

Hexham Ramblers

Come and walk with us!

New to walking? Here is some guidance for staying safe.

You can find out more at the [Ramblers](#).

Having a plan and some basic kit to deal with emergencies is essential to keep you (and others) in the group safe – and each walker is responsible for carrying enough of their own equipment. A simple slip or trip can become a complex, protracted situation that may affect everyone in the group, especially if giving time for someone to rest or waiting for help to arrive. Being on higher, more exposed ground, or facing windy and/or wet weather heightens the risk of hypothermia for everyone in the group. ‘Wind chill’ or ‘feels like’ temperatures (listed in Met Office forecasts) give an idea of how the wind increases loss of body heat, making it feel much colder.

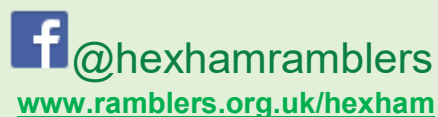
With this in mind, Ramblers suggest equipment for most of our walks should include:

- **Boots:** invest in waterproof ones with a good grip.
- **Layers:** the secret to staying warm and comfortable is a wicking base layer that is quick drying and light when wet and a couple of warm mid-layers (like a fleece), but avoid slow-to-dry cotton. Add a neck buff for extra warmth.
- **Waterproofs:** pack both jacket and trousers (providing wind-proofing and warmth too!). Ramblers suggest a jacket with a roomy hood, and trousers with side zips to put on over boots.
- **Gaiters:** a matter of personal preference, but they can help keep feet dry and calves warm.
- **Spare hats and gloves** (and socks!): hats and gloves can get soaked through, so carry extras (and spare socks can be used as gloves or bandages). Thin silk liner gloves work well to give warmth and can be worn under other gloves or mittens. In summer, bring a sun hat, sun glasses and sunscreen.
- **Spare food and drink:** pack some additional energy-rich snacks and a warm drink (in summer bring extra water).
- **Torch:** we plan walks to end before dark in winter but a torch (preferably a headtorch) is essential as any emergencies or delays could cause us to finish in the dark.
- **Basic first-aid:** pack a waterproof pouch with dressings, blister plasters, and pain relief. Emergency hand warmers can be helpful.
- **Emergency shelter:** carry some sort of personal shelter such as a thermal/blizzard blanket or bivvy bag. These are low cost, lightweight and easily available.
- **Whistle:** to attract attention (many rucksacks come fitted with these).
- **Rucksack:** add some sort of drybag or liner to keep everything dry.
- **ICE Card:** Put your Ramblers *In Case of Emergency* (ICE) card in the top/outside pocket of your rucksack so it is accessible if we need it. (Contact us for a card if you don't have one).

Getting help

In the event assistance is needed, dial 999, ask for ‘Police’, then ‘Mountain Rescue’. If you are making a call for another person in the group, you should stay with the casualty since the emergency services will need to contact you on that phone and may use ‘PhoneFind’ to help fix your location. It's also a good idea to register your phone with the [Emergency SMS service](#), so you can text the emergency services, if mobile coverage is patchy.

Mountain Rescue teams recommend downloading the free *OS Locate* app to your phone. This provides a grid reference (even without a phone signal) which all rescue teams use.



www.ramblers.org.uk/hexham

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity - England & Wales, no. 1093577; Scotland, no. SC039799.