

TOP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION ON HIKING POLES

1. Do I really need hiking poles? Why should I consider buying them?

- a. Hiking poles provide added stability and balance on the hike but also have a variety of additional benefits such as:
 - i. Relieves pressure on back and knees
 - ii. Provides upper body work for your arms
 - iii. Can help to clear brush and spider webs along the trail
 - iv. Can be used to probe streams for water depth and provide extra security when crossing a stream.
 - v. Protection against intruding snakes or small critters.

2. What's best for me – Carbon Fiber or Aluminum?

- a. Hiking poles are generally made from carbon fiber or aluminum. The primary difference is the weight – Carbon fiber poles will typically weigh 12- 18oz per pair and aluminum 18-22oz. So if weight is important, than carbon is the better choice. The drawback of carbon is that they are more fragile and may have a greater tendency to break in rough terrain or weaken when nicked. Aluminum can bend – but rarely breaks.
- b. Aluminum poles come in different gauges – determined by the thickness of the aluminum shaft and the diameter. Lower gauge poles (typically the cheaper poles from discount dept stores) can be structurally weaker and have greater tendency to bend – or break. Higher quality aluminum poles are higher gauge and are much stronger. Aluminum also comes in different grades – Aircraft Grade 7075 being the best strength to weight ratio and are typical in high quality poles.



TOP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION ON HIKING POLES

3. For the adjustable poles, which locking mechanism works best?

- a. There are 2 main types of locking mechanism for adjustable poles – flip lock and twist lock. Both work well when constructed properly and so it is generally a personal preference. The flip lock can be adjusted easily when making minor adjustments – but require fiddling with the small screw adjuster when making anything but the smallest adjustments in length. This is because, generally the pole sections are tapered so get smaller in diameter towards the bottom of the poles section. Twist lock will lock the same way regardless of how much you adjust as they have an internal mechanism that expands and contracts when you twist the pole.



4. What type of grips should I consider?

- a. Grips can be made of Cork, EVA Foam or rubber. Cork will resist moisture, decrease vibrations and best conforms to your hand over time and use. It is generally the most expensive option but provide the best balance of moisture wicking and durability. Best for warm or hot conditions. EVA Foam will absorb moisture from sweaty hands, however are the least durable option. Rubber requires gloves as it can leave blisters on bare hands, so is best for colder hikes. It is generally more durable than foam or cork.
- i. Some poles also come with grip extensions that allow the hiker to grip the extended portion on uphill climbs when poles should be shortened -without having to stop adjust the poles.



TOP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION ON HIKING POLES

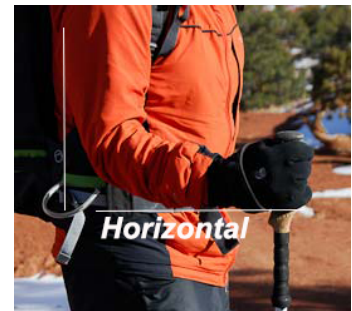
5. Why so many different tip options? What are they all for?

- a. Hiking poles will typically come with steel carbide tips. You can also use rubber tips over the steel carbide when walking on paved surfaces. This preserves the carbide tip and provides better traction on the hard surface. Other accessories may include snow baskets for use in winter over snow and smaller mud baskets that are used on soft surfaces to keep the poles from sinking into soft soils. The mud baskets can also be useful to prevent the pole tip from lodging in cracks of rock on rocky terrain.



6. How do I know how long the poles should be?

- a. The adjustment of the poles are important to get the best utility. Elbows should be roughly 90 degrees when the pole is resting on the ground and the you are gripping the pole as you normally would while hiking.



7. What is the anti-shock feature and how does it help?

- a. Anti-shock is a feature provided in some poles to help further temper the vibration and stress on the hands and arms while hiking. They are generally a spring mechanism inside the poles or a rubber damper. Some poles provide the ability to turn the anti-shock feature off and on.

8. How should I use the straps on the poles?

- a. Properly adjusted straps offer support, so you don't have to grip the pole too tightly and fatigue your hand. Many hikers feel that straps should always be worn as they offer support, are useful in maintaining a good cadence, and make the trekking poles harder to drop.