

Berg Adventures International

Training Program

Goals:

- Increase your aerobic fitness
- Increase your overall strength
- Prepare your body for going 'uphill'
- Prepare your body for carrying a loaded pack
- Prepare your feet for extended hiking

Increase Your Aerobic Fitness:

The most popular types of exercise to increase your aerobic capacity are running, swimming, biking and hiking. If you are new to any of these types of training we recommend that you research each discipline, there are several great manuals out there for you to review.

It is a good idea to alternate different aerobic training disciplines to help prevent repetitive injuries. For example you may want to run 2 times per week and cycle 3 times per week.

ALLOW yourself to rest and recover. If you are feeling fatigued be sure to give your body a rest. Your body actually becomes stronger on your rest days between workouts. Some signs of overtraining can be; (a) 'cotton mouth', where you feel as though you have cotton in your mouth, especially in the mornings (b) a repetitive strain injury and (c) a feeling of continual exhaustion.

Remember the 10% rule. To avoid injury never increase your workouts by more than 10% a week. For example if you are running 10 miles per week, then the following week you would run 12 miles maximum. If you cycle 50 miles per week, then the following week you would cycle 60 miles maximum. This rule can be applied to any aerobic discipline.

Aerobic training should be fun, if you are not having fun you will be less likely to keep on a program. If you love to run but dislike swimming, choose to run 3 times a week and swim once a week.

Try to do multiple all-day hikes before you leave for your climb. A typical summit day can last 10-14 hours. REMEMBER you need to rest and recover so don't go on an all day hike days before your climb, give yourself permission to take a whole week off from training prior to your departure.

Increase Your Overall Strength:

To build long, lean, strong muscles you need to incorporate a good stretching routine into your training. As your muscles become stronger it is important to maintain flexibility as a muscle is

only strongest when it has full range of motion. If you are new to strength training we recommend you research a training program that is right for you

You will need to build strength in your legs, back, shoulders, arms and abdominal muscles. For beginners it is important to begin with low weight for 10-12 reps for the first two weeks. This allows your body to become accustomed to the movements of strength training machines. Before you increase your weight increase the number of reps to 20 to build endurance in your muscles. After some time begin to increase your weight gradually and be sure to drop your reps to 10-12, especially with heavier weight.

Weight training should only be done 2-3 times per week, always with a day of rest in between training sessions to allow your body to recover. Consulting a fitness trainer is also a good idea for someone who is new to weight training.

Prepare Your Body For Going 'Uphill'

It is very important to teach your body how to go uphill. Going uphill requires flexibility and strength in your leg and buttock muscles. If you are not familiar with hill training be sure to start off slowly and refer to hill training manuals.

Hill training is best done on a hill or natural incline. Be sure to go on hikes that are hilly or have a consistent increase in elevation. Hiking can be very time consuming so try to go hiking at least once a week. Wear the appropriate footwear for the terrain you are training on (for example: a well cushioned runner for long distances on asphalt and a good hiking boot or shoe for uneven trail terrain). Always be conscious of how your feet are feeling. If you start getting a 'hotspot' on your foot, stop, assess the area and try moving your sock or applying a preventative bandage for blisters. Once you get blisters they can be very uncomfortable and prevent you from training. You need to toughen your feet for hiking but don't over do it, remember to rest and recover.

If you do not have the option of hiking on the trails you can also gain hill training on manmade surfaces. Inclining treadmills are excellent to help your body prepare for hiking uphill. When you start increasing the incline of the treadmill be sure to start with a small incline for 1-2 weeks and then gradually increase the grade over time. Increasing the incline too quickly can cause an injury and prevent training.

You can also use stairs to train for hill climbing. Try doing repetitions of a good length of stairs, of course 1-2 reps in the first week and then gradually increasing as time goes on.

Prepare Your Body For Carrying a Loaded Pack

Carrying a loaded pack can really affect your fitness, simply imagine adding 40lbs to yourself and how that would affect your aerobic fitness and strength. Carrying a loaded pack will affect all areas of your body, feet, legs and especially your back and shoulders. Unless you have packed away your own personal massage therapist you should prepare your muscles as much as possible for the extra load.

The most common areas of discomfort will be in your rhomboids (between the shoulder blades), traps and sometimes even your low back. When you purchase a pack be sure to have a knowledgeable staff member help fit you with a pack. Believe it or not packs come in different sizes, men and women models and several different volumes. A pack that fits your body properly is a good starting point for your training.



You should also consider strength training for your upper body (refer to strength training section). The best training for you is to actually start wearing your pack on hikes and adding weight to the pack slowly. Of course you want to start with a very low weight and then increase the weight gradually over time. It is also important to distribute the weight evenly in your pack to avoid a 'top heavy' pack that can really cause achy traps.

A good way to judge your pack weight so you don't start with too much weight is to weigh yourself with the pack on to determine exactly how much you are carrying.

Start wearing your pack for your hill training sessions as well. Once your body becomes used to going uphill the next step is to go uphill with a pack. When you start wearing your pack uphill you may wish to use trekking poles to assist you with your balance, to get used to carrying a load.

Prepare Your Feet For Extended Hiking

As we already mentioned it is very important to take care of your feet. While training you definitely want to 'toughen' up your feet but you don't want to cause uncomfortable blisters. We recommend that you don't get pedicures while training or before an expedition because they remove the important tough skin you need for extended hiking.

It is important that your feet get lots of weight bearing experience before you start your trip. For instance if your main source of aerobic training has been swimming or cycling you may want to incorporate some running and definitely trekking. You also want your feet to get used to the extra weight from your pack.

So be sure to carry a pack during your training where it is appropriate to do so.

Last of all if your feet start hurting then you should stop training. Foot injuries take a long time to heal because you are always on your feet and they don't get much time to rest. Some overuse signs to look for in your feet can be, pain in the arches of your feet, constant heel pain, or foot burn.



If you are consistently getting blisters there are a few options you may wish to consider. Try wearing a sock liner under your sock, sometimes this creates a slip between your foot and the sock and can prevent excess friction. Your footwear may also be the cause, so be sure to get a good quality boot or shoe that fits your foot. When you buy footwear try to find a place that looks at your foot before they try selling you the most expensive boot. When they assess your foot they can recommend a proper fitting boot. Also ask them if you can wear the boot or shoe inside the house to see if it is a good fit. Often good stores will allow you to try the footwear on at home to make sure the fit is just right!

Summing Up

So you are now ready to climb your mountain. Some key points to remember are to rest 1-2 weeks prior to your departure. Give your body a rest so that it can peak right before you start climbing. It also reduces the risk of getting injured right before you leave.

Second, remember your training will be your reward. You will take away from your training exactly what you put into it. Have fun, work hard and we'll see you on the mountain!