

Mountains in winter: a checklist before you set off

Tick items off as you pack and fill in "Before you go". Winter days are short, so your turnaround time matters more than the summit.

What to pack

CLOTHING

- ☐ Merino wool or synthetic base layers, not cotton
- ☐ Fleece or wool top, easy to unzip
- ☐ Jacket and trousers against wind and moisture
- ☐ Warm jacket for stops, down or synthetic
- ☐ Hat, neck warmer or balaclava
- ☐ Two pairs of gloves and spares
- ☐ Wool socks and a spare pair
- ☐ Sunglasses with a UV filter, on cloudy days too

ON YOUR FEET

- ☐ High boots, dried after the last trip
- ☐ Gaiters
- ☐ Microspikes, on steep ice they are no substitute for crampons and an ice axe
- ☐ Trekking poles

IN YOUR RUCKSACK

- ☐ Flask of hot tea or coffee
- ☐ Food, and sweets in your jacket pocket
- ☐ Head torch and spare batteries
- ☐ Charged phone and power bank
- ☐ Paper map and compass, plus offline maps on your phone
- ☐ First aid kit and foil blanket
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Matches and lighter

CHECK THE EVENING BEFORE AND IN THE MORNING

- ☐ Avalanche bulletin: lawiny.gopr.pl, in the Tatras lawiny.topr.pl
- ☐ Trail closures on the park or forestry website
- ☐ Forecast for the mountains, not for the town
- ☐ 985 and 601 100 300 saved, Ratunek installed

Before you go leave one copy at home

Route: _____

Setting off at: _____ Planned return: _____

Sunset: _____ I turn back by: _____

Turnaround time is sunset minus the time you need to get down (longer in winter than on the signpost) minus a margin for stops. Stick to it, even if the summit is only a short way off.

Who knows my route (name, phone): _____

Emergency numbers in Poland

985 or **601 100 300** GOPR and TOPR mountain rescue, in the mountains only

112 emergency number, call it also when the signal is weak

Ratunek app, connects you to rescuers and sends them your location

No signal whistle or torch 6 times a minute, then a minute's pause

Hypothermia and frostbite how to recognise them and what to do first

Hypothermia: shivering, pale and cold skin, blue lips, slurred speech, stumbling, drowsiness, apathy. Don't put it down to ordinary tiredness.

- Call for help.
- Get them out of the wind, ideally somewhere warm.
- Take off wet clothes, wrap them in dry things, a sleeping bag or a foil blanket, cover their head.
- If conscious, give a warm, sweet drink. Talk to them, don't leave them alone.

Don't rub them, no hot bath, no alcohol.

Frostbite: most often fingers and toes, nose and ears. The skin is cold, pale or red, goes numb and prickles, then hardens, turns white or blue-grey and loses feeling. At stops, glance at each other's faces.

- Get somewhere warm, or at least out of the wind.
- Take off wet gloves, socks, a ring.
- Warm it with body heat, put cold hands in your armpits.
- Hard skin, blisters, no feeling: call for help.

Don't rub it (not even with snow), no fire, no hot-water bottle.