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# Preparing for a Hike on Longs Peak

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Jul 13, 2011 Misty Fauchaux Comments



Longs Peak is the signature mountain in Rocky Mountain National Park, and everyone wants their chance to summit this famous landmark. Before you can conquer the giant, you have to prepare the body and mind. You also need to bring the right gear and necessities.

### Fourteener Rules Do Apply

Longs Peak belongs to Big Boys Club as in the fourteener's club. Colorado is famous for its many peaks that are over 14,000 feet high, and Longs Peak tops out at over 14,250 feet. The trail starts at around 9,400 feet so be prepared for an arduous climb to the top.

Weather on all mountains can change at any time. It, however, seems doubly so for fourteeners. These mountains are higher than traditional summits. So, the weather at the bottom can be warm and sunny, but it can be snowing on the summit.

You must wear several layers of clothing. You may strip off a few pieces on the way up, but you may need to quickly add a few pieces of items back on the closer you get to the top. Also, ensure that you are mentally prepared for a hike this high. Altitude sickness can quickly come on, and you need to be prepared to turn around if you do get sick.

### What to Pack

While you may feel like the Michelin Man with all the layers, you still need to bring a few more things. Grab plenty of water, and pack enough food for the whole day. There's really no place to fill water bottles along the trail. You'll probably be eating every two to three hours so it's better to overestimate how much food you think you'll need.

Bring a GPS and a cell phone in case you get lost the trail. Wear the right type of clothing and shoes. You will be scrambling over rocks so you are more likely to skin up your knees or arms if you are wearing short sleeves.



### Trail Facts

The Longs Peak Trail is 16 miles roundtrip. The trail itself is only rated as a moderate trail. You must, however, climb over rocks and avoid the loose gravel that's always trying to trip you up. You rise in elevation almost 5,000 feet. No dogs are allowed on the trail. This protects both the dog and the wildlife so leave Fido at home.

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You can camp at the Longs Peak Campground, which is located near the trailhead. You can't, however, camp on the trail itself. Book early if you do plan on staying at this campground. It fills up pretty fast throughout the summer. If the campground is full, you can camp at Boulder Field, or stay in nearby Estes Park.

#### Getting There

You've made it this far in the article so you must be ready to take on the challenge of a Longs Peak hike. Now, you just need to know how to

get there. Drive south on the Peak to Peak Highway (Highway 7) from the Highway 7 and US 36 junction for 9.2 miles. Turn right towards the Longs Peak Ranger Station and Campground.



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##### Giro Snow Helmets

Resorts are opening and snow is on the ground. But the base is thin, meaning there are plenty of rocks waiting to make a meal out of your skull. Get a helmet on yo head before a rock does!

