



WORDS OF WISDOM

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GREAT RESPONSIBLE WALKS

We believe a great walk is a safe one – and one where you leave the environment as you found it. Here's a simple cut-out-and-keep guide to acting responsibly while on the trail. Laminate it and keep it handy for peace of mind.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEAVE NO TRACE

- 1: Plan ahead and prepare.
- 2: Walk and camp on durable surfaces like established tracks and campsites.
- 3: Dispose of waste properly – pack it in, pack it out.
- 4: Leave what you find.
- 5: Minimise campfire impacts. Use a lightweight stove. Where fires are permitted keep them small and use only fallen fuel and sticks. Put out the fire completely.
- 6: Respect wildlife. Observe wildlife from a distance and don't feed them. Store rations and rubbish securely.
- 7: Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors.

SAFETY DO

- Give complete route details to close relatives/friends or the police.
- Tell them when you are leaving and returning and any special medical conditions.
- Notify them of your safe return.
- Take the correct map and compass. Know how to use them.
- Take appropriate clothing/footwear for extreme weather conditions.
- Take waterproof matches and spare cold food.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Carrying an emergency beacon.
- Phone home from the first phone box or police station you come to if overdue.

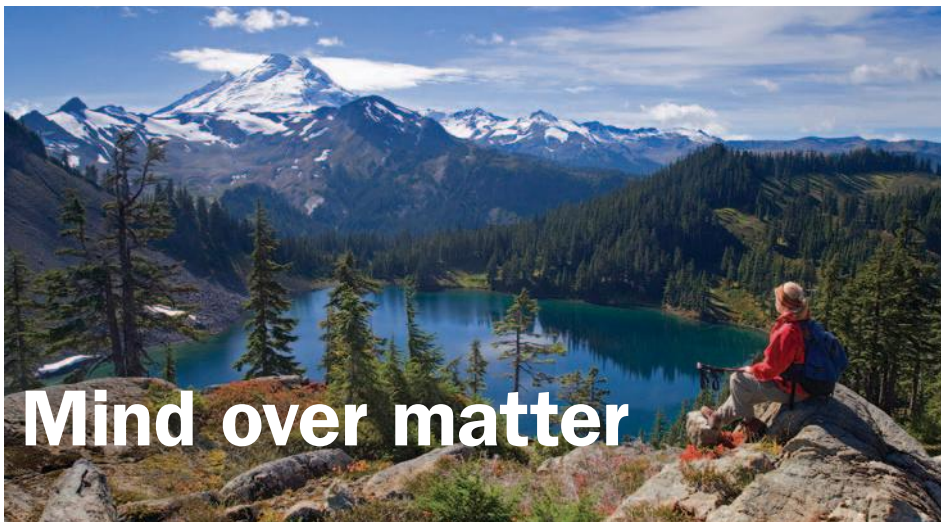
DON'T

- Don't overestimate your abilities. Allow time for the unexpected.
- Don't go faster than your slowest walker. At regular intervals do a group head count.
- Don't split up your group (except for below) during your trip. There's safety in numbers.
- Don't leave an injured person alone in the bush. A walking group of three or more will allow one to look after the injured while the other goes for help.
- Don't keep moving when lost. Find an open campsite with nearby water. Remember Your safety is dependent on your fitness, experience, trip leadership and equipment.

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Always walk on the track – even when wet and muddy.
- Camp at least 100m from lakes and streams.
- Deposit human waste in cat holes dug 20cm deep.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- Preserve the past; examine but don't touch cultural/historical structures or artifacts. Leave rocks, plants and other objects as you find them.

This guide was prepared with the help of Leave No Trace and Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad. See Int.org.au and bwrs.org.au for more details.



Mind over matter

His body may be slowing down, but that won't stop Chris from hitting the trail.



The mind is willing but the body is weak. How many times must I have heard or read that little statement over the years, without giving

any thought whatsoever that one day it might apply to me. Unfortunately that is the situation I increasingly find myself in.

As President of Bushwalking Australia and Vice President of Bushwalking Victoria, I find myself talking more and more about bushwalking, and writing about it too, but as I pass my mid-fifties and with around three-and-half-decades of bushwalking behind me, my body is showing increasing signs of wear and tear.

A relatively minor back injury in a car accident in 2000 put paid to my overnight backpacking trips from that point on. Fortunately around the same time an arthroscopy on my right knee to clear away some troublesome cartilage was completely successful, so at least I was able to continue doing day walks. In recent months a painful and stiff big toe on my right foot has been affecting my walking and the diagnosis of pronounced arthritis in the first joint, and all that entails still hasn't really sunk in. Perhaps I am in denial, especially as bushwalking has been such an important part of my life for so long.

At least I have a lifetime of memories and experiences to reflect on as I age 'gracefully'. My first bushwalks were in the summer of 1978/79 to Baw Baw NP and to Tarli Karng, that jewel of a lake tucked away deep in the mountains of Gippsland, and the classic Sealers Cove, Refuge Cove, Waterloo Bay circuit at Wilsons Prom. Next was the Overland Track in Tasmania where the weather was atrocious, despite

it being mid-summer. The relentless rain, hail, snow, gale force winds, mud and slush meant I can't say that I enjoyed the trip, but by this time I was well and truly bitten by the bushwalking bug, and here I am in 2014 still bushwalking.

My favourite walk of all was in 1987, to NT with my bushwalking club for a 16 day trip through the escarpment country of Kakadu with Willis's Walkabouts. It's the favourite not just for the fact that it was where my wife and I 'became an item', but also because of the incredible scenery, wildlife and rock art.

Bushwalking hasn't just been an important part of my life, I can't imagine life without bushwalking. I have been to some amazing places in Victoria, around Australia and in a small number of other countries, and I have had the privilege of doing so with some wonderful people who have become life-long friends, friendships forged through the camaraderie of shared adventures.

Bushwalking greatly helped me develop independence, self-reliance, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills that contributed directly to my career.

Experiencing first hand through bushwalking many wonderful natural areas opened my eyes to the need to conserve our precious and threatened natural areas and the importance of these areas not only to my personal health and wellbeing, but their importance to health and wellbeing of everyone on the planet. As Richard Louv, international speaker and author of *Last Child in the Woods* and *The Nature Principle* who has just visited Australia says, "We cannot protect something we do not love, we cannot love what we do not know, and we cannot know what we do not see. And touch. And hear."