

THE SUN HITS HARDER UP HIGH

LESS ATMOSPHERE, MORE DAMAGE

Here's something many people don't realize: the higher you go in elevation, the more aggressive the sun becomes. For every 1,000 feet you ascend, UV exposure increases by about 6 to 10 percent. That means if you're at 6,000 feet, you're soaking up roughly 36 percent more UV radiation than you would be at sea level.

But it doesn't stop there. If you find yourself at 9,000 feet, UV exposure jumps by about 42 percent compared to sea level. That's not just a little extra sun, it's a serious increase in the intensity of harmful UV rays hitting your skin, dramatically raising your risk of sunburn and long-term damage.

Why does this happen? At higher elevations, the air is thinner, so there's less atmosphere to absorb and scatter UV radiation before it reaches the ground. At sea level, the denser atmosphere acts like a partial shield, but as you climb mountains or ski at high altitudes, that protective layer weakens. UV rays have a much easier time reaching your skin, making them stronger and more damaging.



This effect is even worse when combined with reflective surfaces like snow, which can bounce back up to 85% of UV rays. On a sunny day at high altitude, you're not only getting direct UV from above, but also a powerful blast reflected up from the snow, effectively doubling your exposure.

When you're high in the mountains or cruising at elevation, make sure your skin protection is as high as your altitude. Use broad-spectrum SPF 30+ (or higher), wear a wide-brimmed hat, UV-blocking sunglasses, and protective clothing. Stay safe, stay protected, and enjoy those stunning views, but always remember: the higher you go, the harsher the sun gets.