

Rating Event Difficulty Level

Organizers should always provide members information about their event's degree of difficulty. Generally, we can describe a hike or other outing as easy, moderate, or strenuous. Of course, what's easy for some members is difficult for others, so organizers should be as specific as possible: distance, elevation gain, and a brief description of any challenges participants may encounter. The wording below can help.

Difficulty levels:

- **Easy:** Generally suitable for anyone who enjoys the activity. Mostly level or with a slight incline. For hikes, 5km to 8km maximum.
- **Moderate:** Generally suitable for novices who want a bit of a challenge. The terrain will involve a moderate incline and may have some steeper sections. If a hike is more than 8km consider calling it "moderate plus."
- **Moderately Strenuous:** Generally challenging for an unconditioned person. The terrain will involve a steady and often steep incline. For hikes of more than 12km, consider calling it "strenuous."
- **Strenuous:** Challenging for most participants because of either the length, the elevation gain, or both.

Specific challenges:

Event leaders can save themselves trouble by warning prospective participants about physical issues such as steep sections, loose rock, boulder fields, and water crossings, and by describing the expected pace. Also mention comfort issues, such rough terrain for bicycle rides, limited availability of water and toilets, and possible complications with traffic, transit, or parking.

The good stuff:

Postings should provide enough information so anyone who would be unprepared or endangered by the challenges to screen themselves out. But postings also should describe what's likely to be enjoyable to "sell" members on the event.

More information online:

Participants can often find more information about the event venue online. Organizers are well advised to do this online search themselves to anticipate and react to any misinformation or updates their participants may be seeing.