



Trek Training Guide

Although walking is something most people do every day, we strongly urge you to train for your trek. You should start training several months before the event and this Trek Training Guide will help you to do this.

It is designed for a person of 'average' fitness. Even if you walk regularly and have a good level of fitness, you will still need to train for this type of long-distance walking, though you may find that it will not take you as long to reach the stages outlined below. If you do not walk often and have only a basic level of fitness you should allow more than the 16 weeks outlined.

Why Walk?

- It strengthens your heart, reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- It improves 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.
- It enables you to solve problems, manage stress and reduce anxiety.

Walking Techniques - ways to avoid injury and discomfort

- Touch the ground heel first, roll forward through the arch, over the ball of your foot to your toes, which push off to start another step. This reduces the risk of shin splints and tendon pulls.
- Walk with your head up and eyes focused ahead.
- Keep your shoulders level, pulled back and down, lift your chest.
- Contract your abdominal muscles, pressing them towards your spine.
- Carry your arms at 90° angles and pump them forward and back, rather than side to side.

The faster you move, the better your cardiovascular workout. But try to keep an even stride and maintain a steady pace. To walk faster....

- Accelerate your arm movements.
- Take smaller, quicker steps.
- To prevent lower back pain avoid leaning forward and arching your back.

Shoes

Choose a comfortable pair of walking shoes designed for the specific activity of walking. It should have a reasonably high ankle and a stiff heel counter to give lateral support. The midsole should be firm yet comfortable. It is worth investing in a good pair of trekking or hiking boots, and appropriate socks. New boots must be worn in. Wear them around the house, on the way to work, etc, and then on longer trips. Once they have conformed to the shape of your feet there is less likelihood of getting blisters.

Feet first!

There are some common foot problems which are very easy to treat and avoid:

- 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. The irritation from the pinching and rubbing may cause blisters.
- Aching arches are usually caused by pounding when you walk. Make sure you touch the ground with your heel first and pushing off with your toe. Arch supports may help.
- Blackened toenails are caused by the big toe hitting the front of your shoe. Keep your toenails neatly trimmed. Make sure that if one of your feet is slightly larger than the other, as most are, that your boots fit the larger one.

Long-distance Walking: 16-week Training Programme

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. (Walk both days if possible).
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. (Walk both days if possible).
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. (Walk both days if possible).
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

Programme Notes

The 16 week programme is a rough training guide. Obviously with work, family and fundraising commitments you may not always be able to achieve what we have set out for you. However in order to get close to achieving the training it is very important to organise your time properly. There are plenty of ways to ensure that you maximise your training, even if you feel you have no time outside work.

- You must organise your week to **make** time to get out to do some training.
- Get up an hour earlier and go out for a quick walk with some stretching in the morning before work while it is still light.
- 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 walk some distance each day. If you drive, park further away than usual, or walk a longer route to work.
- Use your lunchtimes to take regular brisk walks around your work area, not just a stroll around the shops.
- 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.
- Swimming, squash, badminton, cycling and any other sport will also help get you prepared.
- 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.
- It is important at weekends to get into some hilly areas to experience walking on different surfaces, get used to the hills and of course the weather. You should wear the boots and rucksack you will take on the trek.
- You should make the time to walk some consecutive long days: an isolated Sunday walk does not have the same effect as two consecutive days. Nothing will prepare you for the trek better than actually walking. Even if you're only doing an hour around the park or streets **put your rucksack and boots on**, you may look silly but it's worth it.

You may not stick to the training guide exactly but you need to keep it in mind and to do regular exercise every week according to the guide. You will enjoy this challenge far more if you are physically fit.

Training Tips

After the first six weeks you need to gain endurance by walking long slow distances. Pick one day per week as your long walk to gain endurance. Choose two evenings or mornings as your shorter walks with the Circuit Exercises to help build specific muscles groups. Remember to stretch after every walk, it is also essential to stretch after about ten minutes of walking once you've warmed up a bit. Make sure you plan adequate rest/recovery days as part of the training.

Of course nothing is better than walking. However if you play squash, tennis, badminton or go to the gym, cycle or swim for an hour or two, then this will also help with your general fitness. Adding this to your programme instead of one of the short days or on one of the rest days would be fine. Make sure you stretch properly after each session.

Exercise Circuit

The 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.

1 – 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.

2 – 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.

3 – 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.

4 – 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.

5 – 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.

Basic Stretch Programme

1 – 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.

2 – 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.

3 – 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.

4 – 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.

5 – 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.

6 – 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.

7 – 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.

8 – 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.