# THE ULTIMATE NATIONAL THREE PEAKS PREPARATION GUIDE



www.elevenfortyone.co.uk

Excellent

## Welcome to 1141 Adventures

At 1141 Adventures, our aim is simple: to create extraordinary adventures, expertly guided. Our trips are built around experienced leadership, careful preparation, strong planning and a genuine respect for the mountains and the communities around them. 1141 describes its adventures as being supported by expert leaders, mountain rescue professionals and trained medics, with every adventure built around disciplined planning and expedition experience.

For your National Three Peaks challenge, you will not simply be given a route and pointed towards the summit. Your challenge will be led by qualified Mountain Leaders who are there to manage the group, assess conditions, make decisions and help you move safely and efficiently through three demanding mountain environments.

Listen to your Mountain Leaders. This is perhaps the most important piece of advice in this entire guide. When you are tired, cold, wet or focused on the clock, your judgement can change. Your leaders are there to make decisions based on the conditions, the group and the mountain — not simply on the target time. If they ask you to add a layer, eat, drink, slow down, regroup, change the plan or stop, listen to them.

The National Three Peaks is an endurance challenge, but it is not a test of who can ignore discomfort for longest. Good mountain judgement is knowing when to push, when to conserve energy and when conditions mean that the plan needs to change.

This guide is designed to help you arrive prepared: physically, mentally and practically.  The better prepared you are, the more energy you can spend enjoying the experience.



## 01 — Understand the challenge

The National Three Peaks Challenge links Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafell Pike in England and Snowdon/Yr Wyddfa in Wales. The commonly used challenge format involves around 23 miles (37 km) of walking, approximately 3,064 metres of ascent and a substantial road journey between the mountains, all within a 24-hour window.

That means this is not three separate day walks. It is one continuous endurance experience. You climb, descend, travel, eat, change clothes, recover briefly and then start again. By the third mountain, fatigue, sleep disruption and accumulated descent will matter as much as your cardiovascular fitness. Your preparation should therefore focus on efficiency. You are not trying to carry a heavy expedition pack, nor are you trying to travel with the absolute minimum amount of equipment.

The objective is to move light while carrying everything essential.

## 02 — Your Mountain Leaders are there for a reason

Your 1141 Mountain Leaders are an integral part of the challenge. They bring professional mountain leadership, route knowledge and experience of changing conditions. They will be watching more than the summit: they will be assessing the weather, ground conditions, pace, group spacing, fatigue and the wellbeing of the team.

You should treat their advice as part of your equipment. A waterproof jacket in your pack is only useful if you put it on. A warm layer only helps if you use it before you become cold. And a good route plan only works if the group follows it.

Do not race your Mountain Leader, they are experienced in pacing. Do not disappear ahead because you feel strong, and do not push yourself simply because you are worried about the clock. Stay with the group and follow the instructions you are given.

A 24-hour target is an objective, not a reason to compromise safety. Mountain weather can change quickly, and the safest decision is sometimes to alter the plan. Your leaders are trained to make those calls.

## 03 — Move light, but never under-equipped

Every unnecessary gram becomes more noticeable after several hours on steep ground. A huge backpack will make the challenge harder than it needs to be. At the same time, stripping your pack down so far that you leave essential safety equipment behind is a mistake.

Think of your mountain pack as a carefully selected toolkit. Carry the equipment you may genuinely need on the hill, and use the support vehicle as your mobile base camp for the rest.

A comfortable 20–30 litre daypack is a sensible starting point. Keep heavier items close to your back, avoid loose equipment swinging around, and make the things you may need quickly easy to reach.

**Essential mountain equipment**

- Broken-in mountain walking boots with good grip
- Moisture-wicking base layer
- Warm mid-layer such as fleece or lightweight insulation
- Fully waterproof jacket
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Warm hat and gloves, plus spare gloves
- Buff or neck gaiter
- 20–30 litre daypack with waterproof liner or dry bags
- Water bottles or hydration bladder
- Food and snacks
- Headtorch and spare batteries or backup light
- Personal first-aid and blister kit
- Emergency foil blanket and whistle
- Sun cream and sunglasses
- Any personal medication you require

1141's own mountain guidance recommends a layering system (download available from www.elevenfortyone.co.uk), sturdy hiking boots, spare socks, a 20–30 litre pack, 1.5–2 litres of water as a typical starting point, headtorch provision, personal first aid and high-energy food.

Exact requirements will depend on the conditions and the instructions given for your particular challenge.


When you wish
upon a star

## 04 — Layering: put warmth on before you need it

Mountain weather can change dramatically during a single ascent. You can leave the valley feeling warm and comfortable and find cold wind, rain and cloud higher up.

The answer is a flexible layering system rather than one huge jacket.
Your base layer should move moisture away from your skin. A fleece or lightweight insulated layer provides warmth. Your waterproof shell protects you from wind and rain.

Waterproof trousers should be readily accessible rather than buried at the bottom of your pack. The 1141 stopping rule is simple: put your warm layer on before you get cold. When you stop walking, the heat your body was producing disappears quickly. If you are sweaty, wet or standing in wind, you can become cold surprisingly fast.

Do not wait until you are shivering. As soon as you stop for a meaningful break or reach a summit, get your warm layer on. If conditions require it, add the waterproof shell over the top. Your leaders may prompt you to do this — listen to them.

## 05 — The vehicle is your mobile base camp

The vehicle should contain the equipment you do not need to carry over the mountain. Organise it before the challenge so that every changeover is quick and simple. Prepare a separate bag for each mountain if possible. Pack fresh socks, a fresh base layer, food and any additional clothing you want for each leg. This prevents a tired group from emptying the entire vehicle at 2 a.m. looking for a pair of dry socks. Most importantly, have fresh clothes for travelling. Mountain clothes are for the mountain. Once you finish a hill, changing out of sweaty or wet layers and putting on clean, dry clothes can make a huge psychological difference before the next leg.

## 06 — Socks, feet and blisters

Your feet are your engine for the entire challenge. Look after them early rather than waiting for a problem to become painful. Change your socks after every mountain. Take your boots and socks off at the vehicle, dry your feet, inspect for hot spots and blisters, and put on a fresh pair. If your socks are wet, don't simply put another pair over damp feet. Bring enough socks for every mountain plus at least one emergency pair. Use socks you have already tested on long walks. Do not experiment with new footwear, socks or blister products on challenge day.

If you feel a hot spot developing, tell your Mountain Leader or support team early. A few minutes spent dealing with a problem can save hours of pain later.

## 07 — Food: fuel the whole 24 hours

You are going to use a huge amount of energy. The best strategy is usually to eat little and often rather than waiting until you are starving and then trying to consume a huge meal. Think of nutrition as a continuous process. Small snacks during the mountain keep energy coming in; a more substantial meal during the driving sections helps you recover and prepare for the next ascent. Good options to test in training

- Bananas and other easy-to-eat fruit
- Flapjacks and oat bars
- Energy bars or chews
- Jelly sweets
- Trail mix and nuts
- Peanut butter or other familiar sandwiches
- Wraps and savoury snacks
- Chocolate in moderation
- Electrolyte drinks if you know they suit you

The key word is familiar. Train with the foods you intend to use. If you have never used energy gels, do not make challenge day the first time you discover how your stomach reacts to them. Between mountains, aim for a proper recovery meal containing carbohydrates, some protein and fluids. Pasta, rice, potatoes, wraps, sandwiches, soup, yoghurt and fruit can all work. Avoid eating so heavily that you feel sluggish when it is time to walk again.

**Mountain:** Ben Nevis
**Gaelic name:** Beinn Nibheis
**Height:** 1,345 m / 4,413 ft

**Challenge time:** 6 hours total
**Halfway point:** Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe
**Halfway cut-off:** 1 hour 30 minutes

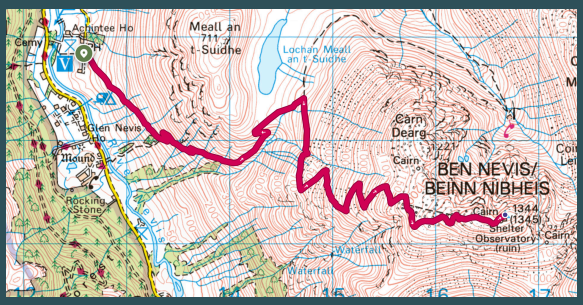



**The North Face:** The North Face of Ben Nevis is much steeper and more challenging than the main tourist path. It is used by climbers and regularly requires technical rope rescues, especially in difficult winter conditions.

**Visitors:** Around 150,000 people visit Ben Nevis each year.

**Mountain rescue teams:** The Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team is based at the foot of Ben Nevis. It is made up of unpaid volunteers and responds to more than 150 call-outs each year




Expect a first demanding climb with steep, rocky terrain, unpredictable Scottish weather, strong winds, and colder conditions at the summit. The long ascent and descent can be physically exhausting, especially when combined with the time pressure of the Three Peaks Challenge. However, you'll be rewarded with dramatic mountain scenery and incredible views when conditions are clear.

## 08 — A simple 24-hour nutrition rhythm

• Before Ben Nevis: eat a familiar carbohydrate-focused breakfast and hydrate.
• On Ben Nevis: snack regularly rather than waiting for hunger.
• Between Ben Nevis and Scafell Pike: eat a substantial but easily digested meal, drink and change socks/clothes.
• On Scafell Pike: continue small, regular snacks and fluids.
• Between Scafell Pike and Snowdon/Yr Wyddfa: recover, eat, stretch gently and reset mentally.
• On the final mountain: keep fuelling even when the finish feels close. You still need energy to reach it.

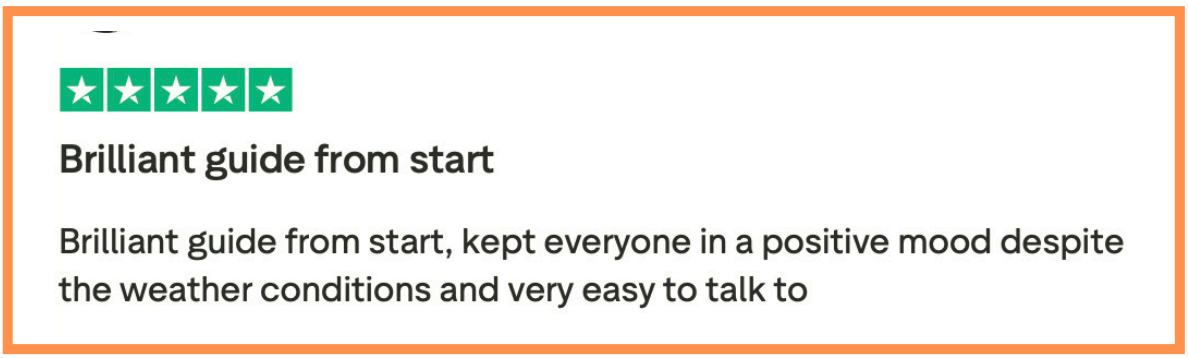
Hydration requirements vary with temperature, sweat rate, body size and individual needs. Drink regularly and follow the advice of your Mountain Leaders. In hot conditions or for heavy sweaters, electrolytes can be useful if they have been tested in training.

## 09 — Pace the challenge, don't race the first mountain

The first mountain can create a false sense of confidence. You have fresh legs, adrenaline and a big goal ahead. It is tempting to move too quickly

The challenge is not won on Ben Nevis. Your aim is to arrive at Scafell Pike and Snowdon/Yr Wyddfa with enough energy to keep moving efficiently. A sustainable pace is usually more valuable than a fast early ascent followed by a major energy crash.

Stay with the group and follow the pace set by your Mountain Leaders. They will be thinking about the entire challenge rather than just the next few hundred metres.





## 10 — Stretching, mobility and recovery

Stretching should not be something you only remember when your legs hurt. Build movement into the challenge. Before each mountain, use gentle dynamic movements such as ankle circles, calf raises, leg swings, walking lunges and hip mobility. The goal is to prepare the body to move, not to perform an intense stretching session.

After each mountain, spend five to ten minutes moving gently through the exercises below. During the driving sections, get out when appropriate, walk around and loosen the ankles, calves and hips.

The vehicle journey can leave you stiff. Do not expect to sit still for hours and then immediately perform your best mountain movement. Use the changeover to reset your body as well as your kit.



## 11 — Mountain etiquette

The National Three Peaks takes place in landscapes that are used every day by local residents, farmers, outdoor professionals and other visitors. You are a guest in these places.

- Give way and communicate on narrow paths.
- Move off the path safely if your group needs to stop.
- Keep noise down, particularly at night and near communities.
- Take every piece of rubbish home.
- Use toilets where available and behave responsibly where facilities are limited.
- Do not block gates, roads, tracks or access points.
- Respect livestock, wildlife, landowners and local residents.
- Follow the instructions of your Mountain Leaders and any local mountain guidance.
- Leave no trace of your visit.

1141 places real importance on mountain etiquette and responsible adventure. The challenge is not just about reaching the summits; it is about doing so in a way that protects the landscapes and relationships that make these adventures possible.

## 12 — Safety comes before the summit

The fact that thousands of people complete the Three Peaks does not make the mountains predictable. Wind, rain, poor visibility, cold, darkness and fatigue can change the character of a route very quickly.

Your Mountain Leaders are there to monitor those factors. If they change the route, slow the group, add a layer, alter the timing or decide that an objective is no longer appropriate, support that decision.

There is no prize for ignoring good mountain judgement. The 24-hour target is an ambition. It is never more important than the safety of the group. Keep your headtorch, waterproofs, warm layer and essential safety equipment accessible. Never bury critical kit at the bottom of your pack.

### 13 — The Mental Game

At some point during the 24 hours, almost everyone will have a moment when the challenge feels much harder than it did at the start. That is normal. Fatigue changes your perception, and the third mountain can feel a long way away. Break the challenge into small objectives.

Think about the next checkpoint, the next change in terrain or the next point where the group will regroup. Do not spend hours mentally carrying the entire remaining challenge.

Your team matters enormously. Check on one another. Eat together. Encourage each other. Tell someone if you are struggling. The person who is strongest at one point may be the person who needs encouragement a few hours later.

### 14 — Driver fatigue is part of the safety plan

The National Three Peaks is also a significant road journey. Driving between mountains requires the same level of planning as the walking itself.

Drivers must be appropriately rested and the driving plan must be realistic. A tired driver is a serious safety risk. The clock should never be prioritised over safe travel.

Use the driving sections to eat, drink, change clothes and recover — but never compromise road safety to save a few minutes.



**Ben Nevis Hike**

Recently hiked Ben Nevis with 1141 and was very happy with the guides. The weather was rough and I might have turned back when I came to the snow near the top with very poor visibility but felt confident to go ahead with such an experienced and confident guide as Rhys. He was friendly, professional and interesting to chat to. Would definitely recommend going with 1141.



## FINAL WORD

The National Three Peaks is hard. That's exactly why preparation matters.
The right preparation removes avoidable problems.
The right kit keeps you comfortable. Good nutrition keeps the engine running. Fresh socks protect your feet. Warm layers protect your temperature.

Stretching keeps your body moving. Good pacing saves energy whilst qualified Mountain Leaders provide the experience and judgment that help turn a demanding day into a safe, well-managed adventure.

When the challenge gets tough, remember that you are part of a team. Listen to your leaders.

Prepare properly.
Move with purpose.
Respect the mountains.
Look after your people.
Enjoy every step.

**1 1 4 1 A D V E N T U R E S**
Extraordinary Adventures, Expertly Guided.



**Mountain:** Scaffel Pike
**Height:** 978 m / 3,209 ft

**Challenge time:** 5 hours total
**Halfway point:** Mickledore
**Halfway cut-off:** 2 hour 30 minutes



**War memorial:** Scafell Pike was gifted to the National Trust in 1919 as a memorial to the men of the Lake District who died in the First World War.

TAKE LITTER HOME

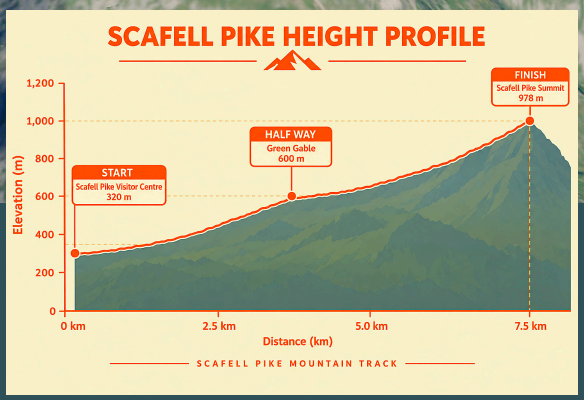
Lingmell
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WASDALE HEAD

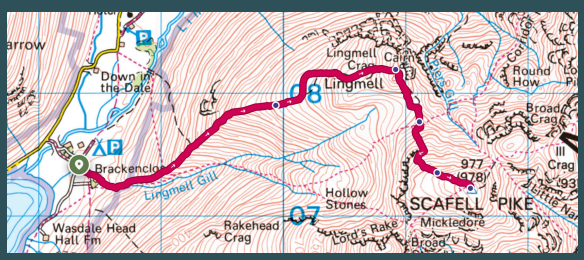
Scafell Pike
978 m

**Visitors:** Around 250,000 people visit Scafell Pike each year.

**Mountain rescue teams:** Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team helps people in emergencies on Scafell Pike. It is made up of unpaid volunteers and responds to over 100 call-outs each year, rescuing injured or lost walkers.




Scafell Pike is the second physically demanding climb, with steep, rocky and uneven terrain that puts significant strain on the legs and requires sustained effort throughout the ascent and descent. The challenge is made tougher by unpredictable weather, strong winds and colder conditions at the summit. Combined with the time pressure of the Three Peaks Challenge, the climb is a true test of stamina, strength and endurance, particularly after tackling the earlier peaks.



# GOLDEN RULES

Move light. Carry what you need, not what you don't.

Carry the essentials. Lightweight does not mean under-equipped.

Listen to your Mountain Leaders. They are there to manage the mountain, not just the clock.

Layer early. Put warm clothing on before you become cold.

Eat little and often. Fuel the whole 24 hours.

Drink regularly. Don't wait until you are dehydrated.

Change your socks. Fresh socks after every mountain.

Change your clothes. Clean, dry travel clothes can transform the next leg.

Stretch and move. Use the changeovers and driving sections wisely.

Pace yourself. You have three mountains, not one.

Respect the mountain. Conditions come first.

Respect other people. You share these landscapes.

Look after your team. Speak up and support each other.

Enjoy it. Look around. Take in the experience. You only get one first Three Peaks

## 15 — Final Checklist

Boots fully broken in and tested on long walks

Walking socks tested; fresh pair for every mountain plus emergency spare

Waterproof jacket and trousers checked

Warm layers packed and accessible

Gloves and spare gloves packed

Headtorch tested; spare batteries/backup available

Phone charged; offline mapping available; power bank packed

Map and compass packed

Food divided into manageable portions

Water/electrolytes prepared

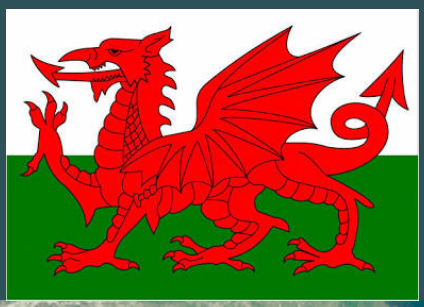
Blister kit and personal medication packed

Fresh base layers and travel clothes packed

Vehicle bags organised by mountain

Weather and route information reviewed

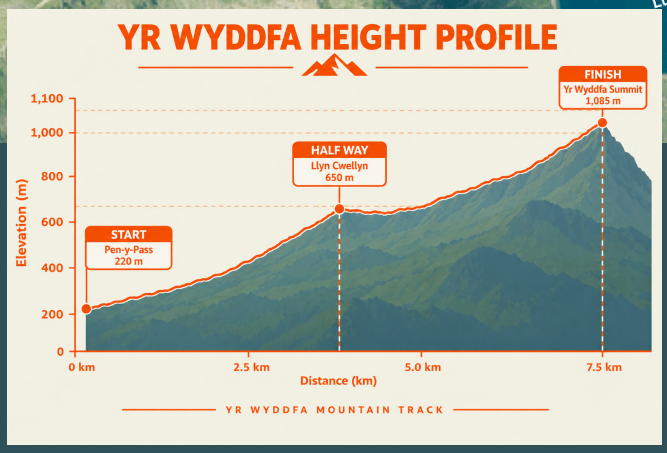
**Mountain:** Yr Wyddfa / Snowdon
**Translates :** the tomb/burial place.
**Height:** 978 m / 3,209 ft



**Interesting fact:** Snowdon has a mountain railway called the Snowdon Mountain Railway, which takes visitors almost to the summit!.

**Visitors:** Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) is one of the busiest mountains in the UK, attracting around 500,000 visitors each year.

**Mountain rescue teams:** : Four teams cover Snowdonia: Llanberis, Ogwen Valley, South Snowdonia and RAF Mountain Rescue. They rescue injured or lost walkers.







Snowdon is the last and physically demanding climb, with steep, rocky and uneven terrain that requires sustained effort throughout the ascent and descent.

The challenge is made tougher by unpredictable weather, strong winds and colder conditions at higher elevations. As the final peak of the Three Peaks Challenge, fatigue from the previous climbs adds significantly to the physical demands, making Snowdon a true test of stamina, strength and endurance.



## Take on the Three Peaks Challenge

Have you ever dreamed of taking on the Three Peaks Challenge?

We have helped hundreds of people achieve their goal of completing the challenge, while supporting thousands more through the fundraising efforts of our participants.

Whether you are looking to take on the Three Peaks as an individual, with friends, or as part of a team, we can provide the support and guidance you need to prepare with confidence.

Our bespoke training plans are designed around your individual needs, experience and goals, helping you build the fitness, strength and endurance required for the challenge.

If you are ready to take on your own Three Peaks Challenge, get in touch with us today to find out how we can help you make it a success.

*Rhys and the team*

info@1141adventures.com


BEN NEVIS
VISITOR CENTRE