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HOW TO: Make A Mountain First Aid Kit

by **Kath Wills** May/2011

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Kath Wills is a member of the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team and a Rescue Emergency Care (REC) first aid instructor. She runs Active First Aid in Snowdonia. Here, she advises what to put in a comprehensive general mountain first aid kit for a group of people.

About Kath Wills

Formerly a PE teacher, Kath Wills discovered a passion for first aid and has been a Rescue Emergency Care (REC) first aid instructor since 1999. In 2000 she decided to combine her enjoyment of the outdoors with her interest in first aid and became a member of the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team (LLMRT). Over the years she has been a member of the main rescue team Committee as well as the Chair of the Medical Sub Committee where she played a vital role in re-vamping the first aid equipment and training. In recent years she has relinquished these roles to concentrate on writing a book on outdoor first aid, however she still plays a significant role in training many rescue team members in first aid.

Active First Aid

Using her experience, Kath is able to provide an insight for those interested into the challenges of first aid in more remote situations. She believes that First Aid is about 'doing' and so the emphasis of the courses is on the practical element. With no medical jargon and plenty of hands on 'scenarios' enacted outdoors in waterproofs, Kath gives candidates the opportunity to become confident in providing care, and the ability to apply general first aid principles in any first aid situation.

For more information about Kath and Active First Aid, visit [Active First Aid](#).



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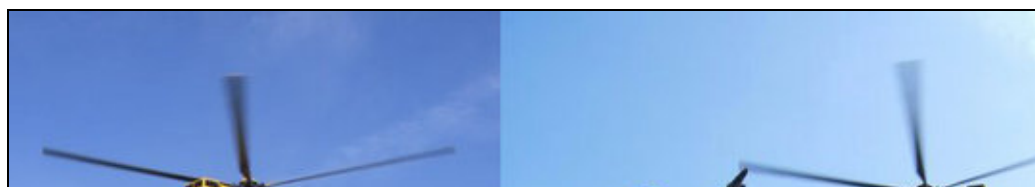
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Why is it important to carry a first aid kit in the mountains?

When I go into the mountains I like to be prepared to deal with a basic 'slip, trip or fall' injury. OK it's possible to improvise dressings and bandages from other bits of kit or clothing but it's better if you are carrying a certain amount of first aid kit.

However, if you sat ten mountaineers down you'd find they were all carrying very different first aid kits. I undertook some research on first aid kits for my forthcoming book on 'Outdoor First Aid'. I asked the question "What do you carry in your first aid kit?" and "What outdoor activity do you use that first aid kit for?". With a current sample size of just over 200 people, of differing types of experience and age, I was amazed to find that no two people carried the same kit!

You can buy first aid kits already made up in the shops, however my research indicates that many people simply put their own kits together and change them according to the activity undertaken. For example a first aid kit used on a mountain biking trip might be different from that used to take a group of 8 people up a mountain. Here follows my suggestions for a comprehensive general mountain first aid kit for a group of people.





Recommended contents of a comprehensive general mountain first aid kit:

- (a) Bothy bag / emergency or group shelter
- (b) Casualty report form
- (c) Wee (waterproof) notebook and pen
- (d) Scissors
- (e) Non adherent dressings like Melolin
- (f) Gloves
- (g) Duct tape
- (h) Wound dressings
- (i) Little gauzes
- (j) Safety pins
- (k) Saline pods
- (l) Mediwipes
- (m) Micropore or Transpore tape
- (n) Compression Trauma Dressing
- (o) Compeed for blisters
- (p) Dioralyte
- (q) Blizzard Jacket
- (r) A bandage / support bandage
- (s) Plasters
- (t) Triangular bandage / Steristrips
- (u) Pain killers
- (v) Face shield
- (w) Hypostop





How To Make A Mountain First Aid / Emergency Kit (click to make image bigger)

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The contents explained:

(a) Bothy bag / emergency or group shelter

– To provide instant shelter wherever you are.

(b) Casualty report form

– To record all details needed for the mountain rescue, as well information found in the Primary and Secondary assessments, plus somewhere to record the vital signs as you await rescue.

(c) Wee (waterproof) notebook and pen

– Note pads can be used if you don't carry a casualty card to jot down information about your casualty.

(d) Scissors

– For cutting tape, dressings or clothing and kit if necessary.

(e) Non adherent dressings like Melolin

– These are useful for wounds that have a fairly light amount of leakage. I carry a few large ones I can cut down to size if necessary.

(f) Gloves

– Several pairs of Nitrile examination gloves (not latex as some people are allergic to it).

(g) Duct tape

– Multiples uses. Duct tape is amazing, in a first aid context it can be used to secure dressings in a general sense you can mend your waterproofs, tent and rucksack if necessary!

(h) Wound dressings

– A dressing pad attached to a bandage is useful on bleeding wounds.

(i) Little gauzes

– To mop up blood.

(j) Safety pins

– Useful for to secure bandages and handy if you need a needle. They are also great for improvising both elevated and lower arm slings by nipping the sleeve of the injured arm to the casualty's clothing

pinning the corners of the injured skin to the casualty's clothing.

(k) Saline pods

– Used to irrigate wounds (or the eyes to wash out foreign objects eg. insects).

(l) Mediwipes

– Pre-packed wipes for cleaning wounds.

(m) Micropore or Transpore tape

– Can be used to secure dressings in place, or help immobilise injured fingers or toes.

(n) Compression Trauma Dressing

– Military trauma dressing for big bleeds.

(o) Compeed for blisters – A special type of adhesive dressing for use with blisters.

(p) Dioralyte – Rehydration sachets (particularly useful in summer).

(q) Blizzard Jacket – Handy little compressed survival jacket with sleeves and hood to keep a casualty warm (used to be called a Blizzard Vest but they now have sleeves).

(r) A bandage / support bandage

– This could be crepe or a support bandage. Used to hold a dressing in place, to secure a splint on a fracture or directly onto the skin to help support an injured muscle or joint.

(s) Plasters

- For minor cuts.

(t) Triangular bandage

– Can be used to hold dressings in place or as a sling for splinting. Can be fashioned into a broad or narrow bandage to secure fractured limbs.

(u) Steristrips

– These are strips of special tape that can close a wound that has reasonably straight edges ie. a slice.

(u) Pain killers

– paracetamol / ibuprofen. Also aspirin (300 mg) for use with heart attack casualties. Copy the information that accompanies the drugs (such as dosage and contra indications) onto water proof paper and keep it in your first aid kit.

(v) Face shield

- (For giving CPR) offers some form of protection when performing mouth to mouth resuscitation.

(w) Hypostop

– energy gel for exhaustion or hypothermic casualties.

Other items you could include:

Cling film for burns

– Simply used as a dressing when placed over a burn. Make sure you cool the burn first and then lay the cling film over the top of the burn – DO NOT wrap it around the limb – then bandage in place.

Small head torch

Adventure Medical Kits

Can't be bothered making your own first aid kit? Check out these pre-made ones [from Adventure Medical Kits](#).





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