

BACKCOUNTRY BASE GUIDE TO LEAVE NO TRACE:



Being out here is a privilege, and with that comes responsibility. Today we're talking about something super important: Leave No Trace.

Whether you're a seasoned mountaineer or just enjoying a day hike, practicing Leave No Trace principles is essential to protect these incredible places for ourselves, for future generations, and for the wildlife that calls these mountains home.

Okay, let's be real. The mountains are beautiful, but they're also fragile. Even small impacts can add up.



Things like leaving trash, stepping off trails, or disturbing wildlife can have long-lasting negative consequences. We can also impact water quality or contribute to wildfires. You can inadvertently change the landscape. And if we don't take care of the mountains, we won't be able to visit them.



The 7 principles:

- (Principle 1: Plan Ahead and Prepare

Plan Ahead and Prepare" means doing your homework *before* you even hit the trail. Research your route, check the weather, pack the right gear (layers are key in the mountains!), and understand any regulations or permits required. This will avoid unnecessary risks and help you minimize your impact.

- **(Principle 2: Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces)**
- "Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces." Stick to established trails and campsites. Avoid trampling vegetation. If you're hiking in a group, hike single file. And when you're setting up camp, choose a designated site or a spot that's already bare.
- **(Principle 3: Dispose of Waste Properly)**
- "Dispose of Waste Properly." This one's simple: Pack it in, pack it out! That means *everything*. Food wrappers, banana peels, even orange peels. If you brought it with you, take it home. And when nature calls, dig a six-to-eight-inch deep cathole at least 200 feet away from water sources, trails, and campsites. Bonus: pack a wag bag for solid waste.
- **(Principle 4: Leave What You Find)**
- "Leave What You Find." Let the mountains stay wild. Don't collect rocks, flowers, or artifacts. Leave natural objects as you found them so others can enjoy them too. Take only pictures, leave only footprints.



- **(Principle 5: Minimize Campfire Impacts)**
- "Minimize Campfire Impacts." Campfires can have a huge impact on the environment. Consider using a camp stove instead. If you do build a fire, use an existing fire ring and keep it small. Burn all wood and coals to ash, and then scatter the cooled ashes. Always check for fire restrictions before lighting any fire.
- **(Principle 6: Respect Wildlife)** "Respect Wildlife." Observe wildlife from a distance. Never feed animals. Store food properly to prevent attracting wildlife to your campsite. And keep pets on a leash to protect both them and the wildlife.
- **(Principle 7: Be Considerate of Other Visitors)**
- "Be Considerate of Other Visitors." Share the mountains! Keep noise levels down, yield to uphill hikers, and be respectful of other people's experiences. Remember, everyone is out there to enjoy the peace and quiet.



Okay, so those are the general principles, but the mountains have some unique challenges.

- **Alpine Environments:** Alpine environments are extremely fragile and slow to recover. Be extra careful to stay on trails and avoid trampling sensitive vegetation.
 - **Snow Conditions:** Be aware of snow conditions and avalanche risks. Know how to identify and avoid avalanche terrain.
 - **Water Sources:** Protect water sources from contamination. Wash dishes and bathe at least 200 feet away from streams and lakes.
 - **Altitude:** Be prepared for altitude sickness. Ascend gradually and drink plenty of water.
- So, there you have it! Leave No Trace in the mountains. It's all about being mindful of our impact and taking steps to protect these incredible places.
 - **Call to Action:**
 - "Before you head out on your next mountain adventure, take a moment to review the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace."
 - "Share this guide with your friends!"
 - "What are your favorite Leave No Trace tips? Let me know me!"

