



HILL & MOUNTAIN SKILLS >
SCHEME HANDBOOK

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HILL & MOUNTAIN SKILLS SCHEME

PREFACE >

This booklet contains all the information needed to progress through the Hill & Mountain Skills Scheme. In addition, Mountain Training produces a range of publications for hill walkers and mountaineers that illustrate the range of evolving techniques required for hill walking and these can also be used to support you during the Hill & Mountain Skills courses.

PARTICIPATION STATEMENT >

Mountain Training recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.

Mountain Training provides personal skills training courses and associated literature to help people understand and manage these risks and to have positive experiences while learning about their responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS >

Many people have contributed to the preparation of this Handbook and to the creation of the Hill & Mountain Skills scheme. Grateful thanks are due to many of the volunteer members of the national Mountain Training organisations, Mountain Training staff team and technical officers.

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HILL & MOUNTAIN
SKILLS SCHEME

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PHOTO: ROB JOHNSON

Walking in the hills can be an exciting and sometimes daunting prospect if you have never done it before. To stay safe and enjoy your time on the hill you will benefit from some basic skills and expertise to guide you on your way. The Hill & Mountain Skills courses are designed to teach you just that. They aim to equip you with the basic knowledge and safety skills required to participate in hill and mountain walking in your own time.

People hill walk for many reasons, but a significant motivating factor is the sense of freedom that you gain from exploring the great outdoors. Discovering new places and challenging yourself adds to the whole experience and within the UK and Ireland there are vast areas to explore and enjoy.

The Hill & Mountain Skills courses are nationally accredited and developed by Mountain Training. The courses are widely available and are delivered by our approved course providers and tutors, who are all experienced Mountain Training qualification holders.

STAGES IN THE SCHEME >

CMS





PHOTO: KARL MIDLANE

THE HILL SKILLS COURSE >



16 hours over **2-3** days

no hill walking
experience required

The Hill Skills course is your key to getting started in countryside and moorland walking. There is no experience of hill walking required to attend a Hill Skills course because the content of the course is aimed at beginners. If you do have some experience of hill walking but aren't confident about planning walks, navigating and understanding the equipment required, then the Hill Skills course is an ideal way to learn.

WHAT DOES THE HILL SKILLS COURSE COVER?



- **Planning** – how to successfully plan a hill walk in the UK or Ireland.
- **Walking skills** – what things should you consider while out walking and what can make life easier (pace, nutrition, movement skills etc.).
- **Clothing and equipment** – being suitably dressed and equipped can make the difference between a great day out and a complete disaster.
- **Weather** – how it affects the hills and your day out.
- **Navigation in the hills** – everything from selecting a compass to navigation strategies and an intro to GPS.
- **Environmental knowledge** – how to minimise your impact on the hill and information on good practice and useful organisations.
- **Hazards and emergency procedures in the hills** – how to respond to any hazards you encounter and what to do in an emergency.

Each tutor will determine the most appropriate way to deliver each of the above sections (for a more detailed syllabus see Appendix 1). Their aim will be to introduce each of the skills in a progressive way so that they are easy to understand and you have the opportunity to try them out on the hill.

During a Hill Skills course, you can expect to start each day at about 9am. The first part of the course is spent indoors, getting to know the other people on the course and gaining an understanding of basic hill walking planning. The Tutor will outline the plans for the course before you head out into the hills. The end of the day will usually involve a short indoor session to review the day and plan the following day's outing. You can expect to be out walking each day for around 4-5 hours and generally on Hill Skills courses this will be on footpaths or trails that are rough underfoot. Much of the journey during the course will involve learning opportunities and as such, the pace of the day is friendly and will include plenty of breaks.

Our Hill Skills Tutors are located around the UK, and offer courses in many of the popular walking areas. The course finder facility on the Mountain Training website will show the number of available courses along with cost and location.

Some good examples of locations are:

Peak District - North Yorkshire Moors - Pennines - Cheviots - Clwydian Hills - Pentland Hills - Lammermuirs - Dartmoor - Brecon Beacons

FIND  **> HILL SKILLS COURSES**



JOIN THE HILLSKILLS CONVERSATION
#HillSkills @MtnTraining



PHOTO: ALEX MESSENGER

THE MOUNTAIN SKILLS COURSE >



18 hours over **2-3** days

some hill walking
experience required

The Mountain Skills course is an ideal choice for walkers interested in transferring their walking skills to more mountainous terrain. Ideally, participants would have some basic hill walking experience and have a reasonable level of fitness. Courses are run in the higher mountain areas of the UK and Ireland.

WHAT DOES THE MOUNTAIN SKILLS COURSE COVER? >



- **Planning** – how to successfully plan a walk in the mountains in the UK or Ireland.
- **Walking skills** – what things should you consider while out walking and what can make life easier (pace, nutrition, movement skills, steep ground etc.).
- **Clothing and equipment** – being suitably dressed and equipped can make the difference between a great day out and a complete disaster.
- **Weather** – how it affects the mountains and your day out.
- **Navigation in the mountains** – everything from selecting a compass and using a map to navigation in poor visibility and an intro to GPS.
- **Environmental knowledge** – how to minimise your impact on the hill, information on good practice and useful organisations.
- **Hazards and emergency procedures in the mountains** – how to respond to any hazards you encounter and what to do in an emergency.

Each Tutor will determine the most appropriate way to deliver each of the above sections (for a more detailed syllabus see Appendix 2). Their aim will be to introduce each of the skills in a progressive way so that they are easy to understand and you have the opportunity to try them out in a mountainous environment.

A Mountain Skills course will start with an opportunity to meet the other people on the course and take part in a short planning session with the Tutor. After that you will be out in the mountains, moving away from marked paths and into steeper, rockier terrain in order to learn about the differences in weather, navigation and managing risk in the mountain environment. The physical effort required on these days will be more demanding than the Hill Skills course and you can expect to be out in the mountains for between 5-6 hours. In addition, many of our Providers will run an evening session that can either be a walk into darkness or an additional teaching session on other elements of the course syllabus.

Our Mountain Skills Tutors offer courses in the high mountain regions of the UK. The course finder facility on the Mountain Training website will show the number of available courses along with cost and location.

Examples of areas that courses are run:

Snowdonia - Brecon Beacons - Lake District - Mountains of Mourne - Scottish Highlands - Galloway Hills

FIND  > MOUNTAIN SKILLS COURSES



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AGE AND PHYSICAL ABILITY >

minimum age

10yrs

maximum age

NONE



The Hill Skills course requires a moderate level of fitness. It is a practical course where you will be walking for a good part of each day, and learning along the way. Any health issues should be talked through with your Tutor prior to the start of the course.



The Mountain Skills course is a clear progression from the Hill Skills course. The main difference being that it's run in the high mountain areas of the UK. As such there is a requirement that you have some experience of hill walking prior to attending the course and also have a reasonable level of fitness. An example of reasonable fitness might be someone who actively participates in sporting activities on a regular basis such as jogging or cycling. If you are unsure about your fitness or experience then speak to one of our course Providers, and if in doubt over which course to attend, the Hill Skills course may be a more appropriate choice.



PHOTO: MIKE RAINE

Mountain Training does not directly run the Hill & Mountain Skills courses; we have approved Providers around the country to deliver the courses on our behalf. In many cases Providers will be organisations or establishments but they can also be sole-trading walking leaders.

Each Provider will have an approved Tutor who is a named individual who holds at least one of our walking leadership qualifications. In addition, these tutors have substantial experience in leading walking groups and have teaching experience behind them, all of which contributed to them being approved as a tutor. All of our approved tutors undertake Continuing Personal Development and also revalidate their first aid certificate as part of our requirements for delivering courses.

FIND  > HILL SKILLS AND MOUNTAIN SKILLS COURSES

A photograph of a man and a woman, both wearing large blue backpacks, looking at a map together outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing a red t-shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white top. They are both smiling and appear to be in a natural, outdoor setting with green foliage in the background. A semi-transparent teal banner with the text 'COURSE COST >' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

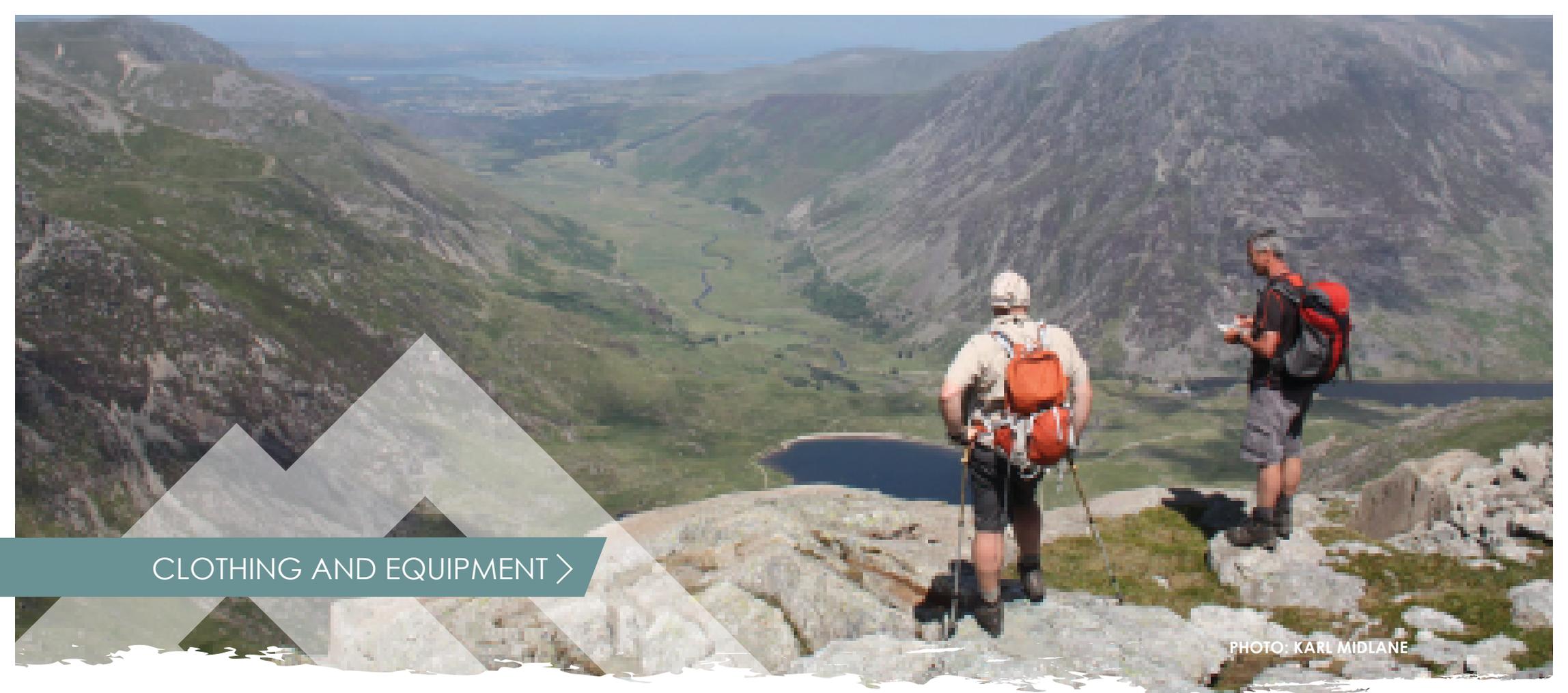
COURSE COST >

PHOTO: ALEX MESSENGER

The cost of the course is determined by the Provider, not Mountain Training. Many factors are considered by Providers in calculating a reasonable cost for the course. When viewing course costs it is important to consider what additions a Provider may offer, and what you want to be included. Some or all of the following may be included by Providers:

- Use of walking equipment such as boots, waterproofs and maps
- Transport
- Accommodation and food

Additionally, private courses for a particular group of people (university students, work colleagues, friends and family etc) can be run by any of our Providers, just contact them to discuss your options.

A photograph of two hikers on a mountain ridge. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a light-colored shirt, dark shorts, and a large orange backpack, and is using a walking stick. The hiker in the background is wearing a dark shirt, shorts, and a red backpack. They are standing on a rocky ridge overlooking a valley with a lake and mountains in the distance. A teal banner with the text 'CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT >' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT >

PHOTO: KARL MIDLANE

Having the right clothing and equipment is an important element of hill walking. Once you have registered for the scheme and booked onto a course, your Provider will send you an equipment list of the items you will need for the course.

The Safety on Mountains book, that you receive when you register for the scheme, is another useful source of information and has a chapter dedicated towards clothing and equipment to assist you in deciding what equipment you might need.

Some of our Providers can offer equipment such as waterproofs and walking boots as part of the course fee, so if equipment is an issue then look for a Provider who can offer this as part of the package. Ask the provider for further information about kit.



INSURANCE >

PHOTO: BRYN WILLIAMS

Mountain Training recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions during attendance on courses.

Personal accident insurance is recommended for undertaking any of the courses. The mountaineering councils are well placed to offer such policies:

- Mountaineering Council of Scotland - www.perkins-slade.com/for-sports/mountaineering-council-of-scotland
- British Mountaineering Council - www.perkins-slade.com/for-sports/british-mountaineering-council
- Mountaineering Ireland - www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/Insurance/default.aspx

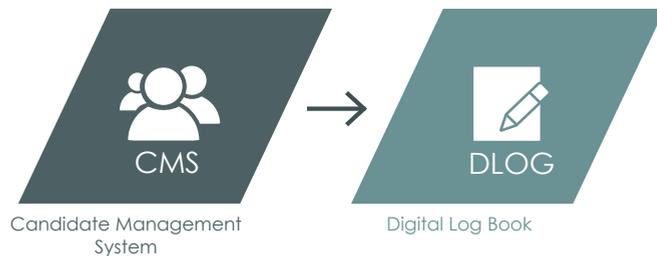
A woman with a backpack is standing on a rocky peak, looking out over a vast valley. The sky is blue with some clouds. The foreground is a rocky outcrop. The background shows rolling hills and a valley with green fields and a river.

WHERE NEXT? >

Enjoy practising your new skills and exploring the countryside! If you've done a Hill Skills course and want to learn more, the Mountain Skills course is an ideal progression for many hill walkers. On completion of either course you may find it beneficial to join a walking club with like minded people.

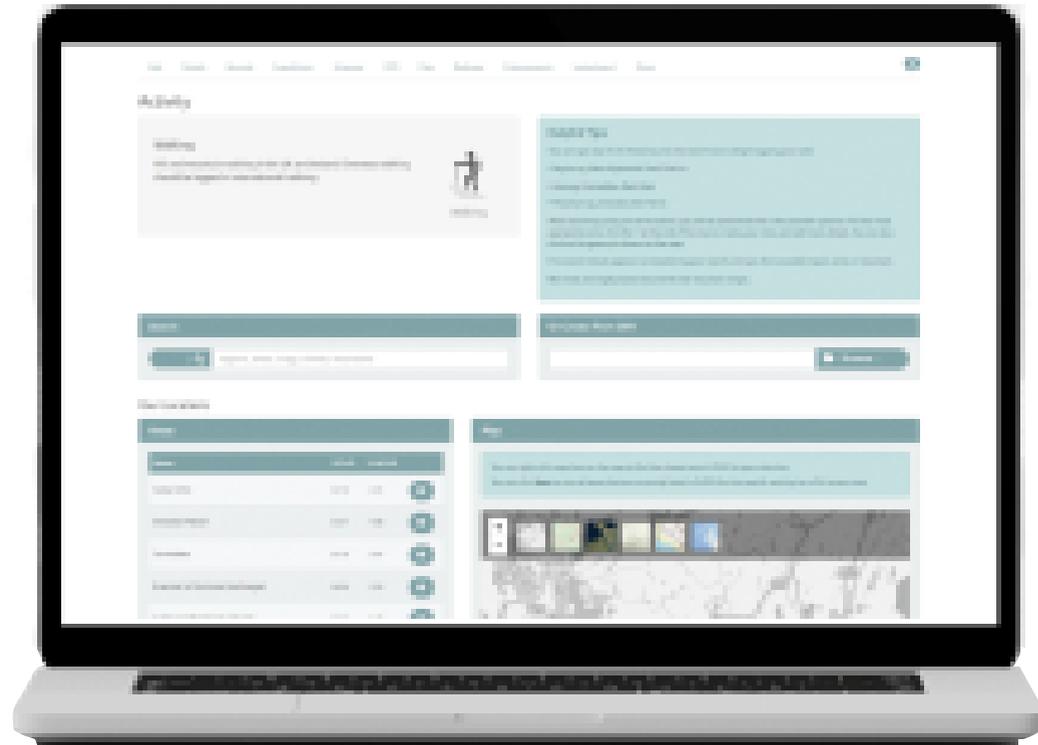
Useful links:

- National Navigation Award Scheme - www.nnas.org.uk
- Ramblers - www.ramblers.org.uk
- British Mountaineering Council - www.thebmc.co.uk
- Mountaineering Scotland - www.mountaineering.scot
- Mountaineering Ireland - www.mountaineering.ie
- Long Distance Walkers Association - <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/>



DLOG IS FOUND WITHIN CMS

DIGITAL LOGBOOK >



As well as the Hill & Mountain Skills courses, Mountain Training oversees a number of leadership, coaching and instructing awards. The Digital Logbook (DLOG) is used by candidates of these awards to record their experience and is also available to people who have registered on the Hill & Mountain Skills scheme.

Whether or not you choose to progress on to one of our awards, the DLOG is a great place to record your experience and is available for life.

- You can log entries for nine different activities: walking, winter walking, international walking, rock climbing, sport climbing, indoor climbing, winter climbing, scrambling and alpine climbing.
- It's easy to filter through your entries to view your walking days in a particular area, for example.
- You can choose to share your logbook with other people so they can see what you've done (particularly useful if you're at school/college/uni or working towards one of our awards).
- There's no danger of losing it or the dog eating it (as there often is with paper logbooks).



FEEDBACK >

PHOTO: BRYN WILLIAMS

We are always pleased to hear about your experience on a course with one of our approved Providers. Should any element of the course be deemed unsatisfactory then these issues should be raised with the Provider at the earliest opportunity.

Following completion of either course, a feedback form will be sent out to you. This feedback is electronic and allows Mountain Training to review the standard of course provision among providers.

APPENDIX 1: HILL SKILLS COURSE SYLLABUS >

Planning

1. Overview of the hill and moorland walking areas of the UK and Ireland
 2. Use of walking guidebooks and online resources
 3. Route planning
 4. Health and fitness considerations for hill walking
-

Walking Skills

1. Walking techniques and additional equipment
 2. Managing pace for a day walk
 3. Nutritional considerations for hill walking
 4. Movement skills over undulating or loose terrain
-

Clothing and Equipment

1. Hill clothing overview
 2. Footwear selection
 3. Equipment selection and functions
 4. Seasonal differences in clothing and equipment selection
 5. Additional emergency equipment
-

Weather

1. Effect of weather in the hills
 2. Obtaining an appropriate weather forecast
 3. Effect of weather on route planning
-

Navigation in the Mountains

1. Introduction to different maps and scales
 2. Introduction to basic map features and symbols
 3. Measurement of distance on maps
 4. Calculating walking time
 5. Use of Grid References
 6. Introduction to pacing and timing
 7. Strategies for navigating a planned route
 8. Compass selection and features
 9. Methods of relocating
 10. Introduction of basic use of GPS devices
-

Environmental Knowledge

1. Understand the impact of humans in hill areas
 2. Gain an understanding of the upland environment
 3. Environmental considerations when walking
 4. Good practice associated with hill walking
 5. Understanding the role of different organisations related to hill walking
-

Hazards and Emergency Procedures in the Mountains

1. Identifying potential hazards in hill areas
2. Managing risk while hill walking
3. Gaining an understanding of common hill walking incidents
4. How to call for help while in hill areas
5. Introduction to the role of Search & Rescue teams

APPENDIX 2: MOUNTAIN SKILLS COURSE SYLLABUS >

Planning

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Overview of the mountain walking areas of the UK and Ireland | 3. Route planning |
| 2. Use of walking guidebooks and online resources | 4. Health and fitness considerations for mountain walking |
-

Walking Skills

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Walking techniques and additional equipment | 3. Nutritional considerations for mountain walking |
| 2. Managing pace for a day walk | 4. Movement skills over steep or loose terrain |
-

Clothing and Equipment

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Mountain clothing overview | 4. Seasonal differences in clothing and equipment selection |
| 2. Footwear selection for mountain terrain | 5. Additional emergency equipment |
| 3. Equipment selection and functions | |
-

Weather

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Effect of weather in the mountains | 3. Effect of weather on mountain route planning |
| 2. Obtaining a mountain area weather forecast | |
-

Navigation in the Mountains

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Use of different maps and scales | 6. Pacing and timing in mountainous terrain |
| 2. Map features and symbols | 7. Introduction of basic use of GPS devices in mountain areas |
| 3. Measurement of distance on maps | 8. Methods of relocating in mountainous terrain |
| 4. Calculating walking time in mountainous terrain | 9. Compass selection and features |
| 5. Use of Grid References | 10. Poor visibility navigation strategies |
-

Environmental Knowledge

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Understand the impact of humans in mountain areas | 4. Good practice associated with mountain walking |
| 2. Gain an understanding of the mountain environment | 5. Understanding the role of different organisations related to mountain walking |
| 3. Environmental considerations when mountain walking | |
-

Hazards and Emergency Procedures in the Mountains

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Identifying potential hazards in mountainous terrain | 4. How to call for help while in mountain areas |
| 2. Managing risk while mountain walking | Introduction to the role of Mountain Rescue teams |
| 3. Gaining an understanding of common mountain walking incidents | |

APPENDIX 3: MOUNTAIN TRAINING AND THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCILS >

Mountain Training is the collective term used to describe all of the national Mountain Training organisations of the UK and Ireland. Each national organisation is responsible for managing skills and qualification schemes along with the course providers assigned to them. Generally the procedures for providers and tutors are equal between each of the national organisations, however slight differences may be required to accommodate regional differences and organisational structures.

The national Mountain Training organisations:

- Mountain Training Cymru (Wales)
- Mountain Training England
- Mountain Training Scotland
- Mountain Training Board Ireland

Mountain Training UK & Ireland

The role of Mountain Training UK & Ireland is to coordinate the combined global objectives of the national Mountain Training organisations. Its areas of work include:

- Coordination of the global objectives of the national organisations
- Development and management of the Candidate Management System
- Administration of the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor and International Mountain Leader qualifications
- Liaison with Government and other external bodies
- Creation of the official publications that support the schemes
- Development of the Mountain Training Association (MTA)
- Providing services for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI), British Association of Mountain Leaders (BAIML) and the British Mountain Guides (BMG)

Mountaineering Councils

The mountaineering councils are the representative bodies for climbers, hillwalkers and mountaineers and work to promote their interests and protect their freedoms. They provide a wide range of services for members and hold regular area meetings.

British Mountaineering Council (BMC)

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**MOUNTAIN
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