



## Attending Outward Bound

### Welcome

You are beginning a great adventure! Outward Bound is invested in your success on your course. Your course will be an amazing experience - an opportunity to learn and grow in new and positive directions that will last a lifetime. That being said, attending an Outward Bound course, like any wilderness expedition, requires planning and preparation.

This packet is intended to aid you in preparing for your course. Many Outward Bound students indicate that their experience was more challenging than they expected - physically, mentally, and emotionally. If you follow the instructions provided, then your course will be much more fulfilling and enjoyable. Trust us, we've been leading wilderness expeditions for over 50 years!

### PLEASE NOTE

*This document contains very important information that could affect your course experience. **Please read it thoroughly.** By requesting an application for Outward Bound you are accountable for and subject to the information contained on these pages*

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## What to Expect

### **Message to Parents:**

**We recommend reviewing this document with your child so that he/she is aware of what will be expected of him/her.**

You are making an investment in the growth and development of your child as well as giving him or her an amazing experience. While Outward Bound is a non-profit organization, our courses are not inexpensive. As you will see your paperwork, if your child is expelled you should NOT expect to get your money back.

On every Outward Bound course participants are expected to give their full effort, treat their teammates and instructors with respect, and follow the guidelines set by Outward Bound. We expect there to be varying levels of motivation. We expect there to be homesickness, doubt or even a desire to quit and we will help them work through these challenges. Our purpose is to help our students push past doubt and successfully complete their course, **but if a student is determined to leave we simply cannot and will not make them stay. A student who is not willing to fully participate can compromise their safety and quality of the course. In these cases a parent/guardian will be notified and asked to make arrangements for their child to come home.**

### **Risks**

Living and traveling in a remote wilderness setting exposes you to risks. We believe those risks enable you to gain insights and perspective unavailable anywhere else. Our commitment to delivering those benefits to you stands alongside our commitment to safety. Our staff is dedicated to the safety of our participants above all else. Outward Bound instructors receive regular training on the various outdoor activities which they instruct as well as the environments encountered on our courses. All instructors are certified as a Wilderness First Responder or Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician or equivalent. Our programs are regularly reviewed by outdoor professionals from within and outside of Outward Bound in order to identify and consider potential hazards. Outward Bound has been a national leader in wilderness safety for over 50 years and frequently advises and assists other organizations in outdoor adventure risk management.

Yet risk and uncertainty are central the concept to of adventure. The intent is not to avoid activities involving risk but to embrace them. Risk is a platform for delivering meaning, growth, physical fitness, and leadership.

Outward Bound staff are taught how to manage the risks of travel in remote areas. Your instructors are trained in first aid, search and rescue, and emergency management, but they cannot guarantee your absolute safety—you must take responsibility for your own well-being and follow all instructions. You should come to your course prepared to work hard, take responsibility for yourself, and master the skills taught on the expedition, because you will be traveling in remote areas that may be hours or even days from definitive medical care.

Each staff team carries a cell phone or satellite phone for emergency communication. However, coverage in the backcountry is limited and there is no guarantee that the phone will work from any given location. **For your safety, it is extremely important that you share any and all medical or psychological issues you have when filling out the medical history section of the application.**



## Wilderness Travel

Outward Bound courses are demanding. It can literally take every waking moment to get from Point A to Point B. Travel may be on trails or “off-trail” over rugged, steep terrain, through forests, snow, tundra, narrow or rushing rivers, choppy lakes, or stormy seas. Travel will require perseverance and understanding of the environment. Route finding, navigating and dealing with bad weather are all serious challenges to be expected in wilderness travel. We rarely take rest days even due to inclement weather, so be prepared to push on even in rain, snow, and sleet.

Outward Bound may be the hardest thing you have ever done. Your course will challenge you mentally, physically, and socially. Outward Bound philosophy maintains that by facing the challenges the course offers you, you will emerge physically and mentally stronger, with an increased mastery of expedition skills as well as a better understanding of your own capabilities and how to make a difference in the world. You learn how to work as a team and become a leader. We think that the payoff is well worth the work, but you should be aware of what you are getting into and excited about tackling the challenges.

**Successful completion of your course demands trust, mastery of skills, a high level of physical fitness, confidence, tenacity, leadership, initiative and compassion. The promotion of these qualities and the discovery of what’s in you is the purpose of Outward Bound.**

### Typical Day

A typical day usually involves getting up early, making breakfast, packing up camp, mapping the route, and then hitting the trail or water, depending on your activities. You will travel all day—taking breaks to rest, snack, or enjoy a view but you will generally be covering lots of territory. Once you reach camp, group members will divide and conquer to get food cooked and camp set up. After dinner instructors often facilitate some sort of evening ritual. At the end of the day you can crawl into your sleeping bag to journal, chat, and get a well-deserved rest.

### Becoming a Team

Throughout the course you will practice low-impact camping and learn basic outdoor living and camp-craft as well as natural history. As you become more proficient and fit, your group will be able to travel greater distances and take on more of a leadership role. Your group will operate as a team of mutually supportive explorers. You will no doubt surprise yourself with what you are capable of!

Your attention will be focused both on the wilderness living and working as a team. Instructors will help on both counts, teaching practical skills and helping you work together; navigating with maps and compasses or charts as you make your way. At night you will have check-ins with your group to discuss personal and group challenges and difficulties encountered in the day’s activities. Topics may include leadership, decision-making, and responsibility.

### Group Living

Living and working with a small group is an opportunity to make long-lasting friendships and enjoy memories that will last a lifetime. It can also be a source of friction and challenge. As you and your group attempt to meet your goals and make decisions big and small you may feel frustrated or annoyed with your teammates at times. Students will arrive to the course with varying levels of motivation, fitness, fear, and doubt. Once the trip starts, even the most eager students may struggle to take a certain risk or stay committed. Investing in working through differences in your group, sharing insights from your challenges, and laughing your heads off over the most delicious rice and bean dinner you ever tasted (hunger is the best spice!) are all part of why students walk away from their Outward Bound course with a deeper understanding of life, themselves and each other.



## **Camp Chores**

Outward Bound is not a guided trip. All group members will pitch in to do camp chores, including cooking, cleaning dishes, setting up tents, navigating, etc. You will find that as the expedition progresses, your mastery of these camp craft skills will enable you to operate more efficiently and effectively around camp. Most groups also contribute by helping clean their gear at the end of course so it is ready for the next group of students to use.

## **Hygiene**

Showering and washing hair are not options while on course. Your instructors will tell you about any available bathing options and explain more about backcountry hygiene when you arrive. Every course environment has different techniques and environmentally appropriate practices for going to the bathroom. You will learn how to dispose of human waste in cat holes or other wilderness-area specific methods. Groups carry soap and hand sanitizer for hand washing. Students will have the opportunity to clean up and wash hair before going home.

## **Food**

You and the other members of your group will learn to cook tasty and nutritious meals over portable gas stoves. Our meals are mainly vegetarian and consist of grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, nuts, and light-weight, dehydrated foods. A typical breakfast might be granola or oatmeal; lunch might include tortillas, cheese, and tuna or peanut butter and jam on crackers; dinners include macaroni and cheese, burritos, or stir-fry. During the day there will be access to snacks like trail mix, nuts, and dried fruit. Our diets can have more fats and protein than you are accustomed to. In order to prepare, we suggest that you cut down on soda, caffeine, and junk food.

We can accommodate some special dietary needs (such as lactose intolerance or vegan diets), but only if we know well in advance. If you have a particularly unusual diet, we may ask you to bring some of your own specialty foods. Certain food (or insect bite) allergies may not be safely accommodated in a remote wilderness setting. We review applicants with food allergies on a case by case basis.

## **Supervision**

Our supervision is based on the premise that, once aware of the necessary skills for wilderness living and travel, students will cooperate, respect their leaders, and follow safety instructions with or without direct instructor supervision. We maintain high staff to student ratios (approximately 1:5) but due to the nature of living and camping together there will be occasions on your course when you are not directly supervised by your instructors. Those situations may include: Final Expedition or other travel, time around camp, cooking, setting up tarps, sleeping and the solo experience.

Our staff does not sleep in the same shelters as students. Students on courses for ages 12-17 will be instructed to sleep in same-sex shelters. Students on courses with a minimum age of 18 will establish their own sleeping arrangements with instructor approval.

## **Independent Student Travel**

A core component of Outward Bound learning is for students to put into practice the skills they have learned. Our longer courses (14 days or more) may culminate in a Final Expedition that will include Independent Student Travel. We vary the level of Independent Student Travel allowed based on course length, time spent in an activity, environment, age, and staff's assessment of the group's competence. On courses with a minimum age of 14 students will always be within sight or sound of instructors. For 16 to 18 year olds on some courses that include 10 or more days of travel in one activity and who are assessed to be competent and high-functioning, staff travel near students but can be as far as 30 minutes distant while traveling. In these cases staff will check in with students at least once a day. Students will be issued Field Communication Technology and instructed in how to contact staff. In the case of possible hazards, such as extreme weather, staff will maintain sight and/or sound supervision.



## Can I do it?

While you do not have to be an athlete or in peak physical condition to attend an Outward Bound course, you must be both physically and mentally prepared to take on the challenges you will encounter on your course.

There are two kinds of strength necessary to complete your course- physical and mental. Your body needs to be strong, but you must also come with an open mind, willing spirit, and positive mindset. Whether you paddle or row a boat for six or eight hours in a day, carry a 50+ pound pack for 10 miles, climb a 14,000-foot peak, scale a rock wall, work your way up and over a high mountain pass or down into a deep canyon; it will push you and reward you on many levels. Most people find that Outward Bound presents them with challenges (physical, mental and even social) that they are not sure they can accomplish.

Regardless of the activities, every course is unique due to varying personalities, different instructors, and ever-changing weather. No matter how much you read the materials we provide and no matter how many questions you ask of your Student Services representative, the reality is that you will not know exactly what the course will be like until you get there. How will you prepare for the unknown?

## **Mental Preparation**

We cannot offer you a training regimen to mentally prepare for Outward Bound but we can suggest a few things to think about and be prepared for.

**Teamwork** - Be ready to be part of a team. Think about other team experiences you have had in the past whether they are sports teams, school plays, or business meetings. Come up with a few observations about what has made your teams successful in the past and plan on being a positive contributor during your course.

**Living with Less** – Look around your house and the “real” world and think about what you have and what you need. Things you currently take for granted like hot running water, upholstered furniture and sidewalks will not be part of your experience. When you get into the rhythm of wilderness living, you will see that despite the complexity of your everyday life, life on the trail and life at home are both ultimately about food, clothing, shelter and each other. We will also ask you to leave behind non-essentials like deodorant, makeup, electronic devices, and books which can be more challenging than you might expect.

**Being Away from Home** – Whether it is the first or the 50th time you have been away from home, you may not have been this far away or done anything quite like an Outward Bound Course. The feeling of being alone and away from family might not happen immediately, but in many cases it will occur while on course. Please use your instructors and teammates as resources as they are there for help. If you think you might feel homesick, let us know. We can help you come up with some ideas to address it.

**Compassion** – Compassion is one of Outward Bound’s core values. Be prepared to offer it and expect it from your teammates. You will travel with and rely on a group of strangers, who each have different reasons for attending Outward Bound and who come with varying levels of physical and mental strength. You may find that you will need to make compromises in your own expectations to support other members of your team. It is important to remember that in such a small group setting, your attitude and actions affect everyone.

**Group Discussion** – Outward Bound delivers learning, in large part, by discussing course experiences. By considering the experience through group discussion before and after your course, you will be better able to hold onto the value of each experience and take it home with you. Be prepared to share your perspective and gain insight from others on your expedition.



## Physical Preparation

If you are not currently active, adopting a daily exercise routine can be challenging. It can be hard to find the motivation to commit to a routine, but every minute you put in prior to your course will pay off once you get to your course. So if you do not already engage in 30 minutes of aerobic exercise at least three times a week, we recommend putting in the time to train prior to your course. In high altitude locations the need for aerobic fitness is even greater!

### Build Aerobic Fitness

Before starting any fitness program it is always a good idea to consult your physician. The most important kind of training is aerobic fitness (running, bicycling, swimming...), the kind which stimulates heart and lung activity for at least 30 minutes without stopping. The aim of your training program must be to increase your body's capacity to breathe oxygen. This will increase the capability of your heart and circulatory system to supply blood and oxygen to all organs and tissues. If you are currently working out three days a week, build up to five or six days a week or increase your time by 10% a week.

We recommend interval training, uphill sprints, running up stairs, or going on extended hikes with a weighted pack as some of the best ways to train for backpacking and rock climbing. Sports like soccer, lacrosse, basketball, and ultimate Frisbee are also great. Please contact your Student Services representative to learn about specific training recommended for your course, and read the Physical Preparation guide on our website.

The most important thing is to find an activity that you enjoy doing. While exercising three times a week is the minimum, five or six times a week is optimum.

### Adopt Healthy Habits

A great way to prepare physically is to adopt healthy eating habits and focus on staying well-hydrated. This is especially true if your course takes place in higher altitudes where you may need a few days to acclimatize. No matter what course type, the following tips may help but will especially help avert ill-effects of altitude:

1. Arrive at your course start well-rested.
2. Reduce consumption of fatty foods, excessive alcohol, and caffeine as these substances require a lot of water and oxygen to metabolize. Increase the amount of vegetables, fruit, and lean proteins in your diet.
3. Drink more water-between 1-4 liters of water per day depending on your activity level.
4. Stop using tobacco products at least one month prior to your course.

**Don't overdo it.** Many people, novice and experienced alike, commonly complain of tired and aching bodies; the result of believing that the harder the body is pushed, the faster it will improve. In fact, the opposite is true. The more moderately you train (as long as you are increasing your heart rate adequately), the more quickly you will improve. The most common mistake people make is going too fast, too soon—quickly joining the ranks of the stiff, tired and discouraged.



## Packing and Travel Information

### **What is provided?**

You don't need to bring camping gear like a sleeping bag or backpack. You will need to bring personal clothing, a few toiletries and footwear. Each course has a specific packing list detailing what you should bring to your course. If you already own camping gear and would prefer to use it for your course please check your packing lists as to what is appropriate. Outward Bound does not allow iPods or cell phones on courses. Your instructors will carry emergency communication devices. We ask students not to bring emergency response technology with an outbound communication function as it can complicate or compromise Outward Bound's emergency response.

### **Packing for Wilderness Travel**

Wilderness travel means you can and, for your comfort, should carry a lot less than when you travel in the regular world. Most experienced wilderness travelers will tell you that they bring about the same amount of stuff on a three day trip as they would on a three week trip.

Our packing list is based on layering. Dressing in several light layers rather than one heavy layer allows you more flexibility as the weather and exertion levels change. When shopping or packing, it is a good idea to try on all your clothes at once. Ideally, if temperatures drop you would be able to wear all your layers together to keep warm.

Staying Warm with Layering:

1. First Layer: Usually called the "wicking" layer (long underwear, liner socks, etc.) – Moisture is the enemy of warmth. Sweat from physical activity like backpacking, paddling or climbing is your body's attempt to cool itself off. Synthetic long underwear pulls moisture away from your body so your sweat won't cool you down too much and make you cold. This layer is worn next to your skin. Cotton items retain moisture and exaggerate sweat's cooling effect.
2. Second Layer: Usually called the insulation layer (fleece tops and pants, wool socks), this layer is worn on top of the first layer. There might be more than one component of the "insulating layer" like a light-weight fleece and a heavier top. Separate layers like a fleece and a synthetic jacket are preferable to bulky ski jackets.
3. Third Layer: Usually called the wind/shell layer (jackets, pants, rain gear) – Adding an outer windproof layer makes sure that the wind does not steal all that built up heat. The third layer is worn on top of the first and second layers.

See your PACKING LIST for the most detailed information about what to bring.

### **Can I bring....?**

#### **Should I bring contacts or glasses on course?**

Either glasses or contact lenses are acceptable on course. Sterile lens care is difficult on the trail, and because of this, reusable contacts may become dirty. In winter and on desert terrain it can be especially challenging. Whether you wear contacts or glasses, you must bring an extra pair. Daily disposable contacts can be a good option to avoid dirt and dust build up that can cause damage to the eye.

#### **Can I bring a camera?**

You should definitely bring a camera if you want to record the events of your course. Please note that there is a possibility of losing or damaging your camera. You may wish to consider purchasing a waterproof bag or box for your camera, battery, and memory card to keep it safe. We also recommend disposable waterproof cameras for this reason.



**What about iPods/iPhones, Cell Phones, Computers, and GPS devices?** You are more than welcome to travel to and from your course with this equipment. Once you arrive we will ask you to leave it all in your luggage as you are not allowed to take it on your course. We ask that students not bring emergency response technology on course.

### **Do I need to bring money for my course?**

You will need money while traveling to and from course- typically around \$40. Please be sure to grab a snack or meal on your travel day. Once we pick you up it may be a few hours before arriving at base or camp and preparing a meal. At the end of the course if you have lost or damaged any of the gear or equipment we provide, you will be charged the replacement or repair fee before you leave the course.

### **Traveling to Course Start**

Arrive to the course start location dressed in clothes that you will wear on the course. Courses are packed with physical activity right from the start so it is important to arrive prepared. We strongly recommend the layering technique and have provided a packing list with your registration packet. One example of what to wear would be a short-sleeved shirt, shorts or pants, boots or sandals with a long sleeved shirt or jacket in your carry-on. To aid in acclimatization to high altitudes, be sure to drink plenty (2-4 quarts) of water the day before your course.

As a precaution against the airlines losing your irreplaceable items, please carry or wear things on the plane like your boots, socks, long underwear, prescription medications and contacts/glasses. If your luggage does get delayed, be fully prepared to begin your course and spend the night outdoors. You can check-in everything else. When you arrive on the course, you will pack your trail gear into a backpack provided by Outward Bound.

### **Air Travel for Teens**

Most airlines offer or require that you purchase an Unaccompanied Minor service that ensures that your child is boarded onto the aircraft, chaperoned during connections, and turned over to the appropriate person upon arrival at their final destination. Each airline has their own policies, rates and services offered so please check with the airlines. Fees are typically \$100 **each way** and should be paid before the flight to prevent issues on the return flight home. If you purchase this provision you will need to provide the airline with the name and phone number of the Outward Bound staff member that is picking up the student that we will provide to you upon request.

Outward Bound staff will be at the meeting place at least one hour before the published meeting time. For unaccompanied minors or teens arriving earlier we make every effort to arrive at the same time as the earliest arriving student but can only guarantee staff at the meeting place one hour prior. Please carefully review the travel information provided for the course as traveling to/from course outside of our recommended travel times will likely leave your child without supervision or anyone to meet them.

Courses for 14-16 year-olds or younger will have start times that allow same day travel. Some courses require an overnight stay prior to course. In the event that a 16-18 year-old course requires an overnight stay, please consult your Student Services representative for information. We do not offer supervision prior to the appointed meeting time.

### **What if I have a travel delay getting to my course start?**

If a travel delay occurs every effort will be made to get the delayed student on the course. Please call 415-933-6222 **(follow the directions on the answering machine—You will be directed to an emergency on call number)** as soon as possible so we can facilitate this pick.

**Outward Bound does not call family members to confirm the students' arrival** on course and we do not typically provide updates mid-course or confirm that travel home will happen as planned. Under no circumstances will we leave a meeting place without accounting for every student expected and will call families if a student is not accounted for or



if outbound travel has markedly changed.

## **When I am on course...**

### **What happens with my prescription medications?**

**All prescription medications must be approved by the Student Services Department** prior to the course start. On courses for 12-17 year olds, medication use is overseen by instructors. Please bring your prescription medications in the original containers. Students who would suffer severe consequences if they were to miss a dose of medication due to damage or loss should bring back-up doses of that medication.

### **What if I need to be reached in an emergency?**

If there is an emergency (an example of an emergency is something like a death in the family) and it is necessary to contact a student on course, please call **415-933-6222 (follow the directions on the answering machine-- you will be Emergency On-Call number)**.

### **Can I receive mail?**

On courses longer than seven days you can receive mail. The mail will be delivered to you at the end of the course. You may be able to send letters out during re-supply if your course has one. You can find the mailing address for your course in the registration materials sent to you. Please notify family and friends that you will be incommunicado during your course and you should be called only in the event of an emergency, such as serious illness or death in the family.

### **What happens to my belongings?**

At the beginning of course, instructors conduct what we call "Duffle Shuffle". This is when the instructors work individually with students to help them decide what should go into their Outward Bound pack and what should stay in the luggage. Duffle Shuffle is the last chance to leave behind any inappropriate items before beginning the expedition. Tobacco, alcohol and recreational drugs are not permitted. Valuables like plane tickets, passports, iPod, cell phones, computers, wallets etc. should be left in luggage. Please leave jewelry at home. Any luggage that stays behind will be secured in a locked, dry and safe location and student access may be limited. On longer courses that have re-supplies, there may be an opportunity to pre pack dry clean clothes in a re-supply barrel that will make it out to the students at various stages of the course. Not all courses have re-supplies.

**Thank you for choosing Outward Bound. If you have any questions about the content in this document please contact the Student Services department at (415) 933-6222.**