



Fitness Training

Multi-day bushwalking/trekking/tramping/hiking is a unique physical activity as it involves endurance, joint stabilisation and strength. Being physically prepared ensures that your experience will be enjoyable. We recommend that you undertake some hiking-specific training in the lead-up, ideally starting 6 months in advance to allow your body time to become conditioned.

Hiking-training is more than just regular walking; your body needs to be prepared for not only the duration of the trek, but also the uneven terrain, undulating hills, pack weight and slippery surfaces. Adequate training months before the trek begins will ensure you are skipping around the hut at the end of the day with a smile on your dial.

6 months before your walk

If you have limited experience with long-distance treks, ideally you will get started with your training as soon as possible. We recommend starting with a more moderate training program, and gradually increasing the length/difficulty/duration of your walks.

IDEAS:

- / Try parking your car further from work and walking to/from, then every second day increase the distance you park your car from work
- / Getting off your bus a stop earlier and walk the extra distance to work
- / Short bush walks or coastal strolls on the weekend
- / Encourage a friend or family member to walk with you to increase motivation
- / Record distance and duration each day that you walk. Aim to increase either distance or duration each week

5 months before your walk

As you become conditioned and can comfortably walk for 30mins to 1hr every second day (3-4 days per week), it is time to start challenging your cardiovascular endurance by adding hills and stair climbs to your weekly routine. Try to find routes that allow you to walk on uneven ground, as this will help strengthen the muscles of your lower limbs. Start by walking at a relaxed speed up the slope or stairs for the first two sessions (record the time it takes you). Focus these sessions on relaxed breathing and your technique (standing up straight, engaging your bottom muscles as you push through your heels when ascending stairs). Each session following try to increase your pace (decreasing your recorded time).

If you haven't already, start "breaking in" your hiking boots to prevent blisters and determine whether your boots are the right fit and feel. If your boots are more than 10 years old there is a good chance the glue will have deteriorated and they will fall apart. It's better to find this out on your training walk than in the middle of the Tasmanian wilderness!

Stability is essential for injury prevention when hiking, especially when carrying a backpack. This includes stability around your spine and pelvis and your more distal joints such as knees and ankles. Therefore balance, yoga and/or pilates based exercises should be added to your training.

IDEAS:

- / Single leg balances, keeping a micro bend in your knee
 - / Advance single leg balance by standing on a rolled towel, foam mat or pillow
 - / Barefoot beach walking on soft sand for ankle stability
 - / Pilates based abdominal exercises (various depending on starting level)
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4 months before your walk

On your Cradle Mountain Huts Walk, you will be carrying between 7.5-10kg, so we strongly recommend that you start wearing a backpack on your training walks. Start with a lighter backpack (~5kgs) and gradually increase the weight of your pack.

IDEAS:

- / Start to add a longer walk ~2hours at least once a week; this includes wearing hiking boots and carrying a pack
- / Soft sand walking
- / Walking on dry riverbeds
- / Alternating training walks with selected focuses e.g. Mon= hills, Wed= intervals of increased pace, Fri=distance



No doubt you are starting to discover new muscles and feeling a little tight and stiff. Adding a gentle stretching program (after you have warmed up) will aid in injury prevention. Aim to stretch major muscle groups such as hamstrings, quadriceps, buttocks and calf muscles. A gentle stretch of the muscles should be felt and pain should never be produced. Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds and avoid bouncing movements.

3 months before your walk

Map out a 7km hike in your area consisting of average hills and flat surfaces. Time how long it takes you to walk this distance (wearing hiking boots and backpack). Complete this hike once per week in conjunction with your other walking. Each week, add an extra km to your hike. By the end of the month the goal is to walk 10km comfortably. This hike is a good chance to practice with all the gear that you intend to take on your actual hike. This will enable you to work out where things are best located in/on your pack for your individual preference. Now is also good time to add in more strength based exercises.

IDEAS:

- / Squats (feet are hip width apart, body weight in your heels). Advance by added weights in each hand or increasing repetitions
 - / Lunges (alternating legs in front, protect your knees by making sure front knee does not come further forward than your ankle, keep torso up straight). Advance by increasing repetitions, adding weights in hands or walking lunges
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2 months before your walk

The trekking tour is getting closer and now you are comfortable walking on different surfaces at different intensities. On the actual hike, you will be required to walk long distances on consecutive days in all weather conditions. Aim to walk 30mins-1 hour every day of the week, despite the weather (in addition to your weekly 7km hike).

Continue carrying your backpack that you will actually need to carry on the trek. Ideally by the end of this month you will be able to comfortably carry up to 10kgs on all your training walks.

1 month to go!

This is your “tapering” month, we recommend reducing the intensity of your training in this last month to avoid a burnout. The idea is to keep walking regularly, but decrease your intensity e.g. slower pace, one stair at a time rather than two, decrease your pack weight back to what you will carry on the trek. The last thing you want to do is get an injury just before your walk.

Remember to continue your strengthening and stretching exercises throughout your hike.