



The cairns are to be reliable trail markers in terrain that can be difficult to navigate in poor visibility or bad weather.



These conditions still apply - and maybe even more so today than before as hikers nowadays are not as well acquainted with the paths as people used to be.

Location: When building a new cairn, it is crucial to get the position right - to serve as a good guide, the cairn must be visible in the terrain and connect to the other cairns on the path. A good starting point is to examine the old topographical maps on kortal.fo, where you can see most of the old cairns.

Materials: When the right position is found, the next step is to find a piece of ground that can carry a cairn. A cairn can easily weigh more than a metric ton (a cubic meter of basaltic rock weighs around 1.7 metric tons). Therefore, it is crucial to build the cairn on firm and steady ground. Bedrock or a large rock can form a part of the cairn itself. The ground cannot be made of soil or of other loose substances that can fracture or wash away.

If appropriate rocks cannot be found on site, they must be brought over from elsewhere. The amount of available material should never be the deciding factor of where to build.

It is necessary to consider how large the cairn should be from the onset. It is a good idea to try to estimate the amount of material needed and the work required beforehand.

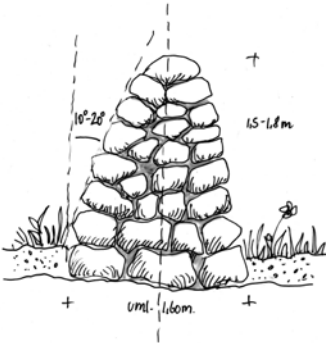
Size and shape: A cairn is not just a pile of rocks; it is a construction or a piece of work that can last generations. The cairn is observed by many passing hikers, and there is a special value placed on the cairn and its historical significance. For this reason, it is important to remember that the cairn should sit well in the landscape and be built as elegantly as possible.

There are variations in the appearance of cairns across the Faroe Islands. The size and shape of cairns can also vary on the same route. For example, it is common to build a large, beautiful cairn in an especially visible place, such as in a pass. The cairns should be built to be on par with the other cairns in the area.

For the most part, there are enough cairns on the old cairn pathways, which is why the work is primarily about rebuilding and restoring crumbled cairns in their original location

BUILDING PROCESS

Building a cairn is basically about placing one rock on top of another in gradually smaller circles – in the end, you have a cone-shaped cairn of the desired height.



The outer edge of the cairn is bevelled.



The rocks are positioned to lock each other in place, meaning that each rock touches several other rocks that together form a strong and coherent stone wall.

Foundation: It is imperative that the ground under the cairn is stable and secure. Any loose material should be dug out and be discarded in a not conspicuous way.

The foundation rocks, i.e. the rocks at the bottom, should be as large as possible, and they should rest solidly on the ground.

The cairn "walls": The size and shape of the rocks in a cairn will vary, but, on the whole, they should not be too small. The rocks should, as far as possible, touch the surrounding rocks. For increased stability, some rocks can also reach the core of the cairn. When building cairns, smaller rocks should not be used to wedge larger rocks, as the smaller rocks will eventually break away and thereby diminish the cairn's stability, which could lead to a collapse.

The core: The core of the cairn is built at the same time as the cairn walls. Soil or lumps of earth should never be used as stuffing. The core is important for the stability of the cairn and supports the other stones. The core may consist of rocks of varying shapes and sizes.

As the work proceeds, regularly stop and observe the cairn from a distance to make sure that it is well structured and pleasing to look at.