

GET OUTDOORS & SAY YES TO ADVENTURE!

*Your Complete Guide and Roadmap to
Starting Adventures in the Outdoors!*



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Your Road Map to Adventure!

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Hey!

Getting outdoors and on adventures can be hard. It certainly was for me in the beginning. I wasn't some naturally athletic, confident person that could just do everything. I had no idea. There were a lot of lessons learnt the hard way while trying to do things my mind and body sometimes didn't feel like they wanted to do.

But somehow, I made it through those early days of learning, sticking with it, and pushing on. Soon, I really loved being in the outdoors! Hiking, climbing and canyoning became my passions.

A while ago, I ran an outdoor adventure group for 2 years and in that time I noticed one thing:

People, especially those new to the outdoors, had a craving for more. They loved the hikes, climbs and canyons I would show them. They always asked me,

"How do I do this on my own? How do I learn it all?"

They wanted adventure. They wanted to explore and get outdoors. It took a while showing hundreds what they could do, but I found a few key things that will make it all a bit easier to get started and continue.

So I want to share these with you, right here, right now. Taking that first step can be hard, but once you do, you'll never look back!

If you want to get into the outdoors or start adventure activities and aren't sure where to start, or want to push your comfort zone further, you are in the right place! I'm here to help in anyway I can.

Your new adventure friend,



Patrick

THE VERTICAL ADVENTURER

Want to know more about me? [Click HERE!](#)

Undertaking anything in the outdoors requires a little forethought. After all, you always want to come home so you can do it all again! So staying safe is the first priority when doing anything outdoors. I know, I know, it's not a glamorous subject to start with! The truth is, behind the scenes of all adventures are calculated decisions to make sure it all goes smoothly. So it doesn't matter if its a 30 minute hike, a trip to the local rock climbing crag, or a 10 day long epic adventure. You should get in the habit of thinking of the same things before each and every outdoor trip.

WEATHER

Always, always, always check the weather before you go! Check it a few days prior to a bigger trip to get an idea of what it will do, and then the morning of your adventure check it again.

IMPORTANT



Keep checking on the weather while you are on your trip. If you don't know much about the weather, just use common sense. If it looks like it's getting worse- it probably is!

TERRAIN

What sort of terrain will you be going into? Will there be a possibility of being near creeks or rivers, or are you high up on ridge lines? Think about these things and how they will affect your trip. Climbing peaks all day is great fun but they often don't have water supplies readily available. Creek crossings can be exciting at the best of times and deadly at the worst. Think about everything you might encounter on your trip and account and plan for it.

CLOTHING

We will cover layering in the next section, but what you wear is extremely important, not just for your enjoyment, but in some rare cases even for your survival. You only need to go canyoning once to realize that on a warm, hot day it's quite possible to get hypothermia without a wetsuit!

FIRST AID & SUPPLIES

Always carry a first aid kit. I have 2 different ones made up which I will take depending on the length of time I am expecting to be out. Even on a short hour long hike I will carry my basic kit. Also, take that extra warm layer no matter what. Have an extra days food on an overnight hike. And always take extra water.

TRIP INTENTIONS

Letting someone know where you are going is sometimes the only way you will be found if something happens. Don't think it's important? Watch the movie about the true story of Aron Ralston in *127 hours*... So take the 5 minutes it takes to send a message to a trusted contact who can raise the alarm if you don't return.

For some more reading on staying safe, have a look at these posts:

[Why That Alpine Crossing or Peak Isn't as Easy as You Think!](#)

[Summit Fever and How to Avoid It](#)

Layering is all about what you wear outdoors. It's pretty important so pay attention! There are no bad weather days, just bad clothing choices. To keep it simple, I want you to remember one simple rule for layering:

STAYING DRY = STAYING ALIVE

It's that simple! You will get wet by either being rained/snowed on, or by sweating, so too many layers while active can also be an issue. Always start your trips cold and then warm up with movement, or put another layer on later after you've warmed up, rather than wearing everything from the start and sweating. When I started hiking, I wore denim jeans and cotton shirts and I found out the hard way what happens when you get wet and can't get dry...

LAYERING, HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT!

All layers must be: Breathable and still work when wet (eg: keep you warm or slow down heat loss).



Baselayer - In warm climates this will be a T shirt, and in colder areas or climates, a long sleeve version. Either Synthetic or wool is the right fabric.



Mid layer - A fleece or softshell jacket, synthetic or wool again being the correct fabric. You can double up on this layer if it's extremely cold (eg: fleece jacket + softshell jacket).



Outer layer - A hard shell rain jacket will stop wind and rain and is made from Goretex or similar type of fabric. Get a size up so it fits over all your layers underneath.



Down layer - Can be worn over your shell outer (in dry weather) or under (in wet weather) and is your warmest layer you have. Great for the cold nights or unexpected stops. Get a high quality fill (800+) and make sure it fits you while wearing other layers underneath. Synthetic fill versions are also available.

Continued over the next page...

Pants - They can be long or short, just make sure they quick drying so use synthetic fabrics. The same layering system as your upper body (base-mid-outer) can also be applied to your lower body. Shell pants and bottom thermals are essential for hiking in snow for instance.

Socks - You don't need the best socks out there but they can definitely make life easier. Always carry an extra pair if you are prone to blisters, as sweaty feet (which we all get) are the leading cause of blisters.

Boots/shoes - Boots VS shoes, which way to go? You can go either! Shoes are great for building ankle strength, provided you take it slow when starting out. If I am carrying heavy loads on overnight hikes I prefer boots, but for all my day hiking I wear low cut shoes.

Hats/beanies - The sun can easily get the better of you if you leave your head unprotected. Wear a cap or wide brimmed hat. In cold climates, a beanie is a obvious choice for keeping heat loss from your head to a minimum.

Gloves - Cold hands and feet make the rest of your body seem extra cold. So keep some gloves handy if any cold temperatures or wind are expected.

IMPORTANT



Never wear cotton on your outdoor adventures. It stays wet longer and is very slow to dry. It also fails at holding in heat so will make you cold very quickly! Cotton can literally kill you, and has done so in the past with many people succumbing to hypothermia which could have been avoided by wearing the correct fabrics and layers.

Remember: Always keep ALL layers in your backpack no matter what the weather forecast says. This is especially true when travelling through alpine terrain (like alpine peaks, passes or crossings) or above any treeline.



Want some more detailed information on layering for adventures, including some examples?

Click [HERE](#) to read all about layering!

Hiking is by far the best and easiest way to get outdoors and experience nature. Stunning vistas ahead of you, a solid trail beneath your feet, it's a fantastic way to get outside. You can set your own pace and take it slow, or go harder in pace or terrain if you want a challenge. There are many different landscapes just waiting for you to explore and it's an activity you can do around the world no matter where you are!

FINDING A HIKING PARTNER

Finding someone as keen as you can often be the biggest hurdle for new hikers. It's totally OK to go solo, taking it slow of course, but if it's your first time or you are new to it, it can be best to go with someone else for the extra confidence and support if you feel you need it.

Asking your friends is the obvious choice but sometimes they might not feel like going or may not be serious about it (especially if it means getting up early). If this is the case, it's best to try one of the following ideas below:

- You can contact established hiking clubs.
- Join in on the hiking groups on [Meetup.com](#). See my post [here](#) about how it all works.
- Facebook hiking groups are also becoming very popular to meet other people keen to get outdoors.

To find the groups above, just search for them on Google, Meetup.com, or on Facebook.

Once you have some fellow hikers keen to explore with you, getting out each weekend is much easier, and you'll also gain experience very quickly.

PLANNING A HIKE

No matter if it's a day hike or a multi-day trip, the questions you should ask yourself and the planning for it are often the same. We have our fundamental needs of food, water and clothing, some safety precautions to take care of, and a bit of logistics.

If you are doing day hikes you can just prepare the night before or on the morning of, but for overnight or multi-day hikes, it's good to plan 2-4 weeks in advance.

On the next page we will look at each part of the planning process in more detail.

Continued over the next page...

PERMITS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Are there access issues/bears/wild animals that need to be considered? Does the hike require landowner permission if it's not national or state park? Make sure to allow enough time to research these things before arriving at the trailhead.

Do you need a permit for the hike? Some places will require very early planning for this! Always have the permits you need!

HIKING TRIP DETAILS

How hard is the hike? Are you ready for it physically, mentally and with the right gear? Look into what skills and gear you will need and adjust your plans accordingly.

Distance and elevation. How far are you hiking and what sort of elevation gain/loss will you be doing. Don't mistake a short hike in distance as easy when you have to go straight up!

Are you prepared with the right maps and GPS files? Do you have your compass?

Do the campsites require a booking? And what can you find there? How much space will you have?

Will you find water along the way through reliable sources? Do you need to purify it? Remember, some seasons see water supplies dwindle or even disappear!

LOGISTICS

How will you get to the trailhead? Do you need a 4WD? Are the roads open to get there? Are their restrictions on parking or are shuttles required?

Are your teammates confirmed as going? Are they ready? Do they have what they need?

WEATHER

How's the weather looking? Be sure to check it a few days out and then again on the day. Always adjust your plans to suit. TIP: Having a backup plan for bad weather makes it easy to still get out and do something so your plans aren't ruined.

Have you packed the right clothing? Make sure that when venturing into any terrain considered 'alpine' to always have the full range of layers with you- even in the middle of summer! Read all about layering for the outdoors right [HERE](#).

TRIP INTENTIONS

Trusted contacts notified? Have you sent the message to your trusted contact? Are they aware of your date and time due back? If you are going solo, this may be your only chance of getting help should you need it!

For more information about hiking, including what gear to take,
head over to my ['How to Start Hiking Guide'](#).

WAIT! GRAB YOUR FREE HIKING GEAR CHECKLIST!

[Click here](#) to get them now, one for day hikes and the other for overnight trips, both ready to print in PDF format! They are great to hang close to your gear (like in the garage) to make packing quick and easy!

While hiking can be relatively easy to get into, other adventure outdoor activities might not be. Adventure sports such as climbing and canyoning can have steep learning curves and may seem impossible to master initially. The key, like with anything, is to stick with it. Here are some tips to make it easier to start and get into the activity, so pay special attention...

- **Invest some time.** Learning new things takes time. Set aside the time to research and get your head around new things. Climbing and canyoning for instance, can seem very technical in the beginning. But keep learning and practicing and you will soon be handling ropes like a pro! I found it confusing when I started, but within months it was becoming second nature.
- **Invest in some gear.** Getting good quality clothing that protects you is essential. Keeping out the elements while keeping you dry and warm is the key to having a good time. What about climbing, or canyoning? If you are wondering how much it all costs, have a look at my post for rock climbing: [How much does it cost to start rock climbing?](#) And for canyoning, I have a similar post: [How much does it cost to start canyoning?](#)
- **Be independent.** Don't rely on everyone else to keep you safe and organised. Make the effort and take care of yourself. It's important to know how to not get into trouble in the outdoors, and then if you do, how to get yourself out of it!
- **Get mentors.** Mentors are like the buzz you get after a good coffee hit! Nothing boosts the learning curve like some one on one time with someone who can show you what's what. Seek out experienced individuals and buy them cake, coffee, beers, carry gear on the trip, or whatever else they like. It's worth remembering, experienced people get tons of requests of people wanting to go out, so be different to stand out and show you are keen by following all the tips on this page.
- **Commitment.** If you are serious about getting into the outdoors or advancing your skills, then show it! Set goals and achieve them by 'chunking them down' making them into smaller goals, thereby making them manageable and realistic to fulfill. Get an [adventure accountability buddy](#) if you are having trouble. You can always [email](#) or message me as well if you need help. That's what I'm here for!
- **It's about the journey, not the destination.** Enjoy the process of learning new things and sucking at them. It's not always going to be easy. I failed many times at many things before I learnt better ways, or ways that worked for me. I find this so important that I even wrote a little story about it [HERE](#) that I use to remind myself.

BONUS TIP!

One thing many experienced people look for when taking out beginners is whether they have any gear of their own. My number one tip has always been: buy some gear to show you are serious about it! If you are hesitant to buy any gear at all, why would someone want to help you knowing you might not be committed to it anyway? Plus this is also a great incentive for you to start the activity!

Rock climbing, or just climbing as I'll just call it from now, was a popular event when I ran my adventure club. People loved it and always asked:

How do I start rock climbing?

Hiking can seem pretty easy to get into, after all, you are just walking. But climbing can have a seemingly impossible learning curve with many questions you ask yourself before you've even tried it. I should know, I was once in the same spot!

Some common questions that are often asked are:

Do I need lots of upper body strength?

How do I learn all that rope stuff?

How much does it all cost?

All your questions will be answered! Keep reading for my top tips to start rock climbing and don't let the fear of the unknown stop you from even trying!

START INDOORS.

Every city or major town has indoor climbing gyms. These are perfect to get fit, learn your movement techniques, and find others to climb with. Be social and talk to others. Many may be in the position as you are in. When someone offers to take you outdoors, take the opportunity! And never, ever flake (cancel) on someone for no good reason once you have committed to a trip!

GET THE GEAR.

Think rock climbing is expensive? Have a read of my post [HERE](#) about the gear you need and how much it all costs. You might be pleasantly surprised! Getting some gear before you have started is a great way of creating incentive for you to commit and pursue your goal of climbing. Plus it shows others you are serious about it and other experienced climbers will be more likely to help you out and teach you...



Continued over the next page...

LEARN THE ROPES.

Devour any knowledge you learn through people, on the internet, and in books. Make an effort to learn a new skill each week. Get familiar with all the knots. Learn to belay in a climbing gym or under supervised instruction from a experienced mentor or friend. The more you learn, the safer you and others around you will be. If you want to get serious about your knowledge, or want to make sure you are learning the ropework correctly, invest in a short climbing course.

FIND OTHERS TO CLIMB WITH.

Getting some climbing partners should be a early goal to get you climbing regularly. Hang out in the indoor gym often, be sociable, and you will have no problem.

BECOME A GREAT BELAYER!

Being an awesome belayer means you'll be a highly sought after partner, even if you don't climb as hard as the other person. Good belayers are a dime a dozen, so hone those skills and watch out for your partner- trust me, they'll appreciate it! You can read more on how to become a awesome belayer [HERE](#).

YOU DON'T NEED TO CLIMB HARD!

It may be hard to start or continue when you see other people climbing better than you. But don't let that put you off! You should climb because it's fun, not because you are trying to impress other climbers. So stop comparing yourself to others and just focus on your climbing!

DID YOU KNOW?

Climbing isn't about upper body strength. Many people think they don't have enough upper body strength and so they give up or never even try! It's all in the feet and the technique! Females often tend to climb better than males because they utilize technique and body positioning better. Generally, males will grunt their way up climbs in the beginning when they start out, and this can appear like they are just 'naturals'. Far from it! Females on the other hand, will use technique to achieve the same thing, it just takes a little practice. So no matter your shape, size or height, climbing is achievable for everyone!



If rock climbing was popular in my adventure club, the canyoning events were next level! It was the most sought after event which always filled up within an hour of me posting it, and had people smiling from ear to ear for days afterwards!

WHAT IS CANYONING?

Canyoning, also known as canyoneering in the United States, is the adventure sport of exploring and descending canyons, which are filled with water, but not always. And we aren't talking grand canyon style here. Its all those little, narrow gouges in the earth that provide the fun with water have carved the rock into beautiful and contrasting shapes and colours. Scrambling, abseiling, jumping and sliding our way through, canyons hold wonders and are a playground for the adventurous.

So you'd like to try canyoning and want to get started? Here's a few tips:

TRY IT WITH A GUIDED TRIP!

Before going all out, why not try it with either a club or a commercially run trip. This is a great way to see if you like it (99% of people do), and also find out more about the canyoning sport locally. Simply search google for canyoning and your location.

GET THE GEAR

Like rock climbing, sort yourself out with the right gear. Wetsuit, harness and descender for abseiling, there's a few things you will need before you can start doing it independently. You can see the full list of what you need and find out how much it costs with my post: [How Much Does it Cost to Start Canyoning?](#)



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LEARN THE SKILLS

Canyoning is all about having the skills to finish safely. Make sure you learn all you can from the experienced canyoners and keep learning by reading and watching videos. Learn all your knots, how to build natural anchors, abseil, lock off on an abseil, ascend the rope, and also how to keep yourself and others safe in the canyon environment. Never be satisfied that you know it all, and always keep progressing.

GET A TEAM

Canyoning is a teamwork adventure sport. Get the right people to go with and stick together. Always keep an eye on one another in the canyon and to become efficient, everyone should pull their weight and help out with tasks that need doing like stacking the rope after an abseil, helping out on downclimbs, and generally just looking out for each other.

TAKE CHOCOLATE AND LOLLIES

My favourite tip. You have permission to take as many lollies and chocolate as you can carry! Why? The sugar hit warms you up quickly when you are feeling cold. Consider yourself the team medic if you have all the sugary goods! Oreos are my personal favourite!

All adventure sports have their hazards, which when they are managed make the activity as safe as possible, and in canyons there are two big ones to be aware of:

GETTING STUCK.

Canyons are one way trips. Once you do an abseil and pull down your rope to continue, consider it irreversible! It's important to have the team, skills and gear to make it through all the way.

HYPOTHERMIA.

The cold takes a toll on us quickly if we stay still too long or are not warm enough with our wetsuit. This is why we wear wetsuits. They trap a layer of water against our skin which is heated by our body almost instantly.

The awesome thing about canyoning is that you can adjust the challenge with the canyons you choose to do. There are even many canyons that don't require abseiling at all, meaning you can get started right away!

If you want some more tips and get a bit more detailed information, I have a great post that covers all you need:

[How to Start Canyoning, a Beginners Guide](#)

Once I realised how much I loved being outdoors and on adventures, I had to find a way to make it happen as much as possible! While it would be fantastic to invent the next Google and rake in millions of dollars and quit work forever, the reality is that the majority of us are not going to be inventing the next Google. And there's no reason to either!

So I came up with the best way to change my lifestyle, afford the adventures I wanted, have the time to do them, and all without working 80 hour weeks.

If you feel like this might be for you, read on!

LIVE SIMPLY

Keeping things simple has loads of benefits, but what really makes sense is reducing your cost of living. Without changing how much you earn, or the amount you work, you can free up significant finances by getting rid of expenses that aren't necessary, and spending less on new stuff. Re-framing your relationship with money is very important for making it happen. Get rid of any debt, and vow to not accumulate any more. Living simply, even if it just means reducing bills, spending less on take out or drinks, and not impulsively buying stuff, is going to free up some adventure funds!

TIME

It's the resource we all wish we had more of, but is the hardest to obtain. Freeing up time for adventures can be done many ways. Many jobs that require work on the computer are quickly changing and people are seeking to do them remotely on laptops and from home. It's a growing trend, and more and more people everyday are approaching their bosses and negotiating a change. Four day weeks are being trialled by companies in many countries, most of them so far with great success! Who knows, it may become the norm one day!

Take a good, hard look at your job and find out a way that you could do it with more flexibility. Even if it means that your employer is open to you taking unpaid leave, contract work, remote work, condensed hours to free up a extra day, just as some examples. And if you've tried everything and your employer won't budge on your situation, you can always do this...

MINI RETIREMENTS

Mini retirements are growing in popularity, and rightly so! A mini retirement means you take lots of smaller 2+ month (usually 6-12 months) breaks from periods of work, instead of the 'big one' (traditional retirement) at the end of your career when you are exhausted from a life of hard work and are nearing your golden years. In your later years, you are no longer at physical peak and learning new things is not as easy. This is why mini retirements are so popular. You value experiences over money. You do the things you love and you do them while in your prime.

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The best thing about mini retirements is you can do them however you want. Take one, or take many, it's up to you!

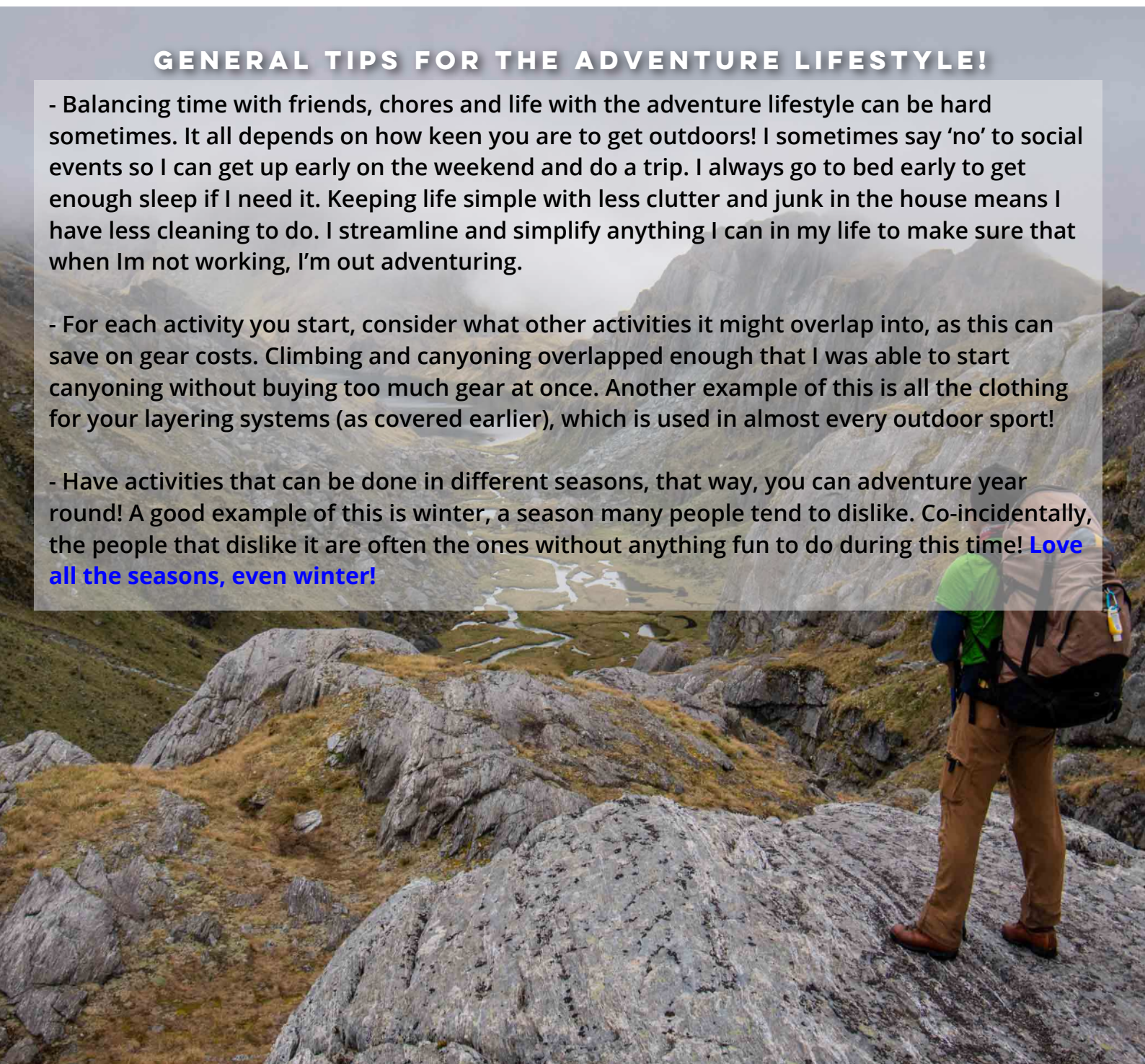
Since doing my first mini retirement, I now look at taking 2 month breaks during the ideal seasons for the different outdoor activities I do, usually amounting to 4 months per year. I save less than I did before doing mini retirements, but am stress free 100% of the time, fulfill all my adventure needs, and am happier overall!

I go into lots more detail about mini retirements in my article here:

[How to Take a Mini Retirement!](#)

GENERAL TIPS FOR THE ADVENTURE LIFESTYLE!

- Balancing time with friends, chores and life with the adventure lifestyle can be hard sometimes. It all depends on how keen you are to get outdoors! I sometimes say 'no' to social events so I can get up early on the weekend and do a trip. I always go to bed early to get enough sleep if I need it. Keeping life simple with less clutter and junk in the house means I have less cleaning to do. I streamline and simplify anything I can in my life to make sure that when I'm not working, I'm out adventuring.
- For each activity you start, consider what other activities it might overlap into, as this can save on gear costs. Climbing and canyoning overlapped enough that I was able to start canyoning without buying too much gear at once. Another example of this is all the clothing for your layering systems (as covered earlier), which is used in almost every outdoor sport!
- Have activities that can be done in different seasons, that way, you can adventure year round! A good example of this is winter, a season many people tend to dislike. Co-incidentally, the people that dislike it are often the ones without anything fun to do during this time! [Love all the seasons, even winter!](#)



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE ON YOUR WAY TO SOME EPIC OUTDOOR ADVENTURES!

Whether you just started your outdoor journey or wanted to progress further, I hope you picked up some helpful advice. Starting is always the hardest step, but once you do, you'll wonder why you didn't try sooner!

After absorbing all this information, you might be wondering, where to now?

No matter your activity, surrounding yourself with knowledgeable people is the best way to progress. Join local clubs. You can find these by simply googling: your location + your activity + 'club'. Many have gear that can be hired or borrowed so you can start straight away.

Facebook groups and [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) are two other great places to find groups that do what you want to do. Just join and put the word out there, and away you go!

For any questions, you can always email me at: patrick@theverticaladventurer.com

Ask me anything! No question is too silly, we all had them at some point!

So for now, keep an eye out on your inbox, I'll be sending you popular posts, advice, resources and occasional freebies. Remember to mark me as a 'trusted sender' in your inbox to ensure you get them. And if you are using Gmail, move me out of the promotional tab if I've ended up there.

That's all for now! I wish you many great adventures in the outdoors!

Till next time!

Your new adventure friend,



Patrick

THE VERTICAL ADVENTURER



You Tube



If you want some more advice, or just read some of my stories and experiences, here are some of the most popular posts on [The Vertical Adventurer!](#)

HIKING

> [One Item You Should Never Bring on a Hike!](#)

CLIMBING

> [My First Night Cliff Camping On A Portaledge. What's It Like Sleeping On A Portaledge?](#)

CANYONING

> [Descending The General. Is This One of New Zealand's Best Canyons?](#)

CAVING

> [Harwoods Hole. The Best Caving Day Trip in the World?](#)

ADVICE & SKILLS

- > [How to Have Big Adventures. Your Guide to Making Big Adventures and Goals Happen!](#)
- > [Learn This to Master Navigation! Learn Situational Awareness!](#)
- > [The Best Gift Ideas for Hikers!](#)
- > [How to Improve Your Rock Scrambling Ability.](#)
- > [Overnight Solo Hiking. Why You Should Get Out And Do It At Least Once!](#)

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You can buy me a coffee or cake with a one time paypal donation of your choosing:



BUY ME A COFFEE!