



hikenovascotia.ca
info@hikenovascotia.ca
PO Box 31076 Gladstone
Halifax, NS B3K 5T9

Youth Hiker Distance Challenge

For Individuals



To complete the Youth Hiker Challenge and earn the Hike Nova Scotia *Youth Distance* badge, youth must hike the following distances within ONE calendar year:

Ages 5-7 = 20 km

Ages 8-10 = 30 km

Ages 11-13 = 40 km

Ages 14-17 = 50 km

Tally your kilometers by going on more than one hike, walk or snowshoe adventure. We recommend you go on several smaller hikes and accumulate them over time within a year. If you reach the required km for your age group early, you can always keep adventuring! Find a list of links to [trail maps and directions here](#).

BONUS: Youth and families can check out the '**CREATE, DISCOVER, EXPLORE & LEARN**' challenge tasks listed below. While completing these additional tasks is NOT mandatory for individual youth participating in the Hiker Challenge, the tasks are a great way to inspire creativity, build knowledge, gain practical skills and make every hike you take an adventure!

Optionally, Parents/Guardians can send in photos of youths' creations and hiking adventures to admin@HikeNovaScotia.ca to be featured on this year's **Youth Hiker's Hall of Fame!**

CREATE

- Create a **Nature Journal**: Draw a picture, write an entry or poem, or capture a special moment from your hike. Nature journals are useful companions for all ages, and for any hike! Your Nature Journal can be utilized to help complete challenges from the 'Discover, Explore & Learn' categories, too.
- Decorate a **Scope** and use it as a special tool during your hike!
- Make a **Face Finder** to search for hidden 'faces in the forest,' or create a **Leaf Slide** to discover beautiful, hidden colors in your own leaf slide show (see the PDF instructions and [leaf slide video](#) for guidance).



- Craft and display your own unique [Nature Art](#)
- Make a [Nature Craft](#): Use your own ideas or find inspiration from the provided link.

DISCOVER

- Set aside some time during your hike to enjoy your very own [Magic Spot!](#) Full written explanation (including how to lead it with your group). Be sure to take turns sharing what you found special about your own Magic Spot with your group, or have your Nature journals ready for inspiration!
- Locate and write observations about 10 different discoveries in one of the following categories:

Birds, insects, or wildlife, mushrooms or fungi, trees, seeds, plants or flowers, rivers or lakes, creature homes or habitats, or a special category of your choice!

Use a Nature Journal to record each discovery (picture or drawing, location, time of year, etc.), or use the *iNaturalist* app to record what you've found. *Note: there must be 10 different kinds of discoveries in the same category, i.e 10 different types of birds, or 10 different types of trees, etc.*

- Create a [Tree Identification Field Guide](#) to use on your future hikes.
- Take on a [Scavenger Hunt](#) or [Leaf Bingo](#) challenge!

EXPLORE

- Geocaching challenge level 1:** Sign up at www.geocaching.com and teach your youth how to find a Geocache on your next hike! Get coordinates, solve riddles, and see if your youth have what it takes to find their very first Geocache as a team. Pack a pen and get searching!
- Geocaching challenge level 2:** If your youth are natural treasure hunters, it's time to step it up. They have to find **5** Geocaches, on **at least** 2 different trails. Be sure to record your findings on the Geocaching.com
- Geocaching Challenge level 3:** Register, name and hide your group's very own Geocache! **Be sure to do this ONLY through the official Geocache website, following their rules and processes for creating new caches!**



- You don't have to travel far for adventure! Find and Hike **3 trails within your community**. Challenge yourself to hike ones you've never been to before! Apps like AllTrails can be helpful when looking for trails near you!
- Nova Scotia is home to over 140 provincial parks. Youth must visit and hike a trail in at least **5 provincial parks**.
- Hike through and explore at least **one** of Nova Scotia's 20 historic forts.
- Hike a trail with your youth and challenge them to ONLY use a map and compass as their guide. To up the challenge for older youth, set specific 'x marks the spot' or topographic points on the map they must successfully navigate to!
- Join us for a Hike NS Fall or Winter Guided Walk, happening across the province annually

LEARN

(some require hiker club/group/professional facilitation)

- Learn about the [7 Leave No Trace principles](#), and then go on a Leave No Trace themed hike where youth can put what they've learned to the test! As a bonus, take time during the hike to do a mini trail clean-up!
- Learn about the [10 Essentials](#), and discuss as a group why it's important to be prepared for every hike. Have youth work together to create their own 'Day-Hike Packing Checklist' that they can use for all their future hikes and adventures.
- Have youth take charge by planning and executing their very own hiking adventure! As a team, have them pick their trail, set the route (distance, time needed, paths, elevation, etc.), make a safety plan, organize what they need to bring (10 essentials!), check the weather and trail conditions, coordinate transportation to and from the location, and go hiking! Be sure to debrief as a team what went well, and areas where there is room for them to improve on next time. Use free information and visual resources such as found at [Parks Canada](#) or [AdventureSmart](#).
- Take part in a Hug-A-Tree and Survive program. For older youth: Take a course offered by Hike NS, or have a local expert talk to your group about hiking safety, first-aid and/or risk-management on the trail.
- As a group, offer to help a local trail building organization in building, maintaining or doing a litter clean-up on a local trail. Find trail groups throughout Nova Scotia listed [here](#).



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