

DofE with TrekCo

Your Gold DofE Expedition

Guidance for Participants



Your Gold Expedition

DofE Gold Expeditions are a coming of age event for many - test yourself in a challenging environment, work with your team to overcome the obstacles presented by carrying a big pack over the hills in sometimes good, sometimes bad, weather... but these are the memories you'll take away forever.

The DofE Gold Expedition is 4 days long, camping for 3 nights, and you must carry everything you need with you the whole way, except water. This is called being 'self-sufficient' in DofE language. Essentially it means you can't buy things in shops along the way or eat at the local chip shop, but you must plan your expedition carefully and have all of your clothing, equipment and food with you and carry it all the way.

That's why the Gold expedition is seen as demanding but incredibly rewarding.



[For more information or to book your place, speak to one of TrekCo's DofE Instructors today – 01273 257330](#)



The Basics

You may have heard that you have to walk 50 miles on your DofE Gold Expedition, but that rule changed long ago. You have to spend 8 hours each day in 'planned activity', 6 of which should be walking - but there is no specified distance. You have to devise, with your supervisor, a suitable route which will take approximately that long. The other hours will be spent on your expedition 'aim' - again to be decided as a group.

Gold expeditions can also only take place in specific areas that the DofE organisation call 'Wild Country'. In England and Wales, where TrekCo mainly operate, this basically means most of the upland National Parks like the Lake District, Snowdonia, Peak District, Dartmoor and so on. For a definitive list, see: <https://www.dofe.org/run/expeditionareas/> and click on 'Wild Country Expedition Areas'.

Your group must have between 4 and 7 people in it; it can't run with fewer people so at Gold Expedition level we group people together - you'll certainly get to know your Gold expedition group as well as you've known anybody after 4 days!

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Route Planning

First, choose your area. Gold Expeditions have to be in 'Wild Country'. TrekCo run Gold Expeditions in the Lake District and the Peak District.

For your Gold expedition you have to plan a route with the rest of your group. If you're an 'Open' participant, then that session will take place when you arrive for your expedition. We supply all of the maps and compasses; this has to be done using paper maps the old fashioned way so that you can show your understanding of your route - and you'll be navigating using paper maps on the walk.

We will have pre-booked your campsites, or reconnoitred the site if wild camping, so there will be a fixed start and end point for each day. You just have to work out the best way to get between the two. This isn't, of course, always a straight line - there might be the odd hill in between!

Factors you need to consider will be:

- How much up and down is there along the way - ascent and descent take time
- What type of terrain is it? Might there be obstacles - bogs, rocks, woodland?
- How fast can the group go? You'll have a better idea of this once you've walked with the group
- Is there an alternative way in a valley if the weather high on the mountains looks really bad?

You will of course receive guidance from your Supervisor, and you can change your route within reason if you feel some of the factors of the expedition have changed.



Choosing your Campsite

Although the location of your campsite will often be chosen before the expedition, it's important for your comfort where you put your tent up...

Choosing a campsite

First, make sure you're in the right place! Check thoroughly on your map before you get your tent out.

Things to consider:

- Flat ground - grassy but not too soft or boggy
- Water nearby
- Toilet area
- Sheltered from the wind

We will discuss these factors beforehand but a well chosen site will help you get a good night's sleep!



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Equipment

What Kit do I need?

As a part of your expedition fee we provide all group equipment, which includes:

- Tents
- Stoves (Trangias) and fuel
- Map and compass
- Rucksack covers for the team
- Emergency shelter for the team
- Tracking device/mobile phone for the team

We also offer free of charge the loan of some personal equipment. As a Gold DofE participant you should organise your own personal kit but there are some circumstances which may mean you don't have an item such as:

Sleeping bag or mat
Rucksack
Waterproof



You can't bring everything with you...

Remember, these are the participant's responsibility so if you ask for all of them then perhaps you aren't ready for Gold! This is intended as a backup for you just in case.

Kit Lists can be found on the DofE website at: https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Expedition_Kit_List-Sept2019.pdf

Discounts

Remember as a DofE participant you get 10% off at GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso – in store and online

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How to Pack your Rucksack

Some basics:

- Your pack should weigh no more than a quarter of yourself! If it's more, get rid of something - you'll find it really hard walking with too much weight
- Assume every part of your pack will get wet and pack everything in dry bags or plastic. Rucksacks aren't waterproof, and rucksack covers won't keep everything 100% dry!
- Balance the pack left to right or you may end up walking in circles. The weight should be on the hips, not the shoulders.
- Don't have any items hanging off - they'll unbalance you and often come off. The only thing on the outside should be your sleeping mat and possibly a tent section, depending on your rucksack type.
- Put heavier stuff higher up the rucksack and nearer to your back
- Think what you might need to be able to get out quickly and make sure that's in a pocket or near the top



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Equipment & Packing Top Tips

FAQs and Advice

- Can I charge my phone? - Foremost on many minds! Remember that your phone is for emergencies and for contacting your Supervisor, not primarily for chatting with friends at home! Try to keep it for the expedition only, and leave home behind for a few days. You can charge phones normally when you're on formal campsites which will be at least at the start of the expedition. When wild camping, you can't charge your phone - you will be away from any facilities. So a reserve battery is a good idea, as is putting your phone on low power mode, turning off wifi and bluetooth and automatic updates etc.
- Will there be toilets? - at formal campsites, yes - but not when wild camping. You'll have to go the natural way - you'll receive instruction on how to achieve that in an environmentally friendly way. That means you'll need to carry a small amount of toilet paper too.
- Showers? - Same answer. There are often streams when wild camping - chilly but refreshing!



An instructor distributing water at a meeting point

- As we're supposed to be self sufficient, do we have to carry water for 4 days? - No. You can fill up at taps and campsites, and our instructors will have a supply for hot days when there are no water sources.
- Can we buy things from shops? - No, you must be self sufficient and have everything with you from the start - that's part of the idea of planning for your expedition.

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Boots

Take Care of Your Feet!

Unsurprisingly one of the things people worry about about is the comfort of their feet - especially around getting blisters, which can be really painful on occasion.

Blisters normally result from a few factors - boots that don't fit well; lack of practise in walking in boots; and wet feet causing the skin to soften.

To help with these factors you can look at different areas:

Boots

Many people think that walking boots have to be those big heavy leather boots (with red socks of course) - but that's not the case. Leather boots are good but expensive and heavy, and there are lots of fabric boots on the market now which are perfectly good for your DofE. You should buy a waterproof boot - but remember that no boots will stay waterproof forever, no matter what they say on the box.



Malesuada eleifend, tortor molestie, a a vel et. Mauris ipsum et suspendisse, neque aliquam faucibus.

Go to a reputable shop like Cotswold, Blacks etc and get your boots fitted - tell them you're doing your Gold DofE and they should see you get the right pair.

Socks

Good quality socks like Bridgedale could save your feet! They will wick away the moisture so your skin doesn't get wet and soft. You absolutely must take spare socks with you to change into if needed. No need for two pairs on the feet at once; one good pair should prevent blisters. Take light sandals or trainers for camp - this will give your feet a break. Crocs for example are amazingly light and ideal for a campsite shoe.

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Doing Your DofE

Completing your DofE Gold Expedition isn't just about going for a walk..

The DofE is a serious commitment - there are four other sections to complete at Gold level in addition to the Expedition, and they all need time, effort and perseverance.

Make sure your expedition preparation is thorough; it really is all important! You need to be fit so you should undertake some practice walks before coming on an expedition - make sure you are used to carrying a rucksack before you have to do it for real.

The idea of an expedition is that you're not directly supervised by adults - so you need to make your own decisions and conduct yourself sensibly. It's about teamwork, not each person just getting to the finish line.

People often ask if they've passed or failed, and think that if they take a wrong turn or are late then they've failed their expedition. It's about keeping safe and getting back on track, realising where you've gone wrong and changing things - not just ticking boxes!



Doing Your DofE

What do I need to know?

All participants on an expedition need to co-operate with one another and complete the expedition together, so a mature approach is needed in order that the team finish their expedition.

We may ask a participant who is clearly physically not going to complete the expedition to withdraw - or in rare circumstances if someone's behaviour is contrary to the ethics of the expedition we may remove them from the group. These reasons might include use of alcohol or drugs; being in the tent of the opposite sex, rudeness to members of the public or other group members including bullying. Members who are removed will leave at their own expense and no travel or other costs will be reimbursed, and no refund of any part of the expedition cost is given. Removal is entirely at the discretion of the instructors and no consultation will be sought.

Everyone must complete their Practise and Qualifying expeditions; it's not possible to excuse people from a section or day even for a good reason. If you're competing for GB on Day 1 of



You'll enjoy your expedition more if you're prepared

your expedition, then you need to change your dates!

Please remember that although most people do pass their expedition section, it's not guaranteed.

We ask that you read and sign the participation statement and agree to the terms, so that we all have a set of guidelines to stick to.

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Or email: info@trekco.com

Medical

Let us Know!

Medical Issues - Before you come on an expedition we'll ask you to complete a medical form - if you're under 18 then this will need to be signed by a parent/carer.

The idea of this is to enable us to arrange the right care for you if we need to, and to contact your family. If in unfortunate circumstances you were unconscious, we wouldn't be able to ask you if you were allergic to any medicines for example - so it's essential we gather anything, whether you think it's relevant or not.

If you need to take regular prescription medicines then you must be able to administer them yourself - unfortunately we can't do that.

Any conditions needing special medication such as diabetes, asthma, allergies etc must be mentioned on the medical form. Please remember that the journey is unsupervised - you can't rely on an adult being present, so ensure that you and your family are happy with you taking part and that they understand this.



Do your DofE in the Lake District for Peak District under TrekCo's expert guidance

Contact Details

We need the contact details of your family for the period when you're on the expedition. We might ask them to come and get you, or a doctor might want permission to operate on you - there are several reasons - so it's vital that your contact is available!

You also need to let us know of any changes in either the contact details or your health so that this is all up to date by the time you come on the expedition.

We want to be sure that you're safe, and we need this information to help us achieve that.



Contact Us

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TrekCo have been delivering outdoor pursuits since 1989 and are the largest outdoor pursuits provider in the south of England. We operate in Sussex and all over the UK, and the French Alps. Our instructors are incredibly experienced, and the friendliest in the field!

