



Trailhead University

How To Be A Trailhead

By Patrick Scullin

Medical research shows that socializing is one of the critical contributors to happiness and life longevity. Yet, most people are spending more time isolated, lonely, and staring at screens. You call that living? Go outside and see what's playing on the Mother Nature channel. Become a Trailhead!

Over the years, many people have asked us about joining Trailheads, and we've politely declined them. We are a closed group, although we occasionally have subscriber invitational hikes and welcome all to join us then.

Why are we exclusionary? Because we are selfish about our time together. Sorry. Instead, we suggest you start a Trailheads group and set your own ground rules--like keeping us out. Who doesn't love revenge? Here are the basic guidelines for this socializing journey.

How to Start

Decide who you want in your hiking group. Invite people you enjoy spending time with. Consider friends, neighbors, and associates. People with common interests, passions, shared experiences, or similar cultural tastes. They could be members of your school, church, nonprofit, or professional organization. Congratulations -- you're off to a good start.

All six of the guys in our posse had experience working in the marketing/design media business. Some were old friends, and some were new. We had varying interests in sports, culture, current events, similar political points of view, and various eclectic interests and tastes. And we shared a passion for laughing and not taking ourselves too seriously. These are the ingredients for making a savory conversational stew. But decide your own recipe.

Some of us were hikers, but most of us were not. A few had fancy hiking boots, while others had sneakers. But we all knew how to walk and figured we could learn this hiking thing with some concentration and practice (left-right, left-right, left-right--what was it again?)

Your group will develop organically. The main thing is to invite people you like and find interesting--those you want to get to know better--and give it a go. If your first outing ends in bloody fistfights and bitter lawsuits, consider recasting for version 2.0.

Set Your Ground Rules

It's best to have a Trail Master. Someone who has hiked, or camped, been a Scout, and isn't afraid to lead people into nature (and preferably isn't a cannibal). The primary duty of the Trail Master is to select hiking trails and let people know where and when to meet.

Everyone in your group should download the AllTrails app. It's free, and as the name implies, AllTrails lists all the trails in your area (as long as it's on planet Earth--if you're hiking on the moon, download AllCraters).

Our group decided to hike weekly, Thursdays at 10 a.m. (our wives are delighted to be rid of us for a few hours). The hikers meet at the trailhead address given on the directions of the AllTrails app. Every member keeps Thursday mornings and early afternoons open. If someone has a conflict, no biggie--we'll trash him behind his back.

After hiking, we decided to enjoy a barbecue lunch. Exercise deserves a reward, right? Living in the Atlanta metro area, we had an embarrassment of riches--this is a barbecue mecca.

And being do-gooders, we wanted to hike with a purpose. Since we're all marketers, we developed a hiking group name, logo, and website (with entertaining trail/restaurant reviews and helpful advice), plus Trailheads' merchandise, donating ALL profits from sales to worthwhile causes. We're currently benefiting Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy.

Sound like a lot of work? It is. But you don't have to do any of it.

Gather your troops and keep it simple. Pick a time, trail, and hike. Do a few of these nature walks and enjoy yourselves. Discuss a regular time. Do you want to eat before hiking, during hikes, after hikes, or not at all? When we get rained out, we meet for sushi because we still want to hang out and laugh. We also get together for poker nights and socialize with our wives for dinners and movies.

But you can do whatever you like--it's your club! Let the group grow organically. The main thing is to take Nike's advice and Just do it.

Taking The First Step

Someone must be the spark that lights the torch. Be that person. It's estimated that 30-50% of people are more introverted than extroverted, but 100% of us love sharing fun experiences. Put yourself out there and think of who it'd be fun to walk with. You can do this.

Socialize, hike, and enjoy the wonders of the great outdoors.

Become a Trailhead. Build your tribe and enjoy each other's company in the beauty of nature, then return home happier and healthier. It's that easy.

Trailheads merchandise is perfect for your stylish uniforms ([get yours here](#)). Remember, all profits benefit a great cause.

Hike your best life, and please follow us at trailheadshike.com.



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