

NYCC Hiking/Snowshoeing SIG



Looking down at Perkins Tower from Torrey Memorial

Photo by Ellen Jaffe

If you can walk, you can snowshoe!

The 2014 NYCC Hiking/Snowshoeing SIG meets every Sunday, January 5th through early March. We share exhilarating outings—interesting terrain, beautiful views, and all-day camaraderie—on the trails, in our cars, and at our coffee stops en route to 4:30-5:00PM NYC returns. Our email is nyccmultisport@gmail.com; phone is 212-222-5527; and our cell—Sundays only—is 646-873-0211.

How it works: We have no minimum participation requirement. We car pool. Each member gets a mid-week email describing the week's outing. To participate, email back—*before Friday night*—to request a car seat, or to offer to drive (can take x passengers.) First “yes” gets first seat, etc. We'll confirm ASAP. Speak only for yourself. “I'm coming with X, or in Y's car” makes coordination far more difficult; we can trade bodies at the meeting point. Each passenger pays \$15 to her/his outbound driver.

Hiking gear: Negotiating a glazed hillside, a rocky, ice-encrusted stream, or an occasional mini-glacier can be an “interesting experience.” With snow on the ground, you **MUST** wear Microspikes or Stabilicers Maxx (*we use both*), Yaktrax XTR, or similar footgear, or have it available in your pack. We've found regular Yaktrax sprins disintegrate on rock. Marilyn and I hike with one carbide-tipped, Black Diamond Trail Trekking pole; some folks use pairs.

Snowshoeing gear: Snow around here tends to be wetter and heavier than western powder. We both wear Tubbs Flex Alp snowshoes. Overkill for most SIG outings, but we also snowshoe in the steep, icy, deep snow conditions of the Adirondack Wilderness, so these “backcountry” snowshoes serve multiple needs.

You'll want “day hiking” snowshoes—Tubbs Journey, Flex NRG, or Flex TRK are good examples. They're designed for hilly, not rolling terrain. Most snowshoe/pole kits as well as “winter-walkers/runners” are not suitable for SIG terrain; they're designed for Central Park. We magically convert our hiking poles into snowshoeing poles just by adding \$10 snow baskets to them.

Hiking and snowshoeing are active sports. While temps tend to be 8-15° lower, and snow 3-5x deeper than in the city, you'll warm up quickly. Don't wear Cotton. If it gets wet you will be cold! A wet, cold hiker, miles from shelter, will not be a happy puppy. Like biking, wear layers of wool or technical fabrics.

Links: <http://www.snowshoemag.com/first.cfm>
<http://www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/snowshoes.html>
<http://www.kahtoola.com/microspikes.php>
<https://www.yaktrax.com/product/xtr>
<http://www.32north.com/Products/Play/STABILicersOriginal>
http://tubbsnowshoes.com/snowshoes?heel_lift=yes&product_type=flex&terrain=mountainous&use=backcountry
<http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/en-us/shop/mountain/trekking-poles/trail-trekking-pole/>

Cell phones, headsets, earbuds, etc. may not be used on trail; OK at lunch, and during breaks.



Great leaders know where to find everything

Photo by Ken Weissman

Clothing and gear.

Base layer: For moisture wicking we wear polypro/Capilene/Techwick tops, layered under zip-up turtlenecks of similar materials, with a single bottom layer—mid- or heavy-weight, depending on temps.

Insulating layers: Marilyn wears one/two light- mid-weight fleece tops. I prefer a mid-weight fleece vest, adding one or two lightweight, long sleeve fleece tops from my pack as needed. Mid-weight, water-resistant, nylon/polyester/spandex hiking pants (similar to x-country/Nordic pants) complete this layer. In deep snow we substitute tough, water-resistant lined nylon shells, with built in gaiters.

Outer layers: Old NYCC wind shells work just fine. Flurries expected? Pack cycling rain jackets.

Footwear: Heavyweight wool socks are the way to go. Our LL Bean Gore-Tex-lined Cresta hiking boots supply above-ankle support and deep lugs for traction, and our above-calf gaiters keep the snow out of our boots.

Head/hand coverings: Marilyn gets cold hands; her mittens look like small boxing gloves. I wear mitten shells over wool mitten liners. We pack, and switch to lighter liners/shells, gloves/mittens as needed. We also wear watchman's caps to cover our ears.

Gear: Our backpacks have two external pockets for water bottles. Each pack contains lunch, finger food, sunglasses, an energy bar, a space blanket for emergencies, and a plastic sheet for sitting on snow covered rocks/downed trees. We toss in bungee cords for short carries on snowshoeing days. A small first aid kit, moleskin, an Ace bandage, pocketknife, toilet tissue, a spare pair of socks, a map, and a few chemical warmers get split between our packs.

Renting/buying gear: EMS, REI, and Gear to Go Outfitters rent and sell equipment. Other Manhattan stores are Paragon and Tent 'N Trail—the most amazingly cluttered, woman-owned store, manned (womanned?) by knowledgeable folks. If you have a vehicle, Campmor in Paramus, NJ, and Outdoor Sports Center in Wilton, CT are both worth visiting. NYNJ Trail Conference members' get a 10% discount at many outdoor stores. <http://www.nynjtc.org>

Ken & Marilyn Weissman