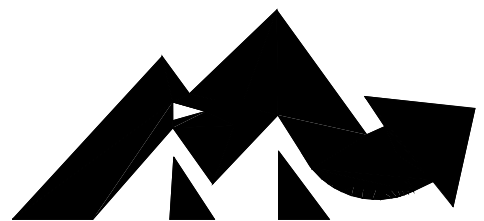


MOUNTAIN PURSUIT CHALLENGE



Original text and illustrations by Peter Sheehan

Vital Statistics for the MPC

ALWAYS STAY TOGETHER...DO NOT SPLIT UP...DON'T SPREAD OUT...SET A REASONABLE PACE THAT THE WHOLE TEAM CAN ACHIEVE....

The weekend can be tough, stick together as a team.

FAMILIARISE ALL THE TEAM WITH THE INTENDED ROUTE USING THE MAPS AND BY COMPLETING A ROUTE CARD.

The route card is a planning/safety device used by climbers to plan a route and get to know it before the actual climb. Fill out the card provided using the route outline (*everyone in the team is expected to be able to use grid references*) so that you and all the team know the route. **HAND IN A COPY OF THE COMPLETED ROUTE CARD AT THE START.**

EVERYONE MUST BE ABLE TO ORIENTATE A MAP TO NORTH AND MUST GET INTO THE HABIT OF KNOWING WHERE THEY ARE ON THE HILLS USING A MAP.

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO KNOW THESE BASIC THINGS **BEFORE** TRYING AN m.p.c. WEEKEND. These are things to learn on a low-level day hike **NOT** on an MPC weekend in strange mountain terrain.

IT IS FOOLISH TO RELY ON ONE PERSON TO NAVIGATE.

ENSURE THAT YOU AND ALL YOUR TEAM ARE AS FULLY EQUIPPED AS POSSIBLE USING THE EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST.

This list is provided for your safety and should be referred to carefully. Fill out a team checklist accurately and have a copy ready to hand in at the start.

ENSURE THAT YOUR TENT(S) CAN WITHSTAND EXTREME WEATHER.

PACK YOUR GEAR IN STRONG PLASTIC BAGS AND INSIDE YOUR RUCKSACK. **Avoid having gear hanging on the outside of your rucksack**

ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE ON THE TIME AND PROGRESS WHEN ON THE HILLS. Refer to the estimated times on the routecard

CHECK IN AND OUT OF ALL CHECKPOINTS AS INSTRUCTED

If you miss a checkpoint there will be search parties out looking for you so be sure to notify the next checkpoint immediately!

To be prepared for an m.p.c. amongst other things do the following before attempting one:

Practice pitching the tent in wet, windy conditions

Cook a meal or two on Trangias to get used to it and work out quick and nourishing meals!

Pack your rucksack as for an m.p.c. and bring it along on a day hike...remember everything in plastic bags inside the rucksack!

Practice walking a straight bearing and orientating maps

Measure the length of your stride so you can calculate distances in mist or darkness.



Figure of Eight Knot



What to Bring

Don't wear jeans... that's worth repeating!

DO NOT WEAR JEANS....they do not hold in warmth, they take ages to dry out, when they're wet they're like cardboard and are useless for hillwalking in Irish weather.

Wear lots of lighter layers of clothing rather than one or two heavy garments. This will give you more flexibility as weather conditions change. Be sure to bring a fleece jumper or top to wear in the evening or if it gets very cold.

Wear comfortable worn-in leather boots with good laces, ankle support and sewn-in tongue.....don't wear a new pair of boots without wearing them in for a couple of weeks.

Wearing doc martin type boots will be allowed but *under no circumstances* are runners, boot-style runners or wellington boots to be worn, they're just not suitable.

Wear two pairs of woollen socks...avoid wearing socks of synthetic material.

If you know you're going to get a blister in a sensitive spot of your foot then prevention is the best cure...put a plaster there from the word go!

Gaiters are a handy extra to keep your boots or lower legs dry. They're good for boggy conditions or in high grass and heather.

A pair of gloves and a woolly or fleece hat are also **MUST BRING** items. (In survival situations you would not last long without them).

Bring a very small washkit (don't forget toilet roll!), and a small personal first-aid kit with plenty of plasters in case you get a blister.

Carry a bivvy bag (survival bag) in case you run into difficulties.....

It can be used to store excess gear outside the tent at night (be sure it is secure from rain)

To improvise a stretcher for emergency use (place a small stone in each corner for grip)

It can give you emergency shelter

It can act as an additional groundsheet

It can be used as an emergency signalling device (as they are usually bright orange and big!)



Packing Hints

Carry all gear securely on your back inside plastic bags inside your rucksack! Make sure your rucksack has a bin bag liner in addition.

Pack in reverse order to need. Bedding rolled tightly and tied. First in last out.

Balance weight - heavy items close to your back

Don't suspend items from the outside of your rucksack! It is O.K. to roll a ground mat and secure it with bungees or straps to the top of the rucksack.

Your packed rucksack should not weigh more than about 11 kilograms.

The important thing about your sleeping bag is to put it into a **compression sack** and keep it dry, get it right into the rucksack in a plastic bag.

Don't forget to bring an insulating ground mat and perhaps a sheetbag for extra warmth.

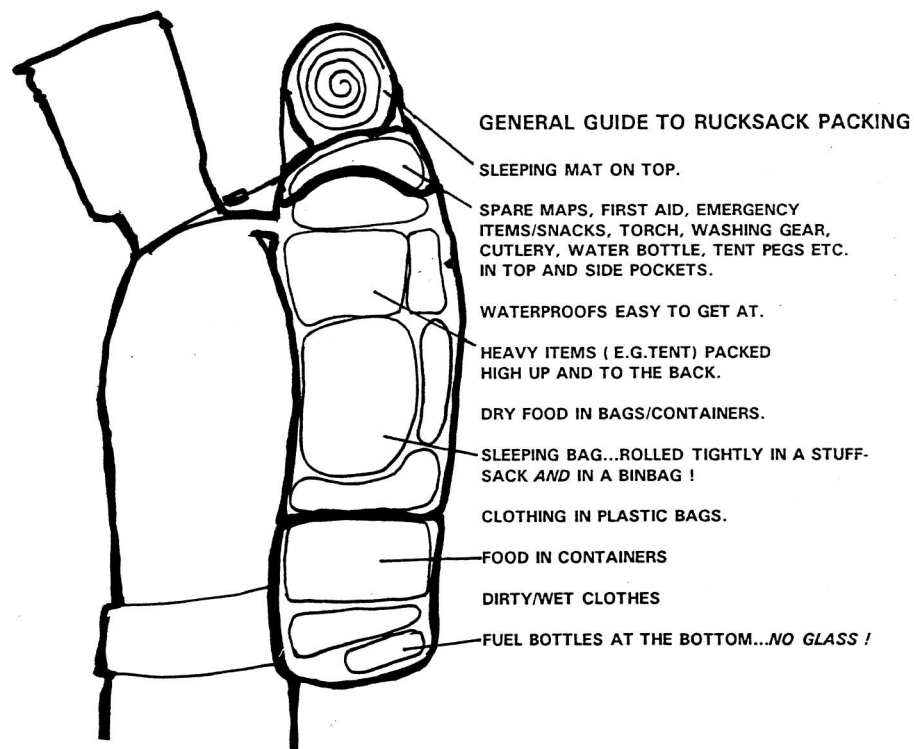
First-aid gear, rain gear, matches, etc. should all be easy to find.

In general cut down unnecessary weight as much as possible...leave the china mug at home along with the two litres of coke!

Don't waste space...the inside of pots and mugs can be used for storage.

Pack your rucksack as neatly and compactly as possible.

Check that your rucksack straps are comfortably adjusted and that they won't loosen. Your rucksack should have an **internal** frame and a **waist belt** - DON'T bring a rucksack with a 1950's external frame and no waistbelt that you found in your grandad's attic! Your shoulders will be in agony trying to carry it and you'll be in misery for the duration of the weekend!



Accidents

Your team should be able to cope with a number of potential accidents...anything from burns due to careless use of a stove (practice and perfect cooking before taking to the hills!) to fractures and sprains due to falls (wear decent boots and take care) if the patient can't be moved or you are afraid to attempt it due to a bad accident then make them as comfortable as possible, treat them for shock, create shelter and get help.

There should be at least five in any hillwalking group so it should be possible to send two able navigators for help provided conditions allow it. Ensure those going for help take note of the exact position of the shelter and can explain exactly what is wrong with the patient.

Attempting to carry a patient or using an improvised stretcher is ill advised except over short distances to get the patient to a safe location in emergencies or if you are very close to "home".

If you are lost, tired out, have an accident or find yourself in dangerous terrain.....

- Stop -
- Stay together -
- Get as comfortable as possible -
- Never send anyone for help -
- Give distress signals on whistles -
- Help will not be far away -

Whistle distress call: six long blasts...pause...six long blasts, and so on.
Only use your whistle in emergencies

Exposure

Wet, windy and/or very cold weather conditions contribute to excessive fatigue (both physical tiredness and low morale) and lowering of body temperature. This can lead to exposure (also called hypothermia) if you are unfit, do not have the necessary gear with you to stay warm or you have not eaten properly.

So to help prevent the problem: *Bring the right gear; Keep as dry as possible; Eat properly; Don't lengthen your journey unnecessarily through bad navigation; Work as a team - share the load and the work*

It is by no means unusual for backpacking hillwalkers to be tired and wet, but be on the lookout for certain signs which indicate that someone is starting to suffer from exposure rather than just fatigue.

Watch out for clumsy or irrational behaviour, shivering and stumbling. Speech may be slurred and the person will be ice cold. If the person actually collapses then stop straight away and create warmth and shelter for the patient...

1. Put the patient in a sleeping bag and bivvy bag
2. Put up a tent or shelter
3. Reassure the patient
4. Get help by sending whistle signals.



Navigation

Always know where you are on a map. Double check routes and bearings.

Never leave it to one person to navigate, always involve the whole patrol.

Follow obvious features where possible, for example, paths, walls, earth-banks, etc.

Be wary of following streams (up or down) as they generally take a steep route downhill and are likely to be slippery and hazardous to climb near.

Orientate your map correctly and check features around you constantly! Feature recognition is the surest means of navigation. Make use of your compass to orientate your map accurately and to double check direction of travel. This will be essential in low visibility conditions or at night as you can't navigate by features if you can't see them!

Don't forget to use the contours on the map to help navigate. Walking around a hill or peak while maintaining the same height is called contouring.

Get used to the scale on the map so that you can judge actual distances. Don't follow other patrols blindly. Do your own navigation as a team.

On The Hills....

Ziz'n'zag up and down steep slopes...you of course will think that this only makes your journey longer...but you will be far more comfortable and energy efficient and your ankles will be most grateful...dig in heels rather than toes for extra sure-footedness and comfort.

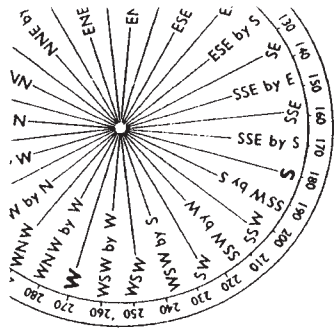
Avoid losing height that you have gained while on route...i.e. cutting across a "valley" may seem like a short cut but you lose height and then you end up having to climb a steep slope to regain it...remember from a distance a steep slope can look deceptively easy. Use trees, sheep, and any feature of known size to make a more accurate judgement.

Go the easy way... not the shortest cut! Avoid dense forest, marshy ground, muck and private property!

Watch time! Always keep an eye on your progress relative to where you should be at a particular time... this is a primary purpose of the routecard. The other benefit of it is that a copy can be left with a responsible person in case of emergencies.

Be alert to the onset of mist/rain/fog/ and darkness! If you are really behind time then consider making an escape route, but only as instructed at the start.

Hurrying down steep slopes or stony tracks is another way of getting a free trip on a scout stretcher (a fate worse than death I can assure you - they don't call them stretchers for nothing!).



Cooking Equipment

Trangia type methylated spirit stoves are to be recommended as an efficient, dependable and sheltered heat source for cooking in wet 'n' windy conditions. They have the added advantage that you are provided with a compact set of pots to boot!

The obvious drawback is the necessity to carry highly flammable meths... Make sure you use a dependable container (not glass or light plastic) wrapped in a plastic bag and stored away from food.

Gas stoves are generally not recommended unless they are of an MSR type, or butane/propane mix.

Whatever you use to cook with be sure that all the team know how to use them safely. The top of a mountain in bad weather is not the place to learn to use a stove for the first time or to experiment or mess with meths or gas!

Always refill and light stoves away from tents and avoid cooking near your tent if at all possible.

Don't lean over an appliance as you light it unless you want to use your eyebrows (or worse)

Don't forget to bring along some washing up gear!

Tentage

Your tent is your home for the challenge...one which you will be carrying on your back from the start to basecamp, basecamp to high camp, and from highcamp to the finish. There will probably be two tents per team; a three man and a two man at least. Your tents will probably suffer punishment from the weather so here's a few tips to help them survive high winds and lashing rain if necessary (no guarantees though!!!)

Check the tent thoroughly before the m.p.c....

All seams should be strong

Peg loops not torn or damaged

Zips or ties all intact

No missing guys

Poles undamaged

All pegs accounted for and unbent with a few extra for double-pegging

All pegs preferably of the v-type rather than wire pegs

No tears in the flysheet

No tears in the groundsheet

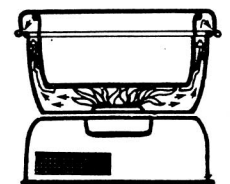
Improve your tents survival chances by....

Sewing extra guys to the seam at the bottom of the fly-sheet and half way up the side seams

Pegging properly (all pegs at 45 degrees and double peg where appropriate)

Pitching the tent with the door away from the wind and in as sheltered a spot as possible

using rocks to prevent pegs being pulled out by the wind (be careful that you don't damage the tent though!)



Food / Menu Suggestions

Eating well is essential for health and good spirits, but unless you want to break your back you must try to keep weight to a comfortable minimum. The secret is a well planned menu and some organisation in dividing the food out for packing.

Avoid food with long cooking times, it wastes fuel and keeps you hanging around, which is the last thing you want to do if its lashing rain!

Try organising your menu so that all you need to do is boil water! This makes cooking convenient and eliminates washing up of pots.

Bring pre-cooked food which only needs heating up and use boil-in-the-bag rice or curry to add instant interest.

Water from boiling "boil-in-the-bag" food, etc, can be used for wash up to save time, fuel & water.

Frys can be inadvisable as they create messy washing up and too much grease will stick in your stomach...not the best if you've a long hike ahead of you.

Boil all stream water before drinking it and use sterilising tablets.....you know, the ones in your survival kit!

Use you common sense to cut down weight, for instance....

Don't bring eighty tea bags when twenty is more than enough; don't bring a loaf of bread bought in a shop on the Friday night, it'll get soaked and squashed... everyone should have their own ration of sandwiches organised.

Organise your food on the basis of the following criteria:

Nourishment value (you will need to eat well when hillwalking for energy)

Convenience of cooking and preparation

Minimum weight and bulk (remove unnecessary packaging)

Maximum appeal! (try to make your meals appetising despite the constraints)

Don't plan your menu on the basis of one of these, take them all into account!

In general:

Pack everything, as compactly as possible (into small containers or see-through plastic bags)

Bring nothing made of glass

Ensure all liquids are stored in sealed containers and in compartments/bags separate from food, etc (bring a small roll of tape in case of problems?)

Discard all unnecessary packaging.





Expedition Route Card

Patrol: _____

Troop: _____

Name, Age, and Phone Number of Leader and Team Members		

Maps Used:	WEATHER FORECAST	Escape Routes:
	Wind:	
DO YOU KNOW : The dangers/signs of exposure ? Survival Procedures ? First Aid ? The capabilities of your group ? If everyone has equipment ? Navigation Techniques ?	Rain/Snow:	
	Temp:	
	Outlook:	
	Sunrise:	Sunset:

LOCATION	GRID REF									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Bearing or Feature	Distance in Km	Height climbed	Speed Estimate	Distance Time	Height Time	Walk Time	Stage Time inc. rests	Actual time on route
TOTALS :										

NOTES FOR CHART ABOVE	1. Magnetic Variation :
2. Measured on map scale :	3. Height measured in meters.
4. 2 km/h = slow 3km/h = moderate 4km/h = fast	5. Divide speed into distance.
6. 1 minute per 10 meters	7. No rests included
8. Stage time = walk time + rest time. (15mins rest per hour)	9. Timed on the route for future reference



Expedition Gear & Patrol Checklist

This is the list of essential gear for use on the MPC. You should tick off each item as you do the final packing. Each scouts gear should not weigh more than 11Kg (25lbs). Remember to evenly distribute patrol gear by weight amongst team members. Items marked * will be checked in particular at check-in on Friday night. Pack all gear in plastic bags. Ensure all first aid kit essentials are being carried.

PERSONAL GEAR:	S/L	P/L	Scout	Scout	Scout
* Hiking Boots					
Socks					
Trousers (No jeans)					
Underclothes					
Shirts					
Warm Jumper					
* Gloves					
Kneckerchief					
* Wooly Hat					
* Waterproof Jacket with hood					
* Waterproof Overtrousers					
Light Jacket and/or Extra jumper					
Foam Mat					
* Bivvy Bag (= survival bag)					
Toilet requisites (including toilet paper!)					
Towel					
Plate, Mug, Cutlery					
Plastic Bags (Lots)					
* Rucksack (Modern, with Internal frame & Waist belt)					
Watch					
* Torch					
* Whistle					
* First Aid Kit					
Emergency Rations					
Reflector for Road					
Binbag Liner for Rucksack					
* Sleeping Bag					
PATROL GEAR:					
* Maps					
* Mapcases					
* Compasses (minimum two per team)					
Tent and Pegs/Poles					
Cooking Equipment					
Fuel					
Matches (Waterproofed)					
Flask					
Spare Pegs/Tent Guys					
Food Supplies					
Pot Cleaning Gear					