



Mt. Whitney Skills and Climb

Sierra

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The primary goal of any alpine climber should always be to carry as little as possible. What is left out of a backpack is often just as important as what is placed inside. Conditions in the mountains vary dramatically from season-to-season, and sometimes even throughout the same day. This can make the process of preparing equipment for an alpine climb difficult. On the one hand, a climber wants to be light. But on the other, a climber wants to have everything he or she needs if there is a storm.

This list was designed for the “worst case scenario,” a trip with significant inclement weather. In serious conditions it’s not uncommon for a climber to need every piece of clothing and equipment on this list. However, if a program does not encounter significant weather, there may be items here that are not used. As you prepare for your trip, it’s important to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

On the first day of your program, an AAI guide will work with you to refine your mountain kit to ensure that you bring exactly what’s needed given the forecast. If you have questions about items you may bring them along for consideration and extra items can be left locked in your car.

The Sierra summer climbing season is defined as May 1st through November 1st. This list references Early, Mid, and Late-season conditions. These periods of the climbing season are roughly defined by the different types of weather and snow conditions you are likely to encounter:

- **Early-Season Conditions** (Early-May to mid-June): Lingering winter snow may still blanket the ground into late spring. Sometimes the final snows don't melt off until early or mid July. Use of ice axe and crampons are likely to be needed on approaches and routes. Overnight temperatures range from 15-degrees to 40-degrees Fahrenheit (-9-4C). Daytime highs range from 35-degrees to 70-degrees Fahrenheit (1-21C). Snow or rain is likely in the early season. Days are getting longer.
- **Mid-Season Conditions** (Mid-June to Mid-September): Daytime temperatures often hit 70-degrees Fahrenheit (21C). Evening temperatures range from 40 to 50-degrees Fahrenheit (4-10C) at night, with occasional dips down below freezing.
-
- July to Mid-August is usually the hottest time of the year. Approaches are generally snow free. There may be lingering snow in shaded slopes and gullies if it was a big snow year. Though mid-season tends to be dryer in the Sierra, the possibility of a thunderstorm is still there. Long daylight hours. Mosquitos.

- Mid-August to Mid-September. Snow is melted out, exposing more scree. Late afternoon thunderstorms are common. Warm days with cooler mornings and evenings.
- **Late-Season Conditions** (Mid-September to Early-November): October is a varied month. Temperatures begin to drop both during the day and at night. Snow falls in the mountains. Daylight hours getting shorter. Cool to cold days. .

Please be sure to check the forecast several days prior to your course to ensure that you are properly prepared.

[NOAA Lone Pine/Whitney area Weekly Forecast](#)

PROVIDED EQUIPMENT: Climbing rope, anchors, solid waste bags

RENTALS: Equipment that is available for rent through our AAI Sierra Equipment cache is designated with a “ Rent” check box. Your instructor will bring these items to you on the first morning of your course during your rendezvous. Please reserve rentals ahead of time and we will send you an invoice for these items. Underlined items in this form are hyperlinked to examples available in our Equipment Shop. Don’t forget that AAI climbers receive a 15% discount off full-price items purchased through our gear shop! [Sierra Rental Form](#)

Call or E-mail the Equipment Shop for Advice on Gear

Please feel free to contact us to get you ready for your climbing trip. Your comfort and safety depend on being well equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we’re here to help you prepare.

Call: (360) 671-1570 Email: shop@AlpineInstitute.com
 Equipment Shop Website: www.Shop.AlpineInstitute.com

Clothing	Packing Checklist
Beanie/Toque Wool or synthetic, must fit under helmet, no tassels. Easily replaced with hooded layers after early season.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
Sun Hat Preferred to fit under helmet.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
Buff/Neck Gaiter Look for one that is UPF rated. Brighter colors work better for warmer conditions and darker colors for colder conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
Base Layer Top Wool or synthetic shirt, long sleeves preferred, ideally a “sun hoody” with UPF 30+ sun protection.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
Active Insulation Layer Lightweight “gridded fleece” or lightweight down or synthetic insulated jacket. Hood preferred. ☆ <i>Weight: 250g-350g ideal weight.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

<p>Soft Shell Jacket or Windshirt A soft shell is a weather resistant, breathable, and stretchy freedom of movement piece. This piece is versatile in the sense of movement. It is often called an “action layer.” It is weather resistant, meaning it can put up with light showers and wind. Also if it gets wet it dries fairly quickly. This enables you to not have to stop and put on another piece when the wind picks up or a light shower happens. Because it is water resistant, and not waterproof, it also breathes fairly well. This enables you to move without overheating, so you don’t have to constantly stop to change out layers to regulate body temperature. They are also made of a stretchy material so there are no restrictions to your movement during activity. Hood preferred. ★ <i>Materials: Exolite, Matrix, Schoeller</i> ★ <i>Windshirt: Patagonia Houdini or similar.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Insulation Jacket AKA the “puffy.” Down or Synthetic. This piece is worn in cold conditions or when not moving. It should have a hood. If choosing Down, water-resistant down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the jacket gets wet. ★ <i>Weight: 350g-450g ideal weight.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Hard Shell Jacket Non-insulated jacket with a waterproof and breathable membrane. Three layer construction is recommended. It must have a hood that fits over a climbing helmet. When sizing make sure it can fit over other layers. ★ <i>Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Base Layer Pant (aka “Long Johns”) Wool or synthetic. Bring one for early or late-season conditions, optional for mid-season conditions (depending on the weather).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Soft Shell Pant Thin, weather-resistant, breathable, and stretchy. Generally more resistant to wind, weather, and abrasion than a simple hiking pant. ★ <i>Materials: Exolite, Matrix, Schoeller</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Hard Shell Pant Non-insulated, waterproof and breathable membrane. Full side zips are recommended. When sizing make sure it is able to fit over a base layer and soft shell pants. ★ <i>Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Shorts Optional. Lightweight, nice for warmer days. Nylon or synthetic.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>T-Shirt Optional. Synthetic, lightweight, nice for warmer days.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Undergarments Wool or synthetic. Sports Bra Wool or synthetic, comfortable, active wear.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Socks Wool or synthetic socks. Boot length if you are planning on wearing boots. Bringing 2-3 pairs is recommended for a multi-day course.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

<p>Approach Shoes Replaces boots when approach and routes are snow free. May replace rock shoe on lower grade technical climbs. Early season there can still be a lot of snow on the ground and it is recommended to hike in your boots.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Liner Glove (early season and late season) Thin, lightweight, wool or synthetic gloves. Size to fit snug but not too tight. Generally worn alone in temperatures above 25°F(-4°C) when precipitation is not present. UPF rated liner gloves are ideal for sun protection. Bring 1 pair.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Work Glove (early and late season) These gloves are used for belaying, tying knots, rope management, etc. Dexterity and durability are key. These gloves provide slightly more insulation than a liner glove and are generally used in temps of 15°F to 30°F(-9°C to -1°C) while actively using your hands. Look for a comfortable snug fit favoring dexterity and a durable leather or synthetic palm. Water-resistant material is recommended because they dry out faster than waterproof gloves.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Hard Shell Glove (early and late season) Waterproof and insulated gloves. If the glove lacks insulation then size it to fit a liner glove inside. Mainly worn in wet conditions, cold, or when not mobile.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Mountaineering Boots (early and late season if snow/ice is on route) Must be stiff, crampon compatible, mountaineering boots. Lightweight leather or synthetic single boots are recommended. Boots are available to rent through Eastside Sports in Bishop. <i>★ NOTE: There are many makes and models out there and not all are created equal. Please consult with our Equipment Shop if you are uncertain about the acceptability of your chosen model.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Gaiters (early and late season if snow/ice is on route) Knee or calf height. Best used in early-season conditions. Optional for mid or late-season. Gaiters do help protect pants from crampon holes regardless of the season.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Climbing</h2>	Packing Checklist
<p>Headlamp Bring extra batteries, or if it has a rechargeable battery, make sure to bring a charger. 200-350 Lumens is an ideal range.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Sun Glasses These are mandatory. Look for a pair that fits well. Photochromic (variable tint) lenses are more expensive but are usable in a wider range of activities. <i>★ NOTE: Those using contact lenses should also bring a pair of prescription glasses in the event that your contacts or solutions are lost or damaged.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Harness Make sure the harness has a belay loop and gear loops. When sizing make sure it can fit over your clothing layers when you have multiple layers on.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p>Helmet Must be UIAA rated for climbing.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*

<p>Rock Shoes Focus on comfort, so they can be worn all day. Avoid technical or aggressive rock shoes with a downturn. Avoid curled toes when sizing. <i>Available to rent at Mammoth Mountaineering Supply.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Belay Device Bring an auto-blocking device that accepts two ropes like the Petzl Reverso or Black Diamond ATC Guide. (Provided with harness rental)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Carabiners Must be UIAA rated for climbing. - Two large pear shaped munter-style locking carabiners. - Two non-locking wire gate carabiners. (Provided with harness rental)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Trekking Poles One is required, but two are highly recommended. These increase balance while wearing a heavy pack and making stream crossings, while also decreasing pressure on the knees during steep descents. For the early-season, your poles should have a snow basket.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p>Day Pack Optional. 25L- 35L is an ideal size. This will be used during rock climbing portions and can also be used as a summit pack.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Internal Frame Pack 50L-60L. Mountaineering specific packs, instead of backpacking packs, are a good way to shave weight. Should also have the ability to carry weight well (35 lbs+).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p>Crampons (early and late season if snow/ice is on route) Must be steel crampons with front points and compatible with your mountaineering boots.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Ice Axe (early and late season if snow/ice is on route) A straight shaft ice axe like the Petzl Glacier or Black Diamond Raven Pro is recommended. Adze is required. A shorter length (50-60cm) is preferred. Please contact our Equipment Shop if you have any questions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<h2>Camping</h2>	Packing Checklist
<p>Tent A lightweight 3 season tent with a full rain fly that goes all the way to the ground on all sides in combination with a “bathtub” style floor for the inner tent. This means that the inner tent isn’t all mesh but has water resistant floor material that scoops up from the floor for 4-12” before changing to mesh, like a bathtub. It should be able to withstand 40 mph winds. If there are any questions please consult our Equipment Shop to see if your tent is okay to use. <u>-Early-season:</u> 4 to 3 season tent recommended. <u>-Mid-season:</u> 3 season tent or bivy. <u>-Late-season:</u> 4 - 3 season tent recommended.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*

<p>★ NOTE: 4 season tents are available to rent through AAI. There is also the possibility to pair up with other students on your course and share a tent. Generally your shelter should weigh no more than 4 lbs per person.</p>	
<p>Sleeping Bag Synthetic or Down. If you bring a synthetic bag bring one on the lower end of the temperature range since synthetic bags tend not to be as warm as down. If you sleep cold it is recommended that you bring a warmer bag than required for the seasonal conditions. <u>-Early-season:</u> 0°F to 20°F (-18°C to -6°C) <u>-Mid-season:</u> 20°F to 30°F (-6°C to -1°C) <u>-Late-season:</u> 15°F to 20°F (-10°C to -6°C)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Compression Stuff Sack For your sleeping bag. If it is a down bag, a waterproof compression sack is recommended.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Sleeping Pad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Early-season:</u> Heavy snowfall years you may want to bring two pads; one inflatable and one closed cell foam. The foam pad helps insulate from the snow and serves as a backup to the inflatable pad. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mid or late-season:</u> One inflatable or closed cell foam pad $\frac{3}{4}$ to full length in size. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Stove and Fuel Canister stoves are preferred over liquid fuel. ★ NOTE: Many people choose to share stoves, fuel and tents to decrease weight. However, some people prefer to camp in their own tents and use their own stoves. This can be determined on the morning of the first day of your program.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p>Pots Bring one pot, 1 - 1.5L. ★ NOTE: If you have a complete stove system like the Jetboil or MSR Reactor then you do not need to bring a separate pot.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p>Utensils Don't forget the official "most forgotten item ever;" the spoon, or spork.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Bowl Bring a plastic bowl or mug. ★ NOTE: If you have a Jetboil or MSR Reactor type stove and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you don't need to bring a bowl. The same applies if you plan on only using commercially packaged dehydrated or freeze dried meals.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Lighters Bring two. One as back-up.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Hydration 3L capacity is recommended, though some people need more and some people need less. Early and late season bottles may be better than a hose-and-bladder hydration system.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Water Purification Water purification tablets are recommended. Pills that take an hour or less to purify are recommended. Steripens are an acceptable alternative to purification tablets.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

★ NOTE: Pumps can be damaged by silt in snowmelt and running water.

Food

You are responsible to bring your own food for the duration of the course. Please consult our [meal planning page](#).

Day 1: breakfast before rendezvous, lunch in field, dinner on own
Day 2: breakfast before rendezvous, lunch in field, dinner at camp
Day 3: breakfast at camp, lunch in field, dinner at camp
Day 4: breakfast at camp, lunch in field, dinner on own

- Own
- Buy

Other Essentials

Packing Checklist

Toothbrush and Toothpaste

Travel size recommended.

- Own
- Buy

Hand Sanitizer and/or Wet Wipes

Required. Used after going to the bathroom and before eating. Wet wipes can be used for the "mountain shower."

- Own
- Buy

Toilet Paper

The provided solid waste bags have a small amount of toilet paper with them, but most people do not find this to be adequate. Estimate how much you'll need for a program of this length and place that in a plastic zip lock bag. An extra zip lock bag can be helpful for pack-out of used paper.

- Own
- Buy

Sunscreen

SPF 30+, zinc based is preferred. Small travel size tubes are recommended so you can put them in a close by pocket for easy access.

- Own
- Buy

Lip Balm

Make sure it is SPF rated.

- Own
- Buy

Personal First Aid Kit

- Band aids
- Blister treatment
- Prescription drugs
- Ibuprofen etc.
- If you wear contacts make sure and have spares if you can't see without them.

- Own
- Buy

Repair Kit

- Inflatable sleeping pad patch kit
- Duct tape (Can be wrapped around trekking poles or water bottle. Gorilla Tape tends to be the best brand for the mountains.)
- Zip ties
- 6-10 ft of 3mm accessory cord
- 2 Trash bags that are big enough to line the inside of your pack with.

- Own
- Buy

Packing Checklist

Other Optional Items

The items below are not required, although many are nice “luxury” items that can make your expedition more enjoyable. Remember that a few ounces here and there add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your expedition.

Gaia Navigation App

Optional Smartphone App. Please have the *Mt. Whitney (all aspects)* maps downloaded prior to the start of your course:

Own

Buy

Map and Compass

Appropriate USGS topographic maps can be purchased in Bishop. Compass must have declination adjustment.

Own

Buy

Belay Gloves

Lightweight and breathable glove with a durable leather palm. They protect your hands from rope burn, pinching, and sharp elements.

Own

Buy

Altimeter Watch

If you have one then bring it, it is a great tool to have in the backcountry, especially for navigation.

Own

Buy

Pee Bottle

Used at night or when the weather is poor so you don't have to get out of your tent.

Own

Buy

Women's Specific Items

Female Urination Device

Pee funnel such as the GoGirl or Freshette. Many female guides prefer a rigid pee funnel.

[Click here for more info](#)

Menstruation Collection Cup

There are many things to consider concerning backcountry menstruation.

[Click here for more info](#)

Own

Buy

Entertainment

Books, games, cards, music player, kindle, ect. For evenings or rainy days in the tent.

Own

Buy

Portable Charging Device

Phone charger, battery pack, or solar panel.

★ NOTE: Solar panels should only be used to charge battery packs. Battery packs should be used to charge devices. Inappropriate use of a solar panel could lead to the depletion of a device's power.

Own

Buy

Ear Plugs

For defense against snoring and high winds.

Own

Buy

Insect Repellent

Biting insects such as mosquitoes and blackflies can be prevalent during different times of the season depending upon conditions and location. This is a nice item to have just in case.

Own

Buy

Camera

Own

<p>Phone cameras or small point-and-shoot cameras are preferred. SLR cameras are not recommended due to their size and bulk.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Diamox - Helps with altitude sickness. Please consult your physician.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>Comfortable Clothing and Footwear Breathable footwear -- like flip-flops -- as well as some comfortable cotton clothing can be nice to change into after you get back to your vehicle.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy