



Sun safety

Scout Ambassador Steve Backshall shares his tips on protecting yourself from the potential dangers of hot environments

The unusually high temperatures we experienced in the UK last summer were a reminder that you don't have to go abroad to be at risk from the effects of extreme heat, like heatstroke, dehydration and hyperthermia. Scout Ambassador and adventurer Steve Backshall has been on expeditions in hot environments like deserts. We asked him the best ways to spot the dangers and how to stay safe anywhere it's hot, whether you're on a camp, an expedition or travelling abroad.

Q. What is hyperthermia?

A. Hyperthermia is the opposite of hypothermia – it's when your core body temperature rises by a few degrees. It's very dangerous, and very difficult to treat in the field.

Q. How do you avoid dehydration and hyperthermia?

A. Drink little and often. Try to travel during the coolest parts of the day: morning, evening, even at night if possible. Make sure you cover your neck and your head to protect them from the sun.

Q. What are the warning signs of dehydration?

A. The first and foremost sign is simply being thirsty. But by the time you've got bright orange wee, it's too late.

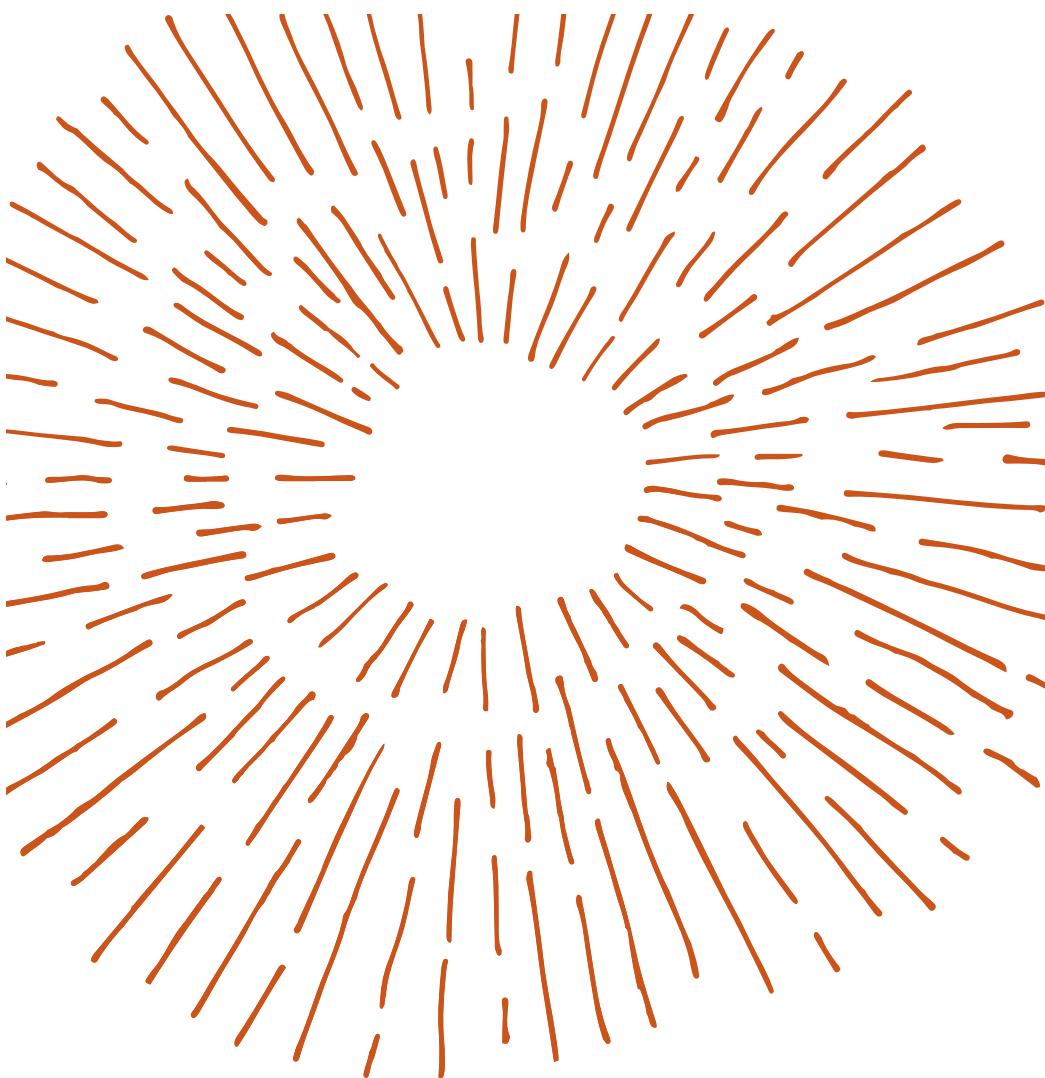
Q. How do you recognise the signs of heatstroke and heat exhaustion?

A. Making bad decisions, stumbling, mumbling, being unsure on your feet, and being grumpy and irritable – those are all signs. So it helps to know the people you are with, because they might just be a grumpy person...

Q. Would you still recommend travelling in hot climates?

A. As long as you're careful and take the proper steps to protect yourself and the rest of your team, it can be a great experience. Don't be afraid of doing an expedition in the desert, because they truly are some of the most extraordinary parts of our planet.





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Outcomes

All sections will find out how to spot the signs of hyperthermia, dehydration and heatstroke, and how to survive in hot conditions. They will also learn how to prevent forest fires from breaking out.

Taking it further

Find out what to do if a wildfire breaks out.

More information

For more badge resources, activity sheets and safety guidance visit: scouts.org.uk/victorinox.



How to prevent wildfires

Most wildfires are caused by people and are therefore preventable. They are much more likely to happen during the summer months, so remember these steps when you head out on your next adventure.



- Consider if you need a fire. Is there an alternative? Gas stoves keep the heat source off the ground. Could you take food that doesn't need cooking?
- Don't make a fire if it's windy.
- Clear the area of flammable debris before making a fire.
- Remember that the fire may spread under the surface.
- Check conditions before you go and find out if fires have been temporarily banned.
- Avoid areas at risk, like those experiencing drought.
- Keep campfires small and under control at all times.
- Never leave fires unattended.
- Always have a fire bucket close by.
- Light your fire away from tents, trees or scrub.
- Make sure your fire is fully extinguished afterwards.