

Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker: Winter Hiking Workshop

AMC Worcester Chapter
November 4, 2023

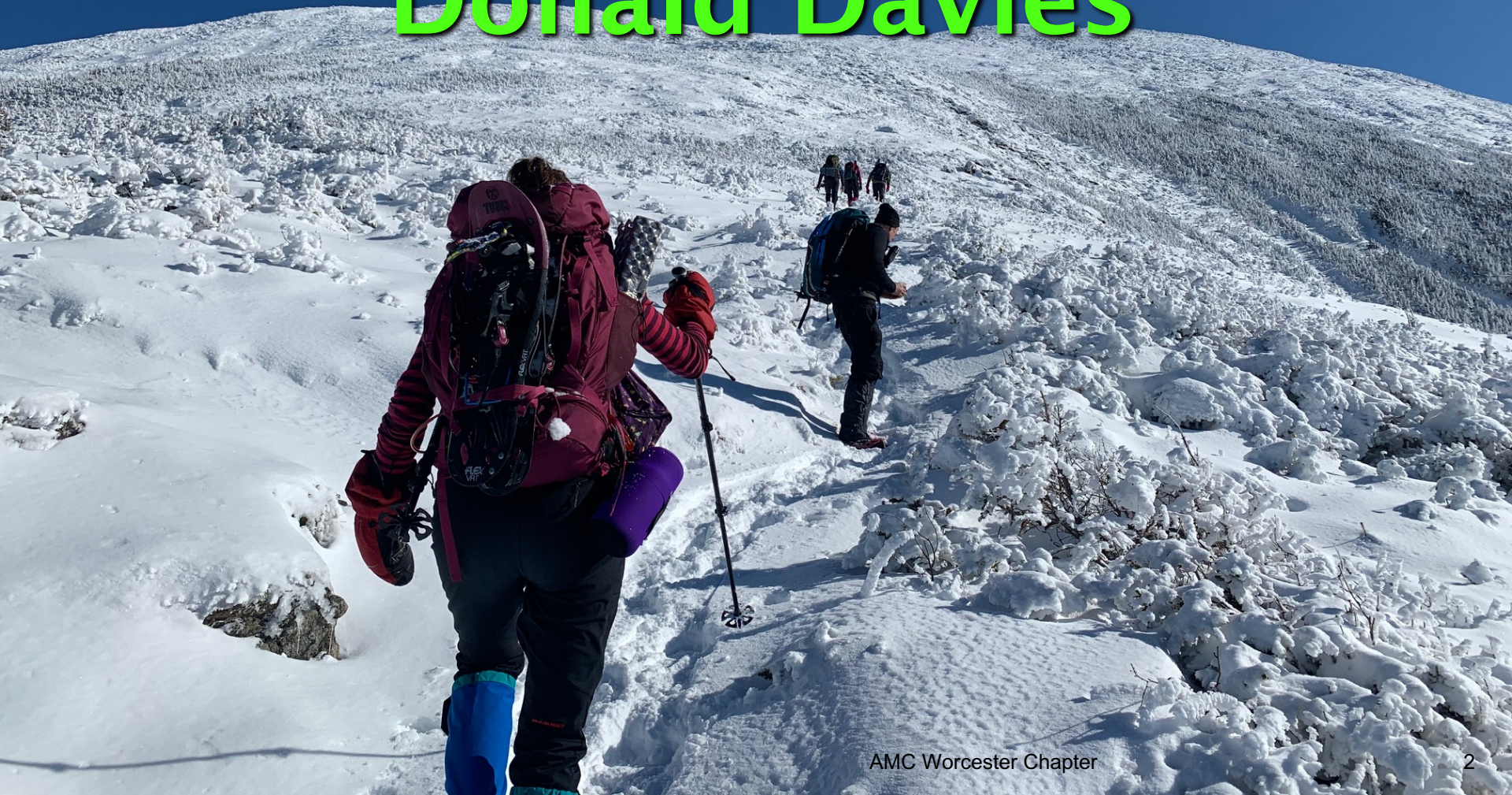
Presented by:

Donald Davies, Chris Pignatiello–Chatson, Wendy
Dziemian, Steph Keimig, Dave Kulpa



Agenda, Introductions, and Purpose

Donald Davies



Agenda

- ▶ **Introductions:** *Donald Davies*
- ▶ **Purpose of the Workshop/Hike Series:** *Donald Davies*
- ▶ **Purpose of the Screenings:** *Donald Davies*
- ▶ **Getting Ready for Winter Hiking:** *Chris Pignatiello-Chatson*
- ▶ **Hydration & Nutrition:** *Wendy Dziemian*
- ▶ **Break outside/firepit s'mores**
- ▶ **Heat Management/Clothing:** *Steph Keimig*
- ▶ **Gear, Gear, and More Gear!:** *Dave Kulpa*
- ▶ **Post Hike:** *Dave Kulpa*
- ▶ **Leadership Training:** *Donald Davies*
- ▶ **Gear Demos:** *Walt Lazarz, Denise Guillemette, Paul Glazebrook*
- ▶ **Hike around Trout Brook:** *Vanessa Butler, Linea Rowe*

Introductions

- ▶ **Donald Davies:** Leadership Chair
4-Season Hike Leader
- ▶ **Dave Kulpa:** 4-Season Hike Leader
- ▶ **Steph Keimig:** 4-Season Hike Leader
Worcester Master Leader
- ▶ **Chris Pignatiello:** Worcester Chapter Chair
4-Season Hike Leader
- ▶ **Wendy Dziemian:** Worcester Chapter Vice Chair
4-Season Hike Leader
- ▶ **Gear Demos:** Walt Lazarz: 4-Season Hike Leader
Denise Guillemette: 4-Season Hike Leader
Paul Glazebrook: 4-Season Hike Leader
Worcester Master Leader

Purpose of Workshop/Hike Series

- ▶ Audience
 - Beginner Winter Hikers
 - Gain knowledge, experience and confidence
 - Experienced Winter Hikers (refresher)
- ▶ “Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker” - Learn by Doing
 - Mt. Wachusett Gear Shakedown - Review gear/ Take a hike!
 - Beginner Track (I): Intro to Intermediate Local Winter Hikes
 - Advanced Track (II): Intermediate to Advanced Up-Country Winter Hikes
 - Other training: Crampon and Self Arrest
- ▶ Sign-Up priority is given to workshop participants for “Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker” hikes
- ▶ Current list of Hikes: www.amcworchester.org
 - Check the website for new hike postings (or subscribe to AMC Activity Digests emails)

Screenings

- ▶ Chapter's goals are to keep hikes safe and fun
 - Need to match participant's hiking level (experience and physical ability) with posted hike
 - Expect detailed "Screening" Questionnaire

- ▶ Four Elements to Hike Ratings (Worcester Method)
 1. **Distance** in miles
 2. **Pace**: Slow (< 1.5MPH), Moderate (1.5-2MPH), or Fast (>2MPH)
 3. **Terrain**: Easy, Moderate, Strenuous, & Very Strenuous
 4. **Overall difficulty**: Intro, Easy, Intermediate, Advanced, Expert

- ▶ Be honest about your fitness level and experience

Getting Ready: Chris Pignatiello-Chatson



Get Ready to Hike!

- ▶ 2 most important pieces of gear that we all possess, even if we've never hiked in winter:
 - Our Body
 - Our Brain
- ▶ Physical conditioning a must!
 - Winter hiking physically more demanding than 3-season hiking
 - The best gear on the market can't remedy poor physical fitness
 - Know your limitations and when to postpone a hike to a better time
 - The mountains will be there another day!

Get Ready to Hike!

- ▶ Take Time to Plan Your Hike & Navigation Methods
 - Review the area you will be hiking
 - Look at trail map and other relevant references
 - Recent Experiences:
 - NewEnglandTrailConditions.com
 - AllTrails.com



Get Ready to Hike!

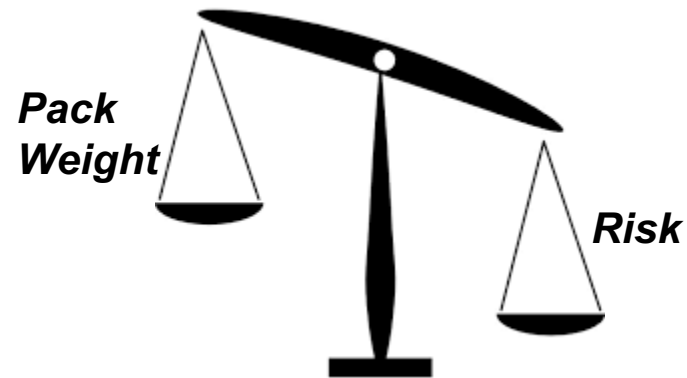
- Trail descriptions:
 - AMC Guides: White Mountains, Maine, Day Hikes
 - The 4000 Footers of the White Mountains
 - Alltrails.com, Hikingproject.com, OutdoorProject.com
- On-Trail Navigation:
 - **BRING: Waterproof map – or protected map**
 - Trail descriptions handy
 - Electronic navigation: Gaia GPS; AllTrails
 - Other: Garmin, smart watch, etc

Get Ready to Hike!

- Check weather conditions for trails and driving (up and back!)
 - Local and destination weather forecast
 - Higher Summits Forecast (MWOBS) – 48hrs
 - mountain-forecast.com (summit & valley)**
 - windy.com (temp, precip, gusts, direction)
 - Thunderstorm threat... take it seriously!
- Even if forecast for hike looks great... if the drive home won't be, *rethink your plan....*

Get Ready to Hike!

- Review your gear/Bring what is on **Gear List**
 - Emergencies happen on short and long hikes
 - (injuries, weather chgs, wrong turns, getting *WET*)
 - Rescue will likely be many hours away
 - Be prepared to hike in the dark (hike duration can be longer than expected when the “unexpected” occurs)
 - Weight vs safety



Get Ready to Hike!

- ▶ Policy of all AMC led Hikes – Stay Together!
 - Start as a group, hike as a group, end as a group
 - Hike at the pace of the slowest hiker
 - Participants should hike close enough to see the person in front and the person behind
 - Hike leaders have the right to change the plans of a hike in the best interest of the group for safety and comfort.

A wide-angle photograph of a snowy mountain landscape. The foreground is covered in snow with some dark rocks and a wooden walkway. The middle ground shows a snow-covered slope leading to a wooden fence or walkway. The background features rolling mountains under a bright sun in a clear sky.

Hydration & Nutrition: Wendy Dziemian

Winter Hydration – Techniques

- ▶ Hot Water and Insulate
 - Insulated bottle holder, wool socks, neck flask
 - Back up thermos
 - Invert wide-mouth Nalgene, Freezes at top
- ▶ Lower Freezing Temp with Sugar
 - Gatorade
 - Jell-O
 - Real sugar (not artificial sweetener)
- ▶ Keep Water Accessible
 - Reach without taking off pack
 - Encourages hydrating

Winter Hydration – Techniques

- ▶ Caution Use of Hydration Packs /AKA “Camelbacks”
 - Prone to freeze
 - Keep hose close to your body
 - Blow water back into the bladder to prevent water from freezing in hose
 - Insulate tubes and mouthpiece
 - Have back-up –> Wide-mouth Nalgene bottle

Nutrition = Fuel

- ▶ **Fuel your Furnace**
 - Normal 1,200 – 2,500 cal/day
 - Summer Hiking 3,500 – 4,000 cal/day
 - Winter Hiking 4,000 – 5,000 cal/day
- ▶ **Carbs**
 - Simple sugars – quick fuel (minutes)
 - Candy, dried fruit, gel packs, chocolate
 - Complex: starches – longer fuel (hours)
 - Bagels, cookies, granola bars
- ▶ **Fat** – Long Term Fuel (4 – 6 hours after eating)
 - Cheese, meat, peanut butter, nuts
- ▶ **Protein** – Post hike recovery
- ▶ **Fancy Energy Bars vs. Snickers ...If you like Snickers, bring Snickers!**

Nutrition = Fuel

- ▶ Have a good breakfast
 - Balanced and nutritious pre-hike
- ▶ Bring what you like
 - Think about what appeals to you on a hike; “Dark Chocolate”
- ▶ Don't skimp on calories
 - Diet before and after hiking
- ▶ Skip food that freezes easily
 - Keep chewy (moist) food close to your body
 - Precut food into bite-size pieces
- ▶ Light and simple
 - Easy to eat; can eat while wearing gloves
 - Max calories per weight



**Heat Management &
Clothing:
Steph Keimig**

Heat Management/Clothing

- Biggest Challenge to Winter Hiking: **Sweating**
- Being wet can lead to Hypothermia
 - Start hiking cool, **not necessarily cold**
 - Dress in layers (like an onion)
 - Wear breathable clothing/quick dry
 - **You will sweat, be prepared:**
 - **MANAGE LAYERS TO ACTIVITY LEVEL**
 - Hydrate early and often
 - Snacks (**salts and carbs, NEED FUEL TO STAY WARM**)
 - No diuretics if possible
 - Hydrate well day before and that morning of
 - Use electrolytes as well, day prior and morning of

Heat Management/Clothing

- ▣ Clothing – Look for
 - Wicking material
 - Designed to pull moisture away
 - Allow for air flow
 - Venting options
 - Zippers at neck, arm pits, side zips on pants
- ▣ No Cotton!!!
 - Cotton pulls heat from your body!
- ▣ No Jeans!!!

Clothing: Tops

- Base Layer (long underwear)
 - Synthetic or wool
 - Long or short sleeves

- Mid Layer
 - Lightweight synthetic or wool
 - Consider lightweight windbreaker

- Outer Layer
 - Fleece and/or wool. Maybe a vest

- Insulating Layer
 - Down “puffy” jacket with hood if possible!; primaloft is best, next to down for weight to warmth ratio, keeps loft when wet. New treated Down is good option

- Outer Shell: Water & windproof layer (must fit over all layers)

Clothing: Bottoms

- ▣ Base Layer (long underwear)
 - Synthetic or wool (show full zip wool)
- ▣ Mid Layer
 - Lightweight synthetic
 - Can be hiking pants
- ▣ Outer Shell
 - Water & windproof layer (not water resistant)
 - Full side zippers recommended

Clothing: Feet

☐ Socks:

- Wool or synthetic (bring extra)
- Liner socks/Vapor barriers

☐ Gaiters:

- Keep snow/water out of boots (internal on pants)

☐ Insulated/Waterproof boots

- Proper fit (not too small/not too big!!)
- **Break in your foot** on shorter hikes, not the boot
- Different feet – Different boots / **lock in heel!**
- Prep feet prior with duct tape and tincture of benzoine– keep in kit!

AMC Worcester Chapter -W WS

Clothing: Hands

- ▣ Gloves: sized correctly!
 - Synthetic (fleece) or wool gloves (if leather must be treated waterproof/ ex. Pittards leather; dries quickly and supple)
 - Liner gloves; not a fan to wear inside mittens
 - Bring extra pair

- ▣ Mittens: wool: dachstein–ortovox/fox river
- ▣ Not a fan of fleece
 - Waterproof/windproof mitten shells to slip over liners. Bring gallon size ziploc freezer bags to use as shell if issues arise for someone, can be paired w/ extra socks

Clothing: HEAD/ GROUND/SURROUND

- ▣ Hats
 - Synthetic (fleece) or wool
 - Pack an extra/ one lighter weight one heavier (windproof)

- ▣ Face:
 - Goggles – if very cold, windy, going above tree line
 - Sunglasses
 - Buff or face gaiter. Balaclava is not best choice

- ▶ PAD/Tarp/Bothy Bag/Bivy/Sleeping Bag/Mylar/SOL/ Adventure Medical

Gear:

Dave Kulpa

- Gear List

- Traction

- Trekking Poles

- Backpack

- Hydration Insulation

Gear

- ▶ For the Winter Hiking Program, leaders will send you a list of required gear for your hike.
 - You can find it on the AMC Worcester web site [here](#)
- ▶ “Full Winter Gear” means everything on the list marked **required**
- ▶ If you don’t own an item on the list, before you buy it:
 - Borrow
 - Contact the leader, who just may have an “extra”
 - Rent (e.g., snowshoes)

Winter Gear Track I

If you are a casual hiker, hiking up to 5 miles with less than 1,000 ft of elevation, then TRACK I is for you. Typically local terrain, rolling hills, modest inclines and declines.

Additional Gear

Z*	Backpack - big enough to fit all of your gear (use stuff sacks to organize gear)
Z*	Pack cover and pack liner (plastic compactor bag works well)
*	Microspikes – some kind of non-snowshoe foot traction
Z*	Snowshoes – designed for flat to rolling terrain (adjust/try on at home before the hike)
Z*	Trekking poles - (flick-lock style recommended) – snow basket on bottom
*	Water Bottle and Water Bottle Holders – insulated (camelbacks will freeze in the winter)-
*	Personal first aid kit and toiletry articles (personal meds)
*	Whistle
*	Headlamp (check batteries before hike)
*	Map of hiking area (remember to leave copy and hiking itinerary at home)
	Chapstick and sunscreen (20+SPF)
	Hand Warmers (activate at the beginning of the hike)
	Small Cell Foam Pad (to sit on)

“*” Denotes required items

“Z” Denotes items recommended for rental before purchase or borrow from a friend

Winter Gear Track II

- If you are an adventure seeker, who often hikes the Monadnocks, Mt Greylock, the White Mountains or Green Mountains then TRACK II is for you. Typical hikes are 6–10 miles in length and 1500 to 3000 ft of elevation gain, with steeper ascents and descents.

Additional Gear

Z*	Backpack - big enough to fit all of your gear (use stuff sacks to organize gear)
Z*	Pack <u>cover</u> and pack liner (plastic compactor bag works well)
*	Stabilizers/microspikes — some kind of non-snowshoe foot traction
Z*	Snowshoes – designed for steep terrain (adjust/try on at home before the hike)
Z*	Crampons (adjust/try on at home before the hike; only required if specified by the leader)
Z*	Trekking poles - (flick-lock style recommended) – snow basket on bottom
*	Water Bottle and Water Bottle Holders – insulated (camelbacks will freeze in the winter)
*	Personal first aid kit and toiletry articles (personal meds)
*	Whistle
*	Headlamp (check batteries before hike)
*	Map of hiking area (remember to leave copy and hiking itinerary at home)
	Emergency kit containing compass, lighter, knife, fire starter & rope, duct tape
	Chapstick and sunscreen (20+SPF)
	Hand Warmers (activate at the beginning of the hike)
	Biyy sack and/or sleeping bag (emergency shelter)
	Cell Foam Pad (to sit on)
Z*	Ice axe (only required if specified by the leader)

“*” Denotes required items

“Z” Denotes items recommended for rental before purchase or borrow from a friend

Track 2 mindset

- ▶ Distance = time spent in the environment
- ▶ Elevation = harsher environment, variable conditions; temps, wind, vertical steepness
- ▶ Distance + Elevation = Be prepared for a range of temperature, weather and trail conditions not only between lower and higher elevations, but at different times of the day.

Traction



1. Micro Spikes
2. Snowshoes
3. Crampons



Micro Spikes



- ▶ Required gear for all winter hikes
- ▶ Best traction for hard-packed and/or slippery snow, “crunchy” ice
- ▶ Go to Mfr website for sizing: S,M,L,XL

Kahtoola
Microspikes

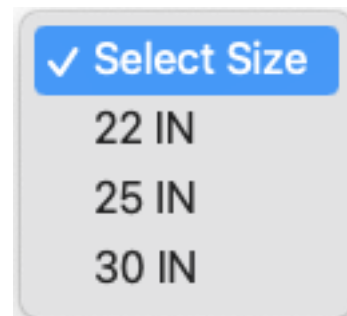


Hillsound
Trail Crampon



Snowshoes

- ▶ Your needs depend on your goals
 1. Flat and/or Rolling Terrain
 2. Mountaineering / Backcountry
e.g., White Mtns, Monadnock, Greylock ..
- ▶ Consider snowshoe weight, ease of entry, durability, amount of traction, heel lifts, expert opinions
- ▶ Sizing usually based on your weight for flotation in deep snow, but for maneuverability in the mountains and back country, **shorter is better**



Up to

- 180 lbs
- 220 lbs
- 280 lbs

Snowshoes – continued

For front country, flat terrain

- ▶ Any snowshoes will do
- ▶ Light weight and ease of entry are desirable



MSR EVO Trail

For rolling hills

- ▶ You want some bite; teeth under the ball of foot at a minimum
- ▶ Heel lifts are nice



MSR REVO Explore

Snowshoes – continued

For Mountaineering / Backcountry

- ▶ “Aggressive” teeth pattern to bite into steep terrain
- ▶ Heel Lift to reduce fatigue on the steps



Backcountry snowshoe models

MSR Lightning Ascent



MSR Lightning Explore



Note: these come in Men's and Women's models

Crampons

for more challenging terrain .. Hard or steep, ice

Hillsound Trail Crampon Pro

- More of an entry level crampon
- Lighter in weight
- Easier to put on
- Easier to walk in as they have a shorter spike
- Suitable for our Track II Training hikes and most upcountry hikes we do



Anti-snowballing pads prevent snow build-up

10x 3/4 - 1" carbon steel spikes keep you moving in deeper terrain

- 10 point
- Universal Fit



Crampons

for most challenging terrain .. Hard or steep/vertical ice

- Leader will tell you if these are required for your hike

Model:
Camp Stalker



- 12 point
- Universal Fit

▶ Ice Axe

- For self-arrest, steep icy climbs
- Requires special training
- Not required for Intro Series



Backpack with pack cover and liner

- ▶ **BIG enough to carry all of your gear!**
 - Clothing Layers you peel off and put on
 - Wind/Rain Gear, Puffy Jacket
 - Extra socks, gloves, hat
 - Microspikes, Snowshoes, Crampons
 - Food, Water
 - Safety gear (headlamp, first aid ...)

RECOMMENDED SIZE 35-45-liter backpack,
with side compression straps or other
attachment points onto which you can lash
snowshoes to the sides, back, or top.



Attaching snowshoes to a pack

Side Mount



Back Mount



Under Lid Mount



Credit: Sectionhiker.com

<https://sectionhiker.com/how-attach-snowshoes-to-backpack/>

Hydration / Insulation

- ▶ Nalgene bottle
- ▶ Insulated bottle holders
 - Wool sock
 - Forty Below Neoprene Bottle Boots
 - Mountainsmith Insulated Bottle Holster
 - Outdoor Research Water Bottle Parka ??

Wide mouthed
32 oz

Easy
Sipper



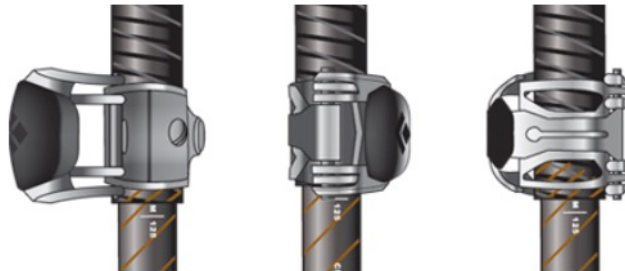
Trekking Poles

- ▶ Help you maintain balance and stability
- ▶ Reduce fatigue; especially on downhill
- ▶ Good to test snow depth and ice solidity
- ▶ Used to raise/lower snowshoe heel lifts!

- ▶ With Snow Baskets



- ▶ Adjustable, “flick-lock” style is best



Sit/Seat pad

- ▶ Foam padding for a comfortable dry seat
- ▶ Adds warmth when resting on rocks, logs, snowbanks



Budget

Equipment	Budget
Micro Spikes, Trail Crampons	\$75–100
Snow Shoes	\$200–\$400
Crampons	\$100–\$150
Trekking Poles	\$100–\$200
Backpack	\$150–\$250
Bottle Cover	\$30–\$50

Look for deals

- ▶ REI 20% off sale
- ▶ Backcountry.com, Campsaver.com, etc often provide discounts if you sign up for their email lists

Before you buy

- ▶ Do some online research
 - Outdoorgearlab.com
 - Sectionhiker.com
- ▶ When you have a good idea of what you want, go to a retailer to get hands on for fit and feel
- ▶ Compare local and online prices
 - Backcountry and Campsaver often offer 10–20% discounts on 1 full priced item when you sign up for their mailing lists.
- ▶ Snowshoes and backpacks often have women specific models

Best Snowshoes of 2023



MSR Lightning Ascent



Tubbs Flex VRT






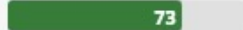



Atlas Helium Trail



Atlas Montane



MSR Evo Trail

Awards					
Price	\$389.95 at REI Compare at 2 sellers	\$237.96 at Amazon Compare at 3 sellers	\$119.96 at Amazon Compare at 3 sellers	\$149.97 at Backcountry Compare at 3 sellers	\$169.95 at REI Compare at 3 sellers
Overall Score ▾	 77	 73	 67	 66	 63
Star Rating	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
Pros	Rigid, precise, excellent binding security, impressive traction	Fully featured for steep and technical use	Inexpensive, easy to use, versatile	Good traction, easy-to-use and comfortable binding	Inexpensive, simple, reliable
Cons	New binding trades ease-of-use for comfort	Loud decking and bulky harness	Unimpressive traction	Clumsy, strapped binding attachment isn't ideal	Loud decking on crusty snow
Bottom Line	The best snowshoes in our test, complete with high end features and simple engineering	This contender provides excellent traction, heel lifts, a comfortable binding, and moderate weight	This snowshoe does everything well and at a low price, making it a great value	This is a great traditional snowshoe that's outshone in a few areas by newer designs	This molded snowshoe is reliable, inexpensive, offers widespread appeal, and is compatible with add-on tails for improved flotation

Outdoorgearlab.com

Where to buy

- ▶ REI, EMS, Amazon, Backcountry.com, Campsaver.com
- ▶ Suggestions for low-cost winter gear, besides big-name gear stores:
 - Craigslist
 - Ebay
 - steepandcheap.com
 - geartrade.com
 - gearx.com – Outdoor Gear Exchange, Burlington VT
 - International Mountain Equipment (North Conway, NH; all sorts of used gear)
 - REI Outlet (on-line)
 - REI Garage Sale: as-is, used/returned gear (check REI web site for dates, locations)

Post Hike & More: Dave Kulpa



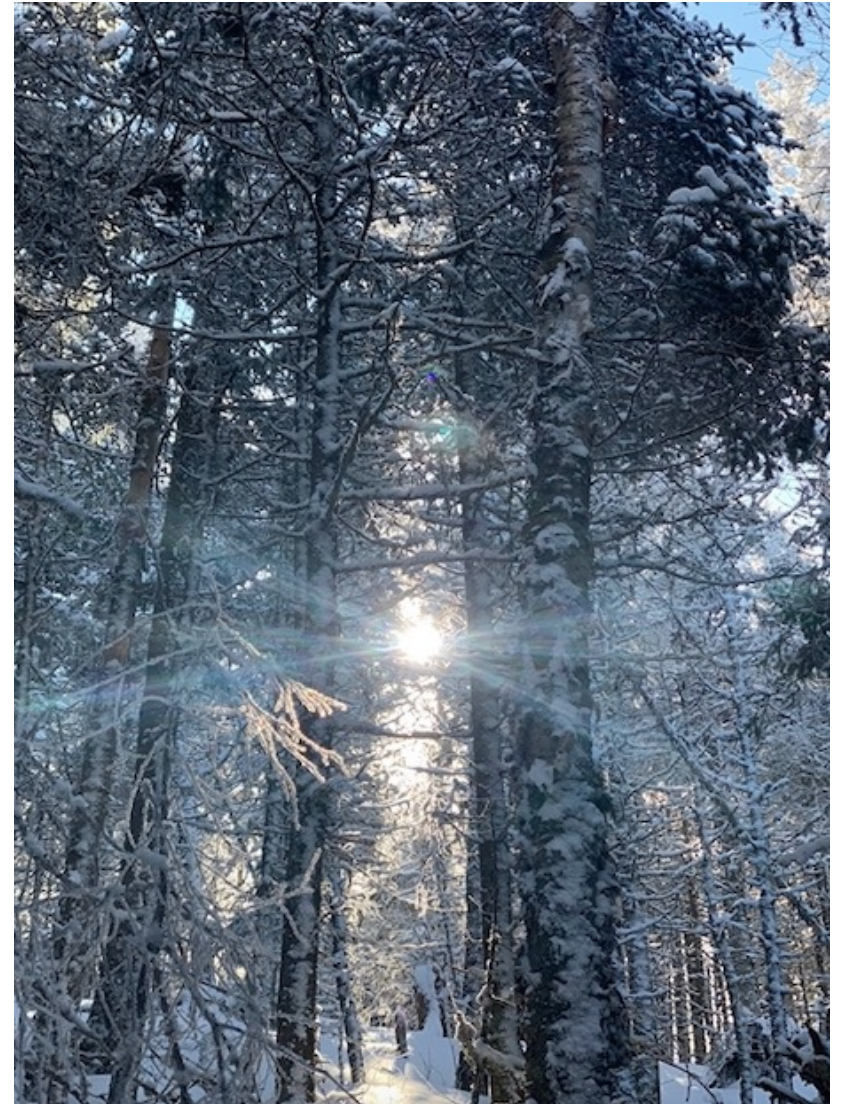
Post-Hike

- ▶ Celebrate the accomplishment
- ▶ Bring a change of clothes for the ride home
- ▶ Drink more water
- ▶ Have a snack
- ▶ Share your pictures with the event participants



Post-Hike

- ▶ What worked? What didn't work?
 - Equipment, skills, fitness
- ▶ Make plans for your next hike!
www.outdoors.org
activities.outdoors.org/search/



Schedule of Winter Hikes

- ▶ “Fixin’ to Get Ready”
 - Pack your winter gear and go out and hike
- ▶ “Explore Your Inner Winter Hiker: ...”
 - Beginner to Advanced Hikes
- ▶ Ad Hoc Events – Ice Axe Self Arrest clinics and crampon clinics
- ▶ Check web for winter hikes outside the series



Pathways to Leadership

- ▶ Discover your interests!
 - Explore other AMC activities – hiking, backpacking, paddling, cycling, skiing, and or climbing
- ▶ ×Complete the Leadership Application
- ▶ Complete the AMC Leadership Training
- ▶ ×Complete Wilderness First Aid
- ▶ Complete 2 mentored evaluate trips for that level
- ▶ ×Receive your certification and badge
- ▶ Commit to leading 2 more trips over the next 2 years
- ▶ Continue to learn, mentor, and inspire

Advanced Adventures in Winter

















