

The quality of your equipment can make or break an expedition.

Nice, simple, basic kit is great for just doing one night away at a time. With a bit of grit, perseverance and good company, you'll be able to stick it through the night even if you're a little bit uncomfortable.

Two or three uncomfortable nights camping in mountainous terrain however is a different story.

Here is some advice from our outdoor experts on kit we think can make a huge difference to your expedition.

WATERPROOFS

- These are shell items. Separate to normal walking clothing. 2-in-1 trousers, 3-in-1 jackets, and big puffy ski jackets are too hot for an expedition.
- They must be separate, easily packable items.
- Zips on the trouser legs will help you put them without taking boots off
- Hoods – an adjustable cinch stops it being blown off in the wind. Peaked hoods aid visibility in heavy rain
- Zips – make sure there is a flap on the inside OR outside of the zip to stop water penetrating through
- Length – is it long enough that it doesn't ride up when stretching?
- Sleeves may have adjustable cuffs to stop water in at the wrists.

WALKING BOOTS

- **COMFORT FIRST**
 - New boots are stiff, break them in before the expedition
 - Make sure they fit – no pinch points
 - Walking socks help to wick sweat away, keeping your feet dry and reducing rubbing
 - Only wear one pair of socks at a time – more than this can cause blisters
 - Leather VS Synthetic – see table
 - WALKING BOOTS are not trainers, wellies or the big platform fashion boots!
 - Must have ankle support.
 - Try to choose something with a waterproof lining – this stops water seeping in through the sides of the boot.

If you're looking to progress through the Silver and Gold awards, are likely to spend lots of time outside of DofE doing some walking adventures, or think you might like to go travelling one day - it may be worth investing a bit more in kit to make everything feel a bit more comfortable and last longer.

SLEEPING BAG/ MAT

- 3 season sleeping bag (at least!)
- Add a sleeping bag liner for extra warmth & hygiene if borrowing a bag.
- Get a compressible stuff sack for the sleeping bag.
- If using a foam roll mat make sure it's for sleeping, not yoga!
- Air roll mats are warmer and more comfortable
- Inflatable VS Foam mats and Down VS Synthetic bags– see table

RUCKSACKS

- 60 Litre minimum
- Make sure it fits you, many have an adjustable back system
- You will need to carry team items –e.g. tents, Trangias, food. Make sure you have enough space
- Does it come with a rain cover?
 - Consider different colour dry bags inside your rucksack to keep everything organised and dry.
 - Line the inside of your bag with a rubble sack rather than bin liners.

	Sleeping Bags <i>Synthetic vs Down</i>	Sleeping Mats <i>Foam vs Inflatable</i>	Walking Boots <i>Synthetic vs Leather</i>
Durability	N/A – you need to look after both.	Foam mats can't be punctured.	Both will last for years if you look after them.
Weight/ Size	Down has a smaller pack size and is generally lighter.	Foam mats are lighter. Inflatable mats pack down smaller.	Synthetic are generally lighter.
£££	Synthetic is cheaper.	Foam is cheaper.	N/A.
Comfort	Synthetic sleeping bags perform better than down if wet.	Inflatable mats are more comfortable and warmer.	Personal preference! Leather can take longer to break in.
Other Comments	Down bags aren't vegan friendly. Adding a sleeping bag liner will add a few extra degrees of warmth. If a down bag gets wet it won't keep you warm.	Inflatable mats will fit inside a rucksack, helping to keep it dry.	Leather boots aren't vegan friendly. Choose whichever is most comfortable for you!