EXPEDITION ESSENTIALS MEDICAL KIT GUIDE

Master the Art of Expedition Kit Preparation

CONTENTS

The importance of a well-prepared expedition kit list

What do I put in my medical kit?

Medical kit essentials

Expedition kit

Specialist equipment

Other considerations

Packing your expedition medical kit

What's next?

Expedition & Wilderness Medicine courses

Thank you for reading



THE IMPORTANCE OF A WELL-PREPARED EXPEDITION KIT LIST

Embarking on an expedition is an exhilarating experience that allows you to explore the great outdoors, challenge yourself, and create unforgettable memories. However, to make the most of your adventure, proper preparation is key. One of the fundamental aspects of preparation is creating a well-thought-out expedition kit list.

An expedition kit list serves as your roadmap to ensure you have all the essential gear and equipment necessary to thrive in the wilderness. It helps you stay organised, prepared for various scenarios, and ensures you don't overlook any crucial items. Whether you're venturing into the mountains, trekking through dense forests, or embarking on a wilderness medical mission, a comprehensive kit list is your trusty companion.

In this e-book, we will guide you through the process of mastering the art of expedition kit list preparation. We'll cover everything from understanding the specific requirements of your expedition to selecting the right gear, organising your pack, and preparing for various weather conditions.

WHAT DO I PUT IN MY MEDICAL KIT?

Organising an expedition medical kit should never be a rush, so start by leaving plenty of time. This is important because it's easily overlooked, and assembly of a full kit can require a fair degree of effort to get right – not simply through assessing and obtaining what you do need, but what you don't.

Inevitably you'll need to make compromises; you need enough equipment to deal with the most common medical problems that are likely to occur but not so much that you're weighed down with kit you won't use. Environment and destination will play a part here, so your medical skills and correct assessment of the risk factors are crucial as well as customs and legal aspects of transporting medication and whether you are a prescriber or not.

Remember you'll be carrying your medical kit everywhere. Pack, reassess what you've packed and then re-pack the essentials, and do so in a small lightweight bag.



MEDICAL KIT ESSENTIALS

Including these items in your 'essentials' list will provide a strong start, as they cover the most common conditions you may encounter:

ROLL OF ZINC OXIDE TAPE	Covering blisters, taping injuries and dressings
IBUPROFEN	Simple analgesia, especially useful for musculoskeletal injuries however avoid if you are in a hot environment or likely to get dehydrated
IMODIUM	To control symptoms of gastroenteritis when participating in essential activities
TINCTURE OF IODINE	Used to purify water and antiseptic for wounds
GAUZE DRESSING	Simple dressings
COMPEED OR SIMILAR DRESSING	Adds padding to nasty blisters
ACETAZOLAMIDE	Consider Prophylactic Acetazolamide 125mg PO 12 hourly for known slow acclimatisers

Plus, don’t forget the non-medical basics:

- Paper and pen/pencil (old fashioned and reliable!)
- Gloves
- Mobile cellular or satellite phone

EXPEDITION KIT

The contents of your expedition medical kit depends on your experience and the level of remoteness in terms of access to help. Easy access to medical attention allows for a more streamlined kit, while remote areas with limited healthcare require a more comprehensive approach.

Even in extremely remote locations, it is crucial to have a means of communication for medevac situations. Prioritising communication capabilities ensures quick assistance and enhances safety.

Once you have your basic kit, break down the expedition medical kit as follows:

ANALGESIA	Depending on your country of origin, the essential analgesia includes Morphine, Penthrox, IM Diclofenac, Rectal Diclofenac, Co-codamol, and Paracetamol.
FRACTURE MANAGEMENT	Simple yet effective methods involve using zinc oxide tape or clingfilm. Additionally, versatile options such as SAM Splints and lightweight Kendrick Traction Devices are highly recommended for fractures.
ANTIBIOTICS	It is important to have antibiotics that cover a wide range of infections. We recommend Co-Amoxiclav, Ciprofloxacin, Metronidazole, and Flucloxacillin. Always be mindful of antibiotic sensitivities, it is worth taking Doxycycline or Clarithromycin in case of penicillin allergy & Azithromycin for GI cover.
LOTIONS AND POTIONS	Skin conditions can be bothersome during expeditions, particularly in tropical regions. Consider including antifungal creams, antihistamines, steroids, antibiotics, Clotrimazole, Anthisan, 1% Hydrocortisone, Fucidin, and antiseptic sprays or liquids.
DRESSINGS AND WOUND CLOSURE	Prepare a variety of dressings, including those impregnated with betadine, along with dry dressings and crepe bandages. Wounds can be closed using steristrips, sutures, staples, or wound glue.
MEDICAL EMERGENCIES	Always have a Salbutamol Inhaler and treatments for anaphylaxis on hand, such as Adrenaline, Piriton, and Hydrocortisone.
IV ACCESS AND FLUIDS	Include IV fluids, giving sets, Venflons, and an assortment of syringes and needles.



SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT

Different environments may require additional specialized equipment.

For altitude expeditions, training and medication for conditions like Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE), and High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) are imperative. Medications such as Dexamethasone, Nifedipine, Acetazolamide, Oxygen, and Hyperbaric Chambers have shown some success.

In polar environments, portable devices for rewarming hypothermic patients, like the Blizzard Bag or air activated heat packs/vests, may be necessary.

Lightweight stretchers are useful, and improvising with ropes can be an option. Ski stretchers are particularly invaluable for backcountry skiing.

Remember to tailor your medical kit to the specific needs of your expedition, ensuring that you are well-prepared to handle any potential medical situations you may encounter.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to gathering your expedition medical kit supplies, it's essential to consult the Foreign Office travel advice website or reach out to the embassy of your destination country. They will provide guidance on current inoculation requirements and international certifications for travelers entering or leaving the country. Avoid any unpleasant surprises by staying informed.

Here's a life-saving tip that deserves your attention:
Once your kit is assembled, distribute the medical supplies among multiple expedition team members. This precaution minimises the risk of losing everything at once. In extreme environments, the likelihood of equipment loss is higher than usual, so it's wise not to tempt fate.

It's also crucial to consider the specific types of kits you'll need to prepare:

- **Field first aid kit:** This basic kit should contain first aid equipment for a small group of individuals who will be away from the base camp for a day.

- **Mobile camp kit:** Designed for a small group (approximately 6 people) spending a few days away from the base camp, this kit should include necessary supplies.

- **Base camp kit:** The primary medical kit for the entire expedition, this kit serves to replenish the other kits and holds a reserve stock of any required medications for individual team members.

- **Accident kit**: This pre-packed emergency kit, which is part of the base camp kit, is specifically intended for serious accidents. It should always be kept on top of the base camp kit for quick and easy access. Additionally, it should be portable for convenience.

By considering these different kits and taking necessary precautions, you can ensure that your expedition is well-equipped to handle any medical emergencies that may arise.

PACKING YOUR EXPEDITION MEDICAL KIT

When it comes to packing your equipment, it's crucial to ensure the protection of your medical kit. Place all items in clear, resealable polythene bags or plastic boxes to safeguard them from water, dirt, and potential damage. Additionally, don't forget to label each content clearly. This labeling is essential as it enables easy identification, particularly in challenging conditions such as bad weather and poor lighting.

As you can observe, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to this question. The size of your medical kit can vary greatly, ranging from a 25kg rucksack to a compact camera case. To determine the appropriate size, consider factors such as common conditions, endemic diseases, common injuries, and the availability of logistical and medical support. Customise your medical kit accordingly to ensure its suitability for the specific expedition requirements.

WHAT'S NEXT?

To discover the ultimate packing strategy for your expedition medical kit and to experience the full spectrum of expedition and wilderness medicine, there's no better option than joining the World Extreme Medicine Expedition & Wilderness Medicine course.

It's the perfect opportunity to delve into all the elements of this exhilarating field while mastering the art of packing your essentials.

Are you ready to gear up and embark on an extraordinary learning adventure that will prepare you for the wildest frontiers of medicine?

EXPEDITION & WILDERNESS MEDICINE COURSES

Embark on an unforgettable adventure in the world of expedition and wilderness medicine by joining our internationally-renowned courses. Our four-day programme is open to medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, and medical students in their final two years of study.

Experience a unique blend of engaging lectures and hands-on practical workshops set against the backdrop of the great outdoors. From learning about expedition planning and climate understanding to mastering wound care and mental health support, our course covers it all.

No prior expedition experience is required - just bring your passion for medicine and adventure. Join our vibrant community of like-minded individuals and explore the exciting locations where our Expedition & Wilderness Medicine courses take place:



NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA

FULL DETAILS



KESWICK, UK

FULL DETAILS



PLAS Y BRENIN, UK

FULL DETAILS



LAKE BOHINJ, SLOVENIA

FULL DETAILS



THANK YOU FOR READING

We hope the World Extreme Medicine guide to packing your expedition kit proves to be a valuable resource for yourself, supporting your knowledge and confidence that you need to face the challenges of practicing medicine in extreme environments.

If you're hungry for more learning opportunities, we invite you to explore our courses, membership, e-learning, and conference. We believe that ongoing education is vital to your success as an extreme and wilderness medic and we are sure that we can provide you with plenty of opportunities to do so.

Thanks again for choosing World Extreme Medicine and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!






TRAINING COURSES | CONFERENCE | MEMBERSHIP | E-LEARNING

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

CONTACT US

WORLDEXTREMEMEDICINE.COM
OPERATIONS@EXTREME-MEDICINE.COM