

General Snowshoeing Information
Hiking-For-Her.com 2011©

GEAR

Your gear is your ticket to an enjoyable and safe trip.

- Snowshoes selected for your height, weight, boot size, and terrain
- Poles (optional, but provide additional stability)
- Daypack
- Water bottle
- Heavy waterproof winter boots
-or- Waterproof hiking boots with gaiters

CLOTHING: Think in layers, from the skin outward. Avoid cotton – it will soak up your sweat and stay wet all day, making you cold and miserable! Polypropylene and similar fabrics are essential to avoiding hypothermia.

- Wicking underwear (first layer to soak up sweat)
- Long underwear, top and bottom
- Long sleeve shirt (not too heavy; avoid sweaters or lots of buttons)
- Waterproof pants
- Knee length socks: 2 pairs (liners, covered by warm wicking socks)
- Vest: lightweight fleece; keeps core warm when you remove jacket
- Jacket: waterproof outer jacket; carry a fleece jacket in pack for extra warmth
- Hat
- Scarf
- Mittens or gloves: wear one pair, carry one pair. Think waterproof and windproof!

PERSONAL ITEMS:

- Lunch and snacks
- Sunglasses
- Lip balm
- Toilet paper or baby wipes
- Kleenex
- Camera
- Sunscreen
- Hand warmers
- Electrolyte powder for water bottle

WHAT TO EXPECT ON SNOWSHOES:

If you can walk, you can snowshoe...

...except there are a few things to be prepared for:

1. **Your stance will be wider.** This makes your legs work a bit differently, and you may experience soreness the next day. The instructor will give you some anti-inflammatory tips to avoid this, but it's good to know this is normal the first few times you snowshoe.
2. **Getting your gear on and off may be awkward at first.** There are many types of bindings, and it may take a few tries to get your snowshoes on properly. Watch for "left" and "right" markings on the bindings or foot pads. It's a good idea to practice putting the snowshoes on your boots BEFORE the first class – without your feet in your boots! That way you can watch the interaction between the boot and the binding, and figure out how to make adjustments to tighten and loosen before you have to do it with cold hands!
3. **You will be burning LOTS of calories.** Depending upon terrain and weather conditions, you will be burning between 400 and 800 calories per hour! Eat a hearty breakfast containing fat and protein in addition to carbohydrates (buttered toast, oatmeal with walnuts and raisins, eggs and bacon.... according to your food preferences).
For lunch, avoid cold and crunchy foods (apples, carrot slices) but include "endurance" foods: nut butter on whole grains, for example. Give your body the protein and fat it will be craving as you burn all of those calories.
Pack a few snacks to carry in your pockets: dried fruit, nuts, energy bars.
4. **You're going to work up a sweat!** This presents problems, because you want to avoid getting too cold in an already cold place, especially when you stop for a pit stop or lunch. Wear the appropriate fabrics (no cotton!!), dress in layers so you can remove the outer layers when you get too warm, and have some extra clothing in your day pack to change into if conditions are wet (extra shirt, socks, gloves, hat).
As soon as you stop moving, take your dry clothing out of your pack and put it on, or switch your wet gloves or hat for dry ones. Don't let your body temperature dip, or it will take a lot of calories to get warm again. This is especially true of your head, hands, and feet.
5. **You are going to have to pace yourself.** It's likely that some people will want to move more quickly or more slowly than you. The instructor will do her best to watch for signs of fatigue, but you are ultimately responsible for saying when you need a break.
Snowshoeing is surprisingly hard work! Don't feel discouraged if you feel tired after only a few hours.
6. **Approach snowshoeing with a Zen attitude.** You won't be going fast, and you won't be going far, compared with cross country skiing. However, you will develop a rhythm that is quite soothing and creates a sense of calm. Combined with fresh cold air and the beauty all around you, it's the perfect break from your busy everyday mind.

TECHNIQUES:

This course is designed to introduce you to snowshoeing on easy to navigate terrain. We will practice getting our snowshoes on and off properly, and adjusting them for maximum comfort as well as safety.

In addition, we will work on stride, pacing and endurance.

We might even have to practice what to do in case of face planting 😊

However, opportunities may arise to practice backcountry techniques. These may include:

- Using poles for balance, upper body workout, and safety
- Ascending slopes
- Descending slopes
- Traversing slopes
- Avoiding snow covered hazards (water, tree or rock wells, cornices, etc.)
- Avalanche awareness
- Breaking trail
- Map reading
- How and when to use emergency supplies
- Interpreting wildlife signs and tracks

We will remain alert for opportunities which offer you a chance to try something new, conditions permitting.