



OPEN GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH EXPEDITIONS 2021

Guidance on kit and equipment

Having the right kit and equipment will help you stay comfortable, and safe, whilst completing your DofE expedition. This pack aims to give you some information and advice to guide your decisions when buying (or borrowing!) kit. We've also included a kit list to help your organise what you need to pack.



wilderness expertise

KIT AND EQUIPMENT

KIT ADVICE

There is an element of personal preference in expedition clothing, but there are 3 key principles:

1. Use multiple layers – this provides more insulation and better regulation of body temperature.
2. Stay dry
3. Choose suitable materials – synthetic fibers offer good insulation and are lightweight, absorb less water and dry quicker.

When you are buying and kit and equipment, bear in mind that:

1. The best source of equipment is to borrow from family & friends, if anyone has done DofE expeditions or similar recently. However, avoid borrowing walking boots as these will have molded to the owner's feet, not yours!
2. When shopping for kit and clothing, take advantage of the expert advice, guidance and fitting services offered in stores.
3. Shop around, compare prices, and use the internet to find the best deal on the kit you choose. Take advantage of clearance sales to get best prices.
4. Make the most of the DofE discounts available to you. Find out more online: www.dofe.org/shopping/card/

WALKING BOOTS AND SOCKS

No other equipment will have a greater impact on the enjoyment of an expedition. Boots are the most important piece of walking kit, so get the best fit you can. If boots don't fit properly, you won't have support for your feet and ankles, and will be prone to blisters, chafing and cramps. Too big and they'll rub, too small and your toes will be scrunched up.

Here are our top tips for buying walking boots:

- For Gold DofE you need boots that have ankle support to protect your ankle from twisting and sprains. Please do not wear trainers or trek shoes.
- Check that your boots have a hard-wearing sole that is injection moulded and won't tear away from the upper part of the boot.
- Understand how your boot is waterproof, and what you need to treat the boots with to retain that waterproofing (e.g., Nikwax, Graingers etc.). All boots need to be cleaned and re-treated after use to keep them in good condition.
- Walking boots will either have a leather or fabric upper. Fabric boots are lighter in weight, and have a waterproof membrane inside, but needs to be regularly maintained by applying waterproofing spray or they will start to leak. Leather boots should also be cleaned and regularly waxed, but tend to withstand tougher conditions. The best time to try on boots is the afternoon as your feet may swell slightly during the day.
- Your feet will almost certainly be slightly different sizes, so try both boots on, wearing medium thick walking socks.
- All boots have a certain amount of 'give' in them. You should be able to wriggle your toes.



- Push your toes to the end of the boot and then put your finger down the back of the boot. If you can do this, you've probably got enough room for your toes to move about, but not too much so you'll slip around inside.
- Wear your boots indoors after you buy them, and on short walks outside before the expedition.
- Tie the laces up properly and tightly.
- When on the expedition, always carry some blister pads (e.g., Compeed) – just in case!

Good walking socks are an important factor in helping you avoid blisters.

- Look for moisture-wicking socks with good padding where your feet need them.
- Try your socks on with your boots so you can check the fit.
- You could buy sock liners to be worn under your thicker socks. These can be washed and dried more easily whilst on expedition and can reduce friction in the boot helping prevent blisters.

SLEEPING BAG & ROLL MAT

What sleeping bag should you take on an expedition? Consider the following key points

- Temperature

Range: This provides the maximum and minimum temperatures that the sleeping bag is designed for.

Comfort: This is the optimum temperature level that you will be warm and able to sleep in.



There is no point taking a sleeping bag suitable for arctic expeditions if it's going to be warm. However, temperatures drop at night so thin sleeping bags made for indoor use or very hot weather are unsuitable. Think about how high you are going: if you are wild camping on a Gold expedition in the mountains, it will be much cooler than on lower ground. A 2 or 3 season sleeping bag is probably the best choice, keeping you comfortable on mild to cold nights.

- Weight

You will be carrying all your equipment so make sure your sleeping bag is lightweight too. Look for a lightweight sleeping bag between 1000-1100g.

- What it is made from

Down sleeping bags are made from feathers, whereas Synthetic sleeping bags are made using polyfibres. If you are buying a new bag, we would recommend going for a synthetic sleeping bag as they are cheaper and are more appropriate for DofE Expeditions. Down sleeping bags will not keep you warm if they get wet, so if you are planning on using one of these, as long as you take good care of it on the expedition, this will also be fine to use.

- Size

You will need to pack your sleeping bag into your rucksack and still have space for all your other gear. Ensure it packs down as small as possible, and use a stuff sack or compression bag with straps that tighten to reduce the size even further.

- Comfort

If you know you tend to get cold, consider a model with extra insulation, and if you like to move around in your sleep, think about buying a design to maximise foot room. Consider taking an inner

sheet bag, which will act as extra insulation and protect your sleeping bag.

- Keeping your sleeping bag dry

This is vital, because not only will a wet sleeping bag make you cold and miserable all night long, it will be much heavier to carry. Pack your sleeping bag in a dry bag or sealed rubble bag to make sure the rain can't get at it.

In order to cushion your sleep and provide a better night's sleep, a roll mat will help to insulate you from the ground, providing a degree of extra comfort and warmth. When deciding what type to use, consider the following

- Traditional foam mats are low-cost and lightweight but tend to be bulky. Self-insulating mats are more expensive but insulate better and provide more comfort.



RUCKSACK

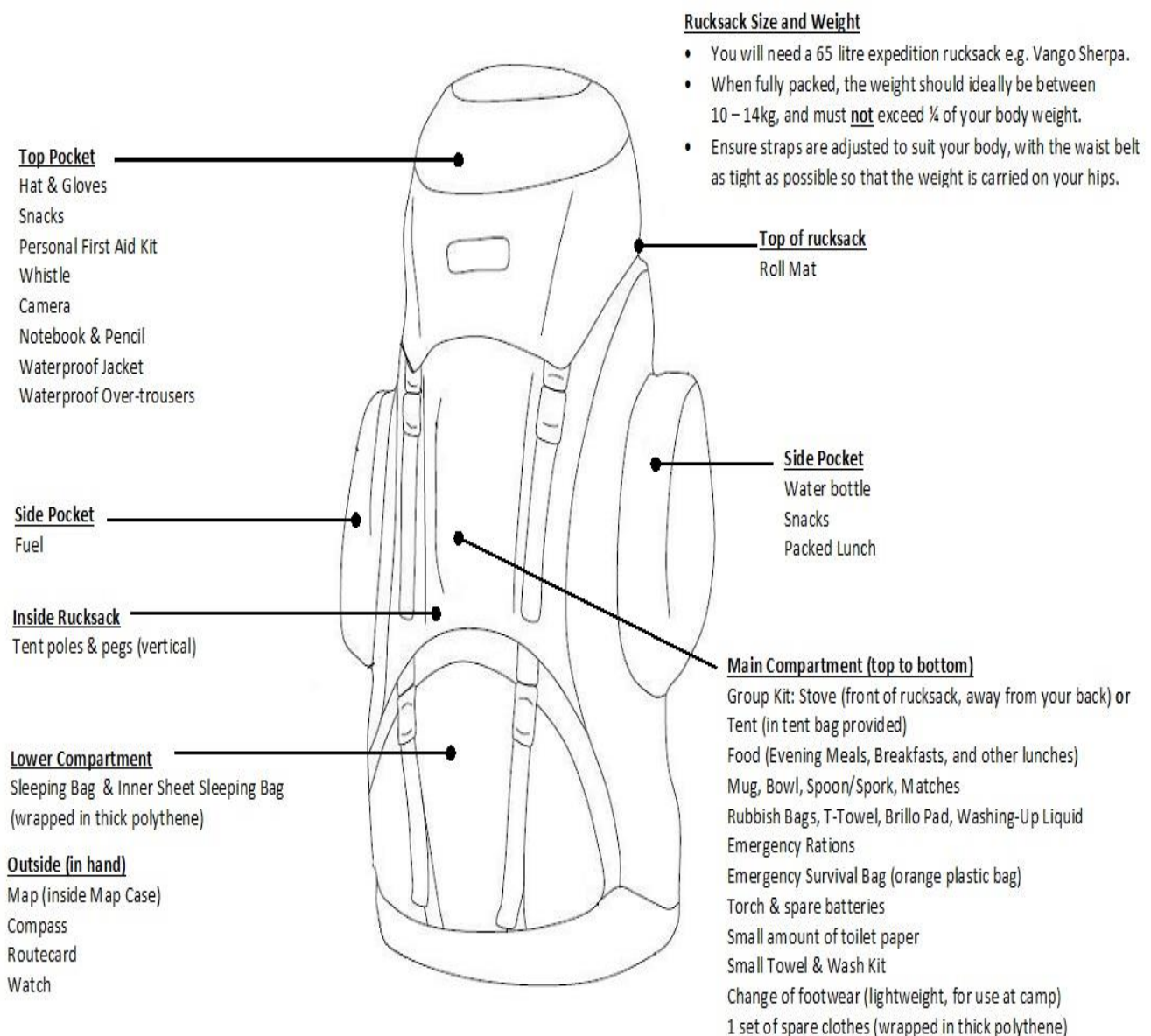
There are many different manufacturers and designs on the market, and which you choose is a personal choice depending on your body shape. Trying rucksacks on before you buy is essential and ideally this should be done with it packed with kit by a reputable shop – e.g., Cotswold Outdoors. Ensure the shoulder, waist and chest straps are adjustable to suit you comfortably. Some brands offer gender specific designs with different padding and strap adjustments.

You'll need a 65-70ltr bag for Gold DofE expeditions and need to ensure you carry no more than 25% of your body weight.

Rucksacks are not 100% waterproof on their own, so a liner may well be needed when in the UK! This could be a thick plastic ‘rubbish’ sack, survival bag or a dry bag depending on your budget. As well as keeping your kit and clothing dry, this also works well as a method of dividing up your kit inside your rucksack to help you keep organised. You may wish to buy a waterproof rain cover for the outside of your bag too if yours doesn’t come with one already integrated.

Practicing packing your rucksack is highly recommended to check that your kit not only fits but also you get used to where everything is kept! Remember you need room to add in some elements of group kit too that we will provide, e.g., part of a tent.

The below diagram gives some guidance on how to pack your bag. This will also be covered as part of your training.



CLOTHING

Outer layer

- Acts like a shell, providing protection against wind and rain.
- You need a waterproof jacket which is both waterproof and breathable, allowing sweat to escape and keeping you dry and with an adjustable hood and plenty of pockets.
- You will also need a pair of waterproof over-trousers. Check these are wide at the bottom or have zips or popper to allow them to go on over expedition boots.
- For expeditions through boggy terrain, you may want gaiters to keep your feet dry.

Middle layer

- Insulating, lightweight, windproof and quick drying.
- Fleeces are popular as they absorb little moisture. Zips and pockets are good to store valuables and allow you flexibility to regulate body temperature.
- Trousers give protection against stings, bites and sunburn.
- Check the manufacturer's label and avoid natural fabrics, such as cotton, which retain moisture and prevent sweat from escaping. Do NOT wear jeans.

Base layer

- Needs to draw sweat away from the skin. Moisture control fabrics with mesh panels will help keep you comfortable.
- Football tops or sports tops are generally suitable for expeditions but other options such as merino wool are also worth considering. Merino items can sometimes be found on sale in stores such as Aldi making them more affordable.

Hat and Gloves

Hats are amongst the most important yet least used item of clothing during an expedition. Your head loses the most heat and also takes in the most heat compared to any other part of the body. This means any temperature changes can have a serious effect on your overall condition during an expedition. For sunny weather you want a hat that shields your eyes and nose from direct sunlight. For wet weather you want a cap that you can wear under your hood to prevent water from running down your face.

- Cold weather – a hat that retains heat and keep participants warm, and dry.
- Hot weather – a light, wide-brimmed hat protects the head, neck and face from sunburn.
- Multi-functional headgear such as a buff can be useful for neck protection from the sun, a scarf for warmth at night and an eye mask when sleeping.



What Not To Take

Packing light is important as you will be carrying your kit. There are also some items which you are advised not to bring:

- Anything you cannot afford to lose (e.g., expensive technology, new or designer clothing, and items of great sentimental value).
- The item that you pack whilst thinking 'what if' or 'just in case': this is probably not going to be used so leave it behind.
- Avoid jeans and heavy cotton (e.g. hoodies). These retain moisture and will weigh you down and make you cold and miserable!
- Make-up, luxury toiletries and hair styling products (straighteners, hairdryer etc.)

PACKING LIST

This is our recommended list to be used in all DofE Gold Practice and Qualifying expeditions.

Remember when packing that you will have to carry all your kit, so pack as light as possible whilst ensuring you have all the essential items. Everything will need to be packed into an approx. 65 litre Rucksack and all items are to be waterproofed either with a rucksack liner or by using “exped” type individual bags.

Remember too that you will be carrying elements of your group kit (tents appropriate for the number in the group, along with stoves and fuel, maps of the area (2 per group) and compasses (2 per group)) in addition to your own personal kit – so leave room for these.

Refer back to the information above for more information and guidance on the items needed.

Mandatory Items: These items are required by all participants and must be carried

Item	Description	Got it	Packed it
Walking Boots	Ensure good fit, and waterproof		
Waterproof Jacket/Coat	Does not have to be Gore-Tex but must have taped seams		
Waterproof over trousers	As above		

Sleeping Bag	We recommend a 3-season bag which must be in waterproof bag.		
Sleep Mat	Either self-inflating, or closed cell foam		

Essentials Items: These items are necessary for a successful expedition.

Item	Description	Got it	Packed it
Walking socks (3 pairs)	NOT COTTON. Could also bring sock liners (optional)		
Technical T-shirts x3	quick drying/airtex/sports T-shirts NOT COTTON. Suggest both short and long-sleeved options		
Fleece x2	That can be worn as a mid-layer over baselayers and under your outer layer. Warmth/thickness will depend on the time of year you are completing the expedition.		
Baselayers	In sports fabric or merino		
Walking trousers	Not cotton, track style pants e.g., Adidas or Canterbury. Pairs with zip-off legs to convert to shorts can be useful		
Underwear	Sports styles are available in stretchy, breathable materials. The fewer seams the better.		
Nightwear	Lightweight		

Head torch	Spare batteries are useful		
Water bottles/hydration bladder	Must be a total of 2 litres capacity. Hard plastic bottles are recommended as they are durable and can be attached to your bag for quick access.		
Bowl	More functions than a plate		
Fork, knife, spoon or spork	You will probably be using these to cook as well as eat		
Mug	Ones with lids to keep liquids warm and avoid spills are great		
Personal first aid kit	We recommend that in addition to personal medication you need this includes: blister plasters, standard plasters, lip salve, antibac hand gel		
Wash kit	Toothbrush, toothpaste, wet wipes, small travel towel and deodorant is all that is required		
Toilet paper and Nappy Sacks	1 roll is enough		
Trowel	1 per group		

Weather dependent items: Participants should look at weather forecasts before the expedition

Item	Description	Got it	Packed it
Warm hat	Woollen or fleece		
Gloves	Lightweight pair		

Sun hat	Can also be used to keep rain off your face! You may also want to bring a buff to protect your head and/or neck		
Sun glasses	Make sure they have UV protection, preferably with a hard case.		
Sun Block	Travel sizes are handy		

Non-essential items: Up to you

Item	Description	Got it	Packed it
Insect repellent	Depending on location and time of year		
Flip flops	Or similar lightweight footwear to rest your feet in camp - after cooking only.		
Small pocket tool			

Group kit (in addition to tent, stove, fuel and maps that we will provide): These are items you need to bring but that may be shared among the group

Item	Description	Got it	Packed it
2 boxes of matches	To be kept in plastic bag		
Note book and pencil	To be kept in plastic bag		
Watch	Preferably 2 per group		
Orange survival bag	Preferably 2 per group		
Toilet paper	One roll will be enough!		

Scourer	Small amount of bio degradable washing liquid also useful		
Zip lock bags/bin bags	For rubbish and waterproofing small items		
Food	In addition to personal snack choices the team will plan a menu and share the food out among the group. Chewing gum is not permitted on expeditions. <i>Covid-19: currently participants will plan their own menu and cook their own food to avoid any cross-contamination</i>		

