

Wilderness Medicine and Rescue Semester Equipment List

Welcome to NOLS!

Learning to choose the right equipment for your adventure is an essential part of the NOLS curriculum. We fundamentally believe you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the outdoors. We recognize the process of getting ready for a course can be an intimidating experience, especially if you have never done anything like it before. This list is designed to help you make decisions about what gear you bring and hopefully help you feel confident about entering your course.

When you arrive, your instructors will first look through all the equipment you've brought and help you decide what to take into the field. You'll then go into our Outfitting Department to rent or purchase any remaining items. The list below is comprehensive; however, the actual equipment needed for your course will vary depending on location, season, and instructor judgment. For this reason, we do not recommend that you go out and purchase a lot of expensive, specialized gear for your course.

Here are some thoughts to guide you as you pack:

- **First, use gear you already own!** You'll be comfortable in tried-and-true clothing. Bring more layers than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options. If an item is suitable for your particular course, you can take it into the field; if not, you can leave it in storage. If in doubt, bring it!
- **Second, rent key items from NOLS.** When it comes to gear, everyone has their own preferences. In the field, you'll have the opportunity to hone your preferred system. We recommend that you rent, rather than purchase, several "big ticket" items, such as a sleeping bag and backpack. While you are not obligated to rent gear from us, there are several reasons why we suggest it. Our rental gear is high quality and chosen specifically for the heavy use it receives on courses. Rental prices are reasonable (based on wear/tear and duration of use), so you can try out gear and make informed decisions on future adventures.
- **Third, purchase specific items from our Outfitting Department.** To make shopping simple, we offer basic camping essentials and personal care items. The items we sell in our Outfitting Department are tailored to what works well on our courses. Approximate price ranges for the items we sell are listed below - you can use these price ranges to help you decide whether to purchase items ahead of time.

- **Fourth, go shopping before your course.** A few options:
 - **REI or a local outdoor store**
 - Pro: Employees often have some sense of what you will need
 - Con: Gear at these locations is often expensive
 - **Department stores**
 - Pro: The active wear and camping sections can have inexpensive options
 - Con: Employees are unlikely to be able to offer suggestions
 - **Thrift stores**
 - Pro: Likely the least expensive option
 - Con: Can take a lot of time to find what you need
 - **Online**
 - Pro: Can find a wide variety of options
 - Con: The variety of options can be overwhelming to sort through

Equipment Fees

In addition to your course tuition, you will pay an equipment deposit. This deposit will be applied directly to the charges you incur for gear rentals, purchases, or any loss or damage to our equipment. Total charges will vary depending on the amount of equipment you rent or purchase from us; the prices listed below will help you estimate your costs. At the end of your course, you will be billed for any amount that exceeds the equipment deposit, or refunded any balance.

How to Use This List

Items under the **Required** heading are items that you **must** either bring yourself or rent or purchase from NOLS as available. Items under the **Optional** heading are not required, and you may bring them from home, buy, or rent from NOLS as available. If you see an **X** in the price column, that means that an item is not available for rent or for purchase as indicated.

Feedback?

NOLS is trying to update this list to be more welcoming and effective. If you are willing to provide some feedback to help our effort please take this [survey](#).

Questions?

Contact your Admission Officer if you have any questions or would like further information about the equipment list.

Wilderness EMT Section

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Clothing and shoes for indoor and outdoor class environments (7-10 days' worth)	X	X	You will need clothing appropriate to an indoor and outdoor class environment. <u>Indoors</u> : collared shirt (colored ok), tucked in, belt, neat pants or shorts, closed toed shoes. We suggest a comfortable pair of indoor shoes or slippers. <u>Outdoors</u> : Please prioritize multiple non-cotton layers, waterproof outer tops and bottoms, and hats/mittens/gloves (in fall and spring). Weather in the Rockies is reliably cool: winter temperatures will range from -20 to 40°F, with multiple feet of snow; spring temperatures will range from 0 to 60°F, with melting snow; and summer will range from 30 to 100°F with snow at higher elevations; fall temperatures will range from -5 to 70°F, with a possibility of snow.
Warm boots	X	X	You may be outside on a simulated rescue for multiple hours. Please bring a winter boot that will keep your feet warm. Not required for summer courses.
Large daypack	X	X	A book-bag or weekend-trip size is great; anything bigger will be too much.
Water bottle	X	X	
Flashlight or headlamp	X	X	
Watch	X	X	Must have a second hand (either analog or digital is fine).
Toiletries and personal items	X	X	
Sleeping bag or warm blanket	X	X	If you will be renting a sleeping bag for the field section of your semester, we can arrange for you to receive it early. See "Sleeping Bags and Pads" below for more information.
Course supplies	X	X	Required: laptop computer or tablet For consideration: notebook, pens, pencils and colored highlighters, mobile phone, camp-style chair for classroom time, knee pads (as a rescuer on frequent scenarios) and personal recreational equipment.

Hospital Clinical Student Experience	X	X	Required: White shirt with collar (polo or button-down). No T-shirts. Dark blue or black pants (slacks or cargo, no jeans). Black shoes or boots. No sandals or hiking boots. Sneakers are acceptable only if they are all black, clean and in good shape. All clothes must be clean and pressed (irons and laundry provided). Watch: analog with second hand or digital with second reference. You will do 2 or 3 Clinicals on the weekends of your WEMT Section.
In-town clothes	X	X	You won't take these into the field, but to wear around Lander consider 2-3 shirts or sweatshirts; 2 pairs of jeans, pants or a skirt; a jacket or sweater; a pair of casual shoes or running shoes; additional toiletries (shampoo, soap, razor, etc.); approximately \$400 in spending money; and personal identification (see the Travel and Logistics document for more information).

Upper Body Layers

We layer our clothing, combining different garments to achieve optimum insulation and protection from wind, rain, and snow. We use either synthetic or wool fibers, both of which insulate when wet; merino wool products are increasingly popular. We avoid cotton, which is poor insulation when wet. It is common to need three insulating layers.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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Required Items

Base layer	X	\$70	Mid-weight long underwear top, non-cotton (e.g. Patagonia Capilene, Terramar Performance, Icebreaker Body Zone)
Middle layer	X	\$50-180	Fleece jacket (e.g. Patagonia R-1, Mountain Hardwear Microchill, etc.) or a wool sweater
Top layers (2)	X	\$95-220	A warm "puffy" jacket that fits over your base layers In colder weather, we recommend having two: one lighter jacket and one heavier jacket that have synthetic or down fill. Lighter puffy jackets include Mountain Hardwear Compressor, Montbell Thermawrap, Patagonia Nano Puff. Heavier puffy jackets include Patagonia Macro Puff, etc.
Wind Shirt	\$40	\$55-100	A lightweight, breathable, durable nylon wind shell.
Rain jacket	X	\$100-150	A sturdy waterproof jacket with a hood. Both coated nylon and breathable fabrics are acceptable (e.g. Gore-Tex, Marmot Precip, Mountain Hardwear Dry.Q, Patagonia H2No)

Sports bra (2-3)	X	\$40	Lightweight bras that offer adequate support. Synthetic or natural fibers (non-cotton) that dry quickly are preferable.
Binder (1-2)	X	X	If you usually wear a binder or are planning to wear one during your NOLS course, make sure it allows you to breathe freely and doesn't cause pain or limit athletic activity.

Optional Items

T-shirt	X	\$25-50	A lightweight synthetic or wool t-shirt
Sun Hoody	X	\$60-70	A lightweight synthetic or natural fiber (non-cotton) hoody that provides both sun protection and works well as a base layer.

Our advice? Bring the sweaters, fleece jackets, and synthetic layers you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip, depending on the season and course area.

Lower Body Layers

You will need 1–2 synthetic insulating layers (usually a base layer and, in early summer, a pair of fleece pants). All must fit comfortably over each other so that they can be worn at the same time. If you tend to get cold easily, add a middle layer of mid-weight bottoms to the base layer and fleece pants.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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Required Items

Base layer (2)	X	\$70	Mid-weight non-cotton bottoms (e.g. Patagonia Capilene, Terramar Performance, Icebreaker Bodyfit Zone).
Fleece/Puffy pants	\$40	\$60-\$200	Heavier-weight bottoms that fit comfortably over the base-layer bottoms. Puffy pants like the Mountain Hardwear Compressor or the Montbell Thermawrap are very popular. Rental price is for fleece pants. For summer semesters, puffy pants are not needed.
Wind pants/Hiking pants	\$40	\$80	Durable nylon pants. These should fit comfortably over base layers. Side-zippers allow the pants to be put on over boots. Soft-shell fabrics are acceptable, but lightweight "running pants" are not durable enough.
Underwear (3-6 pairs)	X	\$20-35	Clean underwear is essential for backcountry hygiene. Though you will have opportunities for laundry, having a supply of underwear for your semester is helpful. Synthetic or natural fibers (non-cotton) are great options.

Optional Items

Shorts	X	X	Loose-fitting nylon athletic or river shorts
Rain pants	X	\$90-110	Although not required, some people like to use rain pants in conjunction with a rain jacket.

Our advice? Bring the synthetic base layers, rain gear, and other layers you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip, depending on the season and course area.

Head, Neck, and Hand Layers

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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Required Items

Baseball cap or wide-brim sun hat	X	\$16-35	Lightweight headwear to protect ears and face from the sun. We sell a variety of visors, trucker hats, and running hats.
Wool or fleece hat	X	\$20-35	Thick enough to keep your head and ears warm on chilly nights.
Gloves or mittens	X	\$17-55	Ragg wool or fleece. See "Winter Section" for greater detail.

Optional Items

Neck Gaiter/ Buff	X	\$22	Neck gaiters are synthetic pieces of multi-functional headwear (hat, bandana, neck warmer, etc.). Buff is a common brand
Mitten shells	\$10	\$38-45	Water-repellent nylon shells that fit over your mittens or gloves

Our advice? As long as they're not cotton, bring your gloves, mittens, and shells. We'll check them and see if they'll work. Depending on the weather, you may need one or two pairs. On the winter section, you might need every pair of gloves/mittens you have.

Packs and Bags

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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Required Items

Backpack	\$120	\$300	Our packs are large expedition models, with a volume of 80–110 liters, made by Deuter exclusively for NOLS. If you bring an internal frame pack, your instructors will examine it to determine its suitability for your course and route. It must have a volume of 80–110 liters.
Small stuff sack (2-3)	\$2	\$25	Small nylon or mesh sacks for organizing items in your pack

Our advice? An expedition backpack is a major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should rent ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision after your course.

Sleeping Bags and Pads

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Sleeping bag	\$100	\$220-350	Synthetic-fill bags (e.g. Thermolite, Thermal.Q, APEX, etc.) perform well in the variety of conditions we encounter on courses. A bag rated to 0° or 15°F. Fall and spring semester students will also need a separate bag for the winter section (synthetic filled bag rated to at least -20°F).
Compression sack	\$12	\$40	Stuff sack that packs sleeping bag into a smaller size than a regular stuff sack would
Plastic trash bag (2-3)	X	\$1	2–3 heavy-duty lawn-and-garden bags (33 gallon/2-3mm) to help waterproof your gear
Foam or inflatable sleeping pad	\$15	\$35-220	Used for padding and insulation between sleeping bag and ground. Foam pads, which we rent, should be closed-cell and at least 3/8-inch thick and have at least an R-Value of 2.0. Inflatable pads, which we don't rent, work as well; Therm-a-Rest and REI are reliable brands.
Ground cloth	\$8	\$20	A waterproof nylon sheet to go between your sleeping pad and the ground (optional on summer semesters)

Our advice? A sleeping bag is another major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should rent ours, gain some experience, and then make an informed decision after your course.

Rock Climbing Section

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Rock climbing shoes	\$40	\$85-100	We rent Black Diamond, Scarpa, La Sportiva and Butora shoes. Available size range: 37-48 (Euro). If you bring your own, make sure they are comfortable enough to spend all day in.
Harness	No charge	\$40-70	We have harnesses to rent, free of charge, but if you own one, bring it along.
Helmet	No charge	X	We have helmets to rent, free of charge, but if you own one, bring it along.
Optional Items			
Crag Pack	\$40	\$50-100	A medium-sized daypack with 50-60L capacity. This can double as a ski pack on your Winter section.

Climbing pants/shorts	X	\$79	Comfortable pants to wear while climbing, either cotton or synthetic. Short shorts are not optimal for climbing with a harness
T-shirts (1-2)	X	\$25	An extra T-shirt or two is always nice to have at climb camp. These can be cotton.
Chalk Bag	\$6	\$25	Some people like to rock climb with a chalk bag to keep their hands and fingers dry. It is not necessary.

Our advice? If you own a harness, helmet, chalk bag, or climbing shoes, bring them along. If your instructors approve, you can use them. We will use NOLS' protection, belay devices, slings, carabiners, and ropes.

River Section (semesters starting in the spring)

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
River shoes	X	X	A simple solid sneaker or river shoe with full foot coverage and sturdy soles. (Keens or other semi-coverage shoes are not appropriate for the conditions.) Consider shoes big enough to fit multiple pairs of socks in cold weather (up to 1.5 sizes bigger than normal)
Long-sleeved UV-protective shirt	X	\$40-50	Light-colored, long-sleeved nylon shirt for sun protection. Hoods encouraged.
Lightweight cotton pants and shirt	X	X	Convenient sun protection around camp
Base Layer (long underwear)	x	\$15 - \$50	On the river, it's essential to designate long underwear sets as "wet" on the river (worn under the drysuit, often with fleece or wool midlayers) and "dry" in camp. Plan to bring 2 full sets to the river section (can be the same from other sections—no cotton or cotton blends).
Swimsuit	X	X	Most students prefer wearing nylon shorts. A sports bra-type top with nylon shorts can work as well. Lycra swimsuits are also an option.
Large dry bag	\$10	\$90-125	3-cubic-foot dry bag made of heavy-duty waterproof material. Used to carry all personal clothing
Small dry bag	\$2	\$35	600-cubic-inch dry bag made of heavy-duty waterproof material. Used to carry all personal items needed during the day

Dry suit	X	X	<p>This item is required for spring and fall courses with river sections, not summer courses with river sections. This section focuses on river rescue and you will need one in order to fully participate. If you are renting, you will need to arrange this rental for the dates of the river section before the start of your semester and have it sent to:</p> <p>your name - course code NOLS River Base at 3101 E 2500 S, Vernal, UT 84078</p> <p>Here are a few rental options:</p> <p>Olympic Outdoor Center: https://www.olympicoutdoorcenter.com/products/dry-suit-rentals-all</p> <p>Pacific River Supply: https://pacificriversupply.com/drysuit-rental-form</p> <p>Immersion Research: https://immersionresearch.com/pages/dry-suit-rentals</p>
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Optional Items

Neoprene Socks	\$4	\$20-30	Neoprene or hydroskin socks meant to be worn inside river shoes to help insulate feet (2mm). Essential for spring courses (March-May) and late fall courses (October-November). To be worn over drysuit booties, inside river shoes.
Neoprene booties	\$9	\$20-40	River or diving booties that stay on the foot securely while swimming. Must have a hard sole capable of walking on rocks. Used primarily for cold weather and in kayaks.

Our advice? Rental of whitewater-specific gear (PFD, helmet, etc.) is included in your tuition. Feel free to bring any personal whitewater gear you already have (e.g. paddling jacket, dry top, river booties, helmet, etc.) and your instructors will check it to make sure it is appropriate for your trip. When planning for the river section, know that there is room for many of the luxuries you might bring to climb camp or even base camping (camp chair, sandals, extra hat, etc).

Footwear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Boots	X	\$170-250	Sturdy, expedition backpacking footwear with adequate support for extended wilderness courses. See information at the end of the equipment list for more ideas about boots.
Wool Socks (4-5 pairs)	X	\$13-30	Mid to Heavyweight wool socks (eg. Smartwool, FITS, Wigwam)
Gaiters	\$20	\$50	Shin or knee-high and durable. Lightweight trail-running gaiters are not recommended.
Camp Shoes	X	\$40-90	Running/athletic shoes. Closed toe required. Many students also use Crocs because they are lightweight.
Optional Items			
Hiking shoe	X	X	Some students appreciate having a low-top hiker or approach shoe to wear during their Climb/Canyon section. (eg. Salomon X Ultra, La Sportiva TX4)
Our advice? Your boots will be a critical piece of gear. If they're not sturdy, don't provide enough support, or don't fit properly with wool socks, we won't let you use them. If you have any doubts about boots, feel free to give us a call.			
Toiletries			
Self-care in the outdoors is an essential component of any expedition. Whatever systems you use to take care of yourself in your daily life can often be modified to the appropriate size/quantity for your course. Any starred (*) item is something that we sell at NOLS.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Lip balm	X	\$3-5	Stick, cream, or tube-type moisturizing balm, SPF 15 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Sunscreen	X	\$5-10	At least 3-6 oz., SPF 30 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Dental Care	X	\$3-6	Whatever your oral hygiene system is (toothpaste*, toothbrush*, floss*, retainer, etc.), you can likely adapt it to your course using trial or travel size versions.
Skin Care	X	\$7	You may want to consider lotion* (preferably unscented) or Vaseline in 3-5 oz travel-sized bottle, wash cloth-sized pack towel* for backcountry bathing, and ointment for scrapes if you are prone to scarring.

Hair Care	X	X	You may want to consider a comb* or brush*, bands*, chopsticks, headwrap, ties, or whatever your system is.
Menstrual products	X	\$5-35	Required if you menstruate. Bring the products which work well for you, and bring slightly more supplies than you think you might need. This might mean tampons*, pads*, a menstrual cup*, or some combo thereof.
Personal Medications	X	X	Any prescriptions/supplements that are part of your system should be brought in sufficient quantities.

Our advice? Bring what you think will support your health on course, minimizing bulk and extra quantity where possible. Travel-size containers can be helpful in this process.

Miscellaneous Items

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Bowl	X	\$7	A plastic bowl with a screw- or snap-on lid is handy.
Spoon	X	\$3-\$13	Lexan spoons are light, durable, and popular.
Water bottle (1-2)	X	\$14-16	1–2 wide-mouth quart- or liter-size plastic bottles
Bandana (1-2)	X	\$2	Useful for a variety of purposes from wiping post-pee to sneezing, from a cooling neck tie to wiping your bowl.
Headlamp	X	\$30	Durable and lightweight. Bring spare batteries.
Batteries	X	\$1	AA/AAA are available for sale. We recommend 2 full sets for your headlamp.
Disposable lighter (2)	X	\$1.75	For lighting your camp stove
Watch	X	\$25	A watch with an alarm is a nice feature.
Pen/Pencil	X	\$0.75	For journaling and taking notes during classes
Notepad	X	\$6-10	A small, lightweight pad is fine.
Sunglasses	X	\$30-80	Sunglasses with 100-percent UV protection; lenses should be dark. If you wear prescription lenses and have limited vision without them, bring your own prescription sunglasses, clip-ons, or over glasses. We sell Suncloud and Optic Nerve.

Prescription glasses and contact lenses (2-3 pairs)	X	X	Bring a spare pair of glasses or lenses. Contact-lens wearers should also bring a pair of glasses as backup.
Optional Items			
Book or e-reader	X	X	A lightweight paperback book or e-reader. Tablet-style e-readers (e.g. Kindle Fire) are not acceptable. We recommend bringing a padded case as well.
Trekking poles	\$12	X	A sturdy telescoping pole for easy packing. We rent trekking poles for the hiking sections only.
Camera	X	X	GoPros and lightweight digital or 35mm cameras are acceptable; bring a protective case. Avoid elaborate lenses and heavy SLRs. (Please note: you may not bring your smartphone or tablet into the field to use as a digital camera.)
Camp chair	X	\$40-50	Crazy Creek-style, or a sleeping-pad adapter.
Hydration system	X	X	An alternative hydration system, whether a Camelbak, Platypus, etc.
Sunglasses retainer	X	\$8	Chums or Croakies for keeping track of eyewear
Pocketknife	X	\$20-30	One small knife is sufficient; simple folding knives are popular.

Our advice? Keep the toiletries, pocket knife, camera, optional items and other gear to small sizes. We work to keep our pack weight as low as possible. Saving every ounce is essential!

Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply

Expedition members share both the use of and the responsibility for the group gear that NOLS issues. NOLS charges only for group equipment lost or damaged. Keep in mind that NOLS evaluates gear from a number of perspectives beyond those that an individual user might consider. Performance, durability and simplicity are all contributing factors towards our gear selection.

- Tents and shelters
- Trowel or shovel
- Stoves, fuel bottles and fuel
- Pots and pans
- Maps and compasses
- Bear-resistant food containers
- Fishing gear
- Equipment repair kits
- Reference books
- Binoculars
- First aid kits

Climbing protection*
Climbing ropes*
Helmets and harnesses*
Ice axes*
Snowshoes*
**if applicable to course type*

Boot Recommendations

NOLS has been outfitting students with boots for many years and our priorities have remained the same: we want you to have boots that provide adequate protection for your feet, are durable enough to withstand extended rugged wear, and are comfortable. Many boots available on the market do not meet these criteria, and a boot that is good for weekend day-hiking use may not be a good boot for your course.

Medium-weight, off-trail backpacking or light mountaineering boots work best. They provide good support for off-trail hiking with heavy packs, and usually require less break-in time than heavyweight mountaineering boots. Here are some features to look for:

- Durable outer material, such as leather or thick nylon, that will withstand hiking among sharp boulders and dense vegetation. Full mesh is not appropriate.
- A waterproof Gore-Tex liner can be beneficial, but is not required. Your feet will get wet if water comes in over the top of your boot. A Gore-Tex liner can also slow drying time once the boot is wet.
- A sole that provides good traction, like Vibram® or other lugged sole
- 1/2- to 3/4-length shank or full poly mid-sole stiffener within the sole to provide foot support and protection.
- Mid-top or high-top ankle coverage. Trail running shoes and below-the-ankle hiking boots are not encouraged.
- Comfortable fit with your preferred hiking socks. Boots that are too small commonly cause blisters.

The following list of acceptable boots is not exhaustive and is to be used for suggestions only. It is fine to substitute a similar boot for one of those listed here.

- Altra: Lone Peak Hiker
- Asolo: TPS series, Equalon, Altai, Finder, Fugitive,
- Keen: Targhee II/III Mid
- HOKA ONE: Anacapa Mid, Kaha
- La Sportiva: TX4, TXS GTX
- Limmer: Lightweight, Midweight
- Lowa: Camino, Ranger, Trekker, Mauria, Explorer, Lady Light
- Oboz: Sawtooth
- Salomon: X Ultra 3 Mid, X Ultra 4 Mid, Quest 4D GTX

- Scarpa: Kailash, Mescalito
- Vasque: Talus

Note that boot manufacturers often rename their product lines. Visit the manufacturer's website or contact us if you have questions.