

VHF Hilltopping Getting Started

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Why VHF Hilltopping?

- “Be” the DX
 - Have your own mini DX-pedition
 - See new and scenic places
- Work VHF contest
- Win awards from PNW VHF S
- It’s like SOTA but without hiking
- Use, test and improve your equipment

Hilltopper vs. Rover

- Hilltopper
 - Stop'n shop
 - Park on high point, set up beam
- Rover
 - Run'n gun
 - Drive through grids for multipliers

Weak Signal Operating

- Weak signal operating refers to long distance communications that requires an unusual combination of luck, skill and equipment on the VHF and up frequencies.
- When everything clicks, you can reach beyond 400 miles on all bands up to 10GHz.
- This is not "low power". You want the most transmitting power and high-gain antennas that you can afford.
- Nearly all weak signal operators participate in scheduled nets and contests, exchanging locations via grid squares.

Basic Starting Stuff

- 2m SSB transceiver
 - TS-480r, \$100 (mine is for sale)
- 2m beam
 - Cushcraft 3-elt, \$100 (mine is for sale)
- GPS
 - Garmin, Tomcat, Smart Phone, etc.
- Compass

Finding Places

- Any hilltop!
- Choose a grid square ...
- Choose a drivable spot
- See “Web Resources” page

Before You Get There

- Off-net activity is low
- CQ only during contests
- Announce your trip on PNWVHFS lists
- Beacon your trip on APRS

When You Get There

- Sunday morning net, 8 am
- Tuesday evening net, 8 pm
- Net is on 144.240 MHz SSB, horizontal
- Nat Calling is 144.200
- Keep track of your 6-digit grid square
- Exchange callsign and grid square
- Take pictures 😊

Better Stuff

- Rig Yaesu FT-897d
- Amp Mirage 10
- Antenna 7-elt M2 beam
- Analyzer MFJ-259B
- SWR Daiwa CN-100
- Mast 18' telescoping pole
- GPS AvMap G5
- APRS Kenwood D710
- Camera Sony a350
- Car 4wd

VHF Hilltopping Web Resources

- Barry K7BWH www.coilgun.info/rover
- Lynn N7CFO www.n7cfo.com/vhf/vhfuhf.htm
- PNW VHF Society www.pnwvhfs.org
- Strategies www.w1rt.us/w3iy/strat.htm

- Grid Square Maps <http://no.nonsense.ee/qthmap>
- Grid Square Locator <http://f6fvy.free.fr/qthLocator/fullScreen.php>
- Google Earth <http://earth.google.com>
- High Point Finder <http://peakery.com>

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