

HEALTHY HIKING

DAVE SCHIEFELBEIN



*Getting fit on
the trail is
easy, fun, and
good for you.*

BY ANDREW ENGELSON

Julian Ansell is evidence that hiking is good for you.

The retired physician and Washington Trails Association member has been hiking since the 1960s. Now in his 70s, he knows a lot of other folks that age who continue to hike the trails. Ironically, Julian started hiking because his wife's bad elbow kept the couple from playing tennis. Now, 40

years later, he's still getting up into the backcountry. He and other hikers his age are as good a case as any for the physical and emotional benefits of hiking.

"It doesn't prove it helps you live longer, but there it is," he said.

We've all heard in the media that Americans are exercising less, eating more, and getting out of shape. According to a study by the American Hiking Society, in partnership with

the Centers for Disease Control, only 15 percent of the U.S. adult population is getting enough physical activity.

"Our goal," says Julie Gerberding, Director of the CDC, "is to help people understand that even modest activity such as walking or gardening is a step in the right direction."

According to the American Hiking Society, the benefits of hiking or walking just 30 minutes a day are impressive:

- ☒ **Decreased cholesterol**
- ☒ **Lowering of blood pressure**
- ☒ **Releasing of calming endorphins**
- ☒ **Preventing osteoporosis**
- ☒ **Relieving back pain**
- ☒ **Reducing insulin needed by diabetics**

Detailed info on these studies are available at www.americanhiking.org.

For those of us who already hike, none of this is terribly surprising.

"It's a great break from the routine," says Debra Gore, a family practice doctor with Group Health in Spokane. "It's a great stress relief from the hassles of sitting in front of a computer all day."

And for those who want to get out more and enjoy these benefits, there's good news:

you don't have to be a buff mountain climber to get started. It's easy.

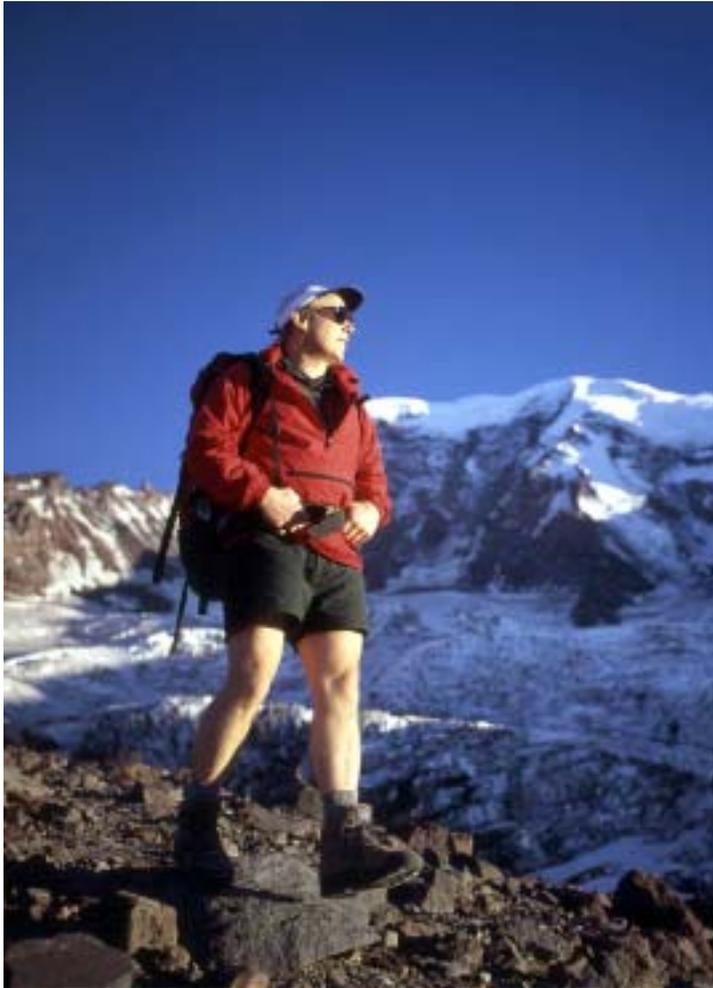
As with any exercise program, if you're just beginning, consult your doctor or medical provider first to ensure you start at a level that's safe and appropriate.

What follows are a few tips on getting the most out of your hiking experience, and preventing injuries in the process.

So get out on the trail. The best time to start is now!

INJURIES

Common mishaps and how to prevent them.



DAVE SCHREIBER

Take good care of yourself: hiking is a sport like any other, and you should take care of your body accordingly: wear good footwear, train and strengthen, properly stretch, and don't push beyond your limits.

Hiking is an aerobic activity, and as such, you should treat your body as carefully as you would any other sport to help prevent injuries, both on the trail and back at home.

According to Rod Moore, a podiatrist and hiker from Woodinville, the five most common injuries that plague hikers are blisters, nerve compression injuries (also called Morton's neuroma), planar fasciitis, ankle sprains,

and tendonitis.

Each condition can be treated and/or prevented by various steps.

Blisters

Wear proper-fitting footgear with orthotic inserts with forefoot padding. Wear inner layer synthetic liner socks with an outer sock of wool or blended materials. Apply anti-fungal foot

powder. And if you notice a blister beginning, apply moleskin to high stress areas on skin.

Nerve compression injuries

Wear footwear with a firm shank to minimize compressive force from rocks underfoot. Wear boots with orthotic inserts and forefoot padding. And ensure your shoes bends appropriately at the forefoot joints.

Planar fasciitis

Properly stretch the planar fascia and tendoachilles of your feet. Wear orthotic inserts and/or heel padding. Keep your boots in good shape. Taking anti-inflammatory medication such as Ibuprofen prior to hiking can help. Also work on posture and good lower back health.

Ankle sprains

Wear boots with tops above the ankle. If your ankles are weak, look for boots with ankle bracing. Practice balance training at home to prevent ankle-twisting spills on the trail.

Tendonitis

Get proper conditioning and strengthening prior to undertaking major hikes. Wear good sturdy boots with orthotic inserts. Stretch properly and carefully after hiking. Taking anti-inflammatory medication prior to a hike can sometimes help. And avoid carrying too heavy a pack.

Moore says the number one rule to remember is never do what you have not trained for. Don't expect to climb to Camp Muir on Mount Rainier if you've haven't hiked much before. See the list of introductory hikes on page 25 for places to start. ♦

Rod Moore is an Ironman triathlete, cyclist, and avid hiker in the Northwest and High Sierras.

HEALTHY HIKING ETIQUETTE & SAFETY

OR, HOW TO MIND YOUR MANNERS IN THE WILD.



Just because you've left civilization doesn't mean you should leave your manners behind.

Some simple rules of safety, courtesy, and low-impact travel will help make everyone's wilderness experience enjoyable.

By MARK HANSON

Within the boundaries of civilization, etiquette is regarded as the preferred behavior of a civilized, well-cultured person. Outside the confines of strip malls and sidewalks, beyond the realm of cul-de-sacs and master plan communities – in the world we fondly call the wilderness – etiquette is as much about survival as it is about not being considered a Neanderthal-like forest dweller.

All too often, those who are new to hiking approach it as a variation on the Sunday afternoon stroll around the neighborhood, never bothering to prepare for the unexpected turn of events. Rick LaValla, former search and rescue (SAR) coordinator for the state of Washington, says that hikers will more than likely avoid becoming lost or injured if they “pay attention to body indicators [hunger, thirst, cold, exhaustion]; don't travel too far, too fast; observe and respond to signs of

weather change and environmental hazards; and know how to protect and conserve their bodies and belongings.”

Also, Search and Rescue statistics show that most wilderness emergencies are resolved within the first 24 hours, either by the victim or outside help. And the decisions and actions of a lost or injured hiker in the first six hours have the most significant impact on being safely rescued. Here are a few tips every hiker should keep in mind when venturing into the wild.

CONCERNING THE SAFE AND COURTEOUS DISPOSITION OF A WILDERNESS TRAVELER

1. Know your own capabilities and limits – Whether it's your first time in the wilderness or the first hike of the season, don't attempt a difficult trail until you have built up sufficient strength, stamina and experience. Within the Puget Sound basin, some good starter hikes include Lake Annette, Twin Falls State Park, and Talapus Lake.

2. Give yourself plenty of time – Get an early start on your hike so you have plenty of time to lollygag at your destination. Plan 1 hour for every 2 miles you hike, and add another hour for every 1,000 feet of altitude gain.

3. Know the area you're hiking – Study a topographical map of the area you'll be hiking in. And bring a map of the area with you. You can typically purchase maps at local ranger stations or most stores that sell backpacking gear. Green Trail Maps are typically sold for under \$5 and are a great reference for trails.

Furthermore, a trail map is one of **The Ten Essentials** that no person should go without when they travel in the wilderness, regardless of level of experience. Having the Ten Essentials with you could mean the difference between losing life or limb and having a great story to tell around the campfire.

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HEALTHY HIKING

THE TEN ESSENTIALS:

- Navigation (map and compass)
- Sun protection
- Insulation (extra clothing)
- Illumination (flashlight/headlamp)
- First-aid supplies
- Fire starter (waterproof matches)
- Repair kit and tools (including knife)
- Nutrition (extra food)
- Hydration (extra water)
- Emergency shelter

4. *Stay on the trail* – Don't tempt fate. The wilderness has an Escher-like quality that can easily disorient you if you leave the trail. And cutting switchbacks leaves ugly erosion scars—don't give in to the temptation to leave the trail. If you do get lost, stay where you are. If you're tired or injured, stay on the trail and ask passing hikers for assistance. Don't bushwhack or travel in darkness.

5. *Be courteous toward fellow hikers, bikers, and equestrians* – When you encounter another soul on the trail, the general rule is to yield to those heading uphill.

CONCERNING SELECTION OF AN INCONSPICUOUS, ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY CAMPSITE

1. If your wilderness travels require overnight accommodations, camp on durable surfaces. These include rock, gravel, snow, dry grasses or established trails and campsites. Also, for comfort's sake choose a spot that is fairly level. You'll thank yourself the next morning.

2. Focus your campsite activities on a small portion of land so as to minimize your impact on the surrounding vegetation. If no campsite is provided, choose a spot well out of view of the trail or other hiking parties.

3. Use biodegradable soaps, and brush your teeth and wash yourself and your articles at least 200 feet away from streams, lakes, and other water sources. Use established toilets or dig



USDA FOREST SERVICE

A considerate and cultured outdoorsperson leaves no trace of his or her presence in the wild. This campfire circa 1900, though rustic and nostalgic, is not exactly good manners in the wilderness today.

a "cathole" six to eight inches deep and at least 200 feet from camps and water sources. Pack out every single thing you packed in.

4. Use campsites when they are provided, and eliminate the need for campfires by using a camp stove. Many wilderness areas have bans on campfires above a certain elevation or in sensitive areas—consult with a local ranger station before you set out. If you absolutely must have a campfire and they're allowed where you're camping, remember these rules:

NEVER leave fires unattended!

Put out fires cold with lots of water and stirring before leaving.

Use existing fire rings - do not dig trenches or build new fire rings.

Use only dead and fallen wood. Never remove branches from a tree, even if the tree appears to be dead.

ON LEAVING NO TRACE DURING YOUR WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

The wilderness is not your personal

treasure trove for souvenirs. Nor is it a place to run rampant without consideration for wildlife or those around you. Whether hiking by yourself, in a group, or with children or pets, treat the wilderness as the public property that it is and leave no trace of your presence that might ruin the experience for someone else. Remember:

Take photos as your only mementos and leave only your footprints

Avoid loud voices and noises - Let nature's sounds prevail.

Unless passing or being passed, try to maintain separation between yourself and other hikers.

Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.

Do not cut switchbacks. Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.

By heeding these tips and guidelines you'll be practicing Preventive Search and Rescue and making your wilderness adventures safer and more enjoyable for all. The only other rules that bear mentioning are to go out often and have a good time! ♦

TRAIL RUNNING

Want to do more than walk on the trail? Here's how.

BY CHERI POMPEO GILLIS

Don't have time for a long hike but just can't turn around until you've seen that stunning waterfall? Why not run? Most of the trails that can be hiked without special equipment can also be run. If you're a hiker, trail running can give you a new sense of freedom with a lighter pack and shoes. If you're a road runner, trail running can give you a break from the bone-jarring pavement.

Clearly you don't have to be in a hurry to run trails, and many a road runner has discovered the uplifting experience of running on forest trails. The soft ground and ever-changing scenery ease the body as well as the spirit.

The transition from running roads to running trails or from hiking trails to running them requires only minimal equipment changes. If you have a pair of running shoes with good traction or some of the newer lightweight hiking shoes you can start on a run/walk mix on the easier trails. It's always a good idea to carry water and this can be as simple as putting a hand strap on a water bottle. In time, if you find that you love trail running, there are trail shoes available from almost every running shoe manufacturer and water carriers to meet your needs at local sporting goods stores. Trail running shoes have a thicker sole to protect your feet from sharp rocks and roots, and more rigid toe box for protection against roots and rocks you may kick on the trail. Since the unexpected sometimes happens, I recommend carrying 10 essential items at all times: extra clothing, extra food, sunglasses, a flashlight, a first aid kit, a knife, a compass, a fire starter and matches in a waterproof con-

tainer, and a map of the area. All of these items are now available in lightweight compact versions at sporting goods stores.

As with hiking, following some simple rules will help keep our forests healthy and let us co-exist peacefully with other trail users. Always stay on the trails to avoid contributing to erosion. Don't litter because it's ugly and nutritional bar wrappers may take many years to decompose. Do not chase or feed the wildlife. You do not want them chasing you and stealing your food.

The trail hierarchy is generally agreed to be that horses have priority over hikers. Runners and bikers should move to the side to let the horse pass or, if you are passing, slow down and ask the rider when and how to pass. Bikes are supposed to yield to pedestrians but when I see a bike coming I jump out of the way just in case. Many trails are 'hiker only' which means that you shouldn't encounter bikes or horses. Downhill traffic should yield to uphill and when you come up behind someone moving more slowly, politely ask the person to let you pass when there is room to safely move aside.

Washington State is blessed with numerous and varied ecosystems, from the high desert of eastern Washington to the evergreen Cascade Mountains and the unique rainforests



The author on the trail. Trail running offers a great way to increase your aerobic workout, but care must be taken to be courteous to walkers.

of the Olympic Peninsula.

Some of the more runnable (less steep, less rocky) trails include:

- Trails of the Tradition Lake Plateau on Tiger mountain, accessed from the Upper Highpoint trailhead
- Iverson Railroad grade and Northwest Timber trails accessed from state route 18 at the Tiger Mountain summit.

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- Blue Lake Trail off Highway 20 in the North Cascades.
- The 4-mile Quinault loop which is an extension to the half mile nature trail at the Quinault rain forest entrance accessed from the Lake Quinault South Shore Road.
- Dishman Hills in Spokane.
- Wallace Falls off Highway 2 near Gold Bar
- Baker Lake Trail south of Mount Baker.
- Capitol Forest west of Olympia
- Chuckanut Mountain, south of Bellingham
- Out and backs along some of the longer trails of Mount Rainier National Park
- The Issaquah Alps, Tiger, Squak and Cougar mountains
- The Yakima Rim Trail.

For a more complete list of trails as well as urban trails such as Seattle's Discovery Park, and Bridle Trails State Park in Redmond, plus pointers on clothing, safety and getting started with trail running, please consult *50 Trail Runs in Washington State* by Cheri Pompeo Gillis (The Mountaineers Books, 2002, \$16.95). I hope to see you on the trails. I'm always on the lookout for new trail running partners. I even know all the words to "Happy Trails to You" and would be happy to serenade you on your way. ♦

To contact Cheri Gillis, please email editor@wta.org.

A Real Workout

Challenging hikes for the experienced.



ALAN BAUER

The 5,629-foot summit of Granite Mountain is a kick-your-butt fitness trip for the experienced hiker.

If it's time to start conditioning for that summer backpack trip or mountain climb, here are some day hikes that are sure to test and improve your fitness. Be aware that these hikes can reach snowfields even in summer, so hiking poles or ice axe are recommended. These trails are for experienced hikers, so hiking veterans, strap on the pack and ascend to spectacular scenery while getting fit. Check with the local ranger station before you go.

Dog Mountain

Hikable: March-December
 Maps: Green Trails Hood River 430, USGS Mount Defiance
 Round trip: 6 miles
 Elevation gain: 2,848 feet

Head up the steep, older, 3-mile trail to an old lookout with beautiful views of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood.

Purcell Lookout

Hikable: Mid-June - November
 Map: Green Trails Randle 301
 Round trip: 7 miles
 Elevation gain: 2,600 feet

This is another steep trail to a lookout at 5,442-feet and grand views!

Sibley Creek Pass

Hikable: July - October
 Maps: Green Trails Marblemount 47 & Diablo Dam 48
 Round trip: 6 miles
 Elevation gain: 2,700 feet

This steep trail out of Marblemount offers a gorgeous wildflower display with spectacular of the North Cascade peaks.

Mount Dickerman

Hikable: July - October
 Map: Green Trails Sloan Peak 111
 Round trip: 8.5 miles
 Elevation gain: 3,900 feet

You'll know what kind of shape you're in when hiking this seemingly vertical trail. The reward at 5,723 feet: inspiring views of North Cascades peaks!

Blanca Lake

Hikable: July - October
 Maps: Green Trails Index 142 & Monte Cristo 143
 Round trip: 8 miles

HEALTHY HIKING

How to pack a pack

Stuff your stuff for a more comfy fit.

BY MICHAEL MAHLIN

If you've ever spent the bulk of an afternoon banging your head against your cook kit as you slogged your way through knee-deep mud on the way to some glorious view eight thousand feet above you, you already know of the importance of properly loading a pack. Although a fully loaded (30-50 lb.) pack is never truly "comfortable," a few basic packing techniques can help make the trek a little less arduous.

As you load your pack for the day's hike, consider the terrain that you will most likely encounter. Is it a steep ascent with numerous switchbacks? Is

it mostly flat? Will you be scrambling or are there any technical portions of the trail? All of these variables help determine where weight should be placed within the pack. By moving heavier items higher up in the pack you raise the center of gravity. Generally, if a trail is steep, you want a lower center of gravity so that the weight in the pack is not pulling you backward. A heavier base also contributes to better balance and stability (you'll be less likely to fall off of the trail). If you plan to spend the majority of the day on a long flat

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Elevation gain: 3,300 in and out
Blanca Lake lies straight ahead at the base of Monte Cristo and Keyes Peaks. Descend 600 feet to the lakeshore or enjoy views from above.

McClellan Butte

Hikable: Late-June - October
Map: Green Trails Bandera 206
Round trip: 8.8 miles
Elevation gain: 3,700 feet

This steep trail is popular, giving an excellent workout close to Seattle. There's apt to be snow patches higher up. The first view is at 3 miles, a possible turnaround spot.

Granite Mountain

Hikable: June - October
Map: Green Trails Snoqualmie Pass 207
Round Trip: 8 miles
Elevation Gain: 3,800 feet

Gaining 3,800 feet in 4 miles is a workout that has a majestic rock garden of granite, shrubs and wildflowers. At 5,629 feet and a lookout, enjoys views from Mount Rainier to Mount Baker.

Cascade Pass

Hikable: Mid-July - October
Map: Cascade Pass 80
Round Trip: 7.4 miles
Elevation gain: 1,800 feet

This popular hike rates a 10 for scenery and is an excellent workout. Look for avalanches crashing from glaciers on Johannesburg Mountain.

Mount Ellinor

Hikable: Mid-July - October
Map: Mt Steel 167 & The Brothers 168
Round trip: 4.5 miles
Elevation gain: 2,100 feet

Summit hike with views of Puget Sound, Hood Canal Mounts Rainier, Adams, St. Helens, Olympus, Washington and The Brothers.



Keep heavy gear near your back and lighter gear near your head. Left: cutaway view of pack layer nearest to your back: heavier items such as tent, fuel, and water are at the center, while lighter item such as clothing are closer to the head. Right: cutaway view of lighter layer further from your back. Top pocket includes sleeping pad and easy-to-reach snacks. Water and tent poles are strapped outside of the pack. Sleeping bag and outerwear are at bottom. Stuff sacks organize the gear.

HEALTHY HIKING

SCOTT HARDER



stretch, move the weight higher in the pack. The higher center will help propel you forward with a less effort.

Once you determine the topography of the day's hike, it's time to load the pack (keep in mind these are guidelines for an internal frame pack). Most internal frame packs have a wide bottom that tapers as it rises toward the hiker's head. A sleeping bag should usually be placed in the bottom section of the pack as it provides a soft comfy base that won't be jabbing you in the small of your back throughout the day. Some packs have a divider that creates separate sections for the sleeping bag and the rest of the gear. These can be useful if you've got a smaller bag that doesn't fill up the entire compartment. By closing the divider, gear from higher up in the pack is less likely to slip or shift downward. After the sleeping bag is loaded, consider where you want the bulk of the weight. Heavy items, whether they are higher or lower in the pack, should be placed as close to your back as possible. If most of the weight is pushed away from your back, the pack will drag you backward and you'll spend the entire day feeling like

you're hiking through quicksand.

Even though they add weight, I like to use stuff sacks to divide my gear. The stuff sacks allow me to keep everything organized, they help me make smaller adjustments in weight distribution, and they make packing and re-packing my pack much easier. When I get to the campsite for the night I can unload the whole pack and use only the items I need from each sack. On a week-long hike, I'll set up my sacks something like this:

- 1. Kitchen** Pots, stove (inside the pots), eating utensils
- 2. Emergency** First aid kit, matches, headlamp, knife, etc.
- 3. Clothing** Pants, shirts, socks, etc.
- 4. Outerwear** Jacket, waterproof pants, gaiters, rain hat
- 5. Food**
- 6. Tent body and fly**
- 7. Tent poles, guylines, stakes**
- 8. Toiletries** Toothbrush, soap, washcloth, mosquito repellent
- 9. Navigation/Repair** Compass, map, duct tape, etc.
- 10. Miscellaneous** Film, cards, notebook, etc.
- 11. Fuel bottles**

On steeper hikes, keep the weight of your pack centered. On longer, flat terrain, repack and let the weight ride a little higher.

Feel free to combine items and eliminate sacks where you feel it is appropriate.

As you place the sacks in your pack, try to keep weight evenly distributed across your back. This is one reason why I like to split my tent into two sacks. It's the heaviest item in my pack and the poles and stakes weigh almost as much as the tent body and fly, so by dividing it I have two medium weight bags rather than one heavy bag. Once the heavy items are loaded, put the softest sack (usually your clothing) behind your head, and fill in the gaps with other malleable sacks. I try to get everything into the interior of my pack so that I don't have any nasty surprises when I get to camp. A friend of mine used to insist on carrying his tent on the outside of his pack. He ended up spending a soggy weekend sleeping under pine branches when he didn't notice that the strap holding his tent to the outside of his pack had broken. If your pack has a lid or exterior pockets, consider filling them with the items you plan to use during the hike (foul weather clothing, map, compass, lunch, etc.) so that you don't have to access the interior of your pack until you get into camp.

Considering the type of trail you will be hiking and appropriately distributing the weight within your pack can make a huge difference in how much you enjoy the day's efforts. Remember to keep heavy gear against your back and the soft stuff behind your head and you'll be well on your way to a happier, and more comfortable, hike. ♦

Michael Mahlin is store manager at Outdoor and More in Seattle, 510 Westlake Ave. N., (206) 340-0677, www.outmore.com.

Get out! A sampler of great beginner hikes

These trails are all superb Washington hikes for beginners. Mileages are **round trip** and maps listed are available at most outdoor retailers. Remember, always take the ten essentials (see page 20), let someone responsible know where you're going, know your limits, hike with a friend, and call ahead to local ranger stations for conditions. Also search the latest trip reports at www.wta.org. Oh, and have a great time!

Open all year

Boulder River

8.0 miles, maps: Oso 77 & Granite Falls 109
(old growth forest out of Darrington)

Deception Pass

1-12 miles, map: USGS Deception Pass State Park
(variety of lovely coast walks on Whidbey Island)

Tradition Lake Loop

4.0 miles, map: DNR Tiger Mountain
(popular trail near greater Seattle)

Twin Falls State Park

2.7 miles, map: Snoq. Pass 207
(family waterfall trail off I-90)

Spruce Railroad

8.0 miles, map: Lake Crescent 101
(low-elevation trail near Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park)

Shi Shi Beach

7.0 miles, map: Cape Flattery 98S
(forest hike to magnificent wilderness beach on Olympic coast)

Hoh River Valley

1-18 miles, map: Mount Tom 133
(valley walking in Olympic rainforest)

Quinault Rainforest Loop

4.0 miles, map: Quinault Lake 197
(pretty forest hike near Quinault Lodge)

Lewis River Trail

mileage varies, map: Lone Butte 356
(easy trails with views of waterfalls, Gifford Pinchot National Forest)

Larrabee State Park

mileage varies, map: DNR Chuckanut Mountain Trails
(gorgeous views of Strait of Juan de Fuca south of Bellingham)

Denny Creek to Hemlock Pass

8.0 miles, map: Snoq. Pass 207
(rock slabs below waterfall make a great picnic spot on popular I-90 hike)

Talapus, Olallie Lakes

4.0 miles, map: Bandera 206
(popular hike into Alpine Lakes Wilderness off I-90)

Federation State Forest

4-8 miles, map: Greenwater 238
(variety of hikes in old-growth forest north of Mount Rainier)



The journey of a lifetime starts with a single step!

Spring through fall

Upper Falls Creek

8.0 miles, map: Wind River 397
(easy hike to 100-foot waterfall near Wind River in SW Washington)

Coldwater Lake View Trail

5.0 miles, map: Spirit Lake 332
(views of Mt. St. Helens, Spirit Lake)

Big Four Ice Caves

2.0 miles, map: Silverton 110
(easy hike to caves at toe of a snowfield near South Fork Stilliguamish)

Monte Cristo Road

8.6 miles, map: Sloan Peak 110
(trail to mining ghost town off the Mountain Loop Highway)

Iron Goat

8.0 miles, map: Skykomish 175, Siouxon Creek, Lower Lookout Mountain 396
(wheelchair-accessible trail on old Great Northern Railway route)

Summer

Dishman Hills

4 miles, map: DNR Dishman Hills
(lovely pine forests near Spokane)

Tonga Ridge

9.2 miles, map: Skykomish 175
(spectacular views and huckleberries on this hike off of U.S. Hwy 2)

Twin Sisters

5.0 miles, maps: Bumping Lake 271 & White Pass 303
(easy hike to beautiful lakes in the William O. Douglas Wilderness)

Lake Ann/Maple Pass

6.2 miles, map: Mount Logan 49 & Washington Pass 50
(short trail to great alpine scenery in North Cascades National Park)

HEALTHY HIKING

Stretching

An ounce of prevention.

Like any physical exercise, hiking requires that you treat your body with care. Stretching and flexibility exercises can help limber up the muscles that tighten up on the trail: in particular the calves, quads, neck and shoulders. Here are a few stretches to try out after hiking (make sure you've warmed up for 5 to 10 minutes before stretching by

hiking briskly). Stretching is best at the end of a workout and should be combined with a strength training regimen to be most effective. Remember to ease into these stretches gradually, breathe deeply, hold the stretch for at least a count of 10 (but don't force), and never bounce a stretch. A big thanks to WTA members Kara Chin for modeling and Ryan Dyson for photography.

RYAN DYSON



Right: gently apply pressure on elbow to stretch triceps and lats.



Below: twist your torso to the right with left elbow outside knee to stretch side muscles and lower back. Repeat each of these stretches for both sides of the body.



Top: gently stretch tight calves by standing on a step and slowly dropping one heel and holding for a count of 10.

Above: flex shoulders by gently pulling on elbows and turning your head in the opposite direction. Also, for quick relief of pack-induced shoulder tension, scrunch your shoulders up and release.

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Above, Center: flex calves and legs using a tree, fence or other sturdy object.

Above: in this stretch, by gently pulling your ankle in toward your torso, you help flex upper leg muscles.

Top Left: stretch each leg by crooking one leg in and then slowly bringing your chest and forehead toward your knee.

Top Right: stretch quads (which get worked heavily during hiking) by holding ankle and gently but firmly pushing away with your leg.

Above: groin stretch helps flex inner legs and lower back.