

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

*Everything you've wanted to bloggers and marketers to tell you about
hiking but don't*

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

This manifesto is free and does not contain any affiliate links. Feel free to share it with anyone under the terms of the Creative Common Attribution 3.0 License.

© Jennifer Singer

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

Table of Contents

PART 1: HIKING IN ITS PUREST FORM

THE SAUNTER

FINDING YOUR CENTER IN A FAST-PACED WORLD

PART 2: WHERE TO ESCAPE

THINK LOCAL

THINK STATE WIDE

THINK BIG

PART 3: WHEN TO HIKE

SEASONALLY

TIME OF DAY

PART 4: WHO TO TAKE WITH YOU

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

PETS

MEET UP WITH OTHERS

GO IT ALONE

PART 5: LEAVE NO TRACE

TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS, LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

PART 6: MINIMUM GEAR REQUIREMENTS

WHAT GEAR DO YOU REALLY NEED?

ALL ABOUT H2O

YOUR FUEL

BUG PROTECTION

MAPS

PART 7: GET OVER YOURSELF

BREAK FREE FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA TRAP

HIKE WITH CONFIDENCE

GO AT YOUR OWN SPEED

YOU CAN DO ANYTHING ONCE YOU DECIDE YOU WILL DO IT

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

PART

1

HIKING IN ITS PUREST FORM

THE SAUNTER

FINDING YOUR CENTER IN A FAST-PACED WORLD

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

TO SAUNTER INSTEAD OF HIKE

John Muir first talked about his displeasure for the term Hike. He argued that instead of hiking people should saunter, and I couldn't agree more. The term dates back to the middle ages, when people went on pilgrimages to the holy land. They walk in a slow relaxed manner, without hurry or effort. When your holy place is the wilderness, it's time to start sauntering.

Since the age of social media, a new group of people have entered the wilderness seeking to see the places made popular by Instagram. They enter the woods to see the places depicted on others feeds. They get their picture for social media and move on. They spend most of their time with their nose buried in their phones. They have pretty makeup and know the perfect selfie angles.

There is another group of people that hike for the workout. They move with haste and keep on going, even after they reached the top of the hill. They don't stop to see what they've found. Trail runners are lumped into this category. They found the sidewalks too mundane and want more of a challenge. You'll recognize them by the blur that just went by.

While this is all fine and dandy for some, I do not want to become one of them. Instead, you should enjoy nature when you enter the woods. The goal is to be in the moment. Put the phone down and just enjoy the wilderness.

Find your favorite tree in the woods. Claim an overlook as your own personal retreat that no one else knows about. Breathe in the fresh air. To listen the sounds all around you.

Next time you go to the woods, saunter. Take your time. Go into it with no expectations and enjoy every experience.

“Now these mountains are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not ‘hike’ through them.” - John Muir

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

FINDING YOUR CENTER IN A FAST-PACED WORLD

“Hiking is a bit like life:

The journey only requires you to put one foot in front of the other...again and again and again.

And if you allow yourself the opportunity to be present throughout the entirety of the trek, you will witness beauty every step of the way, not just at the summit”

- unknown

Technology is fast moving and everywhere. They have caused everything to speed up in our lives. You can never seem to escape it. There are always deadlines fast approaching at work. At home, laundry needs to be done, dinner cooked and some project that needs to be finished. And with more people working from home now, you can't ever seem to get away from it all.

A study conducted by the European Centre for Environment & Human Health at the University of Exeter found that that people who spent two hours a week in green spaces were more likely to report good health and psychological well-being.

I can attest to this fact. When things get crazy, often I just need to get to a trail. It's an escape from everything. When Hillary Clinton lost the presidential election, the next morning she was found on a hiking trail. Beethoven found that walking was imperative to his creativity.

When you are out in the woods, every stressor seems so small. The speed of life slows down. All you are concerned about is what's around you. Get there without a care in the world.

WHERE TO ESCAPE

PART

2

THINK LOCAL

THINK STATE WIDE

THINK BIG

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

**“Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are in dirt.”
- John Muir**

THINK LOCAL

The easiest place to get started is in your own back yard. Sometimes it's literally your own back yard depending on the yard. For others, it's the neighborhood park. It can be on a paved nature trail, or it can be on dirt. Start off by doing some research into your own community.

Bigger Cities, like Minneapolis and St. Paul all have amazing parks to explore. The spaces are so green and tree packed it feels like you are in the middle of nowhere. The suburbs and rural towns have great opportunities too.

Go onto your cities webpage and look up their parks program. Parks and Regional parks typically have a mix of dirt and paved trails. If you want to step it up a notch look for Conservation Areas. These are hidden treasures, filled with amazing trails, trees, prairies and stunning views hidden away.

I was sauntering through a new trail in the Suburbs of Minneapolis and stumbled upon a farmer's field and was face to face with a cow. Another time, I was climbing the edge of a bluff and got the most spectacular view of the Minnesota River. I have lived in the area for almost 36 years and didn't even realize these places were hiding right under my nose.

THINK STATE WIDE

Once you are done exploring local parks, consider going outside of your bubble to State Parks. State Parks are my jam. They have some of the most unbelievable, treasures hiding in them. From Caves, to abandon towns and mills.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

One way Minnesota State Parks gets their guest to enjoy more trails is through the Hiking Club Program. At each State Park, there is a designated trail to complete with a password hidden on it.

The trails take you to some of the best parts of the park. It also gives my kids a goal on each trip, 'To find the password', helping them stay motivated. Don't forget to stop the trail. With only one goal in mind, it's easy to slip into your hiking ways.

Do not run through the entire thing with the sole purpose of finding the password. Then find the shortest trail out of there. You know who you are. I've been guilty of this when conditions get bad. The problem with this is that people miss out on everything in between. With so much focus on the goal, you forget to notice the archeological site next to you. Or the spur trail that has an epic waterfall.

**“Because in the end,
you won't remember the
time you spent working
in an office or mowing
the lawn.**

**Climb that goddamn
mountain.”**

- Jack Kerouac

THINK BIG

There are well known thru hikes in every state, some span the entire continent. In Minnesota we have the five, the Border Route Trail (65 miles), the Mississippi River Trail (620 miles), North Country Trail (800 miles), the Superior Hiking Trail (310 miles), and the Matthew Lourey State Trail (80miles).

Each of these trails travel through some of the best parts for the state, some more remote than others. They require a backpack and some additional gear but will have you more alone than you ever thought possible.

If the big trail intimidates you, plan on doing a section at a time. No need to spend the night in the woods.

WHEN TO HIKE

PART

3

SEASONALLY

TIME OF DAY

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

SEASONALLY

Hiking is not a summer hobby. Better hikers usually get the bug during summer time, but it's usually at the worst time of year. Summer it's actually my least favorite season to hike because of the heat and added bug concerns. They can be relentless. Most hikers prefer to hike Fall and Spring. You have cooler weather and no bugs. For backpacking, prime time is usually Fall or early summer. Don't count out winter either. If you switch up your clothing a little, winter hikes are phenomenal.

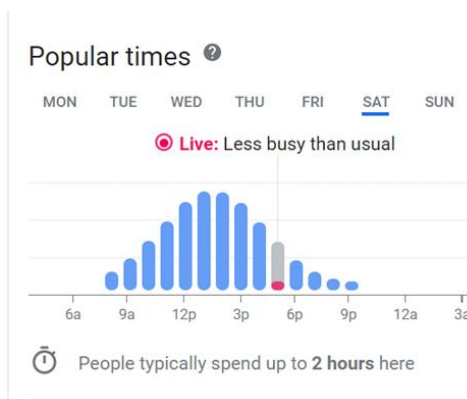
The biggest thing is to remember is to dress for the weather. Also consider that some times of year allow for more daylight, letting you cover more ground.

TIME OF DAY

If you are new at hiking, consider going when the trail is more populated. This way, if you get turned around someone can assist. If you are like me, and are going for solitude, go on off peak times. I prefer to be the first person on the trail and get the morning light.

How do you know when is peak time?

Great question. That's where Google Maps comes in to play. Google has been tracking everyone's movements for some time now and can predict when will be the busiest times are to hike. When you do a search on the web-browser (not mobile), on the right side is a graph showing historical trends. Based on this information you can plan out what day and time is best to go. I try and get on the trail around 9-10 or after dinner if possible.



WHO TO TAKE WITH YOU

PART

4

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

PETS

MEET UP WITH OTHERS

GO IT ALONE

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

I'm not going to lie; this can be a loaded question. It can lead to hurt feels or relief depending on the person. The one thing that hold beginners back is not having anyone to go with.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Ask the person in the bedroom next to you if they'd like to join. Having them in your home makes it so much more convenient. If they aren't feeling it, go down the hall and ask the next person. When that doesn't work, ask your parents, or sibling that lives nearby. Or a friend.

Before you leave, make sure they are on the same page as you. Some want to go faster or slower than you. Some don't want to be there all together. Those are the worst. Go over the route, talk weather, milage, hills. Don't leave anything out. If you add on a surprise at the end, they may never go with you again.

“You can't climb up a mountain with downhill thoughts.” - Unknown

HIKE WITH PETS

To escape with pets can be the best of times and the worst of times. It all depends on the animal and the type of adventure you are on. My favorite trips are those with a four-legged companion alongside. They bring joy to each adventure and even provide a little security too.

On my honeymoon, we decided to camp at JayCooke State Park. They had a breathtaking swinging bridge over St Louis River. The only problem was the walkway was see-through. Our pug froze up instantly. While hilarious for us, he wasn't feeling it. After carrying him over the bridge, he faced another obstacle, lots of rocks and boulders. Needless to say, we spend most of the afternoon with a stressed-out pet. If we had a larger dog that we couldn't carry it would have been a lot worse.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

Knowing the conditions of the trail is something to be mindful of before you leave. If it's a popular trail, and your dog gets excited around other dogs, you may spend most of your day struggling to keep your dog in check. Make sure they are well behaved hiking companions and always pickup after your pets!

MEET UP WITH OTHERS

If you are looking to go out and can't find anyone friends that are like minded, consider joining an online group. Facebook is filled with opportunities and connections. I've seen many active Instagram and Twitter groups as well promoting some great opportunities.

I recently stumbled upon a group while backpacking that all met up on the platform Meetup. They host a group of likeminded backpacking individuals. The leaders are a group of enthusiastic wilderness guides. Most of the events are free, bring your own gear. When they do charge a fee, it's only a few bucks. I enjoyed their company so much because they are all kindred spirits all with different backgrounds.

GO IT ALONE

Sometimes it's better to go solo. If you are truly trying to de-stress, keeping the things that are stressing you out at home is better. I'm sorry to my husband and kids if they ever read this, but sometimes that includes your family.

**“A walk in nature walks
the soul back home.”**

- Mary Davis

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

“May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.” - Edward Abbey

Everyone has their own escape mechanisms. For me, running into the woods is what I need to become a better person. And having to worry about other people’s wellbeing at the time doesn’t help. Did you know being a parent is basically an ongoing mission to stopping them from killing themselves? I never knew there were so many ways. Thankfully as they get older, I worry less, but then another set of worries start up.

The solitude you find in the woods is like nothing you’ll ever experience before. Everyone should try it at least once.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

PART

5

LEAVE NO TRACE

TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS, LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS, LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

Yes, I know how cliché this is. But people need a good reminder sometimes. As more and more people take to the trails this old adage has fallen to the wayside. Before lockdowns started there were two types of people. Outdoors enthusiast and everyone else.

When the only source of entertainment became the wilderness, people came by the carloads. Parking lots were overflowing and with them came all of their gadgets and garbage. Things got left on trails and people loved trying out the new saws on living trees. Don't be one of these people.

On my first trip to Gooseberry Falls in 2016 we got up early to see the falls. We ran into a nice park ranger whose job went from preserving the park and education, to being in charge of cleaning up all the debris that was left from visitors the day before. She was picking up bathing suits, towels, sandals, and other garbage. And just this past year, the pristine BWCA canoe area was ravaged by new visitors that came with saws and other things to markup trees and destroy the area.

Instead leave the trail better than you found it. Throw a trash bag in your pocket and pickup random things you see. Stay on approved trails, keeping the forest floor natural.

If you want to do the bare minimum, pickup after your dog and pack out everything you bring in. Sorry, rant over.

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." - John Muir

Minimum Gear Requirements

PART

6

WHAT GEAR DO YOU REALLY NEED?

ALL ABOUT H2O

YOUR FUEL

BUG PROTECTION

MAPS

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

WHAT GEAR DO YOU REALLY NEED?

When it comes to gear, you don't need much. If you have shoes, you're ready for an adventure. Also, it's good to have a map. As you do more hikes, upgrade to boots, breathable pants and shirts. A buff is good year around. A daypack is nice to carry anything else you need. If weather calls for it, a rain jacket, hat, or waterproof boots and cold weather layers. The truth is, you don't need much. You probably have tons of gear already in your closet. People have been hiking long before this gear was popular.

“There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”

- Sir Rannulph Fiennes

Ditch the fancy gear and go back to basics. You can hike with sandals and jeans. Heck I think I've even done it before. If you want to hike with a ridiculous hat on your head, do it! I've seen people on the trail in a full-blown lion main hat, others in an inflatable dinosaur suite.

The more you hike the more your clothing will evolve. But if you are just starting out, search your closet. When in doubt dress in layers. Have shorts and cotton t-shirts in summer, and warmer fleece layers in winter.

When I first started out, I was always concerned about looking the part. I would look at other people on the trail and feel judged. Like, “I didn't belong if I didn't have the right look.” Once I got over myself, I started having a lot more fun.

ALL ABOUT H2O

Depending on the length of the hike, you'll need some water. The general rule of thumb is to consume is a half a liter of water per mile you hike. If the hike is four miles on a 60 degree day, you should drink and entire Nalgene. On hotter days, double that. On cool days, you still need to replace the water loss even though you may not feel thirsty.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

There are several methods for increasing water consumption. Bring a refillable water bottle with you. If you forgot and are in a bind, grab a disposable bottle of water from the gas station. Some like to hike with a water bladder and hydration pack. These take way more prep work than I think they are worth. I like my indestructible Nalgene, thrown in my daypack. Whatever works for you, do it.

YOUR FUEL

Beginner hikers do one of two things, bring every snack under the sun, or nothing at all. My first thought was to bring snacks for my young children, as great motivational tools. But really, they are fuel for adults too!

When you are out hiking, you can burn 100-350 calories a mile. After a mile in, is usually when I start to feel it the lag. That's because I've burned up all my breakfast reserves. Come to think of it, make sure you have a good breakfast before hitting the trail. A donut will not due. Protein and complex carbs are your friends in the morning.

When you are getting tired, grab something that is guaranteed to give you plenty of energy. You can go natural with nuts and fruits. Or you can go for pre-packaged bars. Cliff bars are the most popular amongst hikers, but my new favorite is the Bobo Bar. Wait for an overlook or other place to chill to fully appreciate the time.

BUG PROTECTION

Nothing ruins a hike more than bugs. They are the one thing most people complain about on the trail. It can take a nice peaceful adventure into something you are running though just to get to the

**“Look deep into nature
and you will understand
everything better.” -
Albert Einstein**

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

sanctuary of the car again.

Deet is the hiker's perfume. A little bit of it can keep off the worst of them. If you are opposed to deet, try permethrin soaking your clothing. The chemical is completely safe once dried but will paralyze any bug that lands on your clothing. Better yet, a dip last 6 weeks or six washes. I soak my clothing couple times during the season and couldn't be happier with the results.

Bug nets are sexy. No matter how ridiculous you think you look, you will be the envy of every other hiker without one. They offer a personal bubble of protection against winged insects. Often you can even see the bugs going for a ride looking for a way in.

Often the thing that bugs me most about the bugs is their buzzing sound. Even with ever other layer of protection, that sounds has me swatting and wanting to run. The solution is the buff. Take your buff and wear it like a headband, placing it over your ears. Guys, if you are opposed to the headband, consider earplugs. They block out enough sounds to make things fun again.

Hike the right time of year. This is my biggest pet peeve. Everyone in books and on Facebook complaining about how buggy it is. First off, don't hike near dusk or dawn. Mid-June, July and August are the worst times to hike with bugs. That doesn't mean shouldn't hike all together in the summer. Wait for a low humidity day, with a breeze and get out there.

MAPS

No matter how comfortable you are with the area, always bring a map. It doesn't have to be a paper map, or a guide book. Instead, download one to your phone. If you don't want to put an app on your phone, take

“Between every two pines there is a doorway to a new world.” - John Muir

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

a picture of it. There are a few great maps out there. First is AllTrails & HikingProject. These are crowdsourced trail apps. Each has a free version, allowing you to search and use any of their recommended trails. It utilizes Wi-Fi to track your location. For more remote locations, you'll need to upgrade the plan to use the phone's GPS to track your position.

If you want to use GPS, download the AVENZA maps. This is another free app, but it works offline. A lot of county parks and state parks offer a free download of their maps on the app. You can also purchase other maps for different kinds of activities.

If you are looking for new trails in the area, use AllTrails and HikingProject. They offer interactive maps allowing you to search hidden trails near your location.

Having a GPS Maps takes the guess work out of navigating tricky trails and their cross sections. It gives me the peace of mind that I'm not wondering off a mile out of the way. It also helps to show the kids, just how far away the car is.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

GET OVER YOURSELF

PART

7

BREAK FREE FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA TRAP

HIKE WITH CONFIDENCE

GO AT YOUR OWN SPEED

YOU CAN DO ANYTHING ONCE YOU DECIDE YOU WILL DO IT

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

BREAK FREE FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA TRAP

You will never be one of those Instagram models so quit trying to be. Want to know a secret, many of those people hike in regular gear, then got into something cute, did their makeup and took 100 pictures to get that fabulous shot.

Life's too short for that stuff. I would never carry extra gear just for a photoshoot. If you make it to the mountain, take a picture of yourself looking disheveled. You earned every ounce of that blood sweat and tears. Wear it as a badge of honor.

**“When everything feels
like an uphill struggle,
Just think of the view
from the top.” -
Anonymous**

HIKE WITH CONFIDENCE

You don't have to be in top physical condition. People got in that great shape by hiking. There is even communities of larger hikers on Facebook, supporting one another.

Others hikers do not own the trail. The wilderness is for everyone. You are just as entitled to be there as them.

Most of people's insecurities are all in their head. If you talk to most of the people, chances are they are pretty friendly, open and willing to share. Once you open up and have confidence in what you are doing, the adventure is so much more fun.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

GO AT YOUR OWN SPEED

In Facebook Groups I'm always hearing about how many miles people completed, or how many trails they did in a day. To do that many hikes does provide good aerobic workout, but they are missing out on the full experience.

Rushing through it, they've missed the overlooks. They've missed the stillness of a scenic vista. The rustling of leaves in the forest. They also risk injury, especially when they are tired

I always wonder, is it just about the records books? Or has our culture has turned everything into a competition. Everyone is seeking recognition for their massive accomplishments.

Next time you are out consider why you are there. It's about you and the place. Don't give in to the peer pressure of how much you can accomplish in a day, or how many miles you can do. This is your time. It is precious. When you are on that mountain, take pictures to remember your adventure, but know that the feeling of standing on the edge of a cliff will never develop as the feeling of you standing there.

**“If the winter is too cold
and the summer is too
hot, you are not a
hiker.” - Anonymous**

YOU CAN DO ANYTHING ONCE YOU DECIDE YOU WILL DO IT

If you have a goal in life, don't just dream about it. Make it happen. There are so many trails out there to complete. There are so many adventures to go on. If you put your mind to something you will find a way.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

I purchased a book on the Superior Hiking Trail as a dream. I wasn't sure I would ever muster the courage to hit the trail. After a couple years I packed my bag and did it. It was a wakeup call like nothing else. I borrowed gear I didn't have, sewed some of my own gear. But I did it. Sure, I'd do some things differently next time, but I'm already planning on going next year with my daughter.

If you want something badly enough, make it happen. You'll find out how to get the gear when you are low on funds. You'll carve out time on your calendar. Don't let anyone stand in your way.

“May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.” - Edward Abbey

SPREAD THE WORD

Does this resonate with you? If it does spread the word. Pass it along to a hiker that you think needs a little more encouragement. To someone that doesn't think we should rush through the next hike. Share a link on Facebook. Put in an email. Throw it up on your own webpage. And remember that this community of hikers would not be here without a group of fun-loving people like yourself.

Appendix: Acknowledgements and Resources

SHOUT OUTS

I want to give a quick shout out to my amazing family who have been so supportive in all of my craziness. To my husband who drives all over the state to do a Hiking Club Trail with me. He's up for anything and reminds me to slow down and enjoy it.

To my children who are willing to join me on the trail and climb to the top of the next hill just to see what's up there.

I also wanted to thank my parents who started me off on my love of adventures and getting lost in the wilderness. To my sister, thank you for taking me on my first backpacking adventure. It won't be our last.

To the city park staff that preserves the parks. To the Park Rangers that have maintained and help preserve all the parks for us to enjoy. To the volunteers that maintain the larger trails.

Lastly, I want to give a shout out to my readers. When I started writing about hiking, I had no idea if you'd make the switch over with me. And you did. For those that sent emails of encouragement, thank you. I truly cherish them.

ENJOYING THE HIKE AGAIN

RESOURCES

This is where most of you are waiting for the sales pitch. There isn't any. I truly believe that hiking shouldn't cost a lot of money. Most of the gear I use is budget friendly or borrowed. For those that want a few more ideas on place to go, look no further than the internet.

FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

You can get tons of great advice about local hikes in Minnesota and [Minnesota State Parks](#) over on my blog. If you aren't a MN reader but love reading about others adventures, join a local Facebook Group. The hiking community is always willing to share their favorite locations.

GUIDE BOOKS

Guide books are not all created equal. Start off with a trip to your library. Jot down your favorite trails. If you want to hang on to it, checkout Amazon. You can probably find it used. The Minnesota Hiking Community is partial to the 60 Hikes Within 60 Miles Series.

MAPS

AllTrails is a great online app to help you find different trails nearby. It's comprised of local people's inputs. If you have a trail in mind, Avenza is a great resource. They use the trail map, and your phones GPS to track your location. It doesn't use require WIFI.

GEAR

For boots or other big purchases that require assistance, I go to REI. For everything else, Sierra Store, Target and Amazon are my friends.