

Appalachian Mountain Club Activity Rating System

Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) activities are rated using a scale of six levels described below. Consult the participant information or trip posting for details including the intended group pace and equipment requirements. Refer to the tables that follow the general descriptions for the miles, speed, and, when applicable, elevation gain. Note that any individual activity may be rated higher by the leader than the tables indicate for several reasons, such as a short distance but very difficult conditions (terrain, steepness, or exposure) or a much longer distance over easier terrain. Activities may also be rated lower at the leader's discretion if instruction in the activity discipline is among the objectives of the program. Some direct experience in the trip activity is required for vigorous and strenuous levels, especially if there are technical skills needed for the activity. This experience threshold may be met at the leader's discretion for hiking and backpacking programs if the participant is able to provide examples of recent similar experience and adequate fitness to participate in a group activity.

1. **Accessible:** Suitable for stroller, wheelchair, or other wheel assisted travel. Paved, hardened gravel, or ADA listed terrain or approach. The distance travelled and anticipated timing of the activity are detailed in the activity description. This rating is employed across activities and is not broken out in each of the tables below. Please direct any inquiries for reasonable accommodation to the trip leader in advance of the trip.
2. **Relaxed:** Suitable for most active participants with full mobility and participants new to the activity described. Expect to be actively on the move for about 3 hours/day. You may be on the trail, slopes or water for a longer time, but there will be plenty of rest breaks.
3. **Easy:** Reasonable fitness for the expected activity is needed, but the trip is designed for those new to the activity. Expect to be active up to 4 hours/day. A bit more active time than the relaxed rating, but with generous breaks.
4. **Moderate:** Fitness level and/or past experience to sustain the activity at a moderate pace is required. Expect to be active up to 4-6 hours per day. Reasonable breaks in the action.
5. **Vigorous:** Suitable for those with recent similar experience and/or demonstrated proficiency, such as being active in sports or often (regular) engagement in vigorous physical activity. Ability to perform at the expected level for back-to-back days for multiday trips. Expect to be active up to 5-6 hours per day, with brief breaks.
6. **Strenuous:** Most physically demanding. Fitness for the specific activity is required with direct experience in the activity highly recommended and potentially mandatory (see the activity description). Expect to be active 6+ hours per day for back-to-back days if it is a multiday trip. Breaks will be shorter/fewer than for other levels of trips.

Tables for specific types of activities, to go with general ratings

Hiking/Backpacking/Trekking

Activity Level	Moving Time up to __ hours	Distance up to __ miles	Daily Elevation Gain or Loss up to __ feet
Relaxed	3+	4	500
Easy	4	6	1000
Moderate	6	8	2000
Vigorous	6	12	3000
Strenuous	6+	15	3500+

Notes:

1. Trips involving hiking at high elevations, such as above 7000', may be rated more difficult than mileage and elevation gain alone would dictate.
2. Likewise, backpacking and trekking trips that involve carrying a heavy pack may be rated up a level.

Trail Work

Travel to/from the work site rated as per hiking activity levels. Specific trail work activity along with difficulty will be detailed in the trip description.

Biking

Activity Level	Moving Time up to __ hours	Distance up to __ miles	Average Moving Speed __ miles per hour	Elevation up to __ feet	Rise __ feet per mile
Relaxed	3	25	8.3	1000	40
Easy	4	35	8.8	2000	57
Moderate	4	45	11.3	3000	67
Vigorous	5	60	12.0	4500	75
Strenuous	6	80	13.3	7000	88

Cross Country Skiing (Classic or Skate)

Groomed touring center maps are in kilometers so metric units are used.

Activity Level	Moving Time up to __ hours	Distance up to __ kilometers	Moving Speed average __ kilometers per hour	Elevation Gain up to __ meters	Rise __ meters per kilometer
Relaxed	3	8	2.7	100	13
Easy	4	12.5	3.1	200	16
Moderate	4	16	4.0	300	19
Vigorous	5	28	5.6	650	23
Strenuous	6	40	6.7	1000	25

Backcountry Skiing

Activity Level	Moving Time up to __ hours	Distance up to __ miles	Average Moving Speed __ miles per hour	Elevation up to __ feet of gain	Rise __ feet per mile
Relaxed	3	3	1	300	100
Easy	4	5	1.25	500	100
Moderate	4	8	2	1000	125
Vigorous	5	12	2.4	2000	167
Strenuous	6	15	2.5	3500	233

Paddling

Activity Level	Moving Time up to ___ hours	Distance up to ___ miles	Comments
Relaxed	3+	3	Flatwater, day trip, no portages
Easy	5	5	Flatwater, day trip, no portages
Moderate	6	6	Class 1 river; no portages, overnight
Vigorous	7	8	Class 1-2, river; 1-2 portages/day; overnight
Strenuous	7+	8+	Class 3 and higher rivers or class 1-2, river; portage class 3 rapids; longer and/or more difficult portages; overnight

Sea Kayaking

All levels require ability to wet exit and re-entry, either solo or assisted.

Activity Level	Moving Time up to ___ hours	Distance up to ___ miles	Comments
Relaxed	3 hrs.	5	Protected water with little wind and current, within ½ mile of shore.
Easy	3-4 hrs.	6-7	Less sheltered rivers or harbors, open water in flatwater conditions, waves < 1ft., 5-10 knot winds, following seas, boat wakes.
Moderate	4-5 hrs.	8-12	Open water, up to 2 ft. seas, 2-3 knot currents, 10-15 knot winds, open water crossings up to 2 miles.
Vigorous	5 hrs.	10-15	Open water, up to ocean swells and chop, 20 knot winds, crossings with significant exposure to winds, waves, current and boat traffic.
Strenuous	7 hrs.	15-20	Open water in remote locations in foul weather, winds up to 25 knots, 3 ft. surf, open crossings of 5-10 miles.

Climbing & Mountaineering

Activity Level	Moving Time Up to, Hours (Car to Car)	Distance up to, miles (Approach)	Comments
Relaxed	2-4 hours (Grade 1) 1 pitch	< 20 minutes < .5 mile as and 250' elevation gain	Top rope activity Figure 8/Skills
Easy	4-6 (Grade 1) 1 pitch	30 minutes .5 miles and 250-500	Top Rope/lead belay/sport climbing
Moderate	6-8 (Grade 1-2) 1-2 pitches	45 minutes .75 miles and 500'-750' elevation gain	Lead belay/anchor cleaning/ trad/sport Single Pitch
Vigorous	8-10 (Grade 2) 2-4 pitches	Up to 60 minutes 1 mile 750-1000 elevation gain	Multi-pitch Trad skills
Strenuous	10-12 (Grade 3) 3-9 pitches	> 60 minutes Over 1 mile AND over 1000' Elevation gain	Multipitch Trad skills

Youth (14 & Under) & Family Hiking

Activity Level	Moving Time up to __ hours	Distance up to __ miles	Daily Elevation gain/loss up to __ feet
Relaxed	2	2	250
Easy	3	3	500
Moderate	4	5	1000
Vigorous	6	8	2000
Strenuous	6+	10+	2000+

Notes:

1. Hikes over rough terrain and/or poorly marked trails may be rated up a level.
2. Trips where participants are carrying full packs for overnight backpacking programs may be rated more difficult than a day hike of the same distance.