



# OutdoorTracks

## Tales from the Trails

### **Hikers and climbers spring checkup**

1. Get in shape.

Work on calf and thigh exercises. Join a gym if you're not already a member. Treadmills and stairclimbers are never as good as being out on a trail, but they do help get you ready. If the gym will let you, use these workouts to break in new boots, too. Sore muscles and blisters and spring hikes go together, especially as we get older.

2. Check your equipment.

Did you wear out anything last year and haven't replaced it yet? Check your water bottles – do they leak? Check your pack – any rips or tears? Mend or replace. Are all the straps OK? What about clothing? Camera? Batteries?

3. Plan your hike.

Check weather and trail conditions before going out. If it's a new area to you, study a contour map closely. Know where the creeks and rivers and roads are. Make a mental note of any cliffs or sharp drop-offs, especially if you're taking kids with you. Know the shortest and easiest direction to head to get out safely if you get lost. Make sure you have a map and compass, not just GPS. You can't always rely on

getting a GPS signal. How far do you plan on going, and what is a reasonable time frame?

4. Let someone know where you're going and when you expect to be back. What kind of a car will you be driving, where will you park it, what is its description and license plate? Let them know how well you're equipped. This is valuable info for search and rescue if it comes to that. Extra food and water? Compass and map? Extra clothing in case you're caught out overnight?

Take some pictures and write a little story about your hike. What did you enjoy most? What did you learn?

Was it a good trail? What would you do differently next time?

Send the story to <https://www.outdoortracks.com> and we'll post it for you! With your permission, we might do some editing and add some more info.