

Safety Checklist

Clothing

- Apply sensible comfortable clothing. Wear a number of layers for warmth
- Waterproof/windproof outer jacket
- Comfortable footwear with a good grip
- Hat and gloves
- Spare warm clothing

Suggested Equipment

- Watch
- Sun block
- Map and compass and / or a Global Positioning System (GPS) and spare batteries
- Food and water or a warm drink - avoid alcohol
- Some extra energy-giving food and emergency rations
- Large polybag/survival bag
- Whistle and torch
- First aid kit

N.B. Mobile phones are useful but have their limitations as the reception is very variable in the mountains.

Before the walk

- Know how to use your map and compass
- Contact Weatherline Tel. 0891 333111 or local newspaper, Internet, Teletext for weather forecasts
- Plan your route to suit the time available, the weather and the capabilities of the group
- Leave clear details of your intended route and estimated time of return

On the walk

- Consuming alcohol on a walk can reduce your ability to retain body heat and can impair your judgement
- Know where you are at all times and be able to give a grid reference
- Know what to do in an emergency. Information is included in this leaflet overleaf
- Keep together as a group

Winter Walking

- Strong boots with grip are essential
- Extra warm clothing/extra layers are essential
- Know and plan for the number of daylight hours
- Adapt length of the walk to winter conditions and day length
- Consider ice axe and walking pole
- Avoid gullies after fresh snow



Recommended Activity Map Base

'The Mournes' 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey NI.

About Mourne Heritage Trust

The Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) was established in 1997 to provide for the management of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Mourne Heritage Trust Mission Statement is:

'... to sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mournes Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mournes communities'.

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Environment & Heritage Service

www.ehsni.gov.uk

An Agency within the Department of the



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Building Sustainable Prosperity

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST



Caring for Mourne

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST



Caring for Mourne

Sense and Safety in the Mournes

- Access Information
- Planning a Walk
- Recommended Equipment
- Safety Checklist
- What to do in an Emergency

The Mourne - one of the top hillwalking destinations in Northern Ireland

- Traditional access routes which lead into the Mourne mountains cross land owned by the farming community and pass along farm lanes and quarry tracks to reach the high ground.
- Throughout the Mourne mountains access is permitted on foot only.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead or under utmost close control so as not to worry livestock or other walkers.
- The Mourne Heritage Trust maintains some public rights of way on behalf of the local councils. If you notice anything needing repair or maintenance please contact the MHT.

A Working Countryside not a Playground

The mountains of Mourne and Slieve Croob are a working and living landscape. Careless behaviour by visitors causes resentment and alienation with the people that live in the area and rely on the local environment for their income.

Gates left open, cars blocking lanes and field entrances, dogs running wild harming livestock and litter carelessly dropped all add to a feeling among local people that visitors do not care about the landscape/environment.

The Mourne Heritage Trust works in partnership with other land owners and organisations to act as an interface between the landowner and the visitor. Over the years visitor facilities have been installed - signage, car parks, footpaths, stiles and interpretation panels.



Planning Your Visit to the Mourne mountains

1. Where to Walk

- Many of the higher hills will require a whole day (six to eight hours) to make a round trip.
- There are many lower hills which are not only less crowded but often have better views and are less demanding to reach the top.
- The MHT can provide a range of walk cards outlining suggested walks and the Trust also runs a series of guided walks.

2. Health and Fitness

- Choose a route according to your physical abilities and experience.
- Take advice from your doctor before going out on the hills if you have any doubt.
- Undertake a series of walks, getting progressively more ambitious, to build up your fitness.

3. Check the Weather

- Check the weather before you go. The mountain weather can change rapidly in a short space of time. Conditions on the hill tops are often more severe than in the valleys.
- Plan your route carefully, taking account of the weather conditions and the ability of all members of the group.
- Do not be over ambitious – allow at least one hour for every 2.5 miles (4km) and add one hour for every 1500ft (500m) of ascent, with extra time for stops for rest and food.
- Set off in plenty of time and daylight to complete the walk.

4. Food and Drink

- Always take plenty of water.
- Take high energy foods.
- Take more food and drink than you need in case of emergency.

5. Contact and Communication

- Always let someone know exactly where you intend to walk and your estimated time of arriving home.
- A simple hand held Global Positioning System is useful particularly if the weather takes a turn for the worse and visibility deteriorates. (GPS does not replace the need for using a map and compass and knowing where you are at all times).
- A mobile telephone is useful to keep in contact in the case of delay, change of weather or emergency.
- Leave a routeplan with a contact person who you can notify if you are delayed or encounter problems.

Emergency Planning

Communication

Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to get back. If you are delayed (for example, you have descended into the wrong valley), inform your contact person as quickly as possible so that the Mountain Rescue team is not called out unnecessarily.

If you come across a casualty or one of your group is injured

Ensure you are protected from harm and then give First Aid if necessary - make sure that breathing is unobstructed; dress wounds to prevent bleeding; keep casualty warm, sheltered and safe from further injury.

Remember to protect yourself from further danger. Send for help. Dial 999 and ask for the Mountain Rescue. Try to give all the details that will assist - about the injured party (age, injury), an accurate location and what you are wearing. Give your telephone number. If you are using a mobile phone let the operator know you are in Northern Ireland.

Mourne Mountain Rescue

The Mourne Mountain Rescue is run by volunteers to rescue anyone who gets into difficulty in the mountains. Volunteers are trained in rescue and first aid and work with other rescue organisations.

Initial contact should be made by dialling 999 and asking for Mountain rescue. Callers should have at hand the grid reference for their location and bear in mind that, with the difficult access to the mountains, rescue may take some time. If a helicopter is required the HM Coastguard will co-ordinate this.

The Mourne Mountain Rescue Team is co-ordinated by HM Coastguard Bangor 028 91 463 933.

