

## **Top Tips for Hiking in During the Pandemic**

The pandemic has changed almost every aspect of how people live including how they exercise. With gyms and indoor facilities closed or operating at reduced capacity and people struggling to make ends meet more people than ever are turning to outdoor activities like hiking to exercise and get some much-needed time outdoors. Now that the hiking trails all over the country are filling up you will need to take some extra precautions in order to stay safe while you hike like:

### **Bring A Pandemic Supply Kit**

You already know that you should be prepared for anything when you go on a hike, and that means being taking pandemic precautions too. Add a few disposable masks, a small bottle of hand sanitizer, and some disinfecting wipes to your usual hiking kit. You may not need any of those things but it's better to have them in case you do run into other people on the trail.

### **Hike Solo or With One Other Person**

Group hikes are a lot of fun, and during the pandemic it's much safer to see your friends outdoors where you can maintain social distancing. But when you're hiking you should limit your hiking companions. Hike by yourself or with just one other person in order to stay safe. If you don't like hiking alone or you're worried about hiking alone take your dog on a hike with you. If you don't have a dog call your local pet adoption center. Many of them have programs where they will lend you an adoptable dog for a hike or a walk. It's good for the dog to get some trail time and good for you too.

### **Practice Social Distancing**

Hiking trails are crowded with people who are looking for pandemic friendly ways to exercise and spend time outside so you may come across other people when you hike. If that happens remember to always maintain social distancing and stay at least six feet apart. That can be tough to do on a narrow trail but it's important that you do it. If you need to stop and let another hiker go in front of you wait a minute or two so that the other person can get far in front of you before you start walking again.

### **Wear A Mask**

If you live in an area where masks are required then you must wear one, but you should wear one when you're around other people even if it's not required. If you wear a mask around your face when you go hiking you can pull it down if you're alone on the trail but pull it up quickly if you pass another hiker.

### **Look for Less Popular Trails**

Because more people are hiking there is a lot more traffic on the well-known trails, both local trails and national trails. Looking for smaller or less well-known trails will make it easier to hike without being around a lot of people. If you're not sure where there are small local trails in your area call your Department of Parks and Recreation. They should be able to tell you where you can find local hiking trails that won't be so crowded.

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