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Hiker Challenge for Guides, Scouts & Youth Groups



Follow these steps to earn the Youth Distance Badge (or patch) for Guiding, Scouting and other youth groups:

1. Go on several hikes, walks or snowshoe outings (with your unit, family or others) and tally the following kilometres within one year:

- Ages 5 to 8: 15 km
- Ages 9 to 12: 30 km
- Ages 13 to 16: 45 km

Tally your kilometres by going on more than one hike. We recommend you hike several hikes and accumulate them over time within a year. If you reach the required km for your age group early, you can always hike more! Find a list of links to trail maps and directions at www.hikenovascotia.ca/find-trail/.

2. In addition to hiking the distance above, you must complete at least two of the following activities in a manner appropriate to your unit level:

- Make a nature journal out of recycled materials and use it on at least one of your hikes, sketching five plants or animals you see.
- Share observations of wildlife with [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org/). Download the free app or go to [iNaturalist.ca](https://www.inaturalist.org/) to post 20 observations (photos or sound recordings) of wildlife. NOTE: Youth under the age of 13 must work with a parent or a leader as the age requirement to join iNaturalist is 13. Observations must be recorded during the hike but may be uploaded later when in an area with free wifi.
- Learn about the seven [Leave No Trace](https://www.nps.gov/leave-no-trace/) Principles for reducing your impact on the outdoors and share the results with your unit.
- Research and create a checklist of things - [the essentials](#) - you should bring on a hike to be safe and comfortable.
- Research and create a [trip plan](#), such as where you'll go, information about the trail, when you'll go and return, etc.
- Explore content in [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org/) and make a list of plants and animals that you might observe during your hike.
- Discuss how to be [safe while hiking](#) and then make up and perform skits about what you discuss.
- Take part in a [Hug-A-Tree and Survive](#) program or ask a local wilderness survival expert to demonstrate wilderness survival skills. For older youth: [Take a course](#) offered by Hike NS.
- As a group, offer to help a local trail building organization in building, maintaining or doing a litter clean-up on a local trail. Find trail groups throughout Nova Scotia listed at www.nstrails.com.
- Go on one of Hike NS's [Fall or Winter Guided Walks](#) across the province annually.
- Research the [International Appalachian Trail in Nova Scotia](#) and share the results with your unit.

3. Order your badges [online here](#).

Learn more in the Q & A section on the following page.



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Q & A



Q: What activities count toward tallying my kilometres?

A: Hiking, walking and snowshoeing all count when tallying kilometres.

Q: Where do activities count? Can I walk in my subdivision, or does it have to be on an actual trail?

A: You may hike on a local trail, walk on nearby streets, a boardwalk, etc. The setting of your hiking, walking and snowshoeing doesn't matter, as long as it's outdoors.

Q: If I use a pedometer, can I use my total number of steps to receive a badge?

A: Only kilometres may be submitted when you are ready to redeem your distances and activities for a badge. However, you can easily multiply your total number of steps by the average length of your stride in metres (and then divide that by 1,000) to calculate your total number of kilometres.

Q: How can I keep track of my distances hiked?

A: Go to www.hikenovascotia.ca/projects-hiker-challenge/ to download and print a logbook (tip: place your logbook in a plastic zip & lock bag to protect it from the elements). Or try one of many mobile device apps that can assist you with keeping track of the distances you hike (www.hikenovascotia.ca/resources-theres-an-app-for-that/).

Q: Where can I borrow snowshoes?

A: Check out Hike Nova Scotia's online Where to Borrow, Rent or Buy snowshoes guide at www.hikenovascotia.ca/resources-snowshoeing/.