



## Take a Fall Hike

Move your workout from the suburban sidewalks to the majestic mountains

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**HIKING IS NOT JUST A SUMMER ACTIVITY.** Come fall, trails are less crowded, temperatures are a little more bearable and the views are just as magnificent. A fall hike is a great way to get your heart rate up, but here's the kicker: hiking often doesn't *feel* like a workout. In between the awe-inspiring vistas and the chance to socialize with friends, hiking can feel more like an adventure than exercise.

Alberta has dozens of trails perfect for day trips, so you can choose how much you want to challenge yourself. Plus, being in nature is a natural stress reliever. Several studies have shown that spending time in nature can lower blood pressure and raise one's mood.

Whatever route you're planning, keep safety top of mind. Leave a trip plan with a friend, wear supportive footwear and remember, the weather can change suddenly in the mountains. Make sure to wear and pack plenty of warm, waterproof layers.

### BE BEAR AWARE

According to John Paczkowski, senior park ecologist in the Parks Division at Alberta Environment and Parks, bears are typically active in our region until early November — he says there's even a chance you could encounter a bear into early December. As well as always carrying bear spray, keep Paczkowski's three tips in mind to stay bear safe this season.

### BE VIGILANT

"The most important tool for bear safety is your brain — be actively engaged and alert," says Paczkowski, adding hikers should be on the lookout for bear tracks, scat and signs of digging. "And don't wear earbuds!"

### HIKE WITH FRIENDS

"Being in a group of people is a larger, more intimidating presence [for a bear]. Data shows that when people hike in groups of four or more, they are very unlikely to have a serious bear encounter."

### GET LOUD

"We suggest people make noise continuously as they hike," says Paczkowski, explaining that talking, clapping and singing can all alert a bear that you're coming down the path — and give them time to change course.

### YOUR DAY HIKE CHECKLIST

- A FULL WATER BOTTLE
- SNACKS, LIKE TRAIL MIX OR GRANOLA BARS
- BEAR SPRAY
- WARM, WATER-REPELLANT CLOTHES, LIKE AN EXTRA JACKET OR PONCHO
- TOQUE AND GLOVES
- MAP, COMPASS OR GPS DEVICE
- FIRST AID KIT



### 3 DAY HIKES FOR FALL

**THE HIKE** Ptarmigan Cirque  
**LOCATION** Roughly a two-hour drive from downtown Calgary.  
**DISTANCE** 4.5-km loop  
**THE APPEAL** Get your heart rate up during this short but steep hike, and be rewarded with incredible views of the Kananaskis and Peter Lougheed Provincial Park mountains. Hike this early in the fall for views of the golden larches.

**THE HIKE** Fullerton Loop Trail  
**LOCATION** 50-minute drive from downtown Calgary.  
**DISTANCE** 6.8-km loop  
**THE APPEAL** This trail is hikeable year-round, so don't let fall flurries stop you. Hikers can expect calming forest and creek views, as well as picturesque vistas of the foothills through breaks in the trees.

**THE HIKE** Grotto Canyon  
**LOCATION** Just over an hour drive from downtown Calgary.  
**DISTANCE** 7-km return trip  
**THE APPEAL** This well-marked trail winds past a waterfall as well as pictographs that are hundreds of years old. On a rain-free day, you might also hike past rock climbers scaling the canyon's limestone walls. **LEAP**