

# HIKER'S MANUAL



Get Ready for  
the Challenge

[PikesPeakChallenge.com](http://PikesPeakChallenge.com)



Benefiting the Brain Injury  
Association of Colorado

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**Saturday, September 6, 2025 | 5:00 a.m.**

**Summit and Barr Camp Hikers  
Manitou Springs Fields Park**

101 El Paso Blvd, Manitou Springs, CO *(corner of Beckers Ln. and El Paso Blvd)*



## Directions and Parking Information

- From I-25 take exit 141 (Cimarron Street/Highway 24 exit)
- Keep right onto W US Highway 24
- Turn right onto Ridge Rd.
- Turn left onto W Colorado Ave.
- Turn right onto Beckers Ln.

Parking: **We highly encourage ALL hikers to carpool as parking can be challenging.** Parking is available along Manitou Ave. and El Paso Blvd.

Do not park your vehicle in areas marked NO PARKING or that are sectioned off with tape or traffic cones as your vehicle could be towed. Do not block residential or commercial driveways and please lock your vehicle! The event staff will not supervise your vehicle.

## Gear

It is very important to bring the proper clothing, food, and water on the hike to the Barr Camp and the summit of Pikes Peak. This is not merely a matter of comfort, but a matter of safety. Hypothermia, dehydration and exhaustion can be avoided if you have proper gear and food, and use them. Consider every item on this list “a must” unless noted as optional. Cotton clothing is very dangerous when wet and can easily cause hypothermia.

- Lightweight hiking boots with lugged sole and good ankle support
- Thick, cushioned socks: wool, polypropylene, or synthetic (Optional alternative - Consider a thin “liner” sock combined with medium to thick outer sock for blister prevention)
- Extra pair of socks (See above)
- Long pants for warmth: fleece, wool or synthetic\* (NO JEANS or other cotton pants)
- Extra shirt/light jacket: preferably fleece, wool, or synthetic
- Waterproof jacket or rain poncho: windproof, waterproof, provide some warmth
- Synthetic gloves or mittens (Mittens are highly preferred for warmth)
- Warm hat: fleece, wool or synthetic
- Sun hat (the one article that may be cotton)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)
- Chapstick with sunscreen
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Loud whistle (for emergencies only)
- Day pack (do not plan on carrying any gear in your hands) Water: In watertight water bottles (at least 2 quarts) or bladder hydration system
- Energy foods: Trail mix, power bars, gels, dried fruit
- Sustaining foods: Sandwich, cheese, beef jerky, peanuts, etc.
- Ibuprofen
- Blister patches to treat blisters
- Plastic bag to carry all trash/toilet paper (You MUST pack out all trash, recommend gallon size Zip-Lock bags)
- Bring a headlamp or flashlight
- Bring a dry shirt to change into at the summit/park to add a dry layer to your skin

### OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- Hiking shorts
- Drink mix: Accelerade, Cytomax, Gookinaid, Gatorade, Power Aid, etc.
- Trekking poles: good for stability on rocky terrain above tree line

## Eating for Peak Performance

Successful athletic performance is vitally dependent upon good nutrition. To maximize athletic performance, select a diet high in carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and low in fat. Eat small amounts throughout the day. The saying in the mountains is that *"lunch begins right after breakfast and does not end until dinner."*

60-70% of calories consumed should come from carbohydrates such as pasta, rice, whole grain breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables and milk. Other good "trail sources" of carbohydrates are energy bars, granola bars, and dried fruit. Carbohydrates are the easiest food for the body to convert into energy.

Proteins are important to include in your daily diet since the body cannot store them. High-protein foods include cheese, peanut butter, nuts, and beef jerky. Fats are also an important energy source. They pack twice the calories as carbohydrates or protein. Fats are also digested more slowly giving you a longer lasting source of energy. High-fat foods include peanut butter, salami, eggs, cheese, and beef jerky. Many people find high-fat foods more difficult to digest while they are exercising strenuously.

Don't forget the other requirement when selecting foods for the hike - they must taste good to you or you won't eat them!

## Hydrating for Peak Performance

Equally important to eating the right foods is fluid replacement. Reduced amounts of fluids can cause dehydration, muscle weakness and organ damage, and can affect the central nervous system. The sports drink should contain electrolytes (important for muscle reflex), taste good, be non-carbonated and not cause gastrointestinal distress when consumed in large amounts. (Most popular sports drinks are too concentrated and can actually slightly dehydrate you. Dilute the sports drink with an equal amount of water.) Water is always appropriate for fluid replacement. Caffeine (soda, coffee, etc.) & alcohol dehydrate the body and should be avoided the day before as well as during the hike. Do not drink stream water.

### HYDRATION GUIDELINES

Proper hydration starts well before you get on the trail. Start drinking a larger amount of water the day before the hike. Keep a water container next to your bed the night before and drink often. Drink again when you get up (optimally at least 2.5 cups of rapidly absorbed fluid two hours before exercising) and a smaller amount just before the event (1/2 cups 10 to 15 minutes before exercising).

Drink before you become thirsty during the hike. By the time you feel thirsty you are already slightly dehydrated. A general guideline is to drink 1/2 to 1 cup every 15 minutes during exercise. It is very important to drink with steady sips rather than long periods (1-2 hours) without drinking anything and then 'downing' a large drink.

*Refill your water bottles at Barr Camp!*

## Training Suggestions

You should start your training now! Always check with your doctor before beginning any new training program. The following suggestions can help make your training most effective for the hike up Pikes Peak, as well as make it more fun for you! Start now! Find a training buddy or two and keep each other motivated. Start by walking at least an hour a day. Walk five times per week. As soon as you can walk an hour comfortably, increase your time.

Steadily increase the difficulty of your walks or hikes. This will increase your leg strength, as well as provide a more effective cardiovascular training for you. Hike up and down hills as much as possible. Climb steps. A football stadium or tall building is an excellent place to do some stair-stepping.

Increase the speed of your walking or add some jogging if you can. This will improve your cardiovascular system and give you more stamina for the hike up Pikes Peak. Bicycle-riding is also good for building up your endurance.

The best training you can do is hiking actual trails with a backpack. The lower part of Barr Trail is quite a challenge and provides an excellent workout. Save a few empty gallon milk containers and fill them with water. This allows you to carry extra weight up the trail and pour out the water before you come down (this helps save your knees). Start with just a little water and increase the amount on future hikes.

Make one practice hike a “dry run.” Wear the same clothes, socks, boots, backpack, etc. This allows you to adjust any items for the most comfort before the day of the hike.

Vary your training. Keep it interesting by performing different exercise and hiking different routes. Hike one day, ride a stationary bike the next, climb some stairs the following day, and so on. Rest is a crucial part of training especially the week before the hike. Allow your body to recover and store energy for the hike.



## El Paso County Search and Rescue – Thank You!



El Paso County Search and Rescue is a mountain search and rescue unit dedicated to saving lives through search, rescue, and mountain safety education. It is a non-profit organization composed of volunteers and is available to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for a variety of rescue missions.

EPCSAR receives no regular financial support from local, state, or federal government; they rely on contributions from our community. The Pikes Peak Challenge is a very honored that EPCSAR is a partner to our highly skilled trail staff making the Pikes Peak Challenge the safest day in the year to hike Pikes Peak! Learn more about EPCSAR at [EPCSAR.org](http://EPCSAR.org)

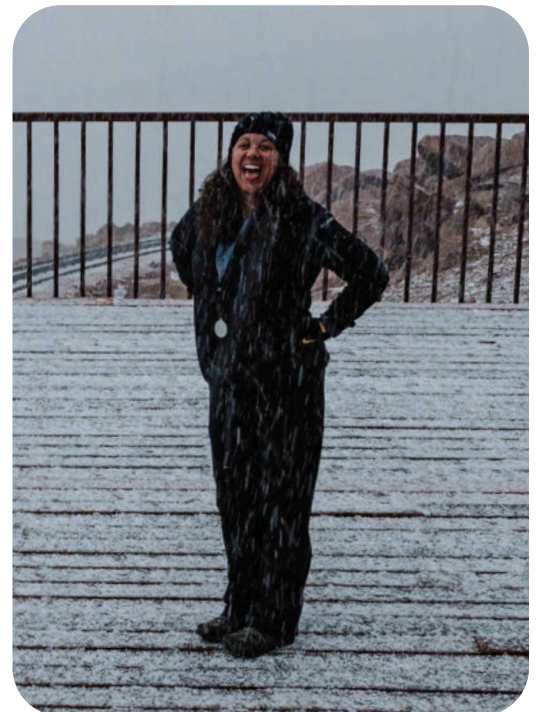


## Weather

What will the weather be like during the Pikes Peak Challenge? In a word, unpredictable! Pikes Peak has very rapid and extreme weather changes that can occur several times a day. Chilling rain, snow, sleet, hail, high winds and dramatic temperatures can vary between Manitou Springs and the upper part of the mountain. This means that you could be suffering from the heat lower on the mountain and get snowed on at the top. PLEASE be prepared for the weather by bringing all of the gear listed under the “Gear” section of this manual (**page 4**).

**WIND:** Below timberline, you remain relatively protected from the wind by the trees and valleys. Once you leave tree line (above 12,000 feet), you are no longer protected from the wind, and this vastly increases the chilling effect of cold and wetness.

**RAIN:** In hiking up Pikes Peak, wetness is typically caused by rain, melting snow, and most often by perspiration. If your wet skin is exposed to the wind and cold, your body loses heat at an unbelievable rate, resulting in hypothermia. The key is to STAY DRY and wear clothing that keeps you warm even when wet.



## Lightning

It is important to have a basic understanding of lightning to help you avoid its dangers. Lightning can cause damage and injury in various ways:

- Direct strike: Hiker in the open who could not find shelter
- Splash strike: Lightning current jumps from an object it initially hit, onto the hiker who sought shelter nearby
- Contact strike: Lightning strikes an object you are holding (e.g., hiking poles)
- Step voltage: Lightning transmitted along the ground, or through an object nearby to the hiker
- Blunt Trauma: Created by shock waves from a nearby strike

When lightning (which is electricity) strikes a peak or tree, it spreads out in all directions, following the path of least resistance. Trees, rock and earth are fairly good conductors of electricity, especially when wet. The human body is even better, and most metals are the best conductors.

### PREVENTION

The first thought should be to avoid areas that might be hit by lightning. Seek a location with nearby projections or masses that are closer to the clouds than one's own head. In a forested area, it is best to be amongst the shorter trees, as long as they are taller than you. The electrical discharge radiates outward and downward, decreasing in intensity as it moves away from the initial strike area. Lightning flows along the surface of rock, especially if wet. Lichen patches, cracks or soil may hold moisture and therefore provide easy paths. High voltage currents tend to jump across short gaps, as in a spark plug, rather than take a longer path around. A person bridging two points may provide a better path for the current, therefore causing some portion of the current to flow through the person's body.

Here are guidelines to help you choose the best body position and location in an electrical storm:

1. Avoid moist areas, including crevices and gullies.
2. Stay out of small depressions; choose a narrow slight rise instead. A small detached rock on a scree slope is excellent.
3. Stay away from overhangs and stay out of small caves.
4. Move immediately and get into the preferred lightning position (read below) if your hair stands on end, you hear a buzzing sound, or see bluish sparks on nearby rocks.
5. Span as small a distance as possible (occupy as little area as you can). Crouch down with your feet together, knees up against your chest, arms close against your body or wrapped around your knees/legs and not touching the ground, and mouth open.
6. Crouch on insulating object(s) if possible - a backpack, bundled up jacket, etc.
7. If in a group, it is preferable to separate people by approximately 50 feet or more (within reason).
8. Remove metal objects such as hiking poles and set them aside. Do not worry about small metal objects buried in your back pack.



## Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness is common among those who travel quickly to a higher altitude. The symptoms are caused by the body's attempts to adjust to the problems of too little oxygen and too few red blood cells to collect the reduced oxygen.

For hikers from outside of Colorado, just the change from the altitude of your home town to our 6,000 feet may be sufficient to induce some symptoms of altitude sickness. If you can arrange to do some practice hikes at altitudes above this height, you will be better prepared. For hikers living in Colorado, try to do some acclimatization hikes above 10,000 feet.

There are varying degrees of altitude sickness. Most common is Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Symptoms differ depending on severity but often include severe headache, weakness, loss of appetite, insomnia, shortness of breath and vomiting. This may be a sign to you to slow down and rest, take some oxygen, or descend. El Paso County Search and Rescue is there for your safety and well-being. Please let them know if you are experiencing any difficulties.

Drinking plenty of water is critical and may prevent some altitude symptoms. Get lots of rest before the hike. Ibuprofen can help relieve a minor altitude headache. (Please only take medications that you are familiar with and know that you do not have any adverse reactions with.) Although not really a form of altitude sickness, the dry cold air found up high can cause a slightly sore and dry throat. Occasionally sucking on a hard candy will help with this problem.



## Hypothermia

A hike up Pikes Peak can turn into a miserable and even dangerous experience for those not prepared to deal with the demands of the climb and the frequently changing weather. One of the most serious things that can happen is hypothermia. You should understand it fully.

Hypothermia is a lowering of the body's core temperature in response to cold, rain, wind and fatigue. The cold need not be extreme; deaths from hypothermia have occurred at temperatures well above freezing. **Most hypothermia cases develop in air temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees F.** These are the conditions that you will most likely be encountering hiking up Pikes Peak. Most outdoor enthusiasts simply can't believe such temperatures can be dangerous.



## RECOGNITION OF HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is usually caused by prolonged exposure to cold. When more heat is lost than the body can generate, hypothermia can result. As its severity increases, chilling reaches the brain depriving you of the judgment and reasoning power to recognize your own condition. Without recognition of the symptoms by a companion, followed by treatment, hypothermia can lead to stupor, collapse and even death. Early signs of hypothermia include slowing of pace (beyond that normally expected at high altitudes), intense shivering, poor coordination, thickness of speech, poor judgment, and irritability. It is imperative that immediate action be taken to correct the situation. The worst mistake you can make is to deny the symptoms and try to tough it out. No matter how strong or well-conditioned you are, hypothermia will beat you if you do not act quickly.

A person may slip into hypothermia in minutes and die in less than two hours after the first symptoms appear unless prompt treatment is received.

## PREVENTION OF HYPOTHERMIA

**AVOIDANCE OF EXPOSURE** is the key to prevention of hypothermia. Dress for warmth, wind and to prevent wetness. Most clothes, especially cotton, lose about 90% of their insulating value when they get wet. Wool, polypropylene, Capilene®, and other new synthetics will keep you warm even when the fabric gets wet. A slight breeze carries heat away from bare skin much faster than still air. Wind drives cold air under and through clothing, and refrigerates wet clothing by evaporating moisture.

**STAYING DRY:** In hiking up Pikes Peak, it is common for your cloths to become damp. This is typically caused by rain, melting snow, and most often by perspiration. If your wet skin is exposed to the wind and cold, your body loses heat at an unbelievable rate, resulting in hypothermia. The key is to STAY DRY and wear clothing that keeps you warm when wet.

## HYPOTHERMIA AND FOOD/WATER

The body must have fuel in order to generate heat. Carry plenty of quick energy foods and sustaining foods and eat small amounts of food frequently. Have two quarts of water with you at all times. Water bottles should be refilled at Barr Camp, about half-way up Pikes Peak.



## Barr Trail

Pikes Peak Challenge Trail Staff are located at all of the numbered locations above but they do not provide water and snacks. The trail is 13 miles long, starting at an elevation of approximately 6,550' and reaching 14,115' at the summit. The trail is steep, rocky and uneven.

Near the top, the switch backing trail becomes narrow and traverses along rocks. To get over the boulders at the top, leg strength and a strong sense of balance are necessary. Refill your water-bottles at Barr Camp!

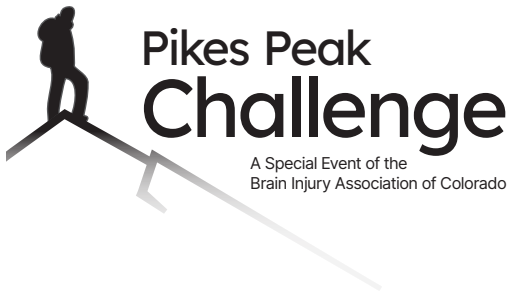
**SUMMIT HIKERS:** For your safety and that of our Trail Staff and rescue personnel, **there is a mandatory cutoff time at Barr Camp.** If you are not checked in and on your way out of Barr Camp by **9:30 a.m.** you will be turned around and must return to the trail head.

Transportation staff will be on standby at the trail head to return you to the park. Please trust our experience and judgment on this matter! If you cannot make the cut-off time it is highly probable that you will become an assistance or evacuation case on the upper part of the mountain due to exhaustion or weather. In addition, it is very unlikely that you would reach the summit before sunset. We do not want your experience on the mountain to be either unpleasant or unsafe; but when presented with these options, we would rather have you unhappy at being turned around than have you unnecessarily injured!

**BARR CAMP HIKERS:** We suggest not staying at Barr Camp more than 20 minutes (get a snack, restroom, etc.) as you still have the hike back down to complete. Transportation staff will be on standby at the Trailhead to return you to the park.



- ① The Start: Barr Trail Trailhead
- ② No Name Creek (8,750 feet) (Note: Some refer to No Name Creek as "French Creek" but the south fork of French Creek is really over a mile away.)
- ③ Barr Camp (10,200 feet): Remember to fill up your water bottles! You must be through Barr Camp by 9:30 a.m. in order to continue.  
**Barr Camp Hikers: Turn around here - YOU MADE IT!**
- ④ A-Frame Shelter (11,700 feet)
- ⑤ 2 Miles to go (12,700)
- ⑥ 1 Mile to go (13,300)
- ⑦ 16 Golden Stairs (13,800 feet)
- ⑧ **SUMMIT – YOU MADE IT!**



# Transportation

## Transportation

Once you have checked in and received your bib at Manitou Springs Fields Park you will be shuttled to the trailhead to begin your ascent. Shuttle vans will take you from the Summit of Pikes Peak back to the park to enjoy lunch.

**SUMMIT HIKERS:** You will need to meet friends who are also hiking back at the park and not on the summit. Typically, transportation runs smoothly but you may experience a wait to board a shuttle van should we experience inclement weather and/or high traffic on the highway. The highway is still open to the public on the day of the hike.

**BARR CAMP HIKERS:** Once you return to the Trailhead, shuttle vans will be on standby to take you back to the park to enjoy lunch, music and park activities.

## Parking

Do not park your vehicle in areas marked NO PARKING or that are sectioned off with tape or traffic cones as your vehicle could be towed.

Do not block residential or commercial driveways and please lock your vehicle! The event staff will not supervise your vehicle.



## The Summit Experience & Park Celebration

Once you have reached the summit, you will have the opportunity to use the restroom, get a snack and a bottle of water while waiting for your ride off the mountain. There is a full medical staff at the summit should you have any health concerns needing attention prior to boarding the shuttle van. Once you put your name on the transportation list and your name is called, you will be required to board the shuttle van.

You will be dropped off at Fields Park in Manitou Springs. There you can have lunch compliments of the Brain Injury Association of Colorado. You can also pick up your t-shirt and swag bag.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO HIKE TO THE SUMMIT?**

An average hiker, in good weather can hike around 1.5 miles per hour, so the total time from the trailhead to the top can be done at around 8 hours. During the course of the day hikers will finish anywhere between 4 to 12 hours. Everything depends on weather, physical conditioning, how well you eat and drink throughout the day and your own determination.

### **CAN I BRING A FRIEND OR CAN MY SON OR DAUGHTER HIKE WITH ME?**

**Only if they are a registered participant.** Everyone hiking in the Pikes Peak Challenge must be a registered participant. Non-registered parties will not be allowed on Pikes Peak Challenge shuttle vans and will find themselves without a ride back down off the mountain. Children are allowed only as registered participants and they must be at least 12 years old and in good physical condition. All fees and fundraising requirements apply to children as well.

### **DO YOU ALLOW SPECTATORS?**

Spectators are welcome but are not allowed to ride the shuttle vans; they must provide their own transportation. The Pikes Peak Highway will charge a per person fee at the tollgate. You are encouraged to log onto [pikespeakcolorado.com](http://pikespeakcolorado.com) - Click on the video button to take a tour of the highway. This site will also provide you with tips on driving Pikes Peak Highway and pricing.

### **WHAT IF THE WEATHER IS BAD, WILL THE EVENT BE CANCELED?**

The Pikes Peak Challenge has never been canceled. That being said, the safety of our participants and volunteers is our #1 priority. We work along side El Paso County Search and Rescue to determine safe hiking conditions. Some form of a hike will be attempted. If the road is closed due to conditions and we cannot transport you back down off the mountain we will suspend the hike at Barr Camp and hike back to the trail head where you will be picked up at the base of the mountain.

### **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO HIKE TO BARR CAMP AND BACK TO THE TRAILHEAD?**

An average hiker, in good physical condition, will take approximately 6-7 hours. Everything depends on weather, physical conditioning, how long you stay at Barr Camp (we recommend staying no longer than 20 minutes) and how well you eat and drink throughout the day.

### **WHAT DOES THE PARK CELEBRATION ENTAIL?**

We want all Pikes Peak Challenge participants to have a great experience. We always have food and cold water available in the park for you to enjoy after your event however some of the amenities such as the DJ and exhibitors will only be in the park until approximately 3:00pm. We will always be there to greet you and congratulate you for your achievement!

### **ARE DOGS ALLOWED?**

Dogs are **not** permitted. As much as we love your furry friends, please be respectful of other hikers by leaving them at home.