



Camping Fun And Lots Of Tips

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This ebook is a compilation of several articles on the subject of camping.
These articles were written by my wife Val and I and hope the tips in them will
be of benefit to you and your family.

10 Benefits You Get from Using Trekking Poles For Hiking

By [Robin Shortt](#)

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act but a habit.
-Aristotle-

I remember watching my boys growing up. They would go to their Scout meetings and bring home a pole that they had cut from a sapling.

They made it into a pole by stripping the bark and carving different designs into it. They would talk about how they used it for hiking and on campouts.

Today things have changed a lot. The Scouts still make their trekking poles, but more hikers are now going high-tech.

Today's poles have much of the same benefits the scouts used them for.

Hikers also use two of them for hiking. Which double the benefits.

1. This includes pack weight distribution to the arms, thus increasing endurance.
2. Makes keeping your balance easier as you cross rivers and streams as well as rough terrain.
3. Lowers stress on the joints, knees, hips and lower back.
4. Gives a more upright, hiking posture. This in turn will make breathing more efficient.
5. Helps you go up those steep inclines. Also helps you keep your balance on the declines.
6. Despite some drawbacks concerning them, the advantages far outweigh the drawbacks.
7. Trekking poles today are high tech in design and with adjustable telescopic features make them ideal for summer and winter. Most are made from materials such as aluminum or titanium.
8. Trekking poles have adjustable wrist straps and can have plastic or cork hand grips.
9. How to use your trekking poles is done by keeping your forearm parallel to to the ground on flat terrain. If you're ascending the poles will need adjusting. You will need to make them shorter, so you will not over reach. The opposite is also true as well. When going down a hill you will need to lengthen the poles.
10. Its very easy to use trekking poles. Just walk naturally one arm forward with the opposite leg. The poles will soon become apart of you as you walk.

As you become used to using the poles you'll find how easy it has become to hike and how much faster and farther you can travel.

Check out your local Scout Shop for a good quality set of poles. You'll also be financially helping out the Scout troops in your area.

Val and Robin Shortt are experienced campers and own three outdoor websites. For more tips like these and to register for their Free newsletter visit: Good Night Camping Equipment <http://www.goodnightcampingequipment.com>

<http://letscatchreelbigfish.blogspot.com/>

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Things You Should Know About Tents

By Val Shortt

Choosing Your Tent

Here are a few hints when choosing the tent just right for you or your family.

Tents that are advertised as one person are rarely big enough for one person.

Two person tents are usually comfortable for just one person, a three person tent is comfortable for two people and so on.

If you do not pick something large enough, you will find yourself cramped, claustrophobic and uncomfortable.

Pick something that will give you a little room to move and some space for some of your gear as well.

Each person needs about 3 by 7 feet to stretch out. You will need extra room to dress etc.

Remember, if the weather is not good, you will be stuck in whatever you have picked..

You don't want to be sitting cramped and hunched over feeling miserable.

In deciding on what you need, decide whether you will be summer or winter camping, and whether you will be backpacking .

Tents are not waterproof. They are made of breathable ripstop nylon. It allows your sweat and breath to evaporate. This means you need a rainfly. They are waterproof. It fits over the roof of the tent and is meant to carry away rainwater from the tent sides. Make sure the fly is large enough to substantially cover the tent walls.

Applying a sealant to the tent seams is a good idea. Apply sealer as needed throughout the tent's life.

Most tents have a fine mesh screen over the door and window designed to keep out insects. All netting is not alike. Standard netting is made of nylon. Dacron is a finer mesh to discourage even the smallest bugs. They are usually zippered at the entrance with a flap that zippers over the door and window for privacy.

Because of the nature of the fabric used in making tents, being porous, very few tents are designed to keep you warm. They are designed to protect you from the weather and from insects. They will protect you from the wind and rain, snow and sun.

To care for your tent, nylon is virtually maintenance free. The only thing that needs to be done is sealant occasionally. Of course never store your tent when it

is wet, or even slightly damp. Always set it up when you are finished your trip and dry it out completely. Also sponge off any dirt or mud inside using a very mild liquid detergent or a baking soda and water solution.

Be sure to make any repairs if you have had the misfortune to burn or damage your tent in some way. You can buy repair kits that come in various colors and are easy to use. Store your tent in a cool, dry place in its storage bag.

Dome Tents

The basic style of the dome tent is hexagonal. The fabric usually used is nylon. The weight is about two and one-half to seven and one-half pounds.

The tent is usually free-standing or self supporting. This means no stakes or lines are needed under normal circumstances.

However you should never leave it unoccupied without staking it down because the wind can send this lightweight tent tumbling off.

The dome tent is great for backpackers and canoeists. Its the choice of winter campers and mountaineers in larger sizes. The reason is because of its aerodynamic shape.

It resists gusts of wind well and is easy to set up and dismantle. The only problem with this type of tent is that it is not well ventilated. Moisture tends to gather at the top of the dome.

Tunnel Tent

This type of tent is primarily a backpacker's shelter. It can weigh as little as one and one-half pounds.

The type of material used is generally nylon. It is not very spacious. The advantage of this tent is how compact it becomes.

It can be rolled into a tight bundle no larger than a football. It is a free standing tent, not needing any lines or stakes unless a fly is added.

It is lightweight, which makes it ideal for the backpacker or canoeist. Because of its design the wind flows off of it easily and makes it great for winter camping.

It has a screened opening at one end and can be closed against severe weather. It is easily erected and dismantled. It also ventilates well.

The A-Frame Tent

This tent is used primarily by the backpacker. The frame of this tent can be either fitted into sleeves or standing independently of the shelter.

Gone are the days of the upright pole that used to hold it up in the middle of the opening. They are generally made out of nylon. Weights vary from about 3 pounds to about 6.

These tents are ideal for canoe trips, climbers , fishermen and hunters. They are relatively lightweight and spacious.

A vestibule can be added to the front opening adding very little weight and adding an extra 10 to 20 square feet. This makes it ideal for storing your gear and giving you extra sleeping area.

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Dutch Oven Cooking Basics

By Val Shortt

Pioneer Cooking

When you think of a cast iron Dutch oven, what comes to your mind? Pioneer cooking? Stews over the open fire?

Of course both are true, but they are still very much in use today and as for the Dutch oven, the possibilities are endless.

Dutch ovens can be used for frying, baking, boiling, and steaming as well.

Purchasing Your Dutch Oven

When purchasing your Dutch oven, make sure the lid has a raised ridge. This is to hold your heat source, which will be briquettes.

This will help you to reach the proper temperature needed for whatever cooking you are wanting to do, with the exception of boiling or frying.

In which case you would want all the heat on the bottom.

Heating Fundamentals

If you are planning on baking, you need more heat on the top than on the bottom.

Put one briquette on the bottom for every 3 on the top of the lid.

For preparing stews, use one on the top for every 4 on the bottom. When roasting, put briquettes on the top and bottom evenly.

Best Temperature

To understand the temperature and number of briquettes needed takes a little math.

Each briquette adds about 25 degrees of heat.

A good starting temperature is 350 degrees F.

To figure out how many briquettes to use, take the size of the oven in inches, and subtract three to get the number of briquettes for under it, and add three to get the number of briquettes for the top.

Preparing To Cure Your Dutch Oven

Now that you understand the basics of using your Dutch oven you need to prepare or cure your oven before using it.

Some cast iron ovens have a protective covering which you will need to remove .

You will need to do some scrubbing with a non-abrasive scrubber.

Once the covering is removed, rinse and dry the oven and then let it air dry.

Curing It

To cure your oven, pre-heat your kitchen stove to 350 degrees. Place the Dutch oven on the center rack, with the lid open slightly.

Allow it to heat slowly until it is too hot to handle. Apply a thin layer of salt free cooking oil with a clean cloth to the Dutch oven inside and out.

Place your oven back inside the stove with the lid slightly open. Bake your oven for about an hour.

Repeat

After baking, allow the Dutch oven to cool slowly.

When it is cool enough to handle, repeat the oil again the same as before and bake again.

When cool enough apply a third layer of oil, but this time it is ready for use.

Preparing your Dutch oven in this way prevents rust and makes for much easier cleaning as well

Cleaning

To clean your oven after use, scrape it out, add warm water, without soap, and heat it in the oven until the water is almost boiling.

For any food that sticks a little, use a non-abrasive scrubber.

Protect your Dutch oven again by warming it in the stove, applying a thin coating of oil and letting it cool. Its now ready for storage.

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Camping With Man's Best Friend

By **Robin Shortt**

Man's Best Friend

Man's best friend your dog, and you, can go camping and have lots of fun.

Look at it as a walk that doesn't end, during which he gets to spend all his time with you.

For us campers, it can give us another means of security and another way of

bonding.

Things You Need To Do

For those of you who are wanting to get involved in this great adventure with their pet, there are some things you need to do to make this as fun as possible for both of you.

Bring Him Along Slow

First time camping pooches should be shown the wonders of nature slowly.

City or urban dogs need to be brought along slow because of their tender pads on their paws, and they need to get used to all open spaces and wonders of nature.

Start with taking them on some day trips to state, county and conservation Parks

The Great Outdoors

The wide open spaces will help your dog get used to unpopulated areas.

He will also find new odors and sights in this stress free environment.

Going on nature and hiking trails will also help your dog gain muscle strength and fitness before you go camping.

Being A Responsible Dog Owner

As we enjoy the companionship of our dogs, they become a member of our families.

Going with us on family outings, walks, trips around town, just about everywhere we go they tag along with us.

Thats fine because we care about them so much.

Its not always the same with camp owners who feel dogs are not man's best friend in their camping area.

They have good reason to be.

A lot of dog owners are not very good in keeping their pets leashed or cleaning up after them.

They also don't abide by the camp rules the way they should, but many irresponsible dog owners feel the rules don't apply to them and their dogs.

Of course because of these pet owners , we all suffer, thus there are now many campgrounds not allowing dogs.

Check ahead to see if the campground you' re going to allows dogs, and if so, are they allowed on the trails, or have special trails set aside for dogs.

Also some campgrounds charge two dollars a night for dogs as well.

Taking Care Of Your Dog

As loving, caring, pet owners, we need to find a way to take care of our dogs while we go out on the trails with our other family members.

We could take turns dog sitting with family, friends, other campers with dogs.

One thing we need to do is make sure we are good responsible pet owners. Check ahead before you go camping with man's best friend.

Here Are Some Pre-Camping Tips

Try to take your dog for a pre-camping visit for possible needed shots, and a Rabies shot tag for his collar.

Look at a possible Lyme disease vaccine.

Take with you a current copy of his records and his vet's phone number.

Pick up a proper dog license & ID tags for your dog with their name, your name, etc.

Microchips, tattoos and pet registries can be used.

Bring medications and a copy of prescriptions.

Try to get a site with some shade for your dog.

Supervise your dog closely around children, other visitors and other dogs.

Keep your dog quiet. Frequent and continued barking disturbs the wildlife and other campers.

Let your dog have time to adjust to his new surroundings. Give him time to rest.

Try to use ziplock bags to pick up after him and properly dispose of it in appropriate trash containers.

Keep an eye on how weather conditions effect your dog, heat, cold, rain etc.

Consider use of a crate for travel and short term restraint, while you are near. Your pet could be stolen if not watched carefully.

You should be aware that your dog will have increased exposure to ticks and fleas.

Take the proper tick/flea collars, repellents or use Frontline applications.

Other diseases can also be transmitted by wild animals and insects.

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5 Things You Must Do If You Want To Create a First Aid Kit For Your Family

By **Robin Shortt**

1. Accidents and medical emergencies in the home happen frequently. Maybe more frequently than we realize. Statistics show a fatal injury occurs every 18 minutes

in homes across America and every 4 seconds a disabling injury could occur. Accidents occur from falls, fire, burns, choking and poisoning.

2. Every home should have at least one first Aid Kit that is well stocked and readily available. First Aid Kits are used most often for minor injuries such as cuts, sunburns or bites. Having a well stocked First Aid Kit available can save someone's life in a serious accident.

3. A First Aid Kit won't be any good to you if you don't know how to use it. Make sure you have a guide in your kit from a reliable source. It should have the latest medical advice and be easy to understand, particularly under stress.

4. There are 5 categories that are imperative in your First Aid Kit

5. Instruments
Pointed tweezers for removing splinters
Disposable latex or non latex gloves
Small rounded-tipped scissors for cutting tape, clothes or bandages
Breathing Barrier for performing CPR
Thermometer—either digital or mercury
Ice Bag
Eye Patches
Oral medicine syringe
Bandages that are good quality. A variety of all sizes to dress a variety of wounds
One dozen individually wrapped sterile gauze pads 2" X 2"
Six non-stick gauze bandages
Six individually wrapped sterile gauze pads 4" X 4"
One roll 2" gauze bandage
One roll 5" gauze bandage
Elastic bandages
Triangular Bandages
Adhesive Tape

6. Antiseptics
Antiseptics such as Hydrogen Peroxide to kill germs. Antibacterial cream or ointment . This is good for cuts ,scrapes and insect bites.

7. Medicines
Over the counter medicines such as antihistamine cough suppressant aspirin syrup of ipecac in case someone ingests poison. This should only be used after calling the Poison Control Center first.

8. Keeping your First Aid Kit Updated
Your First Aid Kit should be checked once a year, possibly the same day you check your smoke detectors, to be sure it is fully stocked and nothing has expired. Make sure you always make a note of anything you use out of your Kit so it can easily be replaced.

9. Storing your First Aid Kit
Make sure you store your First Aid Kit in a tote bag or plastic container that will keep your kit clean and dry and easily accessible in your home. It is recommended to have one on each floor in your home and workshop. Make sure everyone in your home knows where they are and how to use it. It could save your families life.

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Cheap and Free Camping Across America

By [Robin Shortt](#)

Wal-Mart Free Camping

Free camping is for real. Where do you think you might be able to do this? Wal-mart seems to encourage camping in a lot of different areas. Coastal areas where a lot of RVer's want to live in the parking lots are not welcome it seems. It would be a good idea not to roll out the carpet and put out your lawn furniture like some RVers have done. Or you may ruin it for all. Which is beginning to happen.

Some folks stay for a week at a time, hitting the sites by day light. Just so they don't wear out their welcome. Wal-mart then in turn gets business from the campers, but they'll only continue this policy if they don't have problems, so keep it low-key.

A lot of Wal-Mart stores graciously allow RVers to stay over night in their parking lots. But, because of increasingly complaints and other factors, many do not. In fact, there are hundreds of stores throughout the United States that do not allow RVers to stay overnight in their parking lots, and this list of locations is growing every week.

In some cases, it's because of a local ordinance, other times because of objections of nearby businesses or residents, or, because of abusive behavior by some RVers who have left no choice for store managers to do but to ban the stays.

A lot of Wal-Mart's that prohibit overnight stays do post signs that say so. But there are some that don't. What happens if you try to stay at one of the ones that don't allow camping? If you try to stay the night at a store where it's not permitted may be asked politely to leave, or as often happens, be ordered to leave long after they have gone to bed.

In some cases what happens is, where a local law prohibits overnight stays, the local police will knock on a door late at night with an eviction notice, or they may even issue a citation.

The Wal-Mart Locator directory, is just what you'll need to help locate one of these free camping for RVs Wal-Mart's.

Included in this book are "our common sense rules about staying the night at Wal-Mart," which will help you understand the rules – official and unofficial – also staying the night in one of the store's parking lots. This small book is a must have with you on all your trips.

It'll save you from going out of your way to a store that will then turn you away. It was published in 2006.

Flying J TruckStops For Free Camping

Another place for free over night camping is "Flying J"truckstops. They will accept RVers and actively work at having RV campers stop at these truck stops. They count on gas and other sales for your free nights stay. If campers stay out of the way of the truckers, free camping is likely to continue.

National Forest Lands and State Forest Lands

How about, you camp free on any BLM (Bureau of Land Management) land, unless you find it's specifically forbidden in an area. This is also true of National Forest lands. In both areas you're limited to a stay of two weeks in one place, though this rule is not always an enforced rule, and you may only need to move a couple of hundred yards away for two more weeks.

State forest lands are usually open to free camping without permits, but policies vary by state (The two-week rule seems to be common).There are always exceptions to the rules. Always check before you camp.

Ontario's Crown Land

Ontario's Crown land provides for opportunity to have many outdoor recreational activities including camping. The residents of Canada may camp free of charge on Crown land for up to 21 days at any one site, unless otherwise posted .

A lot of Crown land is available for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors, the access to some Crown lands may be restricted or limited. The Ministry of Natural Resources may have posted signs to limit certain kinds of travel or activity (including camping) as well as close some forest access roads for reasons of public safety or environmental protection. Contact the local MNR office for more information regarding the Crown land in the area you hope to visit.

Low Cost Camping

After all you've read about free camping there is a half price discount club with awesome rates. By joining the Happy Camper Club, you will be entitled to half-price camping at more than 1,000 RV parks in the USA and Canada.

Members receive a membership card, plus a thick directory of participating half-price campgrounds. Memberships come with an unconditional 30-day money-back guarantee.

There are free campgrounds scattered around the country. Ask an RVer about this, or buy a Woodall's directory from any large RV dealer.

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Geocaching Outdoor Recreation and Adventure

By **Robin Shortt**

Geocaching, have you tried out this new high - tech hobby yet? Its getting, very popular! What is it? Geocaching is a fun adventure game for GPS users.

The idea is to have different groups both individual and organized set caches up all over the world and then share the locations of these caches on the internet.

After finding the location coordinates GPS users can then locate the caches. As caches are discovered, the finder will usually enjoy a variety of treasures.

Geocache Treasure or Rewards

The only thing the treasure finder is asked to do on finding a cache is to add something themselves.

All the visitor is asked to do is, if they get something they should try to leave something for the cache.

This sure is a great way to be outdoors and enjoy the adventure and thrill of the hunt!

What things might you find in a cache, all depends on its size, the log book, non-perishable food items, books, toys, cds.

Besides the rewards, caches most often contain a log book of sorts that the cache

hunters can leave a log entry or note for those future cache hunters.
<http://www.geocoins.ca/>

What Is GPS

The GPS letters stand for "Global Positioning System," there are a series of about two dozen satellites in a low earth orbit that constantly broadcasts their position.

The receivers then triangulate on these signals and determine where you are on the earth's surface. After selecting a cache, entering the coordinates into your GPS receiver, the receiver will then show you just how far away the cache is and in what direction it is in.

What Makes This So Exciting

The truth is getting to the cache is where most of the fun lies.

Just think about it, even if you know exactly how far and in what direction to go, what obstacles lie before you. A forest, a highway, swamp, mountain and many other impassible barriers. The idea is you need to find your way around these obstigals.

Remembering to stay within the law, getting permission when necessary to cross private property. Most caches are accessible through public land anyway.
<http://www.brillig.com/geocaching/maps.shtml>

Whats The Cost

To participate in geocaching is completely free, although you will need a GPS receiver. They will generally run you around a hundred dollars and up to buy one.

Other than that its free. You should always remember to carry some extra cash, for obvious things like gas for your car, parking, munchies, etc.

Did you know that on May 2nd, 2000 Dave Ulmer placed the first cache near Portland Oregon. The birth of geocaching.

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For The Joy Of Camping Robin and Val

