



## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### **14-DAY BACKPACKING AND ROCK CLIMBING**

#### **PREPARATION**

It is important for you to take time to mentally and physically prepare for your course. Review the “Attending Outward Bound” document on your course web page. If you have yet to start physically preparing, start now and focus on cardiovascular training. You will be putting yourself at a disadvantage if you postpone or ignore physical preparation! If you are unsure how to begin a fitness regimen appropriate for you, contact your physician for assistance.

**Note to smokers and caffeine drinkers:** If you smoke, it’s essential to quit before you arrive. Using your course as a means to quit smoking is NOT recommended. You will be put in a number of stressful situations and a person suffering from nicotine withdrawal may not be able to effectively deal with those situations. If you drink caffeine, it is also essential to significantly reduce your level of consumption prior to your course start. Caffeine withdrawal may cause severe headaches which can hinder your progress on course.

#### **SHELTER**

Each crew will be given large tarps to set up as shelters. You will also be given a ground sheet and a foam sleeping pad to place under your sleeping bag.

#### **FOOD**

Outward Bound practices Leave No Trace camping ethics. Therefore, we seldom build fires. You will be cooking on gas camp stoves. Your instructors will teach you backcountry cooking techniques and you will be responsible for helping with the preparation of all meals for yourself and your crewmates. Your diet will be a mix of dehydrated foods, fresh fruits and vegetables. We use rice, tortillas, crackers, salami, cheese, peanut butter, jelly, tuna fish, pasta and trail mixes. The amount of physical activity you experience during your course demands a nutritious diet to help fuel your body. Junk food is not available on course. If you have special diet requirements, make sure we are aware by recording these requirements in your Medical Record booklet. For more information on nutrition, refer to the Medical Record booklet.

#### **HYGIENE**

You will be outside while on course and won’t have access to a shower or bath. You will be able to do basic cleanup every day: brush your teeth, wash your face and comb your hair. At the end of your course, you will be able to do a more thorough cleanup. Our staff are very skilled in field hygiene so please don’t hesitate to approach them with any questions or concerns.

#### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Since North Carolina Outward Bound is an outdoor program, you can expect to learn and use Leave No Trace camping techniques. Know that it is natural to have questions regarding sanitation in an outdoor setting. Your instructors will answer your questions and will teach you the hygienic and environmentally safe way to dispose of waste.

## BACKPACKING

During your course, you will be backpacking approximately six to eight days. These days will be divided into three phases—training, main and final. During the training and main phases, you learn safety precautions for backcountry foot travel, how to find campsites, how to navigate terrain as well as how to use a map and compass. Equally important will be time spent learning conflict resolution, communication styles, leadership and team building. During the Final Phase, your instructors will step back and let you and your crew work together to collectively navigate through the wilderness.

Since your crew's navigation depends on individual and group decision making, your crew could make some navigational errors along the way. You may hike 12 to 15 hours in one day to reach your destination or you could go three miles uphill one day and 12 miles over varied terrain the next day. The backpacks can weigh 55+ pounds. Remember, **PHYSICAL PREPARATION IS KEY!**

## ROCK CLIMBING AND RAPPELLING

Weather permitting, you may spend up to three days rock climbing and rappelling. With a focus on the practice of safety, your lessons will start with the basics, such as working with ropes and learning to tie knots used for climbing and rappelling. You will progress to:

1. **Top-Rope climbing or “top-roping”:** A style of rock climbing in which a rope runs from a belayer at the foot of a route through one or more carabineers connected to an anchor system at the top of the route and back down to the climber. The rope is attached to the climber by means of a harness.
2. **Rappelling:** A means of controlled descent to lower yourself down a cliff, rock face or some other high location.

You may progress to:

3. **Multi-Pitch climbing:** The ascent of climbing routes with one or more stops at a belay station. Each section of climbing between stops at the belay stations is called a pitch. The lead climber ascends the pitch, placing gear and stopping to anchor themselves to the belay station. Your multi-pitch climb may have up to five pitches and may be graded 5.4 to 5.9.

Depending on weather and group dynamics, your crew may have an opportunity to experience a high ropes course.

## SERVICE

Service will be a continuous theme throughout your course. The ethic of service is practiced through Leave No Trace camping techniques, reaching out with compassion to your fellow crewmates and working together as a team to overcome the challenges of Outward Bound.

On your course, the ethic of service is practiced in greater depth and often includes a service project. Projects range from campsite restoration and maintaining hiking trails in the wilderness to supporting the surrounding communities by assisting families in need, sharing outdoor activities with disadvantaged children or helping in local wildlife restoration centers. Service projects typically last 6-8 hours. **Alert your instructor AT COURSE START if you need written verification or documentation of service project hours.**

## SOLO

Solo typically occurs more than halfway through your course and may last from 36-48 hours. Your instructors will assign each participant an individual campsite within a designated area. You will have appropriate clothing, food, water, shelter, your sleeping bag as well as your compass and whistle. Your instructors will teach you procedures to follow during solo and monitor you during this experience. You will know the location of your instructors' solo site should you need to contact them; otherwise it is essential that you

remain at your solo site. During solo, you will take time to relax, recharge and reflect on your progress while on course. Solo is also a good time to write in the journals we provide. NOTE: Solo is a not a “survival test.”

## **PERSONAL CHALLENGE EVENT**

At the end of your course, you will participate in a personal challenge event. This is a great time to see how much your physical fitness and endurance have improved since you began your course. This event will be a running activity. It is not a race. Your instructors set a certain route for your crew and you complete the route at a level that will challenge you the most.

## **BACKGROUND READING**

Here are some books that we encourage you to read as you plan for your course:

*The Outward Bound Wilderness First-Aid Handbook* by Jeff Isaac

*Leave No Trace: A Practical Guide to the New Wilderness Ethic* by Annette McGivney

*Knots & Ropes for Climbers* by Duane Raleigh and Mike Clelland

*The Outward Bound Backpacker's Handbook* by Glenn Randall

*The Outward Bound Map & Compass Handbook* by Glenn Randall