

# Physical Requirements

**NOTE: ALL Upper and Lower Canyon passengers MUST hike the Bright Angel Trail. Seriously consider whether you are physically capable of hiking in/out of the Grand Canyon. Excellent physical condition and endurance are critical to completing this hike safely. Remember, you must be able to carry ALL your own gear.**

Upper and Lower Canyon trips with Hatch River Expeditions are specifically designed for guests who are willing and able to complete a long and difficult hike on the Bright Angel Trail. Upper Canyon passengers will be *required* to hike out of the Grand Canyon on the last day of their trip, and Lower Canyon passengers will be *required* to hike into the Grand Canyon on the first day of their trip. Even seasoned hikers find hiking in the Grand Canyon to be more challenging than they anticipated.

To safely participate in the Bright Angel Trail hike, you'll need to prepare for:

- A full day's hike – Most hikers take 5-6 hours to get down the trail and 6-8 hours to get up it. Those times will be significantly impacted by pre-trip preparation and self-care while on the trail.
- A long, steep trail – The Bright Angel Trail is 9.5 miles long with an elevation change of 4,440 feet from rim to river (that's nearly *4 times* the height of the Eiffel Tower).
- Temperatures that may reach 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Uneven, rocky, and sandy terrain with steep steps up and down and occasionally narrow pathways.
- Carrying personal gear – We recommend that guests use our UPS duffel service to lighten their loads. Remember that no matter what, you should be carrying at least 3 liters of water and any gear you want access to on the trail.

**Note:** We are happy to discuss other styles of trips that allow us to accommodate a wide range of physical challenges and medical conditions. Please contact our office so we can assist you personally with any concerns.

## Additional Physical Requirements

In addition to being able to complete the mandatory and strenuous hike along the Bright Angel Trail, you will need to be able to:

- Fit into a Type 5 life jacket (max chest size 58")
- Hold onto the raft through whitewater. Ropes are provided as handholds.
- Climb onto and off of the raft. There will be about a 2-3ft step up/down and some surfaces may be wet and slippery.
- Tolerate prolonged/repeated exposure to water of approximately 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Review our **12 Tips for a Better Hike** on the reverse of this page before your trip.

### 5 Great Pre-Trip Conditioning Activities:

1. Find and hike local trails that have elevation gain and loss.
2. Use the incline feature on machines at your local gym and take the stairs wherever you go.
3. Walk and hike on uneven terrain and rocky trails.
4. Purchase and break in hiking or cross training shoes and hiking sandals ahead of time to avoid blisters.
5. Get in the habit of drinking lots of water throughout the day – it's good for you every day, but mandatory on the river!

If by the balance due date, you cannot comfortably hike at least 9 miles, please contact our office.

Questions? Check out the [FAQs on hatchriverexpeditions.com](https://www.hatchriverexpeditions.com/faq)

Still Stumped? Call or email our office: [928-526-4700](tel:928-526-4700) / [info@hatchriverexpeditions.com](mailto:info@hatchriverexpeditions.com)

# Hiking in the Grand Canyon

Everyone who hikes in the canyon for the first time reports that it was more difficult than they expected. There are no easy trails into or out of the Grand Canyon.

Hiking in the Grand Canyon is a strenuous and potentially dangerous activity suitable for only those in excellent physical condition. If you have any history of ankle, knee, hip or other joint problems, asthma or heart-related problems, or have recently undergone surgery, please consult your physician before attempting to hike into or out of the Canyon. Temperatures typically exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) in the summer months and can even reach 120 degrees.

Additionally, given that this is a group activity, it is important that you are physically able to participate with the group and be on time. Remember that your actions can affect the group experience.

## PHYSICAL TRAINING BEFORE YOUR TRIP IS ESSENTIAL.

### 12 Tips for a Better Hike

**1. EAT SALTY SNACKS** almost as often as you drink. Balance your food intake with your fluid consumption so that your electrolyte levels stay within a normal range.

**2. DRINK AT LEAST THREE LITERS** of water and electrolytes. Do not wait until you feel thirsty - by that time, you are already dehydrated. Camelbak-style hydration packs work great plus two backup water bottles. Note that disposable water bottles are not sold in the park. You must bring refillable bottles with you.

**3. REST** at every opportunity. Three developed shade areas are located on your hike into or out of the Canyon.

**4. WEAR** a **WIDE-BRIMMED HAT** and other skin-covering clothing for sun protection.

**5. WET** your hat, bandana, and long-sleeved shirt at water stations.

**6. PACK LIGHT.** Take only what you need – and then double-check it. Water and food should be your heaviest items. Consider using Hatch's UPS Duffel Service (info on the **Duffel Service Form**).

**7. PACE YOURSELF.** A steady pace will not only prevent you from tiring too quickly, but will also allow you to enjoy the scenery.

**8. RESEARCH** your trip. A Grand Canyon hike is not suitable for everybody. Make sure you read the summer hiking information on the Grand Canyon National Park's website.

<http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/hike-smart.htm>

**9. PREPARE** for your hike by getting a good night's rest, eating a good dinner, and avoiding alcohol and other diuretics.

**10. PRE-HYDRATE** during your trip by drinking lots of **WATER**. Don't get behind!

**11. WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES** and clip your toenails to avoid "black toe" and blisters.

**12. STRETCH** before you start, but prepare to have **SORE MUSCLES** the day after your adventure.

#### Bonus Tip: Mules have the right of way

If you encounter a mule train in the Grand Canyon, make sure to follow these safety tips:

- Step off the trail on the uphill side away from the edge.
- Follow the directions of the wrangler. Remain completely quiet and stand perfectly still.
- Do not return to the trail until the last mule is 50 feet (15 meters) past your position.

Questions? [Check out the FAQs on hatchriverexpeditions.com](http://hatchriverexpeditions.com)

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