



**Project Skills:**

- Plan and organize a day hike

**Life Skills:**

- Decision making

**Academic Standards:**

- Physical Education:  
F.8.3 Make choices based on the safety of self and others.

**Grade Levels:** 4-7

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Supplies Needed:**

- Maps
- Brochures of hiking trails
- Large pieces of paper
- Pencils or markers
- Colored dots
- Walking stick
- “Warm-up and Cool-down Exercises” handout
- “Brainstorming Session” handout
- Evaluation

**Do Ahead:**

- Find out what types of hiking trails are available in your area and collect brochures.
- Try out the trails so you know what level of ease they are.

**Sources:**

- Created by Lucinda LaPorte, former 4-H Youth Development Agent, UW-Extension, Rusk County.
- Adapted from *Hiking Trails*, BU-08043, National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System; *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Camping and Hiking* by

**BACKGROUND**

Hiking is an exciting experience in the natural outdoors which can promote a healthy lifestyle that will last throughout a lifetime. The chance to be out and commune with nature is a treat that challenges you to go over “one more hill” to see what’s on the other side.

**WHAT TO DO**

Discuss with youth the benefits of hiking in the outdoors. You may write these on a board or a piece of paper and hang it on the wall. Point out or choose which ones would be most beneficial. Discuss leadership needed in planning and implementing the hike. As an introductory activity do the “leadership walk.”

**Activity: “Leadership Walk”**

Arrange everyone in a line to play follow the leader. Appoint someone to start leading the group on a walk around the room doing various actions, movements, etc. Reverse the line so the person on the end is now the leader. Cut the line in two and have someone else be leader.



**TALK IT OVER**

**Reflect:**

- How did you feel being a leader? (Ask those who were in the leader position.)
- How did you feel being a follower?
- What are the responsibilities of the leader?

**Apply:**

- What does a leader need to do to make sure the rest of the group is following?
- How can you use these guidelines in other areas of your life?

**Activity: Brainstorm Session**

Discuss why one should plan a hiking trip. Divide a large group into four smaller groups. Be sure to mix older youth with the younger youth to act as leaders. Give each group a large piece of paper and a pencil or marker. Using the “Brainstorming Session” sheet, conduct a brainstorm session to plan a day hike.

The plan should answer these questions:

- What to see?
- Where to go?
- How far?
- How hard?
- What activities to do?

**TALK IT OVER**

**Reflect:**

- Would someone explain which plan has evolved?
- Why did you make those choices?

Michael Mouland; and  
*101 Essential Tips for  
Hiking* by Hugh  
McManners.

- Information on ability levels developed by Laura Huff.

**Apply:**

- How will this plan lead to a safe and healthy hike?
- How would you be able to use this process in your everyday walks or hikes?
- How will the ability to plan and organize help you in other ways?

**Activity: “The Walk”**

Demonstrate to the youth how to do “the walk,” showing correct posture and pacing. Keep your back straight and stretch your backbone upwards. Keep your chin up to see where you are going. Then walk, pointing your toes straight ahead and leading with your thighs. Have youth practice the walk. Then have youth take turns leading others in the walk.

Next, demonstrate how a walking stick can be used for balance on hills. Have youth practice with the walking stick. Give youth a chance to lead others while walking up hills – if not today, then at future sessions.

Use the “Warm-up and Cool-down Exercises” handout to discuss and demonstrate exercises that will be helpful in preventing soreness in muscles *after* a hike. (Research has proven that stretching after a walk is more beneficial than before.)

**TALK IT OVER**

**Reflect:**

- Were you able to do “the walk”?
- What is the importance of how you walk?
- Are the exercises easy for you to do anywhere?

**Apply:**

- How will a walking stick help you along the trail?
- How could you use “the walk” and these exercises at other times?

**ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY**

**Enhance for Older Children:**

- Plan a hike on a local trail with disability needs in mind. Maybe they know someone in a wheelchair who wants to get out and see more natural surroundings.
- Plan hikes that have a specific purpose: photography, tree/plant identification, etc. Make it a treasure hunt of finding things.
- Plan a day hike to local hiking trails, e.g., North Shore, Timm’s Hill, or the Kettle Moraine area.

**Simplify for Younger Children:**

- For younger youth, plan a short trip in a park or the neighborhood.
- Give younger children a chance to lead the “follow the leader” activity and “the walk” activity – with and without the walking stick.

**HELPFUL HINTS**

- Check out local trails so that you know of any obstacles that could be encountered and the difficulty for your group. Check with the American Disabilities Association for information on hiking with a disability.
- See if there is a local Trails Association that would give you some insight into the trails available.
- Have youth check out web sites for trails.
- Obtain some pedometers to give to the youth to keep track of their walking distances.

#### ADDITIONAL WEB LINKS

- American Hiking Society, [www.americanhiking.org/](http://www.americanhiking.org/): Since its founding in 1976, the society has been the national voice for hikers – fighting to protect and preserve footpaths, preserve the natural areas that surround them, and promote hiking itself. Check out information on a wide range of hiking activities, including National Trails Day held in early June each year.
- Blue Hills Trail, <https://www.bluehillstrail.com/>: Example of a popular skiing, biking and hiking trail in Northwest Wisconsin, 25 miles east of Rice Lake in Rusk County.

***Reviewed by Wisconsin 4-H Curriculum Team: June 2006***



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## Warm-Up and Cool-Down Exercises

Before you undertake any prolonged physical activity, physical fitness experts advise that you do warm-up exercises to increase flexibility and reduce muscle soreness and aches and pains. Before undertaking flexibility exercises, include a slow jog or run in your program to get your muscles working and primed for the stretching exercises that follow.

Try to hold stretches for 10 to 20 seconds. Stretch three times in each direction, or three times for arms and legs. Breathe in deeply before you stretch, and breathe out as you follow through. Avoid bouncing while you stretch, trying for slow, easy stretches. Avoid arching your back.

**Here are 12 warm-up and cool-down exercises to get you going:**

### Exercises to do while standing

- 1. Neck Stretch**  
With knees bent and feet shoulder-width apart, rotate your head to the right as you try to look over your right shoulder. Repeat this motion to the left, trying to look over your left shoulder.
- 2. Side Stretch**  
With knees bent and feet placed shoulder-width apart, reach with one arm up and over your head to one side. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat on the other side.
- 3. Triceps Stretch**  
With knees bent and feet positioned shoulder-width apart, place one hand between your shoulder blades. Then, with your other hand, pull your elbow behind your head and hold it there for 20 seconds. Repeat with the other side.
- 4. Shoulder Stretch**  
With knees bent and feet positioned shoulder-width apart, place your left hand on your right shoulder. With your right hand, push your left elbow across the front of your body to the right. Then repeat on the other side.
- 5. Calf Stretch**  
While facing a wall, place both hands on the wall at shoulder height with one foot placed ahead of the other. With the front knee bent and the back knee straight, lean forward until you feel the stretch in the rear leg. Repeat with feet in reverse positions.
- 6. Chest Stretch**  
Stand beside a wall with your feet roughly parallel to it and place the palm from one hand behind your back on the wall. Turn your shoulders away from the wall without moving your feet, and hold this position. Repeat with the other arm.
- 7. Bent-Over Shoulder Stretch**  
With your knees bent and your feet at shoulder-width apart, bend over and clasp both hands behind your back. Pull your arms up and hold them in place for two seconds while maintaining abdominal muscle contractions.
- 8. Side Groin Stretch**  
With your right leg extended to the side and your left leg straight, position your right hand on your right hip. Then bend your left knee while moving your body toward your left leg, and hold your position. Repeat with your left leg extended and your right leg straight.

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### **Exercises to do while lying down or seated on a mat**

**9. Back Stretch**

While lying on your back on an exercise mat, bring your bent knees toward your chest. Reach out and grasp your knees, pulling them closer to your chest until you feel the stretch affecting your lower back. Repeat three times.

**10. Seated Hamstring Stretch**

Seated on an exercise mat, straighten one leg out with your toes pointed upward. Bend the other leg with the foot toward the extended leg, and then lean forward and reach with both hands for your toes. Hold this position for 20 seconds. Repeat with the other leg extended.

**11. Groin Stretch**

Seated on an exercise mat, join the soles of your feet together and grasp both ankles with your hands. Pull your ankles toward your body, with your elbows resting on your knees. Hold this position for 20 seconds.

**12. Pelvic Tilt**

Lie on your back with your knees up and your feet flat on the mat. Then tighten your abdominal muscles and press the arch of your back into the mat. Hold for 20 seconds.

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## Brainstorming Session

### Organization of the group:

- Divide into four groups of youth. Have each group sit around a table with a large sheet of paper and pencil or marker.
- Key points to keep in mind and explain to the group:
  - There are no right or wrong answers or ideas – everything will be written down.
  - It is OK to piggyback on other ideas and add to them.
  - No criticism of another's ideas is allowed.

**Give each group one of the following points to ponder:** (You may write these at the tops of large sheets of paper and explain each before you start the activity.)

- *What to see?* Hints: think of natural resources, animals, views, time of year, etc.
- *Where to go?* Hints: look at brochures or maps of local trails; think of other local places not on the maps; think of limiting factors, such as difficulty of terrain and transportation needs.
- *How hard? How far?* Hints: do any participants have disabilities that might limit what they could do or where they could go?
- *What activities to do?* Hints: take pictures with a camera or draw pictures with paper and pencil; have a nature “treasure hunt”; look at historical sites or other sites.

### Process for brainstorming:

- Five minutes for each “stop” (see below). Encourage youth to take their time.
- Rotate tables in between each process.
- Process:
  - First stop: Brainstorm and write down your ideas relating to the topic.
  - Second stop: Cross out what you don't like or doesn't fit. You may add new ideas.
  - Third stop: (Give everyone three colored dots.) Place a dot on the three ideas you like best.
  - Fourth stop: Look at which ideas have the most dots. Prioritize these in the order you think is the most important.

### Coming to a consensus:

- Have the youth put their sheets of paper on the wall.
- Review the priorities on each sheet. The whole group determines what is to be the top idea for each topic.
- When you have picked the top idea for each topic, your plan will be made for your hike!

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## Evaluation: Planning Your Trek

Please circle the number that shows your level of understanding or learning in this session.

	<u>A little</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>A lot</u>
1. I learned something new about leadership:	1	2	3	4	5
2. I know "this much" about planning a hike:					
Before lesson:	1	2	3	4	5
After lesson:	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel that the brainstorm activity helped me learn how to plan a hike:	1	2	3	4	5
I have learned: (list)					
4. The walking activity helped me learn how to walk during a hike:	1	2	3	4	5

Final comments: