

## PATH GRADES

Path gradings consider aspects of difficulty, route-finding, terrain, distance, physical effort required and appropriate mountain/outdoor skills for anyone undertaking a fell walk – based on a scale from GRADE 1 - EASY to GRADE 5 - VERY DIFFICULT.

This is a simplified guide only. Actual path/track conditions/factors may vary.

| PATH GRADES                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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|    | <p><b>GRADE 1 - EASY</b> (disabled access)</p> <p>Accessible for people with a disability, with assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fellwalking experience required.</li> <li>• Flat even surface/s with no steps or steep sections.</li> <li>• Suitable for wheelchair users who have someone to assist them.</li> <li>• Directional signage and/or clear/obvious path.</li> <li>• Walks no longer than 5km.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                |
|    | <p><b>GRADE 2 - EASY</b></p> <p>Suitable for families with young children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fellwalking experience required.</li> <li>• Track/s often bare, hardened or compacted surfaces.</li> <li>• May include uphill section/s and/or occasional steps.</li> <li>• Limited/infrequent directional signage.</li> <li>• Awareness/understanding of path/route direction required.</li> <li>• Walks no longer than 10km.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                            |
|  | <p><b>GRADE 3 - MODERATE</b></p> <p>Suitable for most ages and fitness levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended for people with some fellwalking experience.</li> <li>• Track/s include steep hill sections, rough surfaces and/or many steps.</li> <li>• Infrequent/nil directional signage.</li> <li>• Path/route direction plus basic navigation skills required.</li> <li>• Walks up to 20km.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                            |
|  | <p><b>GRADE 4 - DIFFICULT</b></p> <p>Recommended for experienced fellwalkers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellwalking experience across exposed/uneven terrain in all weathers required.</li> <li>• Advanced map reading/navigation skills required.</li> <li>• Track/s may be long, rough and very steep; some rock scrambling.</li> <li>• Minimal and/or nil directional signage.</li> <li>• Walks may be more than 20km.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |
|  | <p><b>GRADE 5 - VERY DIFFICULT</b></p> <p>Recommended for very experienced fellwalkers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellwalking experience across exposed/uneven terrain in all weathers required.</li> <li>• Steep/exposed rock scrambling, requiring 3-points of contact and good balance.</li> <li>• Advanced map reading/navigation skills required.</li> <li>• Specialised mountain/outdoor skills plus equipment required.</li> <li>• Emergency first aid skills required.</li> <li>• Track/s are very rough, very steep and unmarked.</li> <li>• Walks may be of any length.</li> </ul> |

Note – path grades may be combined (say, 1/2 or 4/5) where factors merge/overlap.

## Enjoy Lakeland

Lakeland is an area of outstanding natural beauty with a rich history of agriculture and industry. The fells, lakes, landscape and culture of Cumbria attract people who admire its magnificent scenery and environment. Being a mountainous area, the weather can change quickly, so always check the forecast. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing. Plan ahead. Consider your safety and the safety of others.

## Be prepared

Path/track grades apply differently to individuals, depending on fitness and health, walking experience and mountain/outdoor safety skills.

Use common sense and judgement. Know your limits and only undertake walks within your capability.

### For comfort:

- Carry adequate food/water, with spare items. Be prepared for a longer outing.
- Carry waterproof/windproof clothing. Be prepared for wet/cold/inclement weather.
- Carry a thermal blanket. Be prepared for cold temperatures.
- Carry an emergency tent/fly and/or bivvie-bag. Be prepared for the unexpected.
- Carry a torch/whistle to attract attention. Be prepared for others to see/hear you.

### For safety:

- Use map-reading/route-finding skills to stay on track. Carry a compass and know how to use it. Alternatively, carry a GPS unit and know how to use it. Consider carrying a personal locator beacon (PLB) in case of emergencies.
- Know where you are, at any point along the route. Know where escape routes provide options for rapid/safe descent.
- Be prepared to stop and retreat to shelter if weather deteriorates, you/someone fall ill or in any circumstance/s that make it unsafe to continue.

### For security:

- Know the route and distance plus height of ascent/descent involved.
- Check the local weather and be prepared for conditions to change quickly.
- Notify others of where you are going and which route you are taking.
- Give an indicative expected return time.
- Have a turn-back time limit and do not exceed it.
- Walk safely.

## Further information

### Mountain Safety in the Lake District:

- Before heading into the fells, see the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association brochure 'Planning Your Next Adventure?'.  
Details at: <https://www.lidsamra.org.uk>