

Hello Mud – Safety tips for spring hiking

Here are some safety tips to consider when hiking in the spring:

- Trails that initially appear dry can become slippery with mud without warning.
- Streams will be swollen with runoff.
- Patches of ice can persist despite above-freezing temperatures.
- Rocks may be unstable and loose from cycles of freezing and thawing.
- Wooden surfaces, such as bridges and boardwalks, will be particularly slick—use caution
- Avoid shiny mud, which has a high-water content, making it the deepest and stickiest.

Remember to bring the right gear:

- Sturdy hiking boots with decent traction; make sure to tie your laces properly so your boots don't get sucked off in deep mud.
- Waterproof jacket or poncho in case of rain; hypothermia is still possible in the spring.
- A first-aid kit with bandages and antibiotic ointment, as well as rescue prescription medications.
- Fluids and snacks.
- Cell phone.
- Consider using hiking poles; not only will using poles save you energy, but they can help you jump across muddy terrain while keeping your balance.
- It's a good idea to throw some plastic bags in your car for muddy wet boots so your car will stay cleaner.

By Karen Pressman