

Blisters

So what are blisters?

One definition is a small bubble on the upper layers of skin filled with Serum. Some may describe a blister as a burning, throbbing unbearable pain in the foot that wrecked the whole hike. Many under estimate just how serious a blister can become. It can not only bring your day of hiking in the mountains to a painful end, but also others you are hiking with.

What causes blisters?

A number of things can cause a blister and most people have experienced a blister at some point in their life, but not everyone has tried hiking for 8 hours with the skin peeled off their heel. Improperly fitted hiking boots that are not broke in along with soft feet is just asking for trouble. Boots that are not fitted correctly will cause your foot to rub against the sock which is pressed against your boot, this will create friction some call this a "hot spot" and if not looked at immediately will cause a blister to form. Socks can also play a big part in causing or preventing blisters, if the sock does not wick moisture away from the foot this moisture will speed up the hot spot process. Good merino wool hiking socks are essential to happy feet.

How do I prevent a blister?

For the most part it is not that hard to prevent a blister. Make sure you have good footwear, that fits your foot well with a nice wool sock. Some of the new light weight synthetic hikers may feel like they don't require any break in, but they do! Wearing your new hikers around the house is great, but it will NOT take the place of putting some miles on them. Start out with short hikes 2 to 3 km long and increase from there. This will do 3 things for you, 1st It will give your new boots a chance to stretch and conform to your feet. 2nd It will give you a chance to become familiar with how to lace your boots for maximum comfort, and 3rd it will allow you to try different types of socks and liner sock or maybe foot beds if you are experiencing a small amount of heel slip. Bottom line is you need to spend time hiking in your boots up hills and down hills long before you put them on at the trail head for a 10 hour hike.

How to treat a blister

You will find many home remedies and wives tales about ways to treat a blister, but one of the best ways is plain old common sense. If a hot spot occurs, stop and tape the area immediately if it is past the point of a hot spot you may want to use some mole skin. By doing this the rubbing action between your skin and the sock or boot is moved to the moleskin rubbing on you sock or boot. It is important to keep your feet dry, so an extra pair of socks may come in handy. Resist the urge to pop blisters, the body has put the fluid there for a reason and that is to aid in the

healing. If a blister has formed, cut the center out of the moleskin to form a doughnut so it is not putting any pressure on the blister. Some prefer to drain the blister if it is large, painful and looks like it will tear open. Use a sterile needle and insert at base of blister. If the blister has burst do not pull off the loose skin, instead clean, disinfect and cover with a non-stick dressing and tape over top. Clean and change dressing at least daily. Try and keep your feet clean cool and dry, when you stop for a break take your boots off and let your feet get some sun and fresh air.

Get some miles on your boots toughen up your feet and you will enjoy many happy blister free miles in the mountains

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