

MIGHTY MILES SUPPORT GUIDE



The wonderful experts who support our Mighty Hike Series have shared their tips and wisdom to help you plan a fantastic day out and support people living with cancer.



Route Planning

David Rollins, our Mighty Hike Route Director, shares his top tips for planning your hike

There are loads of great websites with tried and tested hikes where you can pick the distance and difficulty to suit you and your group:

- ramblers.org.uk
- nationaltrail.co.uk
- discoveringbritain.org
- nationaltrust.org.uk/walking

Or, if you want to plan your own route, there are lots of mapping websites which can also be downloaded as apps so you can navigate using your phone:

- viewranger.com
- outdoorsgps.com
- komoot.com

There are also lots of easy ways to track your hike so you can look back and see where and how far you went:

- [Strava](https://strava.com)
- [MapMyWalk](https://mapmywalk.com)

- Think about elevation and terrain as both will impact the level of difficulty of your hike.
- Where are the closest amenities along your route? Remember that the more remote you go, the less support there will be so you will need to carry more.
- **Great British Toilet Map**
- **Refill**
- Think about the logistical arrangements to and from your hike. Circular routes are simpler than linear routes as they avoid the need for transport.
- Try where possible to avoid busy locations like town centres and tourist areas where paths can become congested and social distancing becomes problematic.
- Think about your start time and check the time of the sunset. On average people will walk 3-6km per hour so you can estimate how long it will take to complete your hike – remember to add in time for breaks.

Wherever you walk, it is important that you observe the rules of the trail and represent Macmillan with pride by following the **Countryside Code**.



Staying Safe

Neil Minter, from our Mighty Hike Event Control Desk, gives advice on how to stay safe and get support if you run into difficulty.

what3words is a really simple way to talk about location, particularly in remote areas, and is starting to be adopted by emergency services and mountain rescue. Every 3m square in the world has been allocated a unique 3-word address that are as accurate as GPS coordinates.



Go on the website at [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com) or download the app and familiarise yourself with it ahead of your hike.

Important Numbers

- Emergencies (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coast Guard or Mountain Rescue)
999 or 112
- Non-emergencies requiring Police assistance
101
- Non-emergency medical advice
111

Remember to also take a note of any local phone numbers you might need for support, like friends and family who are picking you up or the local car park, in case you get delayed.



Check the weather forecast a few days before your hike and make sure you pack accordingly. If the weather looks extreme, don't risk it, and reschedule.



Share a copy of your route and plan with a friend or family member so someone is aware of where you will be and when.



Fully charge your mobile and always take an extra battery pack. Remember that navigation apps can drain batteries quickly.



Wear something bright and ideally reflective in case you end up walking in the dark.



If you get lost on the route, retrace your footsteps rather than looking for a cut through. If you still can't find the route, locate a road as it will be easier to get assistance from, if needed.



Try and stick to footpaths rather than walking on roads. If roads are unavoidable for a short period, keep close to the side and walk facing towards oncoming traffic.



Medical Care

Cameron McVittie, our Mighty Hike Chief Medic, shares tips and advice on how to avoid common medical problems and remedy them if they occur on your hike.



Blister Care

- Make sure you have correctly fitting footwear, preferably well worn-in and never brand new!
- Use sweat wicking socks and avoid cotton, as it holds moisture next to your skin and causes friction.
- Carry spare socks to change into at regular intervals to keep your feet as dry as possible.
- Treat 'hotspots' early – make sure your feet are dry, then apply a blister plaster to the uncomfortable area as soon as you become aware of it.



Hydration

- It's important to be well hydrated before you start your hike, so your body's cells can function properly.
- But remember that overhydrating can also be just as dangerous as dehydrating, so get to know your needs during training.
- When you feel thirsty, this is your body's regulatory systems telling you to drink, so ideally drink little and often to stave-off reaching this point.
- Normal water will do the trick, but sports drinks are also good for a burst of energy. Just don't solely rely on these as they can cause stomach upsets!
- Don't risk running out of water. Use the **Refill app** which lists over 20,000 places nationwide where you can fill up your water bottles for free.



Muscle Cramp

- Exercise causes an imbalance in electrolytes, through sweating for example, which are vital for muscular function. Good nutrition and hydration will help avoid muscle cramps (so read above carefully!)
- Warm up and stretch before you start hiking to ensure adequate blood flow to your muscle. Check out our Zumba warm up video which we'll email you in the week before your hike!
- If you do get cramp, stay calm. Stretch it out and lightly massage the spot. Most likely you need to replace those lost electrolytes.



Nutrition

- Circulating blood sugar levels are vital for muscular function so eat well in the lead up to your hike
- Take carbohydrate-based snacks with low fat content on your hike, to aid digestion. Sweet treats are good but also consider salty snacks to help prevent cramps.
- During your hike, try and eat at regular 30-minute intervals to keep your energy level.

Good luck with your planning, and if you need any further support email our team at hiking@macmillan.org.uk

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MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT