

## The DofE Manager's kit list advice: 'Tony's Top Tips'

With the exception of one or two independent retailers, 'Cotswold Outdoors' are undoubtedly the best high street suppliers of expedition kit. Although the company no longer has a commercial relationship with the DofE, it still seems to look favourably upon DofE participants (and family) who not only benefit of discounts but also get brilliant service from trained retail staff who understand DofE Expedition needs, making a visit well worthwhile.

Rucksack packing is a disciplined and sometimes a ruthless process of choosing the lightest 'fit for purpose items' to carry. I regularly find that Bronze participants often bring far too much... so much so that experienced Gold participants often have sacks that weigh the same or less but have an expedition that is twice as long.

<b>Personal clothing:</b> One set of clothing for journeying and one set that always stays dry and clean for overnight and in the tent.	
Boots	Well broken in, with a waterproof* product or treatment
Waterproof jacket	A breathable wind/waterproof* mid weight garment with good size hood and ventilation.
Waterproof trousers	A breathable wind/waterproof* mid weight garment with zips allowing ventilation and donning / removing over boots.
Socks	Very much a personal choice which could be made up from one thick pair and one thin pair.
Base layers / underwear	Generally underwear (or a 'skin') that is made from wicking fabric which removes moisture (sweat) from your skin, which helps you stay comfortable.
Fleece	A mid layer either made from the traditional fleece fabric or with a soft shell outer which might also offer wind protection.
Trousers	Lightweight to dry quickly but substantial enough to protect against undergrowth and insects.
Warm hat	In the UK we can sometimes experience 3 seasons in just one day so you may well require hats for both hot and cold conditions.
Sun hat	
Sun block	Individual sachet rather than a bottle.
Gloves	Wool or fleece are ideal rather than bulky winter ski type gloves.
<b>Personal equipment:</b>	
Rucksack	65 Lt size fitted in store to your shape (M/F).
Liners	Purpose manufactured dry bags is one option or thick polythene bags (one for sleeping bag, one for main chamber and one for sleeping mat).
Sleeping mat	Traditional blown foam or the more expensive / less durable self-inflating type.
Sleeping bag	Minimum 3 season either with synthetic fill (dry's quicker & easier care) or down fill (lighter / warmer but high maintenance)
Survival bag	Orange polythene bag which is worth its weight in gold in an emergency!
Paper & pen	A few pieces of paper and half a pencil and small pen.
Whistle	Some rucksacks come with one, otherwise tie it to the sack draw string.
Torch	Head torch with LED bulbs (some have a locking mechanism to prevent accidental activation). You won't go wrong with a Petzl head torch.
Personal first aid kit	A small first aid kit is ideal for dealing with blisters, abrasions etc... a supply of Compeed blister plasters is a good idea!
Personal wash kit	This is an area that new participants regularly bring too much! A few wipes, tooth brush, <u>tiny</u> travel toothpaste, tissues and a small shared spray antiperspirant deodorant.
Water bottle	1.5 – 2lts depending on conditions. Water bladders are also popular but be careful with storage hygiene (freeze store is best).
Spork	Say no more!
Mug & bowl	Plastic or collapsible silicone
Matches	Waterproofed
<b>Group equipment:</b>	
Tent	On loan from school
Stove	On loan from school

Fuel	The school stove come with a <u>screw</u> adaptor for a butane/propane gas canister 230-250g
Washing up kit	A tiny container with washing up liquid, sponge/scouring pad and tea towel.
Map & compass	On loan from school
<b>Food:</b> Participants should cook and eat a substantial meal each day.	
Breakfast	Nutritious, filling, quick, light and something that's easy and not leaving dirty pots.
Lunch	Nutritious, filling, quick, light and something that's easy to 'graze' on.
Main meal	Nutritious, filling, quick, light and something that's easy and not leaving dirty pots (dehydrated and just add boiling water is ideal!).
Emergency rations	A sealed package with soup sachet, boiled sweets, high energy tablets (Dextro) and maybe some dried fruit.

\*Most waterproof items of clothing come with a breathable membrane such as Gore-Tex. The fabric is designed to allow sweat water vapour to pass through as part of the wicking process, whilst repelling liquid water (rain). It isn't the most durable of fabrics and after a short time will require reproofing.

#### **Favourite brands:**

Socks: Bridgedale, Bridgedale and Bridgedale again!

Base & mid layers: Craghoppers is a good reasonable entry level brand.

Waterproof: Again Craghopper is okay, then moving onto Berghaus, Mountain Equipment and Rab.

Boots: Hi-Tec is a good reasonable entry level brand, then moving onto Ayacucho, Berghaus, Meindl, Merrell, Scarper and Salomon.

Rucksacks: Vango is an okay entry level brand, then moving onto Lowe Alpine, Berghaus, Rab, The North Face and Osprey.

Sleeping bags: Vango is a good reasonable entry level brand, then moving onto Ayacucho, Rab and Mountain Equipment.

The views expressed in this document are my own based on 30 years of experience with specific brands and retailers.

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