

BOLD & GOLD Levels Guide

BOLD & GOLD trips have a wide range of difficulty. Please ensure that you and your teen are honest about their ability to ensure that they will both thrive on this trip and not inhibit the other participants (or cause a dangerous situation).

Please note: if your participant shows early signs of not being able to complete the trip, they will be evacuated for safety reasons and brought back to Mill Hollow. A refund will not be offered to these participants, so please use the guide below for proper discernment.

Level I: I am new to backpacking and hiking (participating zero to a few times a year). I am not often at elevations over 9000 feet and am unsure how elevation gain affects me. I can carry 15-20% of my body weight up to 2 miles before needing a short break. I have an easy time doing my daily routines and activities. I have tools to self-motivate through hard moments and work well with mentors. I can survive a week on trail without access to my phone, uncontrolled substances (common example with teens is nicotine), and talking with my friends and family back home. I will practice walking with weight on my back a couple of times a month leading up to my trip. I am bringing broken-in footwear that is appropriately structured for walking long distances, in good condition, and does not hurt my feet.

Level II: I am already a fan of backpacking and hiking and do so regularly (and/or I am an active individual who is attentive to my fitness). I have been at elevations between 9000-11000 feet before and I was able to handle the altitude / it minimally affects me. I can carry 20% of my body weight for up to 3 miles before needing a short break. I find opportunities multiple times a week to do something active. I have tools to self-motivate through hard moments, work well with mentors, and want to keep growing my skills as an outdoor athlete. I can survive a week on trail without access to my phone, uncontrolled substances (common example with teens is nicotine), and talking with my friends and family back home. I will continue to stay active and hike with a loaded pack a few times leading closer to my trip. I am bringing broken-in footwear that is my regular choice for backpacking and hiking, like a trail runner or hiking boot.

Level III: Backpacking is one of my passions and/or I get joy from completing challenging hikes. I have been at elevations around 13000 feet, and it does not bother me or affect my ability to hike. I can carry 25% of my body weight for up to 4 miles before I need a short break. I am an active person and pursue fitness in my free time. I have tools to self-motivate through hard moments, work well with mentors, and try my best to encourage my peers. I can survive a week on trail without access to my phone, uncontrolled substances (common example with teens is nicotine), and talking with my friends and family back

home. I will continue to stay active and hike with a loaded pack a few times leading closer to my trip. I am bringing broken-in footwear that is my regular choice for backpacking and hiking, like a trail runner or hiking boot.

Rock Climbing: This trip is ideal for a wide range of participants. Climbing at Sun Rock includes staying at the same Adirondak each night (no backpacking), walking .5-2 miles to climbing sites, and climbing guides who can adjust difficulty for different types of climbers. There are three days of climbing, and each day has the equivalent of two sessions (each session is 2 hours) (Subject to change based on Sun Rock or the teens' needs—for example, the same amount of sessions could be spread over an additional day or tired youth could limit session time near the end). One of the days the teens are resting from climbing, they will go on a day hike and other times enjoy the other facilities at Sun Rock like boating. Climbing does take a basic level of discipline, strength, focus, flexibility, and a positive mental attitude. Climbing gear provided.

Canoeing: Participants should have previous experience paddling watercraft. Paddling watercraft on a backcountry trip is inherently different than a few hours on a calm lake. This trip will be on a river and have canoes loaded with gear. Participants should be able to lift 20 pounds above their head, have confidence in their arm and back strength, and feel confident around water. These trips often take multiple hours in the sun. Canoeing trips require determination and a flexible mindset.