

Guide to interpret trail difficulty grades.

Easy

Experience is not necessary at this level. Anyone who is fit enough to enjoy a few kilometer walk can manage an easy trail. These hikes are short in duration and there aren't many steep climbs. Please keep in mind that walking always involves some exertion. Even the easy trails are not flat, and you must still expect to have a reasonable amount of ascent and descent. Normally an easy trail can be covered in 1 to 3 hours.

Moderate

you need to be in good health and reasonably fit to tackle a moderate grade trail. You should be some one taking regular exercise. Moderate trails are either easy long walks or harder short walks. While conditions underfoot will be generally fair, some trails of this difficulty may have sections of rough climbs. Normally it takes around 4-6 hours to complete a moderate trail.

Strenuous

fitness is the most important factor to tackle a trail of this level. These tracks are generally at significantly higher altitudes and steep ascents and descents are very frequent. Cold climate and remoteness will add to the difficulty. Previous trekking experience is recommended but if you are confident of your physical condition you may attempt trails of this level of difficulty without prior experience. Be prepared to spend around 6 to 8 hours or even longer in certain cases, to complete a trail of this level

Tough

At this level previous experience of trekking is a must. You should have the ability to trek for many hours without a break. Difficult underfoot terrain such as rough paths on steep mountainsides is quite regular in this type of trails. Extremes of weather may also be encountered. Stamina is absolutely required. Most of these trails take more than 10 hours to complete. Some of the trails will require over-night camping.

Be a responsible trekker

Please remember that a nature trail belongs to the ecosystem around it. You are a complete stranger! Protection of the environment around you is much more important than your pleasure or comfort. Please read the following tips carefully and become a responsible trekker by making sure that you do no damage to the environment during your hikes.

- Please do not talk loudly while on a nature trail. Nature is peaceful and quiet. Do not disturb the rhythm of Mother Nature.
- Don't take even a leaf home as a souvenir. Everything around you belongs to the environment around you.

- Don't leave anything non-biodegradable behind. Plastic, polythene, paper, wrappers etc do not belong to nature. They are absolutely harmful stuff made by people. Take all of that back to where people live!
- Remember again "Take only pictures, leave only foot prints"!
- Do not carry any tool bigger than a Swiss army knife. Axes and large knives can do serious damage to delicate eco-systems.
- Always carry a reliable torch. Preferably a head lamp. It becomes dark for approximately 12 hours, every 12 hours!
- Please keep together with others of a similar pace. Getting lost in a forest is not a pleasant experience!
- Always carry a basic compass (like Silva 123). Even without a map, it will help you walk in one direction without circling. Sri Lanka is a small country, so are our forests. If you avoid circling you will reach a civilization within 48 hours even if you are lost in the most remote wilderness.
- Do not make cuts on tree trunks or break branches to mark paths. Carry a small tin of yellow paint and make a small mark on a rock or a trunk if absolutely required to do so.
- Take first aid. paracetamol, plasters, surgical spirits and some bandage should always be carried with you.