

Walking & Hiking Fitness Guide

Walking, fitness and nutrition suggestions
to help you prepare for a Leisurely to
Moderate walk, a Challenging trek
or a Tough adventure with
Exodus, the world's leading
trekking company.





Exodus Walking & Trekking Fitness Recommendations



Well done on booking or seriously considering an Exodus walk or trek. At this point, you may be asking how fit you need to be. For most of our walks and treks just getting outdoors and walking for an extended period of time on hilly trails should be enough preparation if you are active and in good health. However, you will enhance your walking and trekking experience if you feel confident that your fitness level will match the challenge. Following a few training recommendations is the perfect way to get the most from your walking holiday.

Whether you already have a regular fitness routine or are starting from scratch, we have plenty of suggestions to help you prepare based on our grading system. There is no need to be overwhelmed or to be stressed if you cannot follow a training plan; do what you can in the time you have available. After all you are going on holiday, albeit an active one. Before embarking on any exercise routine you are advised to consult with your doctor. If you have a heart condition, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, joint or muscular issues, please seek professional medical and training advice before using this guide.

Our fitness plans

LEVEL 1 PLAN



Suitable for trek Level 1-3, Leisurely or Moderate treks

SEE PAGES 4-5

LEVEL 2 PLAN



Suitable for trek Level 4-6, Challenging treks

SEE PAGES 6-7

LEVEL 3 PLAN



Suitable for trek Level 6-9, Tough or Tough plus treks

SEE PAGES 8-9

Preparation basics for all walks & treks

Cardiovascular (CV) or Aerobic Fitness exercise is needed to condition your heart and lungs and to build stamina for long days on the trails. If you already enjoy swimming, cycling, running or rowing then increasing your time or intensity in these activities will be great training. Nevertheless, the most appropriate cardio preparation is to progressively increase your walking time and intensity with hills and a faster pace (remember your pace on the actual trek should be slow and comfortable, especially at higher altitudes).

The level you work at and the effort you make will depend on your existing cardiovascular fitness and the grade of your trek. We have 3 fitness training plans based on our walking grades. LEVEL 1 is for Leisurely and Moderate walks. LEVEL 2 is for Challenging treks. LEVEL 3 is for Tough treks and Expeditions. Easier walks need less effort and preparation while a tougher trek will require you to push yourself harder in training. On the next page, a self-assessment chart will help you determine whether you are putting the appropriate amount of effort into your cardiovascular training. Once your cardiovascular fitness improves and the same exercises become easier, attempt to progress your cardio training by either increasing pace, duration or gradient.

Training walks will be more useful if you wear your trip kit. Good quality boots, a durable waterproof jacket, comfortable layered walking clothing and a well fitted daypack are essential. Carrying a camel back or water bladder is an efficient way of keeping hydrated when doing outdoor cardio like walking. Adjustable hiking poles can be an advantage with pre-existing joint and spine conditions, when carrying heavy packs, steep descents, advancing age and enhancing balance on uncertain terrain. If using poles, make sure you feel comfortable with them by practising the correct technique of holding them close to the body's line of fall. Poles should be adjusted to a height where the hands are lower than the elbow.



Self-assess your cardio effort and how you should feel

Exertion Level

You will feel this way when:

Extremely Light to Light Activity/Effort

You can easily carry on a conversation.
Easy normal breathing.

STRETCHING This is how you should feel when stretching for all walking grades and training plans

Moderately Light Activity/Effort

Feels like you can maintain for hours.
Comfortable breathing and conversation.

WARMING UP Effort for all training plans

LEVEL 1 Steady cardio sessions and long walks on flat sections

Moderate Activity/Effort

Deeper breathing. Pausing in conversation.
Light sweat.

LEVEL 1 Medium cardio sessions and when walking up hills on long walks

LEVEL 2 Steady cardio session and long walks

LEVEL 3 Steady cardio sessions & flat section of long walks

Fairly Hard Exercise/Effort

Breathing heavy. Conversation very broken.
Sweat very noticeable.

LEVEL 2 Intervals, when increasing incline or speed

LEVEL 3 Long walks when you are ascending hills or mountains, especially with a loaded pack

Vigorous Hard Exercise - Running Pace

Short of breath. Speaking difficult.
Can't maintain intensity. Sweating heavily.

LEVEL 3 Intervals should feel this way when increasing intensity with speed and gradient

Strength - Resistance Exercises

These will help prepare the main muscles used whilst walking/trekking. Walking on uneven hilly terrain works muscles not used in everyday life. There are more up, down and side-ways movements than you do in other activities. Simple body weight exercises can help strengthen your leg, back and core muscles if you are fairly new to resistance training or if you are doing a Leisurely walk to Challenging trek. Gym equipment and heavier loads are recommended for Tough and Tough Plus treks training plans. Aim to keep most resistance movements and exercises controlled and steady. Try to complete the recommended number of repetitions followed by a 1-2 minute rest before moving on to another set of repetitions of the same or a different exercise. For all the strength exercises please take care not to flex the spine or round the shoulders. Maintain good posture by keeping your eyes focused on the horizon, shoulders back and chin and chest proud. Tightening your stomach muscles should help you keep your posture strong during these exercises.

Warm-up & Cool down

Remember to do 5-10 minutes of any easy cardio exercise to raise your pulse slowly before your main exercise session. This gets the blood flowing to your muscles so your body will not be shocked with too much work too soon. At the end of your cardio session slow down your heart by gradually decreasing the speed and intensity to the point where your breathing returns to normal. Then perform stretches.

Stretches

Stretches for muscles used in your walks and exercise routines are important to minimise injuries and encourage flexibility for your walking/trekking holiday. See page 10 for basic stretches.

Rest, Recovery and Tapering

It is critical to rest after several days of exercise. Never do two days of strength sessions in a row and always take a rest day off after your long cardio session. Sports massage can also help with recovery. Five to seven days before your walk or trek, taper your training by reducing the length and intensity of your exercise to minimum level. This reduction and rest allows your body to recover and re-energise for the actual event. This resting phase is important to ensure you are in the best possible shape for your holiday.

Lifestyle Fitness

Add to your preparation with everyday activities that will help condition your legs, core and back. Ignore the lift and take the stairs instead. Walk home carrying your groceries. Mow the lawn, pull weeds, do the housework with more intensity. Remember to always bend your knees and not flex your lower back too much. Allow extra time and power walk to the office or shops.

LEVEL 1 PLAN

Leisurely & Moderate Walks & Treks

USE THIS If you do not have a regular exercise routine but can already easily walk for 25 minutes.

Suitable for



eg: The Amalfi Coast (trip code: TDA)



- ▶ Always work at a pace in which you can comfortably hold a conversation except when walking up hills. When a session becomes too easy make it 10% longer. Wear your day pack and walking clothes in outdoor training sessions.
- ▶ **Steady cardio** can be a walk to the shops or work or on the treadmill. Swimming, cycling, tennis or rowing could also be used as steady cardio unless walking is specified.
- ▶ **Medium effort cardio** sessions will be a faster and/ or a hilly walk or a light jog (preferably with your daypack on). Walk or jog on a treadmill at an incline if going outdoors is not possible.
- ▶ **Longer walking cardio** training can be done at a comfortable pace, but should be on hilly terrain.
- ▶ **LEVEL 1 strength exercises** on the next page. Optional gym equipment explained on page 12.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week		Steady cardio & strength		Medium effort cardio		Long walking cardio	
ONE	Rest	Steady cardio 30-40 minutes & Level 1 strength exercises	Rest	30-45 minute walk on hills and at a faster pace	Rest	Steady cardio 30-40 minutes & Level 1 strength exercises	Rest
TWO	Rest	Steady cardio 30-45 minutes & Level 1 strength exercises	Rest	35-50 minute walk on hills and at a faster pace	Rest	Rest	1 ½ hour of comfortably paced gentle hill walking
THREE	Rest	Steady cardio 35-45 minutes & Level 1 strength exercises	Rest	40-60 minute walk on hills and at a faster pace	Rest	Level 1 strength exercises with 10 minute cardio warm up before	2-3 hours comfortably paced hill walking or treadmill
FOUR	Rest	Steady cardio 40-60 minutes & Level 1 strength exercises	Rest	60-70 minute walk on hills and at a faster pace	Rest	Level 1 strength exercises with 10 minute cardio warm up before	3-4 hours steady pace hill walking with breaks
FIVE	Rest	Steady cardio 40-60 minutes & Level 1 strength exercises	Rest	60-90 minute walk on hills and at a faster pace	Rest	Level 1 strength exercises with 10 minute cardio warm up before	3½-5 hours steady pace hill walking with breaks
SIX	Rest	Steady walk outdoors 40 -60 minutes	Rest	30-60 minute walk on hills and at a faster pace	Rest	Rest	3-5 hours steady hill walking with breaks

You are now ready to enjoy your Exodus Adventure!

Exodus Trail Fitness Plan

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LEVEL 1 STRENGTH EXERCISES

Exercise: 10-14 Repetitions / 1-2 Circuits

Options & Progressions

BENCH STEP UP

Face bench with back straight and ears over shoulders. Stand upright on bench on a single leg for a moment while raising other leg so the thigh is parallel with the seat. Step off the bench with both legs (if you are not stable on one leg put both legs on bench).

Add light dumbbells, water bottles or wear your day pack. Use low park bench, steps at home or aerobic step.



SIDE LUNGE TO BALANCE

Stand tall with feet together. Step out wide to the side. Keep chest, head and feet facing forward while bending the knee of the leg you are stepping with. Other leg is straight. From this position drive off of bent leg. Shift to the opposite leg and balance on that single leg. Repeat

Harder option is to side step to a BOSU at gym or hold light weights.



SQUAT

Start with feet just outside hips distance. Keep head upright and shoulders broad throughout the movement. Shift weight to heels. Bend at the ankle, knee and hip. Lower yourself to a seated position. Aim to get thighs parallel with the floor. Push through heels to stand. Repeat.

Easier option is to hold a pole to balance. Harder option is to hold dumbbells or bottles by your side.



LUNGE FORWARD (optional pole support)

With head and chest upright and back straight step forward with your right leg slowly descending by bending your rear knee 90 degrees. Use thigh and buttock muscles to push you back to standing. Repeat with opposite leg.

Harder option: After forward lunge use the same leg and step back into a lunge.



FLOOR COBRA

With stomach and buttocks tight, lift chest off the floor, lift arms up wide. Rotate thumbs to the ceiling. Pause a few seconds, and then relax. Repeat.

Alternatively use a Swiss Ball. Lie face down with hips and stomach under ball and raise chest.



WALL PRESS UP

Stand two to three feet from a wall or large tree trunk. Place hands on wall shoulder distance apart. Keep body straight and lean into the wall. Push into the wall with hands whilst squeezing chest muscles. Repeat.

Progress to standing further from wall or placing hands on bench or knees on the floor.



LEVEL 2 PLAN

Challenging Treks

USE THIS If you can already comfortably walk outdoors for a few hours or participate in some form of cardiovascular exercise a few times a week. Progress your preparation with this plan if you have followed and are comfortable with the Level 1 exercises as on previous page.

Suitable for



eg: Mt Toubkal Climb (trip code: TMM)



- ▶ **Steady cardio** can be a walk to the shops or office or on the treadmill. Swimming, cycling, tennis or rowing could also be used as steady cardio unless walking is specified. You should exercise at a level where you experience deeper breathing, brief pauses in conversation and a light sweat.
- ▶ **Interval cardio** sessions. You can always use office stairs and hilly urban parks to increase intensity for interval sessions. Intervals should feel like hard exercise with your breathing heavier, conversation difficult and sweat very noticeable. Between intervals return to a more comfortable pace and easy breathing.
- ▶ **Longer walking cardio** training can be done at a moderate pace, but should be on hilly terrain. Stairs and hill repeats are great; if you can't always get to the countryside you can simulate a long hill walking sessions by climbing 3-4 flights of stairs followed by 10 minutes easy walking. Repeat the cycle for several hours on long training days. Be certain to wear the walking shoes, clothes and day pack that you plan to use on your holiday.
- ▶ **Level 2 strength training exercises** are on the next page. Optional gym equipment described on page 12.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week		Steady cardio & strength		Intervals	Strength		Long walking cardio
ONE	Rest	Steady pace cardio 30-45 minutes & Level 2 strength exercises	Rest	30-45 minute brisk walk or jog. Increase intensity for 90 seconds, slow for 3 minutes, repeat 5-7 times	Level 2 strength exercise with a 10 minute cardio warm up before	Rest	2-3 hours of hill walking. Ascend approximately 200-400 metres in total
TWO / THREE	Rest	Steady pace cardio 30-45 minutes & Level 2 strength exercises	Rest	35-50 minute brisk walk or light jog outdoors. Increase intensity for 2 min, easier for 3 min, repeat 5-7 times	Level 2 strength exercise with a 10 minute cardio warm up before	Rest	2½-4 hours hill walking. Aim to ascend approximately 300-500 metres in total
FOUR / FIVE	Rest	Steady brisk walk 35-50 minutes & Level 2 strength exercises	Rest	45-60 minute brisk walk or light jog outdoors. Increase intensity for 2 min, easier for 3 min, repeat 6-8 times	Level 2 strength exercise with a 10 minute cardio warm up before	Rest	3-5 hours hill walking. Aim to ascend approximately 400-600 metres in total
SIX	Rest	Steady brisk walk 45-60 minutes (outdoors trails preferred)	Rest	45 -60 minute brisk walk or light jog outdoors. Increase intensity for 2 min, easier for 2 min. repeat 6-8 times	Level 2 strength exercise with a 10 minute cardio warm up before	Rest	4-7 hours hill walking. Aim to ascend approximately 600-1000 metres in total
SEVEN	Rest	Steady brisk walk 45-60 minutes (outdoors trails are preferred)	Rest	60-90 minute steady brisk walk outdoors on treadmill at 3-8% incline	Rest	Rest	2-4 hours of hill walking. Ascend approximately 200-400 metres in total

You are now ready to enjoy your Exodus Adventure!

Exodus Trail Fitness Plan

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LEVEL 2 STRENGTH EXERCISES

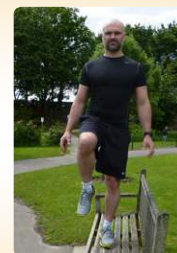
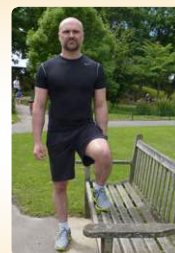
Exercise: 12-16 repetitions & 1-3 sets

Options & Progressions

STEP UP SIDEWAYS

Stand parallel with the bench. Keep back straight and step sideways on to bench or step. Bring up the other foot and hold at 90 degree angle. Try holding weights at your side. Step back down to standing position and repeat.

Add light dumbbells, water bottles or wear your fully loaded day pack. Progress to raising weights overhead as you step up.



ELBOW TO HAND PLANK

Lie face down. Align elbows underneath shoulders with tummy drawn in and back straight, raise body off floor. Only elbows, toes and ball of feet remain on floor. Go from elbows to hands by keeping spine long & straighten arms. Repeat 5-10 times.

For more of a challenge lift one leg.



SINGLE LEG SQUAT

Stand on one leg, knee slightly bent. Lower hips & bend knee 70 degrees into single leg squat while reaching down towards planted foot. Keep chest proud & head forward. Come back to standing on one leg while bringing hand to ear level. Repeat 12-16 times. Switch legs.

You can use a dumbbell or plastic bottle filled with water, flour, sand or sugar. Raising weight to head is optional.



WALKING LUNGE WITH ROTATION

Step forward with chest proud & head upright. Descend slowly by bending both front and back knee 90 degrees until back knee hovers a few inches above floor. Rotate torso toward front leg. Lunge forward with opposite leg.

You can hold any light object such as a rolled towel or cushion if a ball is not available.



SIDE HOP & STABILISE

Balance on one leg with knee slightly bent. Hop laterally to the opposite leg and balance for 2 seconds on the single leg. Then hop sideways to other leg. Attempt to hop side to side and not let both feet touch the ground during set.

For more challenge hold weights or wear daypack.



SQUAT TO CABLE/ BAND ROW

Stand tall with feet hip width apart. Hold band in rowing position with elbows pointed behind body. Slowly bend knees and lower hips into a squat while releasing row and straightening arms. Return to standing and row.

Wrap a resistance band around pole or banisters at chest height. At the gym use a cable machine.



LEVEL 3 PLAN

Tough & Tough Plus Treks

USE THIS If you have previous trekking experience and solid fitness. This plan will help give you an advantage at higher altitudes and strengthen muscles for steep ascents, descents, lateral movements and burst of power.

Suitable for



eg: Mera Peak Expedition (trip code: TNB)



- ▶ Steady cardio walk can be outdoors or on a treadmill with a gentle to moderate incline at a steady brisk pace. You should exercise at a level where you experience deeper breathing, brief pauses in conversation and a light sweat.
- ▶ Interval cardio sessions can be done by increasing intensity with more speed or with a challenging incline for a few minutes. Intervals should feel like vigorous hard exercise with shortness of breath, difficulty speaking and heavy sweating. Between intervals return to a more comfortable pace and easy breathing.
- ▶ Longer walking cardio training can be done at a moderate pace in the hills or mountain. To prepare your body for the demands of a high altitude trek you can make your training more challenging by loading your pack with heavy books or weights. Stairs and hill repeats are great; if you can't always get to the countryside you can simulate a long hill walking sessions by climbing 3-4 flights of stairs followed by 10 minutes easier walking. Repeat the cycle for several hours on long cardio training walks.
- ▶ Level 3 strength exercises are on the next page. Optional gym equipment explained on page 12.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week		Steady CV & Strength	Intervals		Steady CV & Strength		Longer cardio walk
ONE	Rest	Steady 45-60 minute brisk walk at an incline or with a loaded pack or other cardio & Level 2 or 3 exercises.	30-45 minute fast walk, jog or run outdoors. Push intensity for 90 seconds, then slower for 2 min. Repeat 5-8 times.	Rest	Level 2 or 3 strengthening exercises & 10 minute light cardio warm-up.	Rest	3-5 hours of hill walking with loaded day pack or use treadmill hill programme. Aim to ascend 500-700 metres.
TWO / THREE	Rest	Steady 45-60 minute brisk walk at an incline or with a loaded pack & Level 3 strength exercises.	40-50 minute brisk walk or jog. Push intensity for 2 minutes, then an easier pace for 3 minutes. Repeat 5-8 times.	Rest	Steady 20-30 minute brisk walk or jog at an incline and with a loaded pack & Level 3 strength exercises.	Rest	4-5 hours of hill or mountain walking with day pack. Aim to ascend 700-800 metres.
FOUR / FIVE	Rest	Steady 30-45 minute brisk walk or jog at an incline and with a loaded pack & Level 3 exercise.	40-50 minute fast walk, jog or run. Push intensity for 2 minutes, then an easier pace for 2 minutes. Repeat 6-8 times	Rest	Steady 20-30 minute brisk walk or jog at an incline and with a loaded pack & Level 3 strength exercises.	40-50 minute fast walk, jog or run. Push intensity for 2 minutes, then an easier pace for 2 minute. Repeat 6-8 times.	5-8 hours of hill or mountain walking with a loaded pack. Aim to ascend 700-1000 metres
SIX / SEVEN	Rest	Steady 45-60 minute brisk walk or jog at an incline and with a loaded pack.	45-60 min fast walk, jog or run. Push intensity for 2 minutes, then an easier pace for 2 minutes. Repeat 8-10 times.	Rest	Steady 30-45 minute brisk walk or jog at an incline and with a loaded pack & Level 3 strength exercises.	40-50 minute fast walk, jog or run. Push intensity for 2 minutes, then an easier pace for 2 minutes. Repeat 6-8 times.	6-8 hours of hill or mountain walking with a loaded pack. Aim to ascend 1000 metres plus.
EIGHT	Active rest before your trip. Repeat the easier week one routine without the strength exercises.						

You are now ready to enjoy your Exodus Adventure!

Exodus Trail Fitness Plan

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LEVEL 3 STRENGTH EXERCISES

Exercise: 10-6 repetitions / Sets 2-3

Options & Progressions

BOX or BOSU STEP OVER

Lunge with one foot in front on Box/BOSU. Drive off back leg, stepping over box descending into a forward lunge with back foot now on box. Next drive off front leg and step back over box into a back lunge.

An easier option is to perform only the forward lunge. Step back on to the BOSU or box. Repeat.



BODY ROW ON HEELS or BALL

Lie looking up holding on to bar with a wide overhand grip in line with chest. Heels remain on floor and body 30 degrees above floor. Pull body toward bar in a rowing movement. Keep body straight.

In the gym use a Olympic pole on a squat rack or a TRX suspension system



LATERAL SQUAT BOSU or BOX JUMP

Start with feet on the ground at comfortable hips distance apart. Keep chest and head forward throughout the movement. Bend knees and hips to load legs. Jump with both legs on to BOSU. Hop off BOSU. Repeat.

You can squat jump side to side on the ground if no low level box or BOSU is available



PUSH UP (optional knee side lift)

With hands and toes on the floor lower chest by bending elbows, tightening stomach, buttocks and knees. While chest is low lift leg bringing knee to the side. Next squeeze chest muscles together and push body back to start position with straight arms and on both toes. Repeat.

For more of a challenge, place hands or feet on BOSU or crawl side-ways between each push-up.



JUMP LUNGE (optional arm extension)

Start in a deep lunge position with knees bent 90 degree. Keep shoulders and hips aligned over back knee. With an explosive movement jump into the air and descend into a lunge on the opposite leg. Repeat.

Place hands on hips if not using a ball. For more challenge use a weighted medicine ball



SINGLE LEG SQUAT and CABLE PULL

Stand one leg. Use the opposite arm to the leg you are standing on to hold cable with your arm extended. Bend knee and push hips back and lower whilst pulling cable toward your shoulder and extending the opposite arm. Return to standing on one leg and extend arm.

Wrap a resistance band around a pole or bannister. In the gym use a cable machine.



WALKING LUNGE with OVERHEAD PRESS

Stand holding weight at chest. Lunge forward bending knees 90 degrees. Then press weight overhead. Return to standing, lower weight to chest. Step forward with opposite leg. Repeat.

Use loaded back pack, dumbbells or barbell.



Stretches for all levels

- ▶ Stretching post-exercise while muscles are still warm can help increase flexibility and decrease the risk of injury.
- ▶ It also feels good, so don't be shy about stretching after a day on the trails.
- ▶ A pole is optional for balance.
- ▶ Hold stretch for 30 seconds, switch sides.
- ▶ Hold for up to 60 seconds for tighter areas.



STANDING QUAD - FRONT OF THIGH STRETCH

Take hold of the top of the foot or ankle and gently pull your heel up and back. Aim to get heel touching buttocks until you can feel a comfortable stretch in the front thigh. If needed balance on trekking pole.



HAMSTRING - BACK OF THIGH STRETCH

Stand on your left leg, with the knee bent. Extend your right leg to the front and rest your heel on the floor, with the toe pointing to the ceiling. Bend forwards from the hip, keeping your upper body in good alignment. You should feel the stretch in the back of your thighs. Perform stretch on opposite leg.



GLUTE / BUTTOCK STRETCH

Stand on one leg, then place your ankle of opposite leg across the thigh of standing leg. Bend at the knee of the standing leg. Use a pole or bench to balance.



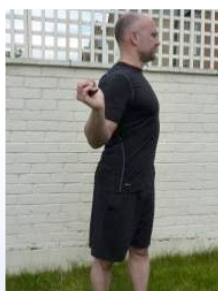
CALF STRETCH

Keep pelvis facing forward and level. Step back with one foot and push heel to the ground. Bend knee forward on front leg to increase stretch on back of the lower leg (calf muscle).



CHEST STRETCH

Stand with feet hip distance apart and arm length from the pole or wall. Place the palm of your nearest hand against the pole or wall and rotate your body away from your hand. Hold and repeat on the other side.



SPINAL ROTATION

Stand with feet hip width apart. Hold a pole across the back of your shoulders. Take a wide grip of the pole and slowly twist your trunk to the right, pressing the right elbow backwards and your left elbow forwards. Hold then slowly change sides.



BACK and LEG STRETCH

Stand with feet hip distance apart. Legs are straight but knees are relaxed. Bend forward 90 degrees at the hip. Extend arms straight with biceps level near ears and avoiding rounding in the back. Place hands on the back of bench or on a pole for support.



Hikers on the Mont Blanc Circuit



Good nutrition for walking & trekking training

Sports nutritionists consistently recommend that regular exercisers consume a diet relatively high in carbohydrates and hydrate sufficiently. This provides you with energy from glycogen stores in your muscles and liver. An 80kg person walking at a normal average pace of 4.2km per hour will burn 270 calories an hour on a flat gradient and 526 calories on an 8 % gradient. That is between 1350 and 2630 of calories or energy required. Your normal diet may be sufficient on a flat walk but some extra complex carbohydrates for long hilly walks should help keep you at your best (if you weigh less, you will burn fewer calories; weigh more and you will burn more). Not all carbohydrates are created equal; sugary carbohydrates give an instant very short term burst of energy. However, to prepare your body for exercise, especially for long days of walking which require endurance, you need carbohydrates that offer a slow release long lasting source of energy. Protein, good fats and a well-rounded, nutrient rich diet are also essential for keeping hunger at bay and sustaining energy on hilly walks lasting several hours. Your specific nutritional needs will vary depending on gender, metabolism, health, as well as the pace, gradient and length of a walk. Below are some very general guidelines based on an average healthy individual.



Trekkers on the way to Everest Base Camp

Before exercise what to eat & when

Meals should ideally be eaten 2-4 hours before. Pre-workout meal ideas with good carbohydrates and protein include: sandwiches with chicken, fish, cheese, egg or peanut butter; jacket potato with beans, cheese, tuna, chicken; chunky soup with bread or brown rice; pasta with tomato based sauce and vegetables; chicken with rice; chicken and vegetable casserole with potatoes; salmon with veg. For breakfast eggs and toast or porridge with milk are good choices.

Snacks should be eaten 1-2 hours before exercise. Good pre-exercise snacks include:

Fresh fruit; dried apricots, dates or raisins; smoothies; energy or nutrition bars; oatcakes with fruit.



During and after exercise

For moderate to high intensity exercise and hill walking lasting more than an hour consuming carbohydrates during exercise can help delay fatigue and prevent glycogen being depleted. Temporary hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) can occur after 2-3 hours of moderate exercise without carbohydrates. This could make you feel light headed and your muscles feel heavy. To help prevent this, top up your blood sugar with food or drink that is easy to digest and absorb such as: diluted fruit juice; bananas; raisins; energy bars, gel or beans; cereal bars; sports drinks.

After exercise try to eat and rehydrate as soon as possible and definitely within the two hour post exercise window when glycogen storage is faster. Exercise burns glycogen and also breaks down muscle protein. Aim to increase your intake of protein while replenishing your glucose with more fast releasing carbohydrates. Suggestion include: fresh fruit with milk or yogurt; sports bar; tuna or cheese sandwich; oat or rice cakes with jam and peanut butter; handful of nuts and dried fruits.

Hydration & fluids

Drinking two litres of water a day will prevent dehydration and keep your energy levels up. When you exercise, you should increase your fluid consumption by an additional 0.5 to 1 litre for every hour of exercise. Alcohol does not count toward your fluid consumption and more than a modest amount of coffee can also have a negative effect on hydration.



Gym equipment options used in level 1, 2 and 3 plans



BOSU

BOSU are half-domes used to add instability for balance and core training



Cable Jungle

Cable machines with adjustable weights are used for upper body push and pull exercises



Swiss Ball

Swiss / Stability Balls are large inflatable balls 45-65cm in diameter used for core exercises



TRX -Suspension

Suspension straps with handles available in many gyms are used for total body exercise



Squat Rack

Squat racks are found in the free weight area and hold the heavy barbells securely

Warning: disclaimer

Programmes and plans described in this document may not be appropriate for everyone. All individuals, especially those with health concerns or are recovering from any injury should consult their physician before undertaking any of the activities suggested in this document. The author has taken great care in developing these plans. However, they are neither responsible nor liable for any harm or injury resulting from this programme or the use of the exercises or exercise and walking and gym equipment described herein.

Suppliers

Resistance bands, dumbbells and mats can be purchased at Argos, John Lewis and online at www.amazon.co.uk and www.physicalcompany.co.uk. Each item should cost £10-£20. Walking and trekking clothing, equipment and boots can be purchased online or in store at Cotswolds Outdoor, Ellis Brigham (Exodus clients entitled to a discount), Snow and Rock and Blacks. Women's hiking specific clothing can also be purchased online at www.stridersedge.com.

Useful walking resources & links

Country Walking Magazine has lots of suggestions on where to walk in the UK for those who have good map reading skills. The Great Outdoors (TGO) is also packed with gear reviews and suggestions for walks with details of distance, ascent and times for those with navigational skills. They also have a TGO app to download.

BMC British Mountaineering Council publishes a useful booklet for new hill walkers available at:

www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/article.aspx?id=5460&s=3.

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Credits

Trail Fitness plan written by Alexandria Murphy

Photos by Adele Ghantous and Mauro Saderi

Models: Sue Leamon, Toni Piercey and Christopher James