ months)
 - Veterans (20+ years)
 - Novice and lifelong backpackers
 - Variety of hiking styles
- Beyond the basics
 - Conditioning series
 - Intermediate backpacking
 - Cooking courses



Introductions

Roundtable Discussions (15 minutes)



- Introduce yourself
- Your background
- Personal goals for the course

Course Overview



5 Course Objectives

1. Experience overnight trips to the backcountry

- Safely
- Confidently
- Comfortably (mostly)
- With respect for environment and wildlife



5 Course Objectives

1. Experience overnight trips to the backcountry
- 2. Meet new people with similar interests**



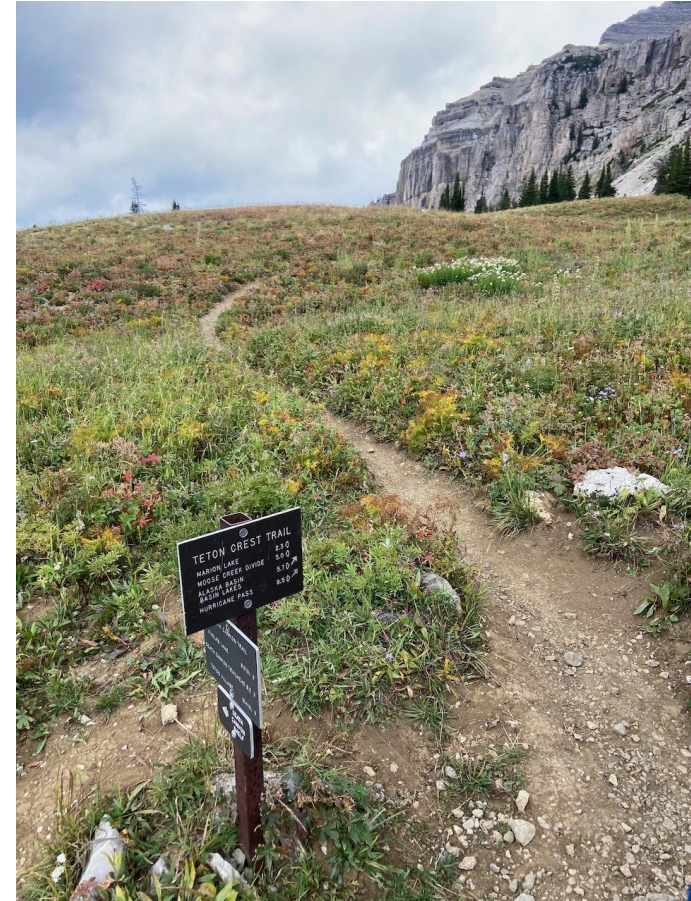
5 Course Objectives

1. Experience overnight trips to the backcountry
2. Meet new people with similar interests
3. **Build / enhance your own kit**



5 Course Objectives

1. Experience overnight trips to the backcountry
2. Meet new people with similar interests
3. Build / enhance your own kit
- 4. Find your hiking style**
 - Likes + dislikes
 - Single vs. multi-night
 - Location, terrain



5 Course Objectives

1. Experience overnight trips to the backcountry
2. Meet new people with similar interests
3. Build / enhance your own kit
4. Find your hiking style
- 5. Learn from experience and from colleagues**
 - Gear
 - Technique



Topics Not Covered

- *Important skills:*

- First Aid
- Navigation



- *Optional (other courses and clinics):*

- Wilderness trip planning
- Ultralight gear
- Backcountry cooking
- Intermediate situations and techniques:
 - Extended off trail travel
 - Tricky water crossings
 - Longer trips (4 nights or more)



What You Can Expect from Us

We will try our best to:

- Teach you the basics
- Help guide equipment purchases
- Provide a supportive environment
- Respond to issues and questions
- Treat you respectfully



But We're Not Perfect

So, please do not expect us to:

- Be professional educators
- Or world class athletes
- Control the weather
- Always respond instantly to issues and questions



What We Expect of You

- Remember we are volunteers
- Make course a priority
 - **Be on time and prepared**
- Research gear purchases
 - It's your kit and must work for you
- Know your level of fitness
 - Be actively conditioning
- Maintain a flexible, positive attitude
 - Expect the unexpected



But You're Not Perfect Either

So, we won't expect you to:

- Be world-class athletes
- Make the course your *only* priority
 - Things happen
 - **Let us know ASAP!**





Course Requirements



Activities **within** this course:

1. Attend all **three lectures**
2. Attend **Gearpalooza**
3. Attend the **Gear Practice Trip** OR practice setting up and using your gear **on your own**
4. Successfully complete **one field trip**

Activities **outside** this course:

5. Complete the **Low Impact Recreation** e-learning class (1 hr) **before Lecture 3**
6. Go on two more Mountaineers backpack trips (at least one trip must be multi-night)
7. Get your Stewardship Badge

Items 1-5 must be completed **during this course period**

You have **up to 2 years** to complete items 6 & 7



Stewardship Badge

- **Need 6 Hours of Stewardship Credit**
 - Mountaineers Stewardship activities
 - WTA trail work
 - Issaquah Alps Trails Club
 - Mountains to Sound Greenway
 - Northwest Avalanche Center
 - Green Seattle Partnership



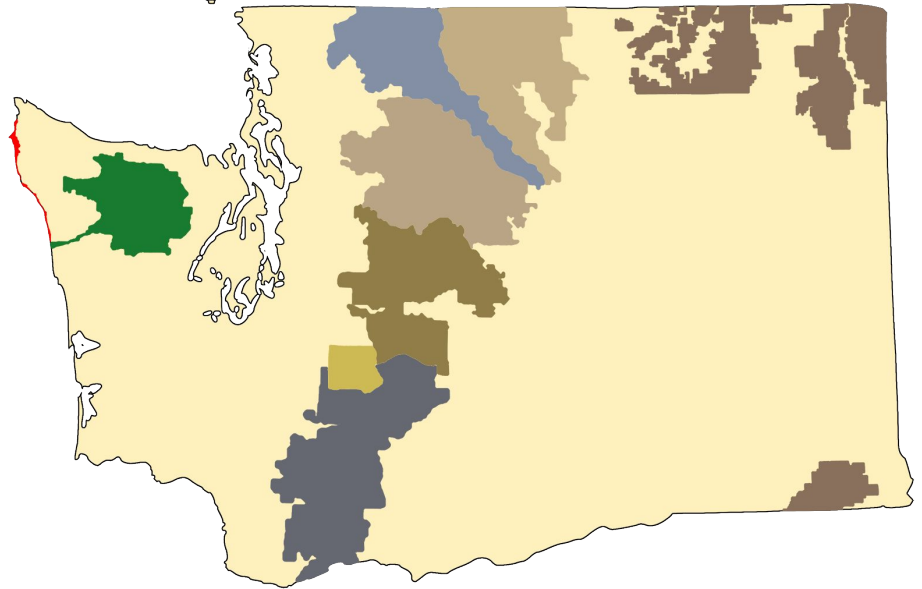
Badge lasts for 1 year and is valid for multiple courses

Places We Go

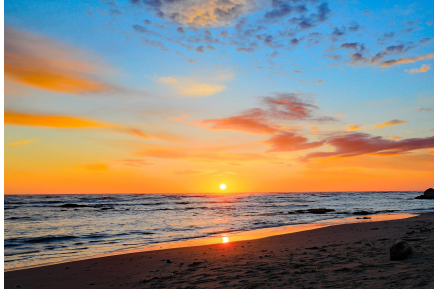


Locations in Washington

- Olympic Peninsula
 - Beaches and National Park
- Cascade Mountains
 - South, Central, North
- Eastern Washington
 - Okanogan and Pasayten Wilderness
 - Columbia Plateau



Backpacking Regions in Washington



Western United States

- Oregon
- Idaho
- California
- Wyoming
- Utah



Types of Backpacking Trips

- “Hiking Oriented” / Faster Paced
 - Go lighter, faster, farther
 - Higher daily mileage
- “Camping-Oriented” / Slower Paced
 - Relaxed environment
 - Reading, swimming, socializing
- A little of both?

Pursue Your Passion!



The Ten Essentials



Why The Ten Essentials?

- Be prepared
 - Unexpected weather
 - Medical issues
 - Gear failures
- Keep small problems small
 - Prevent *avoidable* rescues (or worse)
- Based on decades of experience

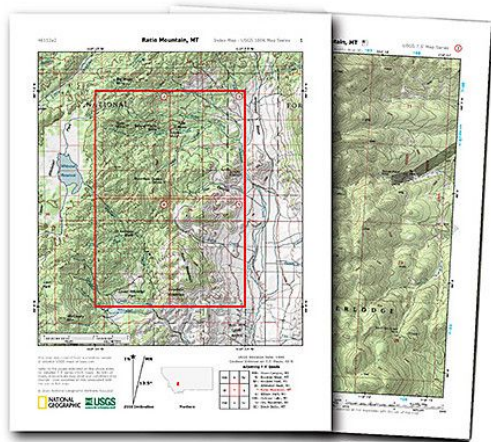


The Ten Essentials

1. Navigation
2. Headlamp
3. Sun Protection
4. First Aid
5. Repair Kit & Tools (including knife)
6. Fire Starter
7. Emergency Shelter
8. Extra Food
9. Extra Water
10. Insulation/Extra Clothing



Essential #1: Navigation



VS.



Essential #2: Headlamp

- Must have
 - 100+ lumens
 - Extra batteries or a spare headlamp
- Nice to have
 - Spot feature
 - Red light option



Essential #3: Sun Protection

- Hat with brim
 - protect sides, neck, face
- Sunglasses
 - side protection advised
- Sunblock
- Lip balm
- Long sleeved shirt
 - breathable



Essential #4: First Aid

- Pre-made kits are easiest
- Know how to use
- Include your common needs



Essential #5: Repair Kit

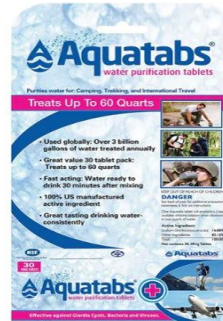
- Knife or multi-tool
- Patch kit for inflatables
 - sit pad, sleep pad
- Duct tape
- Twist or zip ties
- Spare shoe laces
- Repair kits
 - stove
 - water filter
- Tent pole repair sleeve



Essential #5: Repair Kit

Also consider:

- Extra cord
- Gear-Aid Tenacious Tape
- Spare tent stakes
- Water filter parts/back-up filtration



Essential #6: Fire Starter

- Matches in waterproof container
- Lightweight lighter or flint
- “Kindling”
 - Laundry lint



Building a fire in wet weather is harder than you might think!



Essential #7: Emergency Shelter



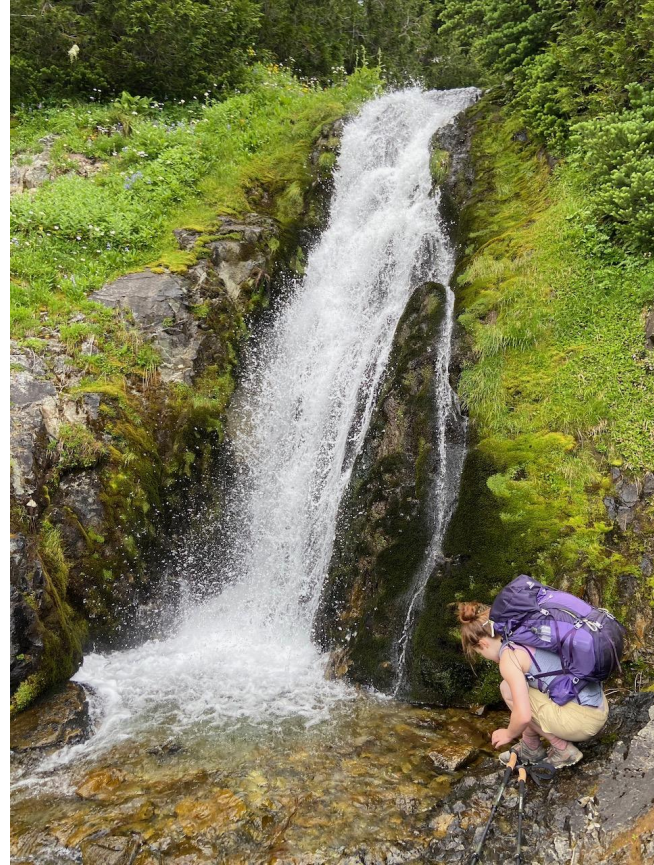
Essential #8: Extra Food

- Day trips
 - Enough to stay overnight
- Backpacking trips
 - Enough for an extra day



Essential #9: Extra Water

- Dehydration risks
- Don't over do it
 - Water is heavy
- Near water sources?
 - Water filter and/or tabs



Essential #10: Insulation/Extra Clothes

Be prepared for:

- Staying overnight
 - Planned or unplanned
- Unexpected weather
 - Rain
 - Colder or warmer temps
- Adjust based on trip
 - Day hike vs. backpack



Make Them a Habit!

- Bring them on every trip
 - Includes day hikes while on backpack trip
- Make kit small and light
 - Easy to grab every time
- Don't double-dip



Hydration



Frequency

- 2-3 cups water per hour
- Drink more in
 - hot weather
 - very dry or humid air
 - high altitude
 - strenuous hiking



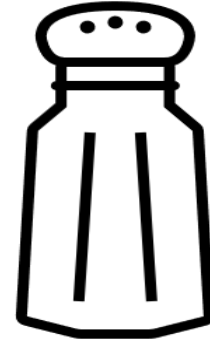
How do I know if I'm hydrated?

- You aren't thirsty
- Urinate 4-5+ times over 24 hours
- Urine is light colored
- Symptoms of dehydration
 - Urine is dark yellow or brownish
 - Tiredness/fatigue
 - Headache, delirium, confusion
 - Loss of appetite
 - Muscle cramps
 - Dry mouth, lips, tongue



What about electrolytes?

- Lost in sweat
- Important and easy to replace with food
- Bring salty snacks



Sodium	Potassium	Calcium	Magnesium
Crackers, pretzels, jerky, salami, salted nuts/seeds, cheese	Potatoes, apricots, raisins, prunes, dry milk, meats, fish, beans	Almonds, sardines, cheese, dry milk, fortified cereals	Nuts & seeds, peanut butter, beans, potatoes, brown rice

Food and Nutrition



Basic Food Planning

Think in units of “meals”

- Breakfast
- Morning Snacks
- Lunch
- Afternoon Snacks
- Dinner



Basic Food Planning

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	-	Oatmeal + Coffee	Oatmeal + Coffee	Oatmeal + Coffee
Snacks (AM)	2 Energy Bars	2 Energy Bars	3 Energy Bars	2 Energy Bars
Lunch	Sandwich + Apple	Cheese + Crackers	Tuna Packet + Chips	Cheese + Crackers
Snacks (PM)	Nuts + Jerky	Nuts + Jerky	2x Nuts + Jerky	-
Dinner	Dehydrated Spaghetti + Hot Tea	Dehydrated Chili	Dehydrated Risotto + Chocolate Pudding	-



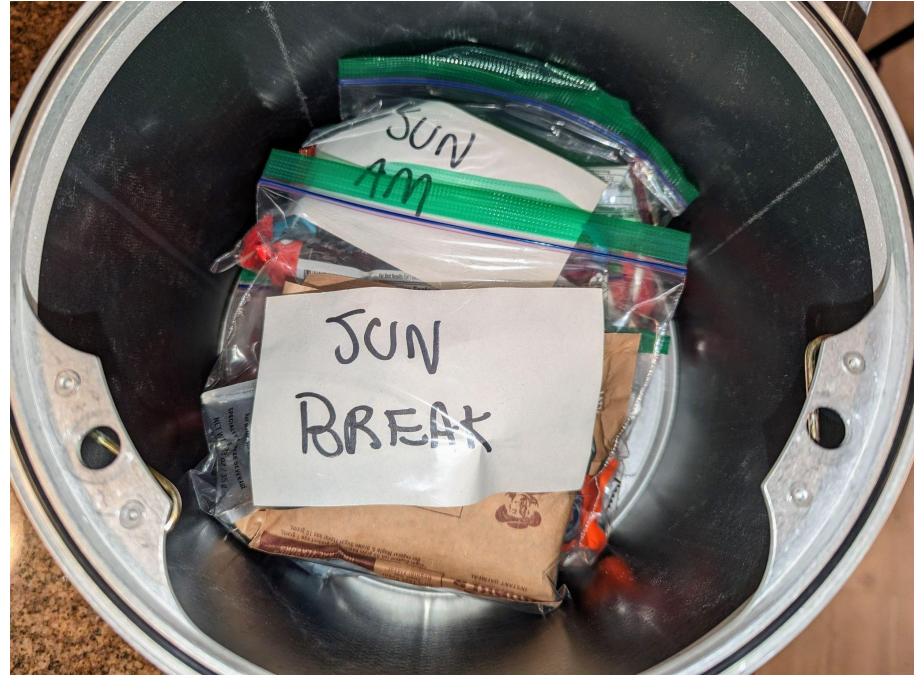
Why Two Kinds of Trail Snacks?

- AM vs. PM
 - Caffeine in the AM
 - Snacks to supplement light breakfast

- Salty vs. Sweet
 - Preferences may change depending on time of day



Acting On Your Plan



Starter Recommendations

- **Start Simple**
- Pre-packaged meals
- Instant foods
- Easy to
 - Prepare
 - Cook
 - Eat
 - Clean up



Breakfast

When?

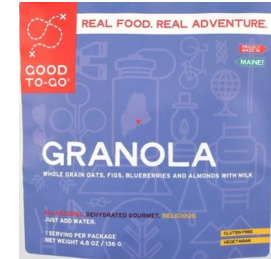
- About 1 hour before hitting the trail

How much?

- 400-600 calories

Ideas:

- Oatmeal or granola w/dried fruit and nuts
- Eggs
 - freeze-dried scrambled
 - hard boiled (boil at home)
- Coffee or tea w/powdered milk



Lunch

How?

- Easy to prepare without a stove

How much?

- 400-600 calories

Ideas:

- First day: pre-made sandwich or burrito
- Cheese and crackers
- Flatbread w/nut butter + fruit
- Tuna or chicken packets



Snacks

How/When?

- On-the-go
- 2-3 throughout the day

How much?

- 800-1500 calories

Ideas:

- Sports bars
- Nuts
- Jerky
- Carrots
- Cheese



Dinner

How/When?

- Prepare at camp, stove access

How much?

- 700-900 calories

Ideas:

- Pre-packaged backpacking meals
- Dehydrated soup
 - noodles
 - dried veggies
 - protein
- Instant rice + lentil pouch



Dinner Tips

- Watch servings
 - Difficult to throw away food
- Check cooking (steeping) time
 - Most take 9 minutes
 - Some take 15 - 20 minutes
- Bring a hot drink!
 - Tea
 - Hot chocolate
 - Instant cider



Food Safety

- **Wash hands often!**
 - Before and after eating
 - 200' away from water sources
- **Perishable foods**
 - eat before shelf stable options
 - shorter time limit in warm/hot weather
- **Food safety essentials**
 - Hand sanitizer and biodegradable soap
 - Dish rag
 - Trash bags
 - Reuse resealable food bags



Basics of Nutrition



How Many Calories?

- **Baseline 2,000 calories**
 - Add 25-50% for short trips
 - Consider doubling for long or strenuous trips
- Needs vary widely
- Start with too much
 - Adjust with experience



Caloric Needs: People Factors

- Size
- Fitness level
- Body composition
- Age
- Special dietary needs
- Tolerance of different foods
- Food preferences and novelty
- Budget



Caloric Needs: Trip Factors

- Number of days
- Distance
- Speed of travel
- Elevation gain
- Altitude
- Weather
- Pack weight



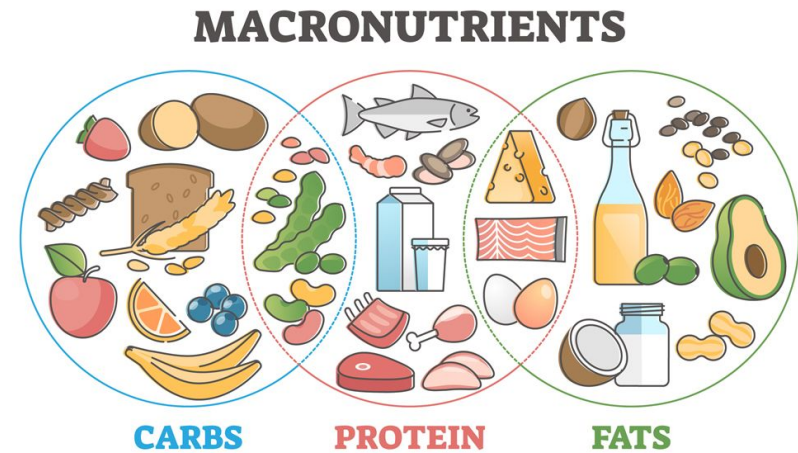
Caloric Needs: Planning

	Thursday	Calories	Friday	Calories	Saturday	Calories	Sunday	Calories
Breakfast	-		Oatmeal + Coffee	670	Oatmeal + Coffee	670	Oatmeal + Coffee	670
Snacks (AM)	2 Energy Bars	400	2 Energy Bars	400	3 Energy Bars	600	2 Energy Bars	400
Lunch	Sandwich + Apple	500	Cheese + Crackers	800	Tuna Packet + Chips	600	Cheese + Crackers	800
Snacks (PM)	Nuts + Jerky	400	Nuts + Jerky	400	2x Nuts + Jerky	800	-	
Dinner	Dehydrated Spaghetti + Hot Cocoa	770	Dehydrated Chili	690	Dehydrated Risotto + Chocolate Pudding	1100	-	
Total Packed Calories		2,070		2,960		3,770		1870



Overall Nutritional Considerations

- Mix of **carbs, protein, and fat**
 - Carbs
 - quick energy
 - small servings throughout day (trail snacks)
 - Protein and fat
 - protein key for recovery
 - long-term sustainable energy (“slow burn”)



Overall Nutritional Considerations

- Mix of carbs, protein, and fat
- Estimate calorie intake



Overall Nutritional Considerations

- Mix of **carbs, protein, and fat**
- Estimate calorie intake
- Avoid too many simple carbs
 - “Boom/bust” cycle



Overall Nutritional Considerations

- Mix of **carbs, protein, and fat**
- Estimate calorie intake
- Avoid too many simple carbs
- **Stay hydrated!**



Balancing Act

more “food weight”

=

heavier pack

=

harder hike



non-perishable

lightweight

nutrient/calorie dense

=

lighter pack

=

easier hike



Where Can I Learn More?

- **Adult Energy Needs and Body Mass Index (BMI) Calculator**
 - <https://www.bcm.edu/cnrc-apps/caloriesneed.cfm>
- **Backcountry Foodie** (discount available)
 - <https://backcountryfoodie.com>
- **Meal Planning for Backpacking**
 - <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/planning-menu.html>
- **The Nutrition Source**
 - <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource>
- **What to know about electrolyte waters**
 - <https://www.cspinet.org/daily/exercise-for-health/what-to-know-about-electrolyte-waters>



End of Lecture 1

What's Next?

- **Wednesday, April 17:** Lecture 2:
 - Clothing
 - Gear
 - Preview of Gearpalooza
 - Field Trip Overview
- **Thursday, April 18:** Field Trip registration open
- **Saturday, April 20:** Gearpalooza 9am - 1:30pm at SPC
- **Before April 24** (Lecture 3)
 - Do 50-minute Low Impact Recreation online class

