

Trail Adventure Resources & Activities

Cadette | Senior | Ambassador

Summary of Badge Requirements

Cadette

- **Hiking:** Go on a three day hikes with each hike being at least 6 hours. Go on one hike that covers at least 10 miles, one hike that covers at least 2,000 feet in cumulative elevation gain, and one hike that is on a different type of terrain from previous hikes you have completed.
- **Trail Running:** Train to build endurance for running at least a 3-mile distance at a comfortable pace.

Senior

- **Hiking:** Go on a 3-day, 2-night backpacking trip that covers at least 10 miles of hiking.
- **Trail Running:** Train for and compete in a 5K or 10K trail race.

Ambassador

- **Hiking:** Go on a 5-day, 3-night backpacking trip that covers at least 20-25 miles of hiking.
- **Trail Running:** Help guide another girl in the sport of trail running with at least 8 training sessions over a 2-month period.

How to Find Trails



Using the AllTrails app or website is a great way to find hiking trails in your area! Filter by length, difficulty, elevation gain, and more. View user comments to get an idea of recent trail reports. Note: AllTrails sometimes inaccurately reports trail distance and difficulty. It is best when used in conjunction with other websites and apps such as Hiking Project.



Use the Hiking Project app or website to quickly browse trails across the state. On Hiking Project, you can see exactly where the trail is located, get a detailed description of the trail, see the elevation profile, and get driving directions within seconds. The app also uses the GPS on your phone to mark where you are on the trail and where you are in elevation.



Stop by local visitor centers to pick up FREE paper maps of all the trails in the area. Add them to your map library!



Stop by your local library to borrow maps and atlases for your next adventure!



Google your county followed by the words "open space" to browse the trails near you. Sites for open spaces are maintained regularly with trail reports and maps. Don't forget about state and national parks! Protected lands are beautiful and well maintained which makes them excellent places to hike for beginners and experts alike.

Backpacking Routes and Areas in Colorado

State Parks

[Lory State Park](#) and [Golden Gate Canyon State Park](#) are great places to go on your first backpacking trip. The trails and sites are well marked, it is easy to apply for permits and reserve campsites, and the routes short. Practice using your gear or train for a longer adventure with a one-night trip at one of these parks!

Rocky Mountain National Park

[Rocky Mountain National Park](#) has a ton of backpacking routes throughout the park. Create your own route by checking out maps of backcountry sites and determining which trails you want to hike. The best part of backpacking in Rocky Mountain National park is that you can make the trip as long or short as you want, plus the park is incredibly beautiful! Make sure to apply for your permit early to get the dates and sites you want.

Other

Lost Creek Wilderness

Lost Creek Wilderness is just south of Highway 285 between Bailey and Fairplay. There are two 30-mile loops in the area that are perfect for a one- or two-night backpacking trip. Those loops are the [Lost Creek Wilderness Loop](#) and the [Brookside McCurdy Payne Loop](#). Permits are free and you can fill them out when you arrive at the trailhead.

Indian Peaks Wilderness

Indian Peaks Wilderness is located just west of Nederland. It is a very popular area for hiking and backpacking so it is best to apply for permits early and arrive at the trailhead early on your first day. [Devil's Thumb to King Lake](#) is one of the best backpacking routes in the area.

Section the Colorado Trail

There are 28 segments of the Colorado Trail that spans from Littleton to Durango. Choose a section of the trail to do an out-and-back or through hike a section by setting up a shuttle.

What to Pack

Remember to pack your overnight pack with the following items:

Required Gear

- Permits (if needed)
- ID & cellphone
- Two itineraries (one for someone not on your trip and one to leave in the glovebox of your car)
- Backpack
- Hiking boots or shoes
- Tent
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Weather appropriate clothing
- Map & compass
- Headlamp with extra batteries
- Sunscreen & Lip Balm
- Insect Repellent
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- First Aid Kit (a good list of items to include can be found [HERE](#))
- Survival Kit (whistle, knife, paracord, [fire starters](#), flagging tape, emergency blanket/shelter)
- Food (for ideas on backpacking recipes, check out [Fresh Off the Grid](#))
- Stove and fuel
- Cook set with light pots/pans and a pot grabber
- Dishes & bowls
- Eating utensils
- Mug/cup
- Dish soap

- Small microfiber towel
- Bear canister
- Spices
- Lighter
- Water in a bottle and/or bladder
- Water filter
- Toilet paper
- Trowel
- Extra resealable baggies
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, deodorant, feminine hygiene products)
- Personal Medications
- Gear repair kit (multi-tool, duct tape, thread & needle, paracord, any other specific items for your gear)
- Extra layers (gloves, warm hat, jacket)

Optional Gear

- Trekking poles
- Pillow
- Camera
- Outdoor journal with pen/pencil
- Book
- Cards or games
- Bandana or buff
- Watch
- Wipes
- GPS
- SAT Phone or Personal Locator Beacon



HOW TO PACK A BACKPACKING PACK

A good rule to follow when you pack your backpack for camping and hiking is to pack in three parts: bottom, middle and top.

Always pack the bottom first, balance the load by keeping heavy things in the center and stash your essentials for the trail on top. This way the things you need are always within reach and don't require taking off your pack and digging through the whole thing. Here's a breakdown of how to pack a backpack for camping and hiking.



MIDDLE OF YOUR BACKPACK:

HEAVIEST ITEMS

- stove & fuel
- food/ bear canister
- loose clothing stuffed around bear canister
- toiletries
- camp mug



MIDDLE

SIDE POCKETS:

- Trekking poles
- Tent poles
- Water bottles

HIP BELT POCKETS:

- Lip balm
- Phone



BOTTOM

BOTTOM OF YOUR BACKPACK:

LIGHT ITEMS THAT YOU WON'T NEED DURING THE DAY

- Sleeping bag in a compression sack
- sleeping pad
- loose clothing stuffed around sleeping bag to fill in gaps



WHAT GOES IN THE BRAIN:

- Travel sized bug spray and sunscreen
- Map or GPS
- Headlamp
- Camera
- Quick snack
- Spork
- Multi-tool
- Lighter



TOP

TOP OF YOUR BACKPACK:

- Rain jacket, rain pants, rain cover
- Lunch
- First Aid
- Water Filter
- Electronics in a lightweight dry sack
- Bathroom kit (shovel, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and a bag to pack out used toilet paper)



Where to Find Gear

Backpacking requires some specialty gear such as a backpack, tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, water filters, and light cookware. These items can be a bit more expensive than hiking and car camping gear, but there are plenty of ways to save on gear.

Check to see if you have a local outdoor gear rental shop in your community or in the area you are traveling to. No rental shop near you or your destination? No problem! Shops like [OutdoorsGeek](#) and [Mountain Side Gear & Rental](#) will ship gear to you for your trip. They have everything you need for your camping or backpacking trip. If you need a bike, paddling gear, or a ski package, check for a local rental shop or for places like [Epic Mountain Gear](#) with multiple locations in Colorado. Your local [REI](#) or other outdoor retailer may also offer equipment rentals. Call or check their website to find out!

Thrift and consignment stores are excellent places to look for gently used outdoor gear and clothing. Places like Goodwill or Arc can be good places to start, but you should also check out the following outdoor consignment shops and see if there are any others in your area!

[Gearage](#) in Fort Collins

[Wilderness Exchange](#) in Denver

[The Outdoorsman's Attic](#) in Denver

[Mountain Exchange](#) in Idaho Springs

[Mountain Equipment Recyclers](#) in Colorado Springs

[The Gear Junction](#) in Grand Junction

Outdoor retailers such as [REI](#) and [Sierra Trading Post](#) are also options for finding the gear and clothing you need. Watch for sales or for special events such as community gear swaps. For example, REI members can take advantage of [Garage Sales](#) where REI sells returned gear at deep discounts. [Backcountry.com](#) and [SteepandCheap.com](#) are online retailers that sell super discounted past season gear. If you are patient and keep an eye out for sales, you can find great deals on quality pieces!

Looking for recommendations on equipment? Check out [Section Hiker](#) for gear comparisons and expert tested reviews.

Training Tips

Start small and develop a routine. Go for walks or runs on trails or through parks near your home. Practice packing your overnight pack and carry it around to get used to carrying the extra weight. Slowly make your walks or runs longer and longer. Create a schedule and set goals for yourself. Track your progress as you go, either digitally or in a journal or scrapbook. Make yourself a chart that shows dates, distance, and place you walked, hiked, or ran. Take one picture on each walk, hike, or run to document your progress and see how things change from day to day and season to season. Find a tracking system that makes you excited and keeps you motivated!

Backpacking Tips and Tricks

1. **Repackage your food.** A lot of food packaging is bulky and will take up way too much space in your pack. Measure only what you need in resealable baggies so that it packs efficiently.
2. **Eliminate negative space in your pack.** Stuff clothing around your sleeping bag, fill your bear can with food and kitchen supplies, leave no space unused!
3. **Divide your gear.** If you are traveling in a group, divide items up to share the weight. Split up parts of the tent and have each person carry appropriate amounts of food and water.
4. **Test your gear before you leave.** Set up your tent, test your stove and water filter, roll out your sleeping bag, make sure everything works and is intact before you leave.
5. **Pack extra resealable bags.** Use them to store trash, keep things waterproof, repackage food on the trail, and more.
6. **Stay warm.** If you are feeling cold, put on more layers. Still cold? Eat a high calorie snack and do some jumping jacks to increase blood flow and body temperature, especially if you are about to crawl into your sleeping bag. Still cold? Fill a hard plastic water bottle with boiling water, wrap it in a jacket or another extra article of clothing, and snuggle with it in your sleeping bag.
7. **Stay hydrated.** Tired of drinking water? Pack a hydration powder/drink mix that you can mix with your water. Replenish electrolytes and hydrate at the same time. Win-win!