

# Trekking training guide



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Nothing is more frustrating, or unnecessary, than failing to complete a trek because you haven't been physically prepared enough for the challenge. Training is therefore essential and the more prepared you are the more you will enjoy yourself!

Training is very specific to the activity that you are undertaking and so to become fitter for trekking, you need to trek. Most training should be part of an ongoing lifestyle but if this is not the case then you should begin training four to six months prior to the trip. If you are very unfit and this is the first time you have ever undertaken a real trek, then this time will need to be extended.

### 1 / WHY TRAIN?

- You will have a far better chance of completing the trek.
- You will enjoy the trek far more if you have a good level of fitness.
- You are far less likely to become injured.
- It will allow you to prepare mentally for the trekking challenge.
- It strengthens your heart, reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- It will improve your circulation, breathing and endocrine functions.
- It tones muscles and strengthens bones, reducing the risk of osteoporosis.
- It reduces blood fat and cholesterol.
- It burns calories and helps you manage your weight.
- It boosts mental performance and improves psychological well-being.

### 2 / HOW TO AVOID INJURIES WHILST TRAINING AND TREKKING

- To avoid blisters keep your feet dry and wear socks made with fibres which draw moisture away from your skin - steer clear of pure cotton.
- Don't lace your shoes too tightly or too loosely. As soon as a hot spot occurs (a rubbing of the skin which then feels warm), remove your boot and apply a blister prevention kit i.e. Compeed.

- When walking, try to make sure your heel touches the ground first and then you push off with your toe.
- Keep your toenails neatly trimmed and remove all hardened skin on the foot with a pumice stone.
- Try to walk with your head up and eyes focused ahead; not always easy at altitude or on difficult terrain!
- Keep your shoulders level, pulled back and down, lift your chest.
- Carry your arms either at 90° angles and move them forward and back, rather than side to side or allow them to relax by your sides.
- If using walking poles, remember to read the guidelines with regards arm angles etc.

## Any questions?

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## 3 / 16-24 WEEK TRAINING SCHEDULE

### Week 1 - 6:

2 x 30mins walks. 1 x 2 hour walk.  
Full stretch after each walk.

### Week 7 & 8:

**Sat or Sun:** 4 hour walk and stretch  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.  
**Weds:** Rest day  
**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.  
**Fri:** Rest day

### Week 9:

**Sat AND Sun:** 4 hour walk and stretch.  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.  
**Weds:** Rest day  
**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.  
**Fri:** Rest day

### Week 10 & 11:

**Sat or Sun:** 6 hour walk and stretch  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.  
**Weds:** Rest day  
**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.  
**Fri:** Rest day

### Week 12:

**Sat AND Sun:** 6 hour walk and stretch.  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.  
**Weds:** Rest day

**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.  
**Fri:** Rest day

### Week 13 & 14:

**Sat or Sun:** 8 hour walk and stretch  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.  
**Weds:** Rest day  
**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.  
**Fri:** Rest day

### Week 15:

**Sat AND Sun:** 8 hour walk and stretch.  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.  
**Weds:** Rest day  
**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.  
**Fri:** Rest day

### Week 16:

**Sat or Sun:** 4 hour walk and stretch  
**Mon:** Rest day  
**Tues:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch  
**Weds:** Rest day  
**Thurs:** 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch  
**Fri:** Rest day

## 4 / EXERCISE CIRCUITS

These exercises are designed to strengthen specific muscle groups. It is important to just use your own body weight in the early weeks. In the latter weeks, small weights added to the ankles or putting on your fully packed rucksack can also help build strength. The idea of the circuit is to complete each exercise then move onto the next.

Once all exercises are completed, (i.e. one circuit), you then go round the circuit again 3, 4, or 5 times as shown in the programme. You can also increase the number of repetitions for each exercise from 20 to 30/40 or 50 depending on how strong you're feeling. It is essential you stretch before and after the session to keep the muscle loose and long, not tight and short.

### Calf Raises:

Stand with feet together, arm length away from wall. Have fingers just touching wall for balance. Raise yourself slowly onto tip toes and then slowly lower. Repeat 20 times.

### Squats:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Hands on hips. Keep back straight and head up whilst you slowly lower yourself so knees are bent 90 degrees. Then stand up so knees are locked straight. Repeat 20 times.

### Step ups:

Using bottom step of staircase or low bench, start with left foot on step and right foot on floor. Stand up straight on left leg bringing right foot up to next step above and then lower back down to floor. Repeat 20 times. Change leg and repeat.

### Leg extensions:

Sit on high sofa/bed/bench with backs of knees just on the edge and feet hanging down. Lean back with hands behind you for support. Keeping back of knee on seat, slowly lift left foot up so leg becomes straight and lower down again. Repeat 20 times. Change leg and repeat.

### Leg Raises:

Lie front down on mat or soft floor with hands under chin. Keeping left leg straight slowly raise six inches off the floor and then slowly lower. Repeat 20 times. Change leg and repeat.

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## 5 / BASIC STRETCH PROGRAMME

### Calves:

Stand approximately 1 metre away from wall with legs straight and heels on floor. Step and lean forward and slowly push hips towards wall. Should feel a slow pull in the calf muscle behind. Hold for 10 secs, swap legs, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

### Hamstrings:

Stand with feet 1 metre apart. With legs straight and hands behind back slowly bend forward at the hips keeping back straight and head up. Should feel a slow pull in muscles at the back of legs. Hold for 10 secs, stand up and lean slightly backwards, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

### Quads:

Standing with feet together, bring left foot up and put left hand on lower shin by ankle and pull behind bottom. Keep back straight and head up. May need to balance with right hand on wall. Should feel slow pull down front of leg. Hold for 10 secs, swap legs, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

### Groin:

Stand with feet 1 metre apart and both feet pointing forward. Keeping back straight and head up slowly. Lunge down to right side feeling pull on inside of left leg. Hold for 10 secs, swap legs, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

### Hips:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and hands on hips. Keeping head still rotate hips round clockwise 10 times and anti clockwise 10 times. Repeat three times.

### Torso:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and hands on head. Keep feet pointing forward but twist body as far as is comfortable, hold for 1 second, face forward, twist body in other direction, hold for 1 second, face forward. Repeat 10 times.

### Shoulder:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Start with hands by hips and keeping arms straight slowly swing arms round backwards 10 times, change direction swinging arms forwards 10 times. Repeat 3 times.

### Standing stretch:

Stand with feet together. Place hands together and reach as high as you can, hold for 10 secs, relax. Repeat 3 times.

**N.B.** You should only stretch warmed up muscles. Don't stretch too far, all you should feel is a slow pull, never any pain. Never bounce, always stretch slowly. People with old injuries or bad backs should be especially careful whilst exercising and stretching.

## 6 / TRAINING NOTES

The above 16 -24 week programme is only a rough training guide and at Encounters Travel we are very aware that other commitments such as work and family may not allow you to stick rigidly to the schedule. However, in order to get close to achieving the training it is very important to organise your time properly and prioritise your goals. Some ideas that have worked for other trekkers are:

1. Get up an hour earlier and go out for a quick walk in the morning before work.
2. If you can walk to work, do so. If you get to work by public transport, get off a stop or two earlier than usual, so that you can walk some distance each day. If you drive, park further away than usual, or walk a longer route to work.
3. Use your lunchtimes to take regular brisk walks around your work area, not just a stroll around the shops.
4. Find a steep set of stairs i.e. five floors of a department store/ office block and climb them five times, at least three times per

week.

5. Cross training such as swimming, squash, badminton, cycling and any other sport will also help get you prepared.
6. Joining a leisure centre is a good idea as the local fitness instructors may well be able to design a programme specifically for you. Most good gyms have a walking machine, or even better a stair climber, where you can clock up mileage more safely and comfortably, but do try to walk as much as possible in 'real' conditions and wearing your rucksack and boots.
7. Book weekends away with the family or friends to some mountainous region in the UK to experience walking on different surfaces and in a mountain environment to test out all your equipment.
8. You should make the time to walk some consecutive long days as on the training schedule. It is the accumulation of walking day after day that really tests you on expedition.

### This information has been compiled from notes by:

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