



## Outdoor Skills Patch

The Outdoor Skills Patch program is a progressive, four-level program to help Girl Scouts of all levels develop their outdoor skills. Through this patch program, girls will get hands-on experience practicing each skill while developing a love and appreciation for nature and the outdoors along the way. Girls will improve their outdoor interest, competence, and confidence while working on this patch to be ready for their next outdoor adventure! This patch is intended to be completed in addition to existing Girl Scout programs. It is not meant to replace journeys or badge work.

## How to Earn the Patch

The main fire patch is available for purchase anytime from the Girl Scouts of Colorado shop. Each skill area features one activity per patch level for Girl Scouts to complete. As girls earn each level, the corresponding log can be added below the fire. To earn each level of the patch, girls will complete every activity that is at and below the level they are attempting to earn. For example, a Junior can earn the Level III – Outdoor Adventurer patch by completing every Level I, Level II, and Level III activity in the patch program. It is recommended that girls complete the patch level that corresponds with their Girl Scouts program level as outlined below.

The levels in this patch program are:

- Level I – Nature Novice for Daisies & Brownies
- Level II – Outdoor Explorer for Brownies & Juniors
- Level III – Outdoor Adventurer for Juniors & Cadettes
- Level IV – Master of the Outdoors for Cadettes, Seniors, & Ambassadors

This patch program includes the following skill areas:

- Knots & Lashings
- Fire Building
- Plant & Animal Identification
- Outdoor Gear
- Wildlife Safety
- Outdoor Cooking
- First Aid
- Navigation
- Outdoor Tools
- Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills



## Purchase the Patch

Purchase your Outdoor Skills Patch through the [Girl Scouts of Colorado Shop](#) online, in person, or over the phone.

## Patch Completion Checklist

### Level I – Nature Novice

#### Knots & Lashings

- Use knots to build an indoor or outdoor fort

#### Fire Building

- Build an edible fire

#### Plant & Animal Identification

- Identify 5 Colorado bugs or mammals

#### Outdoor Gear

- Explore different clothing materials

#### Wildlife Safety

- Use the “rule of thumb”

#### Outdoor Cooking

- Plan, prepare, and pack a no-cook snack or meal

#### First Aid

- Practice preventing common injuries

#### Navigation

- Make your own map

#### Outdoor Tools

- Explore the many uses of bandanas

#### Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills

- Create signal systems with your buddy, your family, and your troop

### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

#### Knots & Lashings

- Use knots to create a dish line

#### Fire Building

- Learn how to use fire starters

#### Plant & Animal Identification

- Identify 10 Colorado wildflowers or plants

#### Outdoor Gear

- Practice layering and explore outerwear

#### Wildlife Safety

- Learn about and practice different ways to keep food safe from wildlife

#### Outdoor Cooking

- Practice using a camp stove and help cook a meal on it

#### First Aid

- Practice caring for common injuries and ailments

#### Navigation

- Plan a route on a trail

#### Outdoor Tools

- Learn how to use a trowel and how to go to the bathroom in the woods

#### Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills

- Practice using various items as signaling devices

## Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

### Knots & Lashings

- Use knots to set up a tarp shelter

### Fire Building

- Create your own fire accelerants

### Plant & Animal Identification

- Identify 10 Colorado birds

### Outdoor Gear

- Practice packing for day and overnight trips

### Wildlife Safety

- Learn about snakes and how to safely avoid them

### Outdoor Cooking

- Cook using a Dutch oven

### First Aid

- Put together your own first aid kit

### Navigation

- Practice using a compass

### Outdoor Tools

- Explore water filters and treatments

### Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills

- Research devices and technology that can be used to signal for help in the outdoors. Practice using different systems or apps on your adventures

## Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

### Knots & Lashings

- Use square and shear lashings to build a shelter and a tripod

### Fire Building

- Light, build, and put out a fire safely

### Plant & Animal Identification

- Identify 10 Colorado trees and learn about the history of wildfires and healthy forests

### Outdoor Gear

- Test different outdoor sleeping systems

### Wildlife Safety

- Learn about big animals in Colorado and what to do if you encounter one

### Outdoor Cooking

- Explore backpacking stoves and meals

### First Aid

- Practice improvising first aid materials

### Navigation

- Practice advanced mapmaking and using natural navigation

### Outdoor Tools

- Explore and safely use a pocketknife

### Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills

- Practice STOP and practice your plans

## Additional Resources and Badge Earning Opportunities

Please review [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) before completing any of the activities in this patch program. Check out the [Award and Badge Explorer](#) for more information about Outdoor Badges and Journeys. The chart below matches each of the topics covered in this patch program with related badges for each Girl Scout program level. Before or after earning this patch, girls may further practice and apply the skills in this patch program by earning these related badges.

Outdoor Skills Patch Topic	Related Badges to Explore					
	Daisy	Brownie	Junior	Cadette	Senior	Ambassador
Knots & Lashings	Buddy Camper	Cabin Camper Outdoor Adventurer	Eco Camper	Primitive Camper Trailblazing	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper
Fire Building		Cabin Camper Eco Friend Outdoor Adventurer	Eco Camper	Primitive Camper	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper
Plant & Animal Identification	Eco Learner	Eco Friend Bugs	Flowers Eco Camper	Animal Helpers Eco Trekker Trees	Eco Explorer	Eco Advocate
Outdoor Gear	Buddy Camper Eco Learner	Cabin Camper Hiker Outdoor Adventurer	Eco Camper	Primitive Camper	Adventure Camper Trail Adventure	Survival Camper Trail Adventure
Wildlife Safety	Buddy Camper	Cabin Camper Eco Friend		Primitive Camper	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper
Outdoor Cooking	Buddy Camper	Cabin Camper	Eco Camper	Primitive Camper Trailblazing	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper Trail Adventure
First Aid		Brownie First Aid	Junior First Aid	Trailblazing Trail Adventure Cadette First Aid	Senior First Aid	Ambassador First Aid
Navigation			Geocacher	Trailblazing	Adventure Camper Trail Adventure	Survival Camper
Outdoor Tools				Eco Trekker Trailblazing	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper
Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills	Buddy Camper	Outdoor Adventurer		Primitive Camper Trailblazing	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper

## Knots & Lashings

Knot tying is a classic outdoor skill that all Girl Scouts should learn and apply during their adventures! Knots and lashings are useful for so many things – from hanging items out to dry to building a tripod to hang a Dutch oven over the fire. These activities are meant to help you learn, apply and practice tying some of the most useful knots for outdoor activities. One of the best types of rope for outdoor activities is 505 paracord because it is small, light, and incredibly strong, but you can complete these activities using any rope-like and stick-like items you have at home – shoelaces, yarn, pencils, sticks you found at the park, etc. Get creative and have fun with it!

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Use knots to build an indoor or outdoor fort.*

Instructions: Practice tying the knots listed below and use them to build an indoor blanket fort or an outdoor canvas or tarp fort.

- Knots you can use to secure your fabric of choice: [Overhand Knot](#) or a [Running Loop](#)
- Hitches you can use to hold your fabric up and away from the ground or to stake it down: [Double Half Hitch](#) or [Clove Hitch](#)



### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Use knots to create a dish line.*

Instructions: Practice tying a [Bowline Knot](#) and a [Canadian Jam/Arbor Knot](#) and use them to create a dish drying line. Set up your line and practice tying dishes or other objects to it using all the knots you know!

### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Use knots to set up a tarp shelter.*

Instructions: Practice tying a [Bowline Knot](#) with a [Halter Hitch](#) and/or a [Trucker's Hitch](#) to set up a tarp shelter. You can also use [this tutorial](#) to help you with the whole process!

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Use square and shear lashings to build a shelter and a tripod.*

Instructions: Learn how to make [square](#) and [shear](#) lashings and use them to build a tripod and a shelter. Practice building these structures, and if you can, test the strength of your structure by hanging things from your tripod or putting tarp or fabric over your shelter to test it out! Bonus - now that you know how to make square and shear lashings, you can use them to create any structures you want or need during your next campout like a table or dishwashing station!

### Additional Knots & Lashings Resources

- Easy to follow, step-by-step animations for nearly 200 knots: <https://www.animatedknots.com/>
- Girl Scouts 10 Essential Knots: [https://blog.girlscouts.org/2019/06/10-essential-knots-for-girl-scouts.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed:+girlscouts/rGjB+\(Girl+Scout+Blog\)](https://blog.girlscouts.org/2019/06/10-essential-knots-for-girl-scouts.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+girlscouts/rGjB+(Girl+Scout+Blog))
- Knot Terminology: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_knot\\_terminology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_knot_terminology)

## Fire Building

There is no better bonding experience than gathering around a campfire, roasting marshmallows, and singing songs! These activities will help you learn the things you need to start and put out a fire safely and successfully. Remember that you do not need to be camping to practice these skills! If you have a fire pit or pan, or another safe vessel that will contain a flame, you can practice safely starting and putting out small fires to prepare for your next campout!

Safety considerations for fire building:

- Follow all [fire restrictions or bans in your area](#)
- Only start a fire in a designated fire ring, fire pit, or fire pan
- Always have an extinguisher nearby (fire extinguisher, bucket of water, bucket of sand, etc.)
- Keep hair tied back and loose clothing tucked in
- Keep an athletic stance or kneel around the fire on solid ground so you can move away quickly if needed
- Never leave a fire unattended
- Stay with a fire until it has completely stopped burning and is no longer warm
- Consult the “Outdoor Cooking” section of [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- ALWAYS HAVE ADULT SUPERVISION

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Build an edible fire.*

Instructions: On a plate, create a fire ring/circle of safety using mini marshmallows or some other food that can look like a fire ring. In the center of the ring, create a small pile of “tinder” using small pretzels or some other food that can resemble small sticks. On top of and around the “tinder” you will put your “fuel” using larger diameter pretzels or some other food that can resemble big sticks. To “light” your fire, put candy corn or any other red/orange candy on top to represent the flames. Now you can eat your fire!



### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Learn how to use fire starters.*

Instructions: Gather any [fire starters](#) that you have. Examples of common fire starters include lighters, matches, and ferro rods.

- Lighters: Practice using a lighter by lighting it and putting it out by blowing on it or releasing the button.
- Matches: To practice lighting matches, grab a bucket of water and your matchbox and go outside. Then practice striking the match on the box. You will need to use a little pressure and speed to create enough friction to create a flame. Once you have a flame on your match, hold it sideways for a moment before blowing it out and/or putting it in the water bucket. Take a deep breath before striking a match and stay calm. Do not fling your match when it is lit. Hold it steady then put it out.
- Ferro rod: If you have one, practice using a ferro rod. Over a bucket of water or a fire safe container, practice making sparks with your ferro rod using a striker. Remember that it takes a little pressure and speed to create enough friction for a spark.

### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Create your own fire accelerants.*

Instructions: Create two or three [fire accelerants](#) that you can store with your camping gear. Two popular fire accelerants are dryer lint stuffed toilet paper rolls and cotton balls covered in petroleum jelly. Pitch wood is another excellent fire accelerant that can be found in nature. Learn more about pitch wood, how it forms, and where you might find it. Practice using your fire accelerants and see which ones are most effective. Pack your favorites for your next campout.



### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Light, build, and put out a fire safely.*

Instructions: Now that you understand fire safety, know about parts of a fire, and how to use fire starters and accelerants, you are ready to build a fire! Start with your safety steps and gather your materials. Have your tinder, kindling, fuel, and extinguisher nearby and ready. Start by making and lighting a small pile of tinder – you can use a fire accelerant to help if you need it! Once you have a strong flame started, add some kindling, taking care not to suffocate your fire. When your kindling is burning steadily, you can add your fuel a little at a time. Keep your fire small and contained, enjoy its warmth, and then make sure to completely extinguish it when you are finished.

#### Additional Fire Building Resources

- Girl Scouts Songs to sing around the fire: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GirlScoutSongs>
- Campfire Stories: <https://www.ultimatecampresource.com/camp-activities/campfire-stories/>

## Plant & Animal Identification

Being an outdoor master means that you are a constant learner and explorer. The purpose of these activities is to help you take time to observe when you are out in nature so that you can learn more about plants and animals, their natural habitats, and be able to identify and name specific species that you can find here in Colorado. There is nothing better than being able to name a bird when you hear it sing, a flower when you see its petals, or a critter when you spot its scat!

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Identify 5 Colorado bugs or mammals.*

Instructions: Using books, field guides, apps, or the help of an adult, identify 5 Colorado [bugs](#) or [mammals](#). These can be bugs or animals that you find near your home or at your favorite park or trail. Learn the name of each one, where it lives, and what it eats. Draw a picture of each bug or animal you found.



### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Identify 10 Colorado wildflowers or plants.*

Instructions: Use the [Seek app](#) or any other website, field guide, book, or app of your choice to identify 10 Colorado wildflowers or plants. The Seek app is free and easy to use and does not require you to create a profile. Simply take a photo of the plant you want to identify and the app will help you identify it! An excellent alternative for identifying plants is to use the [Botany in a Day](#) method of observing patterns to identify plants by their plant families. Try identifying plants near your home or on your favorite trails.

### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Identify 10 Colorado birds.*

Instructions: Using the [Merlin Bird ID app](#), or any other website, book, or app of your choice, observe and identify 10 different birds. The Merlin Bird ID app is free and easy to use and does not require you to create a profile. Simply select your general location then answer questions about the relative size and color of the bird and what you saw it doing and the app will give you a list of possible birds. Once you have found your bird, read more about it, and listen to its call. See if you can spot or hear your birds at other trails and parks!

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Identify 10 Colorado trees and learn about the history of wildfires and healthy forests.*

Instructions: Use the [Seek app](#), or any other website, book, or app of your choice to identify 10 different Colorado trees. The Seek app is free and easy to use and does not require you to create a profile. Simply take a photo of the tree you want to identify and the app will help you identify it! Now that you know more about Colorado trees, watch [this video](#) and/or read [this article](#) to learn more about the history of wildfires and how fire can contribute to a healthy coniferous forest.

### Additional Plant & Animal Identification Resources

- Peterson Field Guides are a popular series of guides for identifying birds, plants, insects, and animals - <https://www.hmhbbooks.com/series/peterson-field-guides>



## Outdoor Gear

In this section you will explore outdoor clothing and gear. Your clothing and your gear should help keep you safe and comfortable on your adventures. Knowing what to wear, what to pack, and how to pack it is an important part of recreating in the outdoors. Dressing and packing for outdoor adventures is about being resourceful and using what you have. You do not need the fanciest, most lightweight gear nor do you need name brand clothing to be able to enjoy the outdoors. What matters most is that you feel good in the clothes you wear on your trip and that your gear meets your needs.

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Explore different clothing materials.*

Instructions: If you look at the tag on all your clothes, you can see what the fabric is made of. Cotton, polyester, nylon, spandex – all of these are common clothing fibers. You may hear people say that “synthetic” fabrics are best for outdoor activities. Synthetic refers to fibers such as nylon, polyester, and spandex. Wool is also often highly recommended. These fibers are recommended for outdoor activities because they dry faster or are more moisture resistant than cotton. Cotton t-shirts can be great in summer because you want your sweat to cool you, but in colder temperatures, wool and synthetic are more comfortable. Test it out! Put on one cotton sock and one synthetic fiber or wool sock and get them both wet while they are on your feet. Which one feels better before you get them wet? Which one feels better when wet? Which one dries faster? Does one keep your foot warmer than the other? Try this with other pieces of clothing. Put on a cotton t-shirt and jeans and run through the sprinklers. Do the same thing with a polyester shirt and nylon pants. Which outfit feels better in warm or cool temperatures? Which one feels better when dry or wet? What would you rather wear on a hot day, in the rain, or in the snow and why? Tell an adult about what you have learned.

### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Practice layering and explore outerwear.*

Instructions: Learn more about [how to layer clothing](#) and why it is a recommended practice. Separate your clothes into base layers, middle layers, and outer layers. Mix and match your clothing from each pile and put various shirts and jackets on together. Step outside with them on. Which combinations are warmest? Which ones are most breathable? Which ones keep you cool? Which layers are easy to put in your pack? What would you want on a hot day, in the rain, or in the snow and why? Try on different jackets and test them in different conditions. For example, put on your rain jacket and do a few of the following things: stand in front of a fan, run up and down the stairs 3 times, stand out in the sun, and/or run the sleeve under water. Write down your observations about how you feel in that jacket in each situation. Did it keep you warm? Did it keep you dry? Did water soak through it? How long did it take for water to soak through? Could you feel the wind from the fan or from outside come through? When you ran around in it, did you get sweaty and hot? Try this activity with your winter jacket, your windbreaker, your fleece pullover, or any other jacket you have.



### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Practice packing for day and overnight trips.*

Instructions: Learn about the [Ten Essentials for Outdoor Adventures](#) and then look in your day pack. Do you always carry at least one item from each category? Put items from the Ten Essentials in your pack so that they are ready for your next day trip. What if you were going on a backpacking or overnight trip? Compare your list of what you would bring on an overnight trip to this [backpacking checklist](#). Is there anything you forgot about or would you pack anything more? Practice [packing a backpacking pack](#) with the gear you have at home and carry it around your house for a while or take it on a short hike. How heavy is it? Does the pack feel comfortable? Could you carry your pack for a few hours or a full day? What is the heaviest item in your pack? Are you carrying any items that you could maybe leave at home? What is different about packing for a backpacking trip vs. a day hike?

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Explore different sleeping systems.*

Instructions: Learn the different [ways that people sleep outdoors](#) – [tents](#), [hammocks](#), [tarps](#), [bivy sacks](#), sleeping under the stars. Try as many as you can in the backyard or on a campout or check them out and test them at an outdoor retailer. Learn about the pros and cons of each one. If you have a bunch of different sleeping bags, pads, a tent, hammock, or tarp at home, try using various combinations of each one to see which one you like most. Learn about the different types of [sleeping bags](#) and [pads](#), the materials they are made of, and the pros and cons of each design. If you do not have sleeping bags, pads, or other outdoor equipment at home, try them out at your local outdoor retailer, borrow from friends, or rent something new for your next camping night. After trying as many combinations as possible, decide what works best for you. What sleeping system works best for the type of camping you like to do and the environment that you like to camp in? What sleeping system is most comfortable for you that will allow you to get a good night's sleep?



## Wildlife Safety

Anytime you are outdoors, there is a chance that you will encounter wildlife. While some animals may be harmless and all are generally much more afraid of humans than we are of them, it is still very important to respect their space, understand their behaviors, and know what to do when you see them. These activities will help you identify potentially dangerous wildlife that you could encounter on outdoor adventures and determine how you can keep yourself and the animals safe when recreating in their habitats.

### Level I – Nature Novice

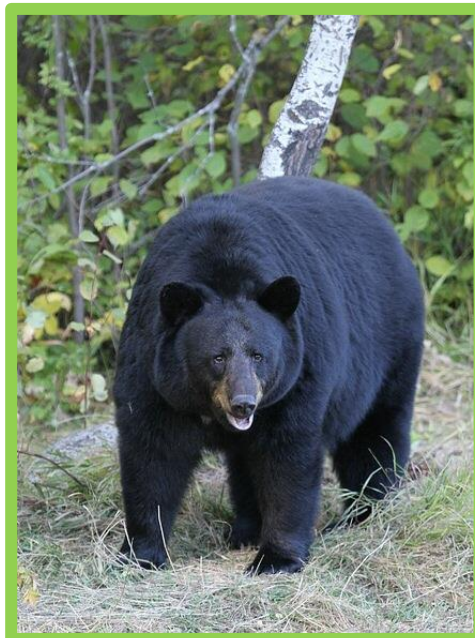
*Activity: Use the “rule of thumb.”*

Instructions: If you fully extend your arm, stick your thumb up, close one eye, and look at your thumb with your open eye, any wildlife behind your thumb should be fully covered – that is the “rule of thumb.” If you do that and you can see any part of an animal, you are too close. If you do that and you cannot see any part of the animal, you are likely a safe distance away. Practice using this rule at your favorite parks and trails. Remember that this applies to squirrels, rabbits, and ducks too!

### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Learn about and practice different ways to [keep food safe from wildlife](#).*

Instructions: Learn about the best ways to keep your food safe from critters on a campout. Remember that food or bear hangs are not always best (bears are exceptional tree climbers!). Learn more about how to keep you, your food, and bears safe when camping in bear territory. Learn about the rules at your favorite state and national parks for food storage so that you can be prepared for your next adventure. What food storage containers do you already have that are bear proof? If you do not have bear proof food storage, how could you make your food bear proof on a camping trip? Why is it important to keep food away from bears and other wildlife?



### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Learn about snakes and how to safely avoid them.*

Instructions: [Snakes](#) can be a common sight on warm days in the spring through the fall. Learn about snakes found in Colorado that you might see on trails and what to do if you see one. How can you quickly tell the difference between a rattlesnake, bull snake, and any other type of snake found in Colorado? What venomous snakes are found in Colorado and where might you see them? What should you do if you see a snake? How can you avoid being bitten? What should you do if you or someone you are with is bitten?

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Learn about big animals in Colorado and [what to do if you encounter one](#).*

Instructions: Learn about bears, mountain lions, and moose. Learn about where they live and how they behave. Learn what to do and how to stay safe if you see or encounter one. What motivates them? Are they territorial? How can you tell if the animal is agitated or might charge? What should you do if you spot one of these animals? Practice with a friend by having them pretend they are a bear and you try to scare them away. Ask your friend if you seemed scary to them or if they think you would have scared them away if they were a bear. Do the same thing for moose, mountain lions, and any other large animals you can think of that you might see.

## Outdoor Cooking

No campout is complete without good food! These activities will help you learn about the most practical ways to cook outside and how to plan, prepare, and cook delicious camping meals!

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Plan, prepare, and pack a no-cook snack or meal.*

Instructions: Think about your favorite snacks and meals that you eat at home. Which ones could you easily carry and put together on a hike or at a campsite? Prepare your own no-cook snack or meal for your next picnic or hike!

### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Practice using a camp stove and help cook a meal on it.*

Instructions: Learn how to set up a propane camp stove. Practice setting it up, turning it on, lighting it safely, and turning it off. Search for camping recipes or create your own recipe to prepare and cook on your camp stove. Find out if you can cook your favorite foods while camping!



### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Cook using a Dutch oven.*

Instructions: Explore the amazing world of Dutch oven cooking! Plan and prepare a meal to cook in a Dutch oven using charcoal, your home oven, and/or over a fire. For an extra fun challenge, try baking with a Dutch oven.

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Explore backpacking stoves and meals.*

Instructions: Learn about different types of [backpacking stoves](#). Practice using a few different kinds if possible or check them out at your local outdoor retailer. Read about the pros and cons of each type of stove. Practice planning, packing, and preparing three backpacking meals. Even if you do not have a backpacking stove, you can cook backpacking style meals at home using boiling water. Remember that backpacking food should be quick-cooking, nutrient dense, and include ingredients that do not require refrigeration!

### Additional Outdoor Cooking Resources & Recipes

- Cooking Methods & Recipes: <https://www.freshoffthegrid.com/>
- Classic Girl Scout Recipes:
  - <https://trailhead.gsnorcal.org/classic-outdoor-cooking-recipes-for-your-next-troop-campout/>
  - <https://www.girlscoutsla.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutsla/documents/program/outdoors/Recipes%20from%20Camping%20Skills%20Training.pdf>
  - <https://www.gsmw.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsmw/documents/GSMW%20Intro%20To%20Camp%20Cooking%20Booklet%205.19.14.pdf>

## First Aid

Injuries and illnesses happen in the outdoors. Whether you are enjoying a leisurely camping trip or thru hiking the Colorado Trail, at some point, you will get hurt or get sick and it is important to know how to care for yourself and others. If you love recreating in the outdoors, consider taking a Wilderness First Aid class once you turn 16 to learn even more about how to help when someone gets hurt on trail. No matter your age or outdoor experience, everyone should know what is in their first aid kit, how to use it, how to recognize signs and symptoms of common outdoor injuries and illnesses, and how to prevent and treat them. These activities can also help you complete the [First Aid badge](#) for your Girl Scout level!

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Practice preventing common injuries.*

Instructions: Learn about and practice preventing [common outdoor injuries and illnesses](#), including sunburns, blisters, bug bites, dehydration, heat stroke, scrapes, and bruises. Think about things you already do or things you can start doing to keep yourself protected in the outdoors. Tell a friend or family member about what you are going to do to keep yourself safe on your next outdoor adventure!



### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Practice caring for common injuries and ailments using [Wilderness First Aid fundamentals](#).*

Instructions: Learn about symptoms and practice caring for [common outdoor injuries and ailments](#), including sunburns, blisters, dehydration, altitude sickness, heat stroke, burns, scrapes, sprains, and strains. With a friend, take turns pretending the other one has a blister, altitude sickness, etc. and practice helping each other.

### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Put together your own first aid kit.*

Instructions: Put together your own first aid kit or look inside a first aid kit that you already have. You can use [this list](#) or [this list](#) to help guide your decisions about what should be in your first aid kit. Familiarize yourself with the items you have and learn how to use each one. Practice caring for bodily injuries such as wounds, joint sprains, and broken bones. With a friend, take turns pretending that the other one is hurt and practice using your first aid kit to help each other. Think about how you would care for and get someone out safely if they were hurt. What would you do if they could not walk themselves back to the trailhead or the car?

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Practice improvising first aid materials.*

Instructions: One underlying theme in wilderness first aid courses is being able to improvise and use items that you may already have with you in the backcountry to care for an injured person. For example, a jacket could be used as a sling, a backpack as a splint, a bandana as a wound dressing, etc. Set out the gear you always carry with you and look at each item as a possible first aid tool. How could you use it to help treat someone who is injured? Practice different scenarios with a friend and consider taking a Wilderness First Aid course so you can be prepared if an emergency occurs on a trip.

## Navigation

A map is one of the most essential items for outdoor activities. They are the first things you look at when planning your adventure, the first things you see when you arrive at a trailhead and the first things you try to reference when you are unsure where to go next. With a good map and compass, you can find your way anywhere, but they are useless if you do not know how to use them. These activities will help you learn how to use a map and compass to plan your adventures and keep you on the right track.

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Make your own map.*

Instructions: Learn about [parts of a map](#) and practice drawing a map of your neighborhood or favorite park. Consider including things like a compass rose, a legend, a scale, roads, and landmarks.

### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Plan a route on a trail.*

Instructions: Look at multiple maps of your favorite trail or a trail you want to explore. Determine things like distance, elevation changes, landmarks you might pass, and natural features you may see. Practice this on a trail or path near your home. Go for a walk on your route while following your map to see how well you predicted what it would be like.



### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity: Practice using a compass.*

Instructions: Practice [using a compass](#) to orient yourself at a park or trail that you are familiar with. Practice [taking a bearing](#) and getting from point to point on your map.

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity: Practice advanced mapmaking and using natural navigation.*

Instructions: Create a map of a trail on a mapping system such as CalTopo, Google Maps, or Google Earth. Use your map to determine distance, elevation, landmarks, natural features, and to estimate how long the route might take. Use GPS systems or apps like Gaia or Alltrails to track your hikes, runs, or bike rides. Practice using [natural navigation](#) skills such as determining direction using the sun, the stars, or even plants.

## Outdoor Tools

Several outdoor tools are introduced in other parts of this patch, including rope, lighters, and compasses. This section highlights additional items that are incredibly useful for outdoor activities!

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity:* Explore the many [uses of bandanas](#).

Instructions: A bandana is one of the lightest “tools” you can have for outdoor adventures. There are so many [uses for a bandana](#) – from keeping your hair out of your eyes to filtering water! Think about and practice some of the ways you can use a bandana on a hike or while camping!

### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity:* Learn how to use a trowel and how to go to the bathroom in the woods.

Instructions: Learn about [how to use the bathroom in the woods](#). Learn about what a trowel is and how to use one. Practice using a trowel by digging a cat hole in an appropriate spot. Set up your own bathroom kit to keep in your pack.

### Level III – Outdoor Adventurer

*Activity:* Explore [water filters and treatments](#).

Instructions: Learn about different types of water filters and other ways to treat water to make it safe for drinking. Learn about how to find and collect water in the outdoors. Explore water filters and treatment tablets at your local outdoor retailer (or explore at home if you have them!) Why is water filtration and treatment necessary? What are the pros and cons of various types of water treatment products? What do you think would be the best method for you and your style of camping?

### Level IV – Master of the Outdoors

*Activity:* Explore and safely use a pocketknife.

Instructions: A sharp knife is one of the most important and useful survival tools. Learn about pocketknife safety and practice using your knife following [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). Practice using your knife to prepare food for outdoor cooking, to create kindling for a fire, or to whittle a gift for a friend!



## Outdoor Safety & Survival Skills

There are many things that fall into the category of survival skills. This section of the patch highlights other survival skills that can often be overlooked. In any emergency, the first thing you should do is STOP: Stop, Think, Observe, and make Plans. Stop moving, sit down, breathe, take time to look around you, assess your resources, and then take a few minutes to make multiple plans for staying alive, being found, and getting home safely. The following activities will allow you to practice additional survival and safety strategies.

### Level I – Nature Novice

*Activity: Create signal systems with your buddy, your family, and your troop.*

Instructions: In Girl Scouts we use the buddy system, which means that you pair up with a buddy and stick with them on trails, when going to the bathroom, or walking from one activity to another. You and your buddy take care of each other and you each make sure the other is safe. Create a signal system to use with your buddy, your family, and your troop for outdoor adventures. This could be a whistle, a hoot, clapping, or any other noise or combination of noises to let each other know that you are safe, that you need help, or that there is an emergency.



### Level II – Outdoor Explorer

*Activity: Practice using various items as [signaling devices](#).*

Instructions: One of the first things you should think about in an emergency is signaling for help. Knowing how to build a shelter, find water, and build a fire is all great, but if you have not made any signs to anyone that you are there, you may never be found. Find items around your house that can be used to signal for help in emergency situations. Practice using them outside and then store what you can in your day pack. For example, some backpack manufacturers put whistles on chest straps, so you always have a whistle within reach. Another household item that you can use to signal for help in emergency situations is a small mirror or the back of any shiny, reflective object. When you catch the sun just right, you can direct a beam of bright light at others or at aircrafts (do not shine lights at airplanes or helicopters unless you are in a real emergency!). Bright bandanas, pins, or bright colored tape can be used like a breadcrumb trail if you need to move off a trail to use the bathroom so you can find your way back – or if you get lost, they can help people find and rescue you. Learn more about ways to signal for help in emergency situations and carry any useful items you find with you on your next hike. Practice with a friend! Go to a park or wooded area and play mirror tag, Marco polo with whistles, or hide-and-seek with bright bandanas, fabric, or tape.



### **Level III – Outdoor Adventurer**

*Activity: Research devices and technology that can be used to signal for help in the outdoors. Practice using different systems or apps on your adventures.*

Instructions: There are many signaling devices that are used in outdoor situations, including [personal locator beacons \(PLBs\)](#), [satellite \(SAT\) phones](#), GPS devices, and apps on your cellphone. Learn about these types of devices and technologies, how they work, and what you would like to try using on your adventures. Learn more about [Strava Beacon](#), [AllTrails Lifeline](#), and [Garmin Live Track](#). If you are in the outdoors a lot, you might also consider looking into a [Road ID](#) and an [American Alpine Club Membership](#) or a [CORSAR card](#) in case of emergencies. Last but not least, consider [setting up your emergency contacts in your phone](#) so that others can contact your family if you are experiencing an emergency and are unable to use your phone to call for help. Practice using these on walks around your neighborhood and your next hike.

### **Level IV – Master of the Outdoors**

*Activity: Practice STOP and practice your plans.*

Instructions: At a park or trail that you are very familiar with, pretend that you are lost and all you have is your day hike or backpacking pack. STOP (Stop, Think, Observe, make Plans) and then go through your Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, etc. Practice all your survival skills. This may include signaling, building emergency or long-term shelters, collecting water, starting a fire (or pretending to start a fire), or anything else that you might do in an emergency.