

Outdoor Trip Intensity Levels

BU Outdoor Programs uses a five-level scale to rate how physically and technically challenging each trip is. Check the trip description for the trip's rating.

Some trips may not fit neatly into a single intensity level—factors like remoteness, terrain, or exposure might make a trip seem more, or less, challenging than its rating suggests, so the trip description will note any important details that influenced the final rating. (Example: A ski trip may be less remote, being 1 hour away from urban facilities, but still be “Moderate” due to a greater level of fitness and prior technical skills required.)

Some trips require direct experience or technical competence. If so, it will be explained in the trip description. These trips will usually have you fill out a short questionnaire when you register, which helps us determine whether the trip is a good fit.

If you're unsure whether a trip is right for you, don't hesitate to email us at buop@bu.edu. We're happy to help!

Activity Levels

Relaxed:

- **Fitness:** Suitable for most active participants with full mobility and participants new to the activity described. Expect to be active for ~2-3 hours in a day (not including transportation time). These trips are designed to be approachable for a range of fitness levels, and there will be plenty of opportunities for rest breaks.
- **Remoteness:** Usually within 1 hour of bathrooms and facilities.
- **Experience Required:** No experience needed. Especially good for those who are less familiar with outdoor settings.

Easy:

- **Fitness:** Reasonable fitness for the expected activity is needed, but the trip is designed to be accessible for beginners. Expect to be active ~4 hours a day. Easy trips are a bit more active than “relaxed” but with lots of room for rest. These trips are designed for those looking to enjoy outdoor activities with a little bit of physical challenge without expecting to be exhausted by the end of the day.
- **Remoteness:** Usually within 1 hour of bathrooms.
- **Experience Required:** No experience needed. Any skill requirements will be taught and supported by trip leaders/guides during the trip.

Moderate:

- **Fitness:** Fitness and/or past experience to sustain the activity at a moderate pace is required. Expect to be active ~5-7 hours in a day. Participants can expect to feel the physical demand and take reasonable breaks in the action. Ideal for those ready to exercise their physical abilities.
- **Remoteness:** Usually within 2 hours of bathrooms.
- **Experience Required:** Prior experience may be required.

Difficult:

- **Fitness:** Suitable for those with recent similar experience and/or demonstrated proficiency such as regular engagement in sports or other vigorous physical activity. Ability to perform at the expected level for back-to-back days on multi-day trips. Expect to be active ~5-8 hours per day and to experience physical challenges. A good fit for those looking for a challenging adventure with a higher level of commitment.
- **Remoteness:** May involve travel through remote areas up to 6-8 hours from bathrooms
- **Experience Required:** Prior experience is either strongly recommended or required.

Strenuous:

- **Fitness:** Most physically and/or mentally demanding. High fitness for the specific activity is required with direct or comparable experience mandatory. Expect to be active 8+ hours per day, with back-to-back days for multiday trips. Breaks are often shorter or fewer than lower-level trips. Designed for seasoned adventurers seeking to commit themselves to a physical and/or mental challenge in demanding environments.
- **Remoteness:** May involve travel through remote wilderness areas more than a day from bathrooms.
- **Experience Required:** Prior experience is required.

Hiking, Backpacking, and Snowshoeing

Activity Level	Distance (Up to ___ miles)	Daily Elevation Gain or Loss (Up to ___ feet)
1 - Relaxed	4	500
2 - Easy	4	500
3 - Moderate	6	1000
4 - Difficult	8	2500
5 - Strenuous	10	3000+