

Guide for New Hikers

An Introduction to the Swannanoa Valley Museum's Hikes (adapted from Carolina Mountain Club's guidelines)

Hiking is an easy and enjoyable way to get exercise. However, if you do not exercise regularly or have a health-related condition it is important that you consult with a doctor before starting on a new exercise program.

The Swannanoa Valley Museum has several hikes a month that vary in difficulty as well as one or two "daycations" each month that can generally accommodate people of all abilities. Please visit our Events Calendar (can you link this to the Calendar?) to find out what events are scheduled this month.

Each hike and daycation is rated for difficulty from "Easy" to "Strenuous." Click here (please link to Hike Difficult Scale) to read more specifically about our rating scale. Each event is rated with Easy, Moderate, Difficult, or Strenuous on our Event Calendar. It is important for you to know what you are capable of before you select and attend a hike. This is easy if you have some experience going on our hikes. It may not be clear for people that are new to hiking, particularly hiking in North Carolina's mountains. For new hikers or people who are not sure of their capabilities we suggest beginning with an Easy or Moderate hike and using that experience to assess how they feel on and after the hike. New hikers can gradually increase the difficulty in length and altitude change on subsequent hikes. Most people that have been doing other exercise programs, like long walks in the hills, running, biking, and other sports can start with a Moderate hike without much difficulty.

Non-members are welcome on Swannanoa Valley Museum hikes; after doing a few hikes with us we recommend joining the Museum as you will not only support the museum on an annual basis, but you will receive significant discounts on all of your future hikes and daycations. To view membership information please click here. (Please link to Membership page.)

Everyone who participates in a Museum hike is completely responsible for themselves—their health and safety. In particular this means being healthy and fit enough, before the hike, to go on the particular hike without damaging themselves or slowing down others significantly. Each person should carry all the medications that they might need during a hike. For example, someone that is allergic to bee stings must carry whatever medications might be necessary in case of multiple bee stings.

A few new hikers may have difficulty with even our easiest hikes. We ask new hikers to call the hike leader beforehand so that the leader can be confident that the hike will be comfortable for the hiker. We want to make sure that every new hiker has a good experience from the beginning. Please call the Museum at 828-669-9566 to talk to our director if you are unsure about your ability to do any of the hikes.