



The Bear Facts

Every time scouts embark on an adventure into bear country they're opening the door for a bear encounter. Bears are the animals that everyone wants to see yet doesn't want to see. It's all a matter of perspective. Spot a grizzly bear on the other side of a raging river; awesome. Walk around a blind corner and find yourself 10 feet away from a grizzly cub; not so cool anymore. Bears are naturally afraid of humans, but anytime a scout hikes into bear country, the lines between bears and humans become less defined. When you enter bear country, be prepared to deal with possible bear encounters.



CAUTION



Bears on Hiking Trails

Hiking in Bear Country

Bears are accustomed to seeing people on hiking trails. Aside from **ALWAYS** packing your bear spray, there are a few other precautions you should take while hiking in bear country.



- **BE ALERT** See the bear before you surprise it. Watch for fresh tracks, scat, and feeding sites.
- **DON'T HIKE ALONE** Avoid hiking alone if possible. As a scout, you should always be following the buddy system. A group makes more noise than a single hiker, increasing your chances of giving any bears in the area a heads up that you are there.
- **DON'T HIKE AT DAWN, DUSK, or at NIGHT** Avoid hiking at dawn, dusk, or at night: during the summer months, that's when grizzly bears are the most active.
- **MAKE NOISE** When hiking, periodically clap your hands together, spontaneously sing, or yell "Hey bear!" to alert bears that you are near. This is especially important when walking through dense vegetation, traveling upwind, near loud streams, or on windy days.
- **STAY ON MAINTAINED TRAILS** You are more likely to be attacked by a bear when hiking off-trail.
- **AVOID CARCASSES** Bears will guard and defend carcasses against other scavengers or humans. Dead ungulates will attract and hold many bears near the carcass site. If you discover a fresh carcass, leave the area quickly by the same route you approached.
- **AVOID STRONGLY SCENTED ITEMS** Bears have very sensitive noses and will seek out interesting scents. They are especially attracted to the scent of food; however, strongly scented lotions, soaps, candy, and deodorant could attract the interest of a bear. Avoid these items.
- **STAY WITH YOUR STUFF** Do not leave packs containing food unattended. Bears learn new food sources quickly.

Know Your Bears

Grizzly Bear

Color: Medium to dark brown
Body Shape: The Grizzly bear has a distinct shoulder hump.
Height: The grizzly bear average around 6.5 ft. in height
Claws: Grizzly claws are long. They can usually be seen from a distance



Black Bear

Color: Variety (Black to Light Blonde)
Body Shape: Black bears do not have a hump
Height: Slightly smaller than grizzlies
Claws: Black bear claws are short.



Bear Spray

Bear spray is proven to be highly successful at stopping aggressive behavior in bears. It is a non-lethal deterrent designed to reduce human injuries caused by bears and the number of bears killed by people in self-defense.

Bear spray uses a fine cloud of capsiem derivatives to temporarily reduce a bear's ability to breath, see, and smell, giving you time to leave the area.

Tips for Using Bear Spray:

- Keep bear spray accessible in a quick draw holster, not stored in your pack.
- You don't have to be a good shot with bear spray. Just put up a cloud of spray between you and the charging bear.



- Bear spray is NOT like insect repellent. It does not work as a deterrent when applied to people or equipment.
- If a Bear Charges You
 - Remove the safety clip.
 - Aim slightly down and adjust for wind.
 - Begin spraying when the charging bear is 30-60 feet away.
 - Spray at the charging bear so that the bear must pass through a cloud of spray.
 - Keep spraying until the bear changes direction.
 - If the bear continues to charge, spray into its face.
 - Leave the area promptly.



Bear Attacks

How Do I Survive a Bear Attack?

Experts recommend that hikers in bear country carry with them bear pepper spray. This stuff will usually stop a bear in its tracks and allow you time to escape. Bear spray is your first line of defense in all bear attack scenarios. In the unlikely event that bear spray doesn't work, or if you don't have bear spray, there are two techniques to use to help you survive an attack based on the type of bear.

Grizzly Bear Attack

- 1 **DON'T RUN!** When you run, the bear thinks you're prey and will continue chasing you, so stand your ground. You can't outrun a bear.
- 2 **Drop to the ground in the fetal position and cover the back of your neck with your hands.**
- 3 **Play dead.** Grizzlies will usually stop attacking when they feel there's no longer a threat. Once the bear is done and leaves, continue to play dead. Grizzlies are known for walking around to see if their victim will get back up.

Black Bear Attack

- 1 **STAND YOUR GROUND** and make lots of noise. Black bears often bluff when attacking.
- 2 **Don't climb a tree.** Black bears are excellent climbers and love to snack on scouts in trees.
- 3 **Fight back.** If the black bear actually attacks, fight back. Use anything and everything as a weapon; rocks, sticks, fists, and your teeth. Aim your blows on the bear's face (particularly the eyes and snout). When a black bear sees that their victim is willing to fight to the death, they'll usually just give up.



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