



GIRL GUIDES
AUSTRALIA

LIGHTWEIGHT CAMPING AND HIKING

*Extract: Introduction to
Lightweight Camping*

A RESOURCE KIT FOR GUIDES AND LEADERS

Introduction

Welcome to our lightweight resource kit. This kit was born out of an idea and a dream that more girls would get the opportunity to go hiking through Guiding.

As the world gets busier and cities get bigger it can be hard to find the time and the opportunity to get out into the natural world. Many of us do not have the skills or the knowledge to know how to get along without a fridge or esky, we do not know how much water we would use in a day, how to pack enough into a pack for 3 days. Most of us have never had practical experience using a map or a compass, if any experience at all – let alone trying to estimate how long it will take us to walk somewhere with a pack on and know whether we are going to make it to our camping spot in time!

Lord Baden-Powell said “nature study is the key activity in Scouting and Guiding”, we hope that this kit helps you, as Leaders and as Guides, to gain the skills, knowledge and some practical experiences to gain the confidence you need to take hopefully your first step of many into the great outdoors.

What is lightweight camping or hiking?

Lightweight skills are about being able to camp and hike using only the gear that you carry on your back, including food, sleeping gear, your tent, clothes and anything else you need.

Why go lightweight camping or hiking?

There are lots of reasons you would choose to go lightweight hiking. Some people go to achieve a purpose, such as gain a badge or an Award. It might be for the love of the outdoors and to feel a connectedness to nature. Others go just for fun. Beautiful and remote places can only be accessed on foot such as the more southern and northern parts of mainland Australia.

Lightweight camping and hiking will teach you life skills such as independence and confidence in your own ability to look after yourself, you will make new friends, enjoy adventures and get some physical activity and relaxation away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

What is this kit for?

This kit is designed as an introduction to lightweight skills. It is full of information, suggested activities, suggested programs and further discussion points to aid you in your lightweight journey. The times suggested are just that, a suggestion and may vary according to the skills, knowledge and experience of the group.

Who is this kit for?

This kit is for anyone with no to moderate lightweight knowledge or experience. It is designed to be able to be used by both Leaders and Guides interested in this area. For those who have some lightweight experience, you are sure to find something new or different.

“At first, I didn't know much about lightweight camping and wasn't sure what it was all about. I learnt it's just building on all the camping knowledge I've already got from Guiding. It wasn't nearly as overwhelming as I thought it was going to be. I was proud of my new skills.”

- Laura



Choosing Lightweight

There are a variety of ways to camp lightweight. Whilst each is based on similar lightweight principles, they differ in the amount of hiking you do and how often you move your campsite.

Established Site

An established campsite has access to running water and toilets. This form of lightweight camping normally involves setting up camp once, staying at the site for the duration of your camp and then packing up when it is home time. This allows you to bring more luxury items as you do not carry them as much.

Bush Site

Bush sites may not have running water or toilets which means you may need to carry your own water and dig your own toilets. These sites are often found in more remote and untouched camping areas and require you to hike in carrying everything on your back. Generally you will stay at the same site for the duration of your camp.

Expedition

Expeditions involve hiking or walking from campsite to campsite. As you spend the majority of your day hiking, you will want your pack to be as light as possible. Although, it is important that you carry everything you require, especially food and water.

It is simply a matter of choice what type of lightweight camping you wish to participate in. There are many options depending on your desire and skill levels. For example, beginners may like to stay at an established site and participate in day walks to get use to hiking before starting expeditions. Investigating maps thoroughly is the way to get information about the type of camp sites and walks available. From there, you can make an educated decision about what type of lightweight camping is suitable for you. You may either start with a group of people and plan a walk from there, or have a specific trip in mind and find a group.



As a general guide, beginners walk approximately 3 km/hr. It is suggested you walk for a maximum of 4 hours a day including rest periods. Those with a bit of experience will cover approximately 4km/hr and walk for a maximum of 6 hours a day with breaks. Experienced walkers can walk at 4km/hr for a maximum of 8 hours a day including rest. These are estimations only and are calculated based on carrying a full hike pack.



If you are hiking, it is important that you carefully plan out your walks day by day before your camp. The last thing you want is to have estimated a walk that is too long for a day and be stuck at dusk, hours from your campsite. As such, you need to examine the distance between sites and the difficulty of terrain in deciding if the walk selected is appropriate to your skill level and wishes. Take into consideration that walking with a large back pack is significantly slower and more tiring than normal walking.

As with choosing a camp site, it is very useful to look at maps and search the internet for information about particular walks or parks when choosing what walk to complete. It is important that you have a clear appreciation of what track and terrain you will be up against before you start your hiking. There are techniques to use including route planning and completing a cross section to help you get a better understanding of the terrain you will encounter (see **Map Reading** section).'

ACTIVITY 1 CAPSITE LOCATIONS

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Map

Preparation: None

Look at the following map and see what campsites you can locate. Are they bush or established campsites? With what knowledge of the campsites you have, what precautions would you need to take?

ACTIVITY 2 PLAN A BEGINNER'S WALK

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: Map, Pen and Paper

Preparation: None

Briefly plan a walk for a beginner group, an intermediate group and an experienced group of hikers. They are away for 1 night each and need to start and finish at the same spot. Where are they going to camp? Why? Make sure the walk is of appropriate length for the different groups.

Treading Softly

While it is fantastic to get out and about in the outdoors, it is important that we remember that the environment is finite and fragile. It is a sensitive and valuable resource which we need to look after to ensure that it is there for future generations to enjoy. We have the responsibility to take care of our environment and encourage and teach others to do the same.

Here are some ways to tread softly in the environment:

Use existing campsites and tracks

Where ever practical, use existing camp sites and tracks. It is easier and has less impact on the environment. They have been made to be used and for specific reasons. Do not cut corners or create new tracks. This is simply to minimise the damage to the environment you are visiting. If you have to travel across untracked ground, it is best that you spread out to disperse any damage to the terrain and vegetation. Remember to leave gates as you have find them and obey any signs you come across, especially those referring to private property.

Protect water resources

We need to conserve the quantity and preserve the quality of water in the bush. When there are more campers around in autumn and summer particularly, the demand for water is high and careless practises can degrade the quality. Make sure you scatter any used washing or cooking water at least 100 metres away from any water source such as streams so that it will be filtered on its way back into the watercourse. It is best to minimise the amount of detergent used to wash up with and use an environmentally friendly one where possible. In general, do your best to use as few chemicals as possible.

Use a stove to cook on instead of campfires

Firewood has become a scarce resource, particularly in popular camping and walking areas. Dead wood plays an important role in our natural ecosystems and provides homes for many of our animals. As such, campfires are now banned in many places, particularly State and National Parks. Where campfires are allowed, use an existing fireplace where possible, ensure the surrounding environment is cleared, keep fire size to a minimum and familiarise yourself with and stick to the fire regulations current in your area. Before you go to bed, make sure your fire is completely extinguished. Use water to do this where possible. To check the ashes are sufficiently extinguished, you should be able to touch them with your hand. Scatter the ashes before you leave.

As an alternative to cooking on an open fire, modern stoves are efficient, quick and easy to operate. They are lightweight, clean, good in wet weather and safer than open fires in high fire danger periods. They are the more environmentally friendly option.

Bury toilet wastes

Where ever possible use the toilets provided at campsite and along the walks. In areas without toilets or where they are full, you need to bury your faecal waste and toilet paper at least 100 metres from any campsites, tracks and water sources. Dig a hole about 15cm deep, not including snow where applicable. Sanitary pads and tampons need to be carried out as they are not safe for the environment. For more information, see Hygiene and Toilets section.

Carry out all rubbish

What you carry in, you must carry out. Therefore, it is helpful to think about the amount of rubbish you will gather as you plan your trip. You need to consider the packaging of your food products when deciding your menu and what you purchase. It is essential that you carry out all your own rubbish and do not leave behind anything including food scraps. To further protect our environment, clean up the waste left behind by other inconsiderate bush visitors.



Some National and State Parks have specific restrictions. Check out if this is the case where you are going so you do the right thing.

ACTIVITY 1 TREADING SOFTLY PERFORMANCE

Time: 15-20 Minutes

Equipment: Pen and Paper

Preparation: None

In Patrols, create a song, rhyme, poem or skit about treading softly and perform your creation to each other.