

The Leave No Trace Recommendations for Getting Outside During Covid-19

The coronavirus pandemic has altered all of our lives. It is important to be aware of the most current information from the CDC on these changes, and that goes for changes to the way we spend time outside as well. To keep ourselves, our communities, and our outdoor spaces safe and healthy during this time, please consider these recommendations.

1 You and Your Outdoor World

You may be asking: *Can I go for a hike or walk on the beach right now?* Your personal vulnerability, the health of others in your community, access to local and uncrowded spaces and more play into this decision. Then there are communities and states with either lockdown, shelter in place or stay at home mandates. Where Covid-19 is spiking, it may not be possible to get out at all, so pay close attention to guidance in your community before heading outside. Then follow physical distancing guidance, meaning staying at least six-feet away from anyone not living with you.

2 Expect Closures

As businesses limit services or direct their staff to work remotely, closures should be expected. The result could be a lack of water, restrooms, campgrounds, or other facilities—or even entire areas closed to the public. Many experts are recommending that you refrain from using public restrooms and other open facilities at all right now. Take necessary precautions like bringing extra food and water, learning how to go to the bathroom outdoors, and being ready to pack all your trash out with you.

3 Pack Out Your Trash

With limited staff and services likely in many parks and protected areas, trash and recycling receptacles may not be emptied as often as normal or at all. This can result in trash overflowing from receptacles which becomes litter and can harm wildlife. Instead, pack your trash and recyclables out with you all the way home and utilize your own receptacles.

4 Avoid Times and Places of High Use

Absolutely avoid crowded parks, trails, and beaches. Physical distancing applies in the outdoors just as it does anywhere else. To avoid being part of the creation of large crowds and groups at popular outdoor areas, spread out to less popular spots, and avoid times of highest use if possible. Remember these Tips For Handling Crowds in Outdoor Spaces.

5 Proceed With Caution

Keep in mind that as our healthcare system becomes more overwhelmed, it's important to reduce potential accidents that would add to the stress on first responders and medical professionals. As much as possible, stick to activities and areas that are within your regular routine and take it easy.

6 Don't Forget the Leave No Trace 7 Principles

Just because times are tough, doesn't mean the Leave No Trace **7 Principles** fly out the window. Our outdoor spaces will likely be receiving less attention from staff and volunteers right now. This means our shared spaces need us to act as stewards more than ever. Remember, it is still just as important to prepare for spring weather conditions, stick to trails, dispose of our waste properly, minimize fire impacts, leave what we find, keep a safe distance from wildlife, and generally do your best to eliminate impacts.

7 Be Considerate and Kind to Other Visitors

We are all in this together. Be considerate of others in the outdoors by ensuring that you practice physical distancing. Be particularly kind to park staff during these challenging times. Help them do their job by doing your part to take care of each other and our beloved outdoors.

We will see you
out there on
the other side
of this crisis!

