

TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR TREK EVENTS AT ALTITUDE



*Get fit, have fun and enjoy your
challenge of a lifetime!*

STARTING OUT

KNOW YOUR OWN ABILITIES

Everyone has his or her own physical and mental abilities, goals and aspirations; therefore, devising your own training programme personal to your needs will be the key to your success. Classic Tours trekking challenges are designed for people of average fitness, but you do have to be prepared to train! These guidelines will give you suggestions to assist you in preparing for the challenge. Use it as you see fit and modify it for your own purposes. Keep in mind that your ultimate goal is to be as physically prepared as possible for the challenge.

The majority of people taking part in these trekking challenges are not trekkers. It is therefore imperative that everyone follows a reasonably serious course of training in order to get the maximum benefit. Although you may feel that you are fit enough, remember the event will include challenges that are not in your normal daily routine.

Whilst these events are not meant for specialist trekkers they are nevertheless a challenge and require a high standard of fitness and understanding of how to climb hills and walk along narrow paths at different altitudes.

YOUR FITNESS

Getting yourself fit is all part of the challenge. You will be trekking for long periods averaging 8 -9 hours a day, over successive days often, in hot temperatures and over hilly and rugged terrain at times. This will require endurance, leg strength, aerobic fitness, stamina and a good, comfortable pair of well fitting walking boots! The fitter you are the more you will enjoy the challenge ahead!

Your fitness, size, age, or sex has nothing to do with how altitude may affect you. However, we have found that people who are mentally and physically fit cope better with the effects.

FINDING TIME TO TRAIN

If you have a busy lifestyle of work, family and fundraising commitments then draw up a weekly training plan. Be creative in your training and start doing things such as getting up an hour earlier to go for a walk, run to work or to the shops and going to the gym. When possible, choose to walk rather than drive or take the bus.

HOW TO PLAN YOUR TRAINING

MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

This training programme has been put together as a rough guide, we are aware that other commitments such as work, family and fundraising may not allow you to stick rigidly to a schedule. However, where possible the programmes have been designed to enable you to fit training around work. You may wish to remove or reduce the sessions, or you may wish to add time and increase the number of sessions, depending on your current levels of fitness.

GENERAL FITNESS

Don't just walk to get fit – cross train with other sports e.g. swimming, cycling and going to the gym, you'll enjoy training more by breaking it up. Any other work outs will be a benefit. Ask a fitness instructor at a local gym to put together a weight and stretching programme.

BE PREPARED

The secret to preventing injuries and preparing yourself to get the most out of your training is to develop a good, personal mileage base. The best strategy is to let the terrain and how you feel tell you when to make more or less effort.

GET MOTIVATED

Remember the purpose of your training is to help you achieve the trip of a lifetime. The more you put in before you go, the more you will enjoy the challenge whilst you are there. Keep in mind this goal at all times. You can help yourself with this by planning your walks for enjoyment as well as workout – try to walk to or where you want to go, rather than simply doing the distance and hours.

BEATING THE WEATHER

It's all too easy during the winter months to make excuses not to train, but there are lots of fun ways to get fit and avoid the cold weather:

- Use the gym for fast pace walking on the treadmill
- Join aerobics classes for fitness
- Take your chance on a crisp sunny day get your walking boots on and make the most of it.
- Train with a friend, doesn't have to be someone on the challenge, lots of people want to get fit – make arrangements to meet up or train together.

EATING FOR FITNESS

Your diet will play a key role in your fitness, and it's something to start thinking about when you start your training. In the initial stages of your training try to reduce your saturated fat intake. As you start to increase your trekking, you will need to up your calories. Try to eat one meal a day high in carbohydrate to give you the extra energy you need. Ideal foods include potatoes, bread, pasta and rice. Remember a balanced diet is always best so you get your daily requirement of vitamins and minerals. Include fruit and vegetables as well as meat and fish. The other important thing to note here is fluid intake – it is essential to increase your fluid intake when exercising as you lose a lot.

The overall advice is to be aware of your diet and try to eat healthy balanced meals, including carbohydrates to give you the extra energy and drinking water to replace lost fluids.

TREKKING AT ALTITUDE EXPLAINED

It is unlikely you will be able to do any of your training at altitude, but you can still prepare yourself as much as possible. Fit climbers are 17% likely to suffer from some form of altitude sickness whereas unfit climbers are 43% likely to suffer. Therefore training and improving your fitness is vital.

Understanding what Altitude Sickness is and what the symptoms are will help you on the challenge. You should be aware of the possible ill effects of altitude before you go and if you have heart and lung problems or high blood pressure please get advice from your doctor before registering for the challenge.

ALTITUDE SICKNESS OR ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS (AMS)

The percentage of oxygen in the atmosphere at sea level is about 21% and the barometric pressure is around 760 mmHg. As altitude increases, the percentage remains the same but the number of oxygen molecules per breath is reduced. At 3,600 metres (12,000 feet) the barometric pressure is only about 480 mmHg, so there are roughly 40% fewer oxygen molecules per breath so the body must adjust to having less oxygen.

In addition, high altitude and lower air pressure causes fluid to leak from the capillaries in both the lungs and the brain which can lead to fluid build-up. Continuing on to higher altitude without proper acclimatisation can lead to the potentially serious, even life-threatening altitude sickness.

Trekkers are often surprised how altitude can also affect their moods and you may find you become irritable and emotional without reason. If you find this is the case, it is normal and we advise you to have a chat with the trip doctor to let them know how you are feeling.

One technique that you can practice before the event without getting up to altitude is learning a slow, rhythmic walk that lets you keep going for hours without getting out of breath – once you are out of breath at altitude it takes a long time to get it back. On a training walk try walking up a gentle slope breathing only through your nose, this will force you to slow down and hopefully learn the ‘Kili trudge’!

Altitude sickness can be fatal but is entirely preventable. The key to avoiding problems is to acclimatise; this is why we ascend gradually. Symptoms of altitude sickness include shortness of breath, accelerated pulse, mild to thumping headaches, nausea, a general feeling of “woolly-headedness”.

The lack of oxygen at altitude affects most people to some extent. A number of measures can be taken to help prevent altitude sickness:

- Ascend slowly, observe how the guides move.
- Drink extra fluids. The air will be dry and cold and moisture is lost as you breathe.
- Avoid alcohol as it may increase the risk of dehydration.
- Eat light, high-carbohydrate meals for more energy.
- Avoid sedatives.
- The prescription medicine Diamox helps to speed up acclimatisation to altitude but is not essential for this trip since it is mostly below 3000m and there is time to acclimatise during the first days.

Mild altitude sickness will generally abate after a day or so but if the symptoms persist (or become worse) the only treatment is to descend – even 500 metres can help.

ACCLIMATISATION

The main cause of altitude sickness is going too high too quickly. Given enough time, your body will adapt to the decrease in oxygen at a specific altitude. This process is known as acclimatisation and generally takes one to three days at any given altitude, e.g. if you climb to 3,000 metres and spend several days at that altitude, your body will acclimatise to 3,000 metres. If you then climb to 5,000 metres your body has to acclimatise once again.

Several changes take place in the body which enable it to cope with decreased oxygen:

- The depth of respiration increases.
- The body produces more red blood cells to carry oxygen.
- Pressure in pulmonary capillaries is increased, "forcing" blood into parts of the lung which are not normally used when breathing at sea level.
- The body produces more of a particular enzyme that causes the release of oxygen from haemoglobin to the body tissues

Classic Tours challenges are specifically designed to allow time for acclimatisation. Listen to the advice of your tour manager and doctor on the trek.

TOP TIPS!

1. Use the hiking boots you will be using for the trek.
2. Look for trails / paths through woodlands or countryside in order to get used to trekking over stones and uneven ground. Also carry a rucksack weighing approx. 5kgs in which you should have a water bottle, some food, toilet paper and other personal effects. You may also want to train with a walking pole.
3. Walking poles can be very helpful for many reasons including all round balance, additional impetus uphill, stability and impact reduction on descents. If you decide to use walking poles spend some time learning how to use them properly to get maximum benefit. Here is a link to a short film explaining some of the techniques and benefits: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtV_KpYTw00
4. It is essential to find terrain which is hilly and has narrow paths climbing unevenly through the countryside. Many of the treks include trails fairly high along mountain sides. This will help overcome height concerns you may have. None of the walks are dangerous, however some of the paths do involve rock scrambling i.e. sometimes using both hands and feet but not requiring ropes.
5. It is vital to do at least one weekend trek of 7 hours each day across the most difficult terrain you can find within your area. This does not mean climbing Ben Nevis or Snowdon. The objective is to find a rural rocky / hilly / stony terrain so that your muscles can get used to long periods of walking.
6. For people who are overweight it is important to also use the gym (particularly the step machine) and do regular swimming during this period in order to reduce the waistline. This will make it much easier to walk for consecutive days.
7. Avoid blisters by keeping your feet dry and wearing appropriate socks. We recommend those made with fibres which draw moisture away from your skin – stay clear of pure cotton. Make sure you have correctly fitting boots and that they are laced up firmly, but not too tight. If you feel them rubbing, take action and apply blister prevention e.g.. Compeed.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Why not customise this to suit you and stick it in a prominent place like on the fridge door for that extra bit of motivation!

6 MONTHS TO GO!

Get into a routine of exercising regularly

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
2 x Aerobic Training sessions a week , 30 – 35 minutes per session 2 x Recreational exercise within the month 2 x 3 hour Treks within the month	

5 MONTHS TO GO!

Building a strong foundation of fitness

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
2 x Aerobic Training sessions a week , 40 minutes per session 2 x Strength Training within the month 2 x Recreational exercise within the month 2 x 2 hour Treks within the month 2 x 4 hour Treks within the month	

4 MONTHS TO GO!

Build your endurance & strength

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
2 x Aerobic Training sessions a week , 40 minutes per session 2 x Strength Training within the month 2 x Recreational exercise within the month 2 x 4 hour Treks within the month 2 x 6 hour Treks within the month	

3 MONTHS TO GO!

Focus on training both mental & physical aspects of yourself

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
2 x Aerobic Training sessions a week , 40 minutes per session 2 x Strength Training within the month 2 x Recreational exercise within the month 4 x 4 hour Treks within the month 2 x 7 – 8 hour Treks within the month Try to do 2 consecutive days of trekking to get your body used to it	

2 MONTHS TO GO!**Continue to build your mental & physical endurance & strength**

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
2 x Aerobic Training sessions a week , 40 minutes per session 2 x Recreational exercise within the month 4 x 4 hour Treks within the month 3 x 6 – 7 hour Treks within the month Include 2 consecutive days of trekking – 6 hours on the first day, 4 hours on the second day	

1 MONTH TO GO!**Maximise your training to give you that extra endurance & strength which you will need**

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
2 x Aerobic Training sessions a week , 40 minutes per session 2 x Recreational exercise within the month 4 x 4 hour Treks within the month 3 x 8 hour Treks within the month Include 2 consecutive days of trekking – 8 hours on both days	

1 WEEK TO GO!

Training Schedule	Completed / Date
Reduce your training to prevent injury and tiredness. In the last week you should do no more than: 1 x Recreational exercise 2 x 4 hour Treks	

Remember this is just a guideline – adapt the programme to your current fitness levels and your lifestyle. The more training you do, the more you will enjoy the event.

GOOD LUCK!!

TRAINING PROGRAMME EXPLAINED

- **Aerobic Training** – can include running, cycling, swimming, cross-country running, speed walking etc., for a minimum of 30 minutes per session
- **Strength Training** – should include exercises working mostly on upper body strength. Include exercises for arms, shoulders, back and abdominals. Each exercise should include 3 sets of 10-15 repetitions (reps) so that muscle failure occurs on the last set. You do not have to join a health club to get a good strength work out – you can do sit ups and press ups at home.
- **Recreational Exercise** – is any form of fun exercise that you enjoy. Can include climbing, trekking, dancing, swimming etc.
- **Trek Training** – get your boots on, grab your walking poles (if using them) and get walking! It's really important to be comfortable in your boots and get used to trekking of mixed terrain.
- **Rest Days** – do not train 7 days a week. Your body needs time to rest in between the training. The training plan suggests 3 – 5 sessions per week. Allow your body time to recover.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

- www.walkingbritain.co.uk – a great resource for ideas of where to walk in the UK.
- www.walking-routes.co.uk – a directory of walking routes in the UK.
- www.walkingenglishman.com - the most popular free content web site for walking in Great Britain on the internet.
- www.walking-uk.com includes details of walking clubs in the UK so you can train with others living locally to you as well as ideas on where to walk

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT ALTITUDE SICKNESS & TRAINING

- <http://www.nathnac.org/travel/factsheets/altitude.htm>
- [http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/advice/advice-for-travellers/acute-mountain-sickness\(ams\).aspx](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/advice/advice-for-travellers/acute-mountain-sickness(ams).aspx)
- http://medex.org.uk//medex_book/english_version.php

Classic Tours Training Guidelines have been designed by Gideon Seligman and Gina Thomas. Gideon is a Tour Manager with over 20 years experience leading charity challenge events. He's helped people achieve their goals and reach the finish line on hundreds of challenges all over the world. Gina has a degree in Sport Science and together they have put together a plan to help set you on your way to challenge success!

GOOD LUCK & ENJOY THE TREK!