

Let's Get Personal Ladies!

As in personal hygiene on when you are in the woods. To keep things delicate, let us refer to liquid waste as Number 1, solid waste as Number 2, and Personal Hygiene Products as Number 3.

Number 1 seems pretty straight forward and the one that occurs the most often, right? You bring tissue or wipes with you, step away from others to a secluded spot behind a tree or rock 150' or 75 adult steps and relieve yourself. Used tissue/wipes are placed in a Ziploc bag that is used for this purpose only (perhaps you prefer the black ones that keep the items discreetly hidden: <http://hucksterpackaging.com/black-ziplock-bags.htm>). And the bag is returned to your pack for proper disposal after the hike. Some prefer the “drip-dry” method where there is no need for tissues/wipes. In this case, it is not a bad idea to utilize a panty liner to protect your clothing. Others prefer to wear something like Depends that are absorbent, keep moisture away and you don't even have to stop!

Number 2 also seems straight forward and is generally avoided if possible. However, when it is necessary there is often a limited time to act. A friend of mine calls herself the “Poopsmith” and keeps her trowel on the outside of her pack with a biner. Here is one option that weighs just 3 ounces and costs less than \$5.00: <http://www.rei.com/product/799009/gsi-outdoors-cathole-sanitation-trowel>. She can get to it quickly and so can others in her hiking party if they need to. Again, step away from others to a secluded spot behind a tree or rock 150' or 75 adult steps and dig a cat hole. You do not need to dig an entire outhouse hole – a small hole is sufficient and takes little time to dig. Tissues and wipes are disposed of as noted in Number 1 above in your Ziploc bag and the “material” is covered with dirt. You can use a stick to push the “material” in the hole if you missed. This allows you to keep your trowel clean and used for putting the dirt back in the hole and covering.

Number 3 is avoided by many, but hey if you like being out there, it will happen from time to time. For those who plan longer mountaineering trips, speaking with your doctor to obtain medication so this does not occur can happen. It is not always foolproof though, so plan accordingly. You would hate to be climbing Kilimanjaro and not have any of the needed items with you! Handle all used feminine hygiene items as you would for number 1 above. Place them in your black Ziploc bag along with all product wrappers for proper disposal after the hike.

Wipes can do double duty to wipe your hands with or you can carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer.

Of special interest – location, location, location. If everyone uses trailheads, trail junctions and summits you soon have an outhouse rather than a nice trailhead, trail junction or summit. A little pre-planning can avoid the need. You know you are passing through the last town before the trailhead, make a pit stop. Still need to go when you get to the trailhead? Try to make it 7 or 8 minutes up the trail if there is no port a john or privy available. Please step off the trail at least 150' (just about 75 paces). You know you are getting close to the summit? Perhaps you are 10 or 15 minutes away from the summit – make a pit stop.

Thanks for taking time to consider the personal side of being out there, ladies. And thanks for not leaving anything behind in the woods except for that one item that is covered with dirt. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!