

Winter walking tips from Ramblers Scotland

It may be cold outside, but that is no excuse to stay inside when you could be enjoying Scotland's amazing outdoors! Have a look at our walking tips before you go to make sure you get the most out of going for a walk in the winter.

- A brisk walk of 30 minutes five days a week (or 60 minutes for children) is the best way to meet recommended levels of physical activity.
- Try and get out most days to make the most of winter sunshine and soak up that Vitamin D!
- A walk at lunchtime, even if just for 15 minutes, will help to banish SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) and general winter blues.
- Plan a walk which has a café or pub en route to get warmed up in, or find a sheltered bench for a rest halfway around.
- Be prepared! Scottish weather can change quickly, particularly in upland areas, and winter days are short so it's easy to find yourself inadvertently walking home in the dark.
- If you are new to walking, go with someone else to build up confidence.
- Wear comfortable clothes and sturdy, comfortable footwear suitable for the conditions and terrain.
- Several thin layers of clothing are better than one thick layer. You can take off layers as you warm up, or add them if you get cold.
- Take a good waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers.
- Wear a hat and gloves, and take a scarf – the Scottish wind can find its way into every gap!
- A small backpack is more comfortable to walk with than an ordinary bag.
- For longer walks, take food with you or high energy snacks like flapjack, chocolate or dried fruit and nuts, and possibly a flask with a hot drink.
- Take a mobile phone (charged and switched on) and/or make sure someone knows where you've gone and when you expect to be back.
- Consider wearing some reflective clothing if you are walking on roads after dark and remember to walk facing the traffic.
- On windy days, look for a walk in woodlands or forests which will be more sheltered than hills or coastal walks.
- Scottish mountains in winter can be a serious proposition so make sure you have (and can use) a map and compass, and wear proper boots, warm clothes and waterproofs. Take a headtorch and spare batteries, plenty of food and a hot drink in a flask.
- Scotland is windy and on high ground wind chill can be a serious issue, so make sure you are properly equipped with warm, windproof clothing, and avoid exposed ridges.
- On a linear walk try to plan to walk with the wind behind you.
- Don't go beyond your limits – if you are not used to walking on snow and ice and don't have the right equipment (or knowledge of how to use it), turn back.

Ramblers Scotland is the representative body for walkers in Scotland with around 6,500 members in Scotland and 120,000 across Great Britain. We are recognised by **sportscotland** as a governing body of sport. We work to promote walking for the health and pleasure, to safeguard public access to land and to protect the natural beauty of the countryside.

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