



THE LANGDALE PIKES.

Start / Finish - The Langdale Estate (LA22 9JD)

Distance	Difficulty	Ascent	Map
5.5 miles	Hard	740m	Explorer OL6

SUMMARY.

This walk explores one of Lakeland's most well-known mountain landmarks – the Langdale Pikes. These hills are justifiably well-walked: their cliffs, craggy buttresses and river-gorges give them the feel of much bigger mountains, and the views from their summits are superb in clear weather. However, they are considerably higher than the fells covered in other walks of this series, and some sections are rocky and steep; this route is suitable for fit, experienced and well-equipped walkers with a degree of sure-footedness, who are able to accurately navigate with map and compass, should the weather turn.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION.

1. Start at the National Trust Stickle Ghyll car park, just past the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel & Stickle Barn, 2 ½ miles west of the Langdale Estate on the main Great Langdale Valley Road. Turn left at the bus shelter and information boards in the car park to follow a path that doglegs through stone walls, and heads uphill, past a National Trust "Stickle Ghyll" plaque on a boulder. Follow the pitched path up the left bank of Stickle Ghyll, passing a waterfall, and the birches and oaks lining this initial stretch of the river.
2. Bear right over the footbridge and then follow the path up the right side of the Ghyll. It soon crosses a stile and a stream, passes through a gap in a wall and forks; continue to follow the path up the right bank of the Ghyll, heading towards a small stand of young pines, and ignoring the paths re-crossing the Ghyll to the left, and climbing steeply up the hillside to the right. Pass the pines and continue uphill. The path eventually becomes steeper, more broken, and bounded closely by the river on the left and a band of short crags to the right; these crags encroach increasingly onto the line of the path until they meet the river and bar the way, just after an awkward rocky step in the path.
3. Cross the river by a line of stepping stone boulders and continue up the final, rocky path on the left side of the ghyll to Stickle Tarn. At the tarn, turn right across the ghyll by a line of large stepping stone boulders, and then left to follow the path skirting the southeast shore of the tarn. After crossing two sets of stepping stones and a stream, the path passes an erratic boulder and rises gently away from the tarn to follow the right bank of another small ghyll.
4. At a levelling-off in the path, take a left fork, by a cairn that fords the ghyll and climbs steeply west up a rocky path to gain the ridge of Pavey Ark, passing several cairns. As the path levels out at the top, it bears sharply left by a small cairn. Follow it the short distance to the summit rocks of Pavey Ark with its panoramic views.
5. Leave the summit on a small path that contours south-southwest across stretches of rock, and small boulder fields. Once clear of the cliffs of Pavey Ark, it veers south and then south-southeast, heading more directly towards Harrison Stickle. Follow the path as it steepens and winds up the east side of Harrison Stickle to gain the top. The views are even more extensive than on Pavey, and the sea to the west can be seen on a clear day. On leaving, take a rocky path southwest for 40 or 50 paces before turning sharply right down to a col.
6. Turn left here, at the cairn, heading west-southwest down a steep slope. As it begins to level off, there is an intersection of paths. Down to and across the stream at the bottom of the slope, following the path that heads west, after a short meander, towards Pike O'Stickle. As you near the summit cone itself, a stepped path winds steeply up and around the northern side of the Pike. As this path arrives at the northwest edge of the summit cone, the only way further up is a short scramble up to your left, which brings you out on the summit. If you decide to leave the scramble for another day, you will still be rewarded by magnificent views across a sweep of fells to the north.
7. On leaving, retrace your steps down the stepped path. Back at the foot of the summit cone and the pitched path, take a right fork leads along the south-western edge of the Langdale Pikes massif and to the summit of Loft Crag. On descending Loft Crag, follow the path as it winds down to the left before contouring back rightwards, again following the southwestern edge of the Pikes.
8. By a large cairn, the path swings further right and steeply downwards, into the uninviting descent route. Don't worry: the angle and footing soon improves as the path swings round to the south west, before levelling off entirely for a while as it follows the crest of a gentle spur.
9. Before reaching the rocky knoll that blocks the spur, the path begins to veer down to the right past several small cairns. Follow this route as it encircles the obstacles on the ridge itself. Where the path moves back left, further down, there are magnificent views down to the gorge and waterfalls of Dungeon Ghyll. As the valley rises to meet you, the path crosses the ghyll where it emerges from its defile. Cross a stile and, a little further downslope, take a gate on the left. A few hundred yards further downhill brings you back to the path on which you started the walk; turn right and regain the car park.





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