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# Safe snowshoe hiking

10 Recommendations from Club Arc Alpin

**Snowshoe tours and winter hikes are a great way to get fit, experience nature and socialise. The following recommendations serve to make snowshoe tours as enjoyable as possible, to respect nature and the environment and to effectively counteract the alpine dangers.**

## 1. Be in good health and fit

Snowshoe tours are an endurance sport. They make your heart, circulation and muscles work hard, so good health and a good assessment of your capabilities are required. Avoid having to rush but adopt a pace without anybody in your group getting out of breath.

## 2. Plan your tour carefully

Maps, guidebooks, the internet and experts are good sources of information about routes, distances, differences in altitude and the current conditions. Pay particular attention to the weather forecasts, as cold conditions, strong winds and poor visibility greatly increase the risk of accidents. Act on your own responsibility: Does the tour suit my skills?

## 3. Use complete equipment

Make sure you have the right equipment for winter conditions and your specific destination. Away from secured hiking trails, avalanche transceiver, probe and shovel are standard equipment and mountaineers should be familiar with their usage. Also first-aid kit, bivouac sack and mobile phone (European emergency number 112). Map, app and GPS support orientation.

## 4. Avalanche situation

Inform yourself in detail about the avalanche danger before the tour! What is the danger level,

where are the danger spots, what are the current avalanche problems? Do not undertake tours at danger level 4 and 5.

## 5. Weigh up the avalanche risk

Dense forest is a reliable avalanche protection. But pay attention to the transition area to open terrain and forest aisles. Base your decisions on strategic methods of risk assessment, pay attention to danger signs and danger spots - e.g. steep slopes and their run-off areas.

## 6. Orientation and breaks

Orient yourself constantly. It is important to know how to use a map, altimeter, app or GPS. Timely resting serves the relaxation and enjoyment of the landscape. Drinking, eating and making breaks are necessary to maintain performance and concentration.

## 7. Keep your distance

Keeping your distance reduces the load on the snowpack and your risk. Maintain relief distances of at least 10 metres on ascents and in the run-out area of steep slopes and cross gutters individually.

## 8. Assess the crash risk

Steep slopes, hard frozen snow cover and rocky terrain can lead to dangerous situations during snowshoe tours and winter hikes

## 9. Go in small groups

Small groups (up to max. 6 persons) are more flexible and act more coordinated than large groups. Stay with the group. Inform someone you trust of your destination, route and return time. Important note for solo hikers: minor incidents can turn into major emergencies.

## 10. Respect nature and environment

The mountains provide a valuable environment for experiencing wilderness. Enjoy this freedom! Be considerate of wild animals, respect protected areas and do not enter reforestation areas. Leave no waste and avoid noise. Use public transport or car-share to get to your starting point.

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