

# Activity Difficulty Levels

## Hiking, Ski Touring, and Snowshoeing

Level		Distance	Elevation Gain	Duration	Description
1	Beginner	Less than 6km	Less than 100m	Up to 3 hours	Rolling terrain, established primary or secondary trails
2	Low Intermediate	Less than 9km	Less than 200m	Up to 4 hours	Rolling terrain, established primary or secondary trails
3	Intermediate	Up to 12km	Up to 400m	5 to 6 hours	A mix of established trails and some back-country paths, may involve some bushwhacking.
4	Strong Intermediate	Up to 15km	Up to 600m	Up to 8 hours	Generally travel over rough ground, steep sections, faint trails (tertiary) bushwhacking or Level 3 at faster pace and with fewer breaks
5	Advanced	Up to 20km	Up to 1,000m	Up to 10 hours	Rough and/or steep terrain, bushwhacking and/or primitive trails and strenuous elevation gain or Level 4 at fast pace
6	Difficult and Strenuous	Up to 25km	2,000+m	Over 10 hours	Very rough or steep terrain. Very strenuous elevation gain or Level 5 at a very fast and sustained pace.

## Climbing

Level	Remarks
Beginner	Single pitch, easy grade (up to 5.7 rock and WI3 ice) top roped
Intermediate	Seconding single pitch, intermediate grades (up to 5.9 rock and WI4 ice), seconding multi-pitch (easy grade) and leading easy grades

## Notes

1. Trip ratings should allow participants to self-assess trip suitability for their personal goals and ability level.
2. The scale is approximate as many variables are involved i.e. required fitness and expertise level, terrain roughness, elevation gain/loss, completion time, weight of pack to be carried, remoteness, navigation complexity, hazard exposure, length.
3. Some rating factors are variable. Adverse developments during a trip can significantly increase objective hazards, trip completion time and effectively raise the difficulty level. Examples include adverse weather conditions (i.e. precipitation, wind, fog or low cloud), health or fitness problems or injuries (particularly leg or foot) and equipment failure (i.e. ski or snowshoe bindings).
4. For hiking and backpacking, security of footing is a major consideration which can be altered by rain, ice, snow, mud, vegetation. In winter, snow conditions are the major determinant. These are highly variable (depth, icy, breakable crust, prior tracks). Other factors include equipment robustness (touring vs. telemark gear), terrain steepness, vegetation density and avalanche hazard.
5. Ski touring does not necessarily require proficiency in the telemark style.
6. Example trips above are for hiking and backpacking. Ski touring or snowshoeing in the same terrain may have a different rating.
7. Select trips within your current capabilities. See Trip Participant Guidelines.
8. You are responsible for your own safety at all times.
9. Trail definitions
  1. Primary = NCC & ADK Trails
  2. Secondary = Clearly established paths, well worn or well marked
  3. Tertiary = Faint path, mixed visibility on ground or irregular frequency of markings
  4. Primitive = Bushwhacking or deer track.
10. Most local hikes in the Gattineau Park would fit into the class of Levels 1 through 3
11. A few hikes in the Gattineau Park such as the Traverse and the North-South Trek would be classified as Level 4 or 5
12. Most hikes in the Adirondaks would be classified as Level 4 or 5
13. Some long traverse hikes like the Great Range in the ADKs and most hikes in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the Canadian Rockies would usually be in the Level 5 & 6 category