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INTERMEDIATE TREKKING TRAINING GUIDE



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Introduction

Welcome to your intermediate trekking training guide!

Congratulations! You're looking to broaden your horizons, improve your fitness levels and raise funds for charity – all of which are extremely positive things to do with your time. Taking on the challenge of a charity trek is an exciting way to mark a major milestone in your life, achieve something that you previously thought impossible and have an exhilarating, fun adventure!

Whichever trek inspires you, your first step is to get trek-fit and commit some time and effort to prepare your body for your challenge. This trek-fit training guide is specifically designed by fitness experts to safely progress your fitness to the appropriate levels so that you will not just be able to complete the challenge but you'll be able to complete it comfortably. Each training guide is based around trekking specific cardiovascular (CV) training but also includes a range of dedicated resistance and flexibility training exercises that will improve your total body fitness so that you have the all-round strength that you'll need.

The training guides are suitable for most fitness levels and steadily build your fitness over 12 weeks, but if you have not exercised for some time then the specific lead-in training guide, which is a precursor to the main schedules, will ensure that you can cope with the level of training. The training guides are carefully structured and cover everything that you need to do for your fitness preparation, so all you need to focus upon is forward planning and beginning sooner rather than later. You are embarking on a fantastic, life-enhancing experience that will enrich your life in many different ways. Kick-starting your fitness is the first step in achieving your goal. Enjoy your training!

Who is this training guide for?

You are fairly fit, already visiting the gym, taking an exercise class or enjoying some cardiovascular (CV) activity each week but you recognise that you need to train specifically for the demands of your trekking challenge. Hence you need a training guide that will advance your CV fitness beyond your current level and also build all round strength to prepare your body for the new demands of your challenge.



Trek fit training essentials

Getting started

If you are starting training for the first time or alternatively if you have not exercised for some time then it is advisable to visit your GP for a check-up before you begin. Your doctor will support your plans to get fit for your trek and will also be able to advise you regarding any precautions that you should take relevant to your personal medical history.

Listen to your body

Don't be a slave to the schedule! If you feel off-colour, excessively tired or your resting heart rate is elevated by more than 10% then take the day off from training. It is better to miss a day or two and allow your body to recover than attempt a session and make your condition worse.

Warming up

Always warm up before each session for approximately 10 minutes. A warm-up will prepare your body for exercise, reduce your risk of injury and enhance your performance for your session.

Cooling down

Always finish each session with a cool down, lasting for approximately 10 minutes as per your warm up. A proper cool down will help your recovery and limit any post-session muscle soreness.

Stretching

Spend a few minutes at the end of your cool down stretching the main muscle groups that you have used, so that you remain, loose, supple and reduce your risk of injury.

Rest

Rest is important and allows your body to recover from your training sessions, so ensure that you include at least one full rest day in your program each week.

Check your shoes

Don't skimp on your training shoes because a good pair of shoes are an investment in comfort and injury prevention. Regularly check them for wear and replace them approximately every 500 miles, sooner if you land heavily.

Check your boots

Similarly, don't skimp on your walking boots either. Invest in a well fitting pair from the outset and practice in them until they feel like a second skin. Keep them well maintained and always dry them thoroughly after use.

Keep it fun

Above all, keep your training in perspective. Your trek is an exciting adventure which should enhance your life and not diminish it so enjoy the whole process and keep it fun.

Trekking kit checklists

Essential gear for healthier, happier trekking

It's important to get the right equipment prepared. The equipment lists given below are a general guide but will vary depending on the time of year, terrain to be covered and the weather conditions:

Walking equipment

- Backpack and waterproof liner.
- Route card for your walk.
- Food — sandwiches, chewy bars, fruit, nuts, confectionery.
- Emergency food — e.g. high energy food bars.
- Map, compass and guidebook. There are many compasses available but by far the most popular model for hill walking is the Silva Expedition Four type compass.
- Drink — 2 litres of water and tea, coffee or soup.
- Insect repellent.
- Sunglasses and sun cream.
- Camera.
- Phone.
- Whistle — a loud whistle to attract attention in an emergency during a walk.
- Lightweight head torch — in case you get caught out after sunset!
- Spare batteries for camera and torch.
- Spares walking shoe laces.
- First aid kit.
- Survival bag.
- Zinc oxide tape.
- A tough plastic bag to carry your litter home once you finish your hill walk.
- Tissue paper or wet wipes.



Walking equipment (clothing)

- Base layer top and bottoms.
- Mid layer top and bottoms.
- Outer layer top and bottoms.
- Gaiters.
- Hat and gloves.
- Spare mid-layer fleece.
- Spare pair of socks.

Optional walking items

The walking items below are optional and can be invaluable in some walking situations but can just be an unnecessary weight to carry in other situations.

GPS receiver

Although you should never rely on a GPS receiver alone for navigation, they can be invaluable tools in poor visibility such as thick fog, at night or in an emergency. GPS receivers are now relatively inexpensive. A GPS receiver can be a great aid to learning navigation by simply confirming your location and boosting your confidence in your own skills.

Binoculars

Great for watching wildlife but also a useful navigational aid.

Walking poles

A great aid to reducing strain on your legs when carrying heavy loads and can help prevent ankle or knee injury on steep ascents and descents.

Weekend walking kit

The same equipment and clothing should be taken for a weekend walk or camping trip as it should for a day walk, with the following additions:

- Stove and fuel.
- Eating, cooking and drinking utensils.
- Dish washing items.
- Windproof lighter or matches.

- Sleeping bag.
- Sleeping mat.
- Tent (always check you have all the pegs and poles before you leave home!).
- Toiletries and towel.
- Paracord has many useful functions and lengths of cord tied to rocks and trees can be useful 'handrails' at night to guide you from your tent

Training Guide

Trek fit 'lead-in' training guide

Session key: Walk (W) Flexibility (F) Rest (R)

Phase 1	Week 1/6	First Steps	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	W + F	10 minutes very easy, taking recovery breaks if necessary	Start easily, introducing your body to training and stretch your legs afterwards
Tues	R		
Wed	R		
Thurs	W	10 minutes easy pace	Try to repeat Monday's session, still taking the pace easily
Fri	R		
Sat	R		

Sun	W + F	10-15 minutes easy	1st longer session, start slowly and stretch your leg muscles at the end
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Phase 1	Week 2/6	Building up (1)	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Recovery after Sunday's longer session
Tues	W + F	10 minutes steady pace	
Wed	R		
Thurs	W	15 minutes easy pace	Start slowly. Try an 'out and back' course of 7 ½ minutes out and 7 ½ minutes back
Fri	R		
Sat	R		

Sun

W + F

15-20 minutes easy pace

Practice
your
pacing
techniques
that
you've
used
during
previous
sessions

Phase 1	Week 3/6	Recovery	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Full recovery after yesterday's longer session
Tues	R		Double recovery
Wed	W + F	15 minutes easy pace	This should now be comfortable
Thurs	R		
Fri	R		
Sat	R		
Sun	W + F	20 minutes easy pace	
			Today's session should now be within your grasp, particularly with 3 rest days beforehand

Phase 2	Week 4/6	Building up (2)	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	W + F	20 minutes easy	
Wed	R		
Thurs	W	20 minutes easy	

Fri	R		Double rest day because Sunday's walk will be your longest to date
Sat	R		
Sun	W + F	25 minutes easy paced walk	Try the 'out-and-back' strategy again

Phase 2	Week 5/6	Peak week	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	W + F	20 minutes easy	
Wed	R		
Thurs	W	Repeat last Sunday's session of 25 minutes non-stop	Try and vary your routes so that you don't become stale
Fri	R		
Sat	R		

Sun	W + F	30 minutes easy pace	Longest walk of the schedule, don't worry about your pace, just aim to complete the session
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Phase 2	Week 6/6	Taper before main training guide	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	W + F	20 minutes easy	
Wed	R		
Thurs	W	20 minutes steady paced ride	This should now be comfortable
Fri	R		
Sat	W + F	30 minutes easy/steady	Repeat last Sunday's session, which should now feel easier.
Sun	R		Rest today before you begin the main training guide tomorrow



Trek fit training guide - Intermediate

Session key: Walk **(W)** Jog/Run **(JR)** Gym **(G)** Flexibility **(F)** Rest **(R)**

You haven't exercised for a while and your trekking challenge is going to be the ideal goal to help you get back in shape. You want a training guide that will help you get fit enough to complete your challenge without difficulty, but will also fit into your life.

Phase 1	Week 1/12	Starting out	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	W + F	30 minutes easy pace	Start easily, introducing your body to training
Tues	R		
Wed	G	60 minute all over body workout focusing upon legs, back, shoulders, arms, abs and core. Begin with light weights that you can handle with ease	This session will be your regular gym session, always focusing on total body strength
Thurs	R		Recovery after introducing your body to gym training
Fri	W	45 minutes easy pace	
Sat	R		

Sun	W + F	60 minutes easy	1st longer session, start slowly and stretch your leg muscles at the end
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Phase 1	Week 2/12	Building up (1)	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Recovery after Sunday's longer session
Tues	W + F	45 minutes steady pace	
Wed	G		Repeat your session form week 1
Thurs	R		
Fri	W	45 minutes steady pace	Both midweek walks are comfortable because your Sunday session is longer
Sat	R		

Sun	W + F	1 ½ hours easy pace	Try to do at least some of your walk off-road
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Phase 1	Week 3/12	Building up (2)	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Full recovery after yesterday's longer session
Tues	W + F	1 hour steady pace	Remember to stretch out for 5-10 minutes afterwards
Wed	G	Week 1 session repeated but try to increase some of the weights that you've used in the first two weeks	
Thurs	R		
Fri	W	1 hour steady pace	
Sat	R		
Sun	W + F	Target 2 hours continuous walking, taking short recovery breaks if you need to	Try and walk off-road for all your longer weekend sessions

Phase 2	Week 4/12	Mini-peak	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes

Mon	W + F	30 minutes easy. This is your first 'back-to-back' workout	Use this session as an easy recovery workout after yesterday's long hike
Tues	R		
Wed	G	All over body session	By now you should be getting a good feel for your capabilities and progressing
Thurs	R		
Fri	JR + F	20-30 minutes very easy jog or run. Jogging will help to progress your CV fitness faster	Start slowly and keep at a pace where you can still hold a conversation

Sat	R		No activity today, both to recover from yesterday's jog and also to prepare for tomorrow
Sun	W + F	2 ½ hours off-road steady paced hike	By now you will need to be thinking about your nutrition and hydration en route

Phase 2	Week 5/12	Recovery week	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes

Mon	R		This week backs off on volume to allow your body to rebuild and recover
Tues	R		Double rest day – try and limit any other activities
Wed	JR + F	30 minutes easy	No gym session this week so put your focus into today's jog
Thurs	R		You should find this walk comfortable
Fri	W	60 minutes steady pace	
Sat	R		

Sun	W + F	Repeat last Sunday's session	Take a drink with you and some energy foods so that you're always topped up
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Phase 2	Week 6/12	2nd build-up (1)	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	JR + F	30 minutes repeat of your week 6 session	Try and cover a little more distance than last week, now that you're getting fitter

Wed	G	All over body workout	Gym training resumes again, look to use the same weights from your last session
Thurs	R		
Fri	W	1 - 1 ½ hours steady paced walk	This should now be comfortable
Sat	R		
Sun	W + F	3 ½ hour trek. Start slowly and take recovery breaks as you feel you need	Make sure your rucksack is stocked with snacks and a drink

Phase 3	Week 7/12	2nd build-up (2)	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes

Mon	R		Total rest today after your longest walk to date. Try and put your feet up
Tues	JR + F	40 minutes easy pace	Cut the session down to 20 minutes if you still feel tired from last Sunday's long walk
Wed	G	All over body workout	Try and keep your gym sessions going because they will really support your walking training

Thurs	R		
Fri	W	1 ¼ - 1 ½ hours steady paced walk	
Sat	R		Fuel up with a good complex carbohydrate meal ready for tomorrow
Sun	W + F	4 ½ hours easy walk	This is a big one so keep the pace down, drink regularly and stretch afterwards

Phase 4	Week 8/12	1st weekend back-to-back	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Total rest today because this week steps up a level
Tues	JR + F	Target 40-45 minutes at a very easy pace	Stretch all your leg muscles afterwards
Wed	G	All over workout	
Thurs	W	60 minutes steady	You should now be coping with this duration without any difficulty
Fri	R		Really easy day today, just check over your kit for the weekend and ensure that you eat well in the evening
Sat	W + F	4 hours off-road. Back-to-back weekend	Stretching after your walk is really important today to help you recover for tomorrow

Sun	W + F	3 hours off-road	Try and choose different routes to avoid staleness and eat small energy snacks regularly
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Phase 4	Week 9/12	Recovery and end of week push	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Two consecutive rest days, so avoid activity and recover
Tues	R		Try and have a sports massage for your legs, to ease any stiffness
Wed	JR + F	45 minutes easy / steady	You should be fully recovered and able to extend your jogging a little
Thurs	R		
Fri	W	1 hour steady pace	
Sat	R		Big complex carbohydrate meal tonight – pasta is ideal
Sun	W + F	4 ½ hours off-road, easy pace	With most of this week light, you'll now be ready for your longest session to date

Phase 4	Week 10/12	Expedition week	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	W + F	1 ½ hours steady pace	
Wed	G	All over body workout	Miss this session and have a rest day if you feel tired
Thurs	R		Double rest day in preparation for the big weekend expedition
Fri	R		Load up your fuel tank throughout the day with good quality carbohydrate
Sat	W+F	6 hours long hike with whatever recovery breaks you feel that you need	This weekend is effectively your trek dress rehearsal so try and get away to a new off-road location
Sun	W + F	4 hours long hike with whatever recovery breaks you feel that you need	Take the 1st hour very easily so that you ease your body into the walk

Phase 5	Week 11/12	Start of taper	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes

Mon	R		Double rest day to kick off the week and begin your taper
Tues	R		A second sports massage will reinvigorate your legs
Wed	JR + F	30 – 40 minutes easy pace	
Thurs	G	All over body workout	Look to maintain your existing level rather than push up on heavier weights
Fri	W	1 hour steady pace	
Sat	R		
Sun	W + F	4 – 5 hours off-road single weekend session	This is your last long hike so 'road-test' any last minute items of clothing

Phase 5	Week 12/12	Main taper	
Day	Session Type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Use the extra rest days this week to finalise all your travelling arrangements
Tues	JR + F	30 minutes very easy	Avoid the temptation to 'race', remember that you are tapering and your training is just to keep your body 'ticking over'
Wed	R		
Thurs	W	1 hour, easy pace	
Fri	R		
Sat	R		
Sun	Fly!	Embark on the challenge of a lifetime with the confidence that you are ready for your trek and in great shape	Have a fantastic experience!



Trek fit training tips

Trek fit training tips

1. **Gear up!** It is important that by the time that you depart for your trek, you ensure that all your clothing is tried and tested 'in the field'. Your challenge will involve trekking for long periods – possibly several hours per day so all your clothing needs to be comfortable and to fit well. Comfort during extended periods trekking is of paramount importance because a seam that mildly irritates on a short jaunt, will become a major source of discomfort over several hours. Hence try out all the different combinations of your clothing in advance and replace any items that could cause problems.
2. **Boots in the afternoon!** In addition to wearing comfortable clothing, it is vital that your boots are correctly sized for you. Remember that your feet can swell as much as half a size as the day progresses, so you need to buy your boots in the afternoon. Sizes vary between manufacturers so visit a specialist retailer who will be able to provide you with a range of styles and sizes and also make sure that you try them on wearing the same socks that you intend to wear for your trek.
3. **Train with a rucksack.** You will certainly have to transport gear during your trek, which at the very least will mean carrying a small day sack between stopovers for your personal belongings. Hence you need to carry out some of your training with a rucksack which contains a similar amount of weight. It's surprising how heavy even a lightweight rucksack can feel after a few hours on your feet so as well as specific trekking training, you need to get used to carrying a load on your back, the positioning of straps and of course, minimising any unnecessary items.
4. **Train consecutively.** Although there may be rest days scheduled into your challenge, a lot of the trek will involve walking on consecutive days with only the evening for recovery. To ensure that your body is able to cope with these demands, it is important that when the training guide includes back-to-back sessions that you manage to train on successive days, so that you replicate conditions as closely as possible. For that reason, your cool down period after training is vital because it helps to accelerate your body's recovery so that you will be able to exercise the next day.
5. **Train similarly.** As far as possible, try to replicate as closely as possible the conditions that you will experience on your trekking challenge. Hence if you know that the terrain is particularly mountainous then it is worthwhile carrying out some of your training on hilly ground. That should include both uphill climbing and downhill descending because trekking downhill places different demands upon your body and you need to be prepared for every eventuality.
6. **It's not all about CV.** Although trekking and walking are primarily cardiovascular (CV) activities, your training should be not exclusively CV based. To move your body forward, over uneven terrain and whilst carrying a load, requires total body strength so you will benefit considerably from supplementary strength training. Focus areas include the muscles of the back, core, abdominals and shoulders as well as your legs and you will find that the resistance training exercises included in the training guide will make a big difference to your ability to keep going for long periods.
7. **Fuel up!** During your trek, you can easily burn in excess of 100 calories per mile walked, particularly when carrying a load and on uphill sections. Combine those statistics with the fact that you will be

exercising for long periods throughout the day and you can see that your fuelling strategy is key. Hence you need to ensure that you eat plenty of complex carbohydrate meals, pasta being ideal before each of your long training sessions so that you don't run out of energy and similarly, replace those calories again with complex carbohydrates when you finish.

8. **Fuel on the go!** The last thing that you want either during a long training session or during your trek is to completely run out of energy. Fortunately there are now plenty of energy products available that are ideal for keeping you 'topped up' and which you can easily carry en route. These products include energy drinks, bars and gels and it is worthwhile experimenting with them in training to find which products suit you best and then packing some in your luggage to use during your challenge so that you have an 'energy safety net'.
9. **Get breathless!** Many treks climb to significantly high altitudes where there is less oxygen in the atmosphere, which will make breathing harder and place greater demands upon your CV system. Hence it is important during your training that you improve your CV system to a level that your body will be able to cope with higher altitude sections. So whilst steady paced training is an important cornerstone of your training guide, some of your sessions need to challenge your aerobic system and make you breathe more heavily. These sessions will improve your aerobic capacity and make your trek easier and more enjoyable.
10. **Partner up.** Completing long training sessions can sometimes be a lonely business, particularly towards the end of your training guide when you are fitter and out for a few hours at a time. So rather than going it alone, see if you can link up with a fellow trekker or get support from a friend or family member to give you both company on the long routes and a training partner. You will find that the added incentive of having someone to train with will encourage you to 'get out there' when it might just be tempting to give a session a miss and have a lie-in!
11. **Struggling for time?** Go long. If work and other commitments mean that you're finding it difficult to complete every part of the training guide then try to ensure that you at least complete all the long workouts. Your primary goal is to be able to trek for several hours per day and also on successive days so whilst the resistance training and other sessions will significantly contribute to your trekking fitness, if you have to miss the odd session, make sure that it's not a long workout.
12. **Don't forget the basics!** With all the organisation and training, not forgetting checking that your clothing and boots are suitable, it's easy to forget smaller, yet equally important items for your challenge. Sunglasses, high protection factor sunscreen, personal toiletries, a small first aid kit and water purification tablets will all be important and don't forget to check with the organisers for any specialist items that you may need to include. Finally, keep everything down to the bare minimum and typical trekker's tricks such as stripping out unnecessary packaging, cutting down the handles of cutlery etc, will all help you keep your load light.

Motivation

Staying motivated can be one of the toughest aspects of training. Bad weather, work, family and friends can all make it difficult to stay focused and keep keen. To stay enthusiastic make sure you do the following:

- Keep a balance. Training should not “get in the way” of life. Make sure you maintain previous commitments to work, family and friends
- Treat yourself when you achieve a goal; either a tasty meal or a new piece of kit
- Remember why you chose to train and what you have achieved since beginning
- Read an inspiring story or autobiography
- Talk to other trekkers
- Write a blog

Some inspirational quotes:

“You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.” - Mae West

“The value of life lies not in the length of days, but in the use we make of them ...” - Michel de Montaigne

“Happiness walks on busy feet.” - Kitte Turmell

“If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail.” - Steve Prefontaine

Congratulations

Well done! You have successfully reached week 12 so now all you have to do is to finalise your preparations for the trek, stay relaxed and look forward to an amazing experience. By reaching the final week of this training guide you have made significant advances in your fitness, as well as honed new skills so now's the time to enjoy the fruits of your labours.

During this final week, your training volumes and the number of sessions are reduced, so that you begin your trek energised and raring to go, so use this extra time to check over your clothing and equipment so that everything is in tip-top condition for your big challenge. Don't forget to pack any last minute energy products that you may want to use and then just enjoy your personal trekking challenge experience. Have a fantastic time!



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