

EXPEDITION CLOTHING

Below you will find some tips for choosing your clothing for Wildside Outdoors DofE Expeditions.

More useful information can be found on our YouTube channel (Wildside Outdoors UK) and on our Event Resource System which you should have a login for.

WATERPROOF JACKET & TROUSERS

A waterproof has two key components:

1. **Waterproof Membrane:** This is a thin, porous material that sits between the outer fabric and the lining. It's designed to repel liquid water while allowing water vapor (sweat) to pass through, keeping you dry from the outside but preventing moisture build-up from the inside.
2. **Taped Seams:** To ensure that water doesn't seep through the seams, waterproof jackets have them sealed with a waterproof tape or coating.

Additionally, many waterproof jackets also have a Durable Water Repellent (DWR) coating on the outer fabric. This coating helps water bead up and roll off the jacket, preventing it from soaking in.

In essence, a waterproof jacket creates a barrier that prevents water from penetrating the fabric, while allowing moisture to escape.

Below you can see an example of a waterproof jacket with taped seams.



Note that a water repellent jacket is not waterproof!

WALKING BOOTS

Waterproof walking boots are crucial for any DofE expedition. They provide essential protection against the elements, particularly in unpredictable weather conditions. Here's why they're a must-have:

Wet Feet: DofE expeditions often involve trekking through muddy terrain or encountering unexpected rain showers. Waterproof boots prevent your feet from getting wet, which can lead to discomfort, blisters, and even hypothermia in extreme cases.

Support: Walking boots offer superior ankle support compared to regular shoes, reducing the risk of injuries like sprains and strains. This is particularly important on uneven terrain and during long hikes.

Comfort: While it takes time to break in new walking boots, they are designed to provide comfort and support over long distances. Choosing the right fit is essential to prevent blisters and discomfort.

Remember: While waterproof boots are essential, it's also important to pack appropriate socks to help wick away moisture and prevent blisters.

Try lots on! Take the time to go into a quality outdoor retailer and find a pair of boots that fit well and do not allow your feet to move around in them.

By investing in a pair of quality waterproof walking boots, you're taking a crucial step towards ensuring a comfortable and successful DofE expedition.



Remember that your boots must be: waterproof, ankle height and designed for walking and hiking

You can access a kit list to help you pack on the ERS.

EXPEDITION CLOTHING

UPPER BODY CLOTHING

The clothing you wear on an expedition, should be comfortable, light-weight and made of quick drying materials.

You should always avoid cotton and denim, as these are both highly absorbent and heavy when wet. This means they will soak up sweat or rain, or both, and hold it in the material. Which will likely be cold and uncomfortable. Man-made sports clothing is ideal.

Expedition clothing can be split into three main categories. Base layer, Mid layer and Outer layer.

BASELAYER

This is the layer of clothing that goes next to your skin.

Items such as cold weather baselayers or sports top should be your go to here. Lightweight and comfortable with a short sleeve and a long sleeve option. Vests are a bad idea as your rucksack will rub on your shoulders.

MIDLAYER/ MIDLAYERS

This layer goes on top of your baselayer and can actually be made up of multiple layers. This is the layer that you should use to keep you warm.

When walking this should be a fleece jacket or pullover with a zip.

Cotton hoodies are not a great idea as they are heavy and very absorbent.

OUTERLAYER

Your outerlayer would ordinarily be your waterproof, which you should only be wearing when it is raining.

Another option would be to have a lightweight windproof jacket for those windy dry days. These help keep the wind off and keep you warm. Note that these do not replace your waterproofs, you will still need to bring both waterproof jacket and trousers. A windproof jacket isn't an essential item, but could be useful, particularly at Silver and Gold.

LOWER BODY CLOTHING

Unless it is expected to be very cold on your expedition it is likely that you will only use one or two layers of clothing. The rules above still apply, cotton and denim should be avoided at all costs.

If it is expected to be cold then it is worth bringing some thermal leggings to wear under your trousers.

TROUSERS

The ideal choice here is some trousers designed specifically for walking. Note that these trousers

often have a water repellent coating on them, they CAN NOT replace your waterproof trousers.

Other options are leggings or synthetic sports trousers.

Shorts are ok in warm weather, but leave your legs open to scratches or bites when walking in long grass etc. Some walking trousers have a bottom section that zips off which is a good option for warmer weather.

SOCKS

It is crucial to get your socks correct when on expedition. They play a huge part in preventing you getting blisters. Socks should be designed for hiking and fit you well (no bagginess). They should be made from synthetic materials or wool, but not cotton!

ACCESSORIES

Hats and gloves are very useful on an expedition for a variety of reasons.

SUN HAT

If its very sunny this will protect you from the sun and help you to perform better on the expedition. It will also reduce the chances of you coming down with a heat related illness.

WARM HAT

No matter the temperature during the day on your expedition it is often very cold at night time. A warm hat will help keep you warm and help prevent you coming down with a cold related illness.

GLOVES

Similarly to a hat, if it is cold you might be glad to have some gloves to help keep your fingers warm. Especially as you will need to use your hands a lot throughout the expedition.

OVER NIGHT WEAR

You can bring specific clothes to wear overnight if you want, or you can wear your spare clothing to save weight.

SPARE CLOTHING

You must bring one full set of spare clothing on the expedition. It is acceptable to have your clothing for the final day of your expedition be your spare clothing.

You can access a kit list to help you pack on the ERS.