

Congratulations on choosing The 3 Peaks Challenge....the event of a lifetime!!

Before you start remember that your body may need time to adjust to your new fitness regime. Within your training programme, rest is as important as time spent on your feet. We strongly recommend that you rest on at least one day out of seven. Equally, when training, stick within the limits of speed and distance that are comfortable for you.

Train using the walking boots you intend to take with you on the challenge. This will help you to get used to them, break them in, and ensure they are comfortable for the challenge. If you are using walking poles, train using them.

As the challenge gets closer, try to leave whole weekends free for long training walks. Time spent walking 15 - 20 miles in a day will pay dividends, preferably with steps!

Please find below some training hints and tips to get ahead of the game before you hit the mountains and peaks!

Terrain

All the mountains and peaks all have well defined paths up to the respective summits, however for the most part they are steep and uneven and made up of steep steps cut into the mountainside for the best part of the climbs....please bear this in mind when training and climb up and down as many steps as you can before the challenge!

Medical check-up

Before you start on a new training programme, it is always a good idea to consult with your local doctor. You may wish to take our recommended training programme along with you so the doctor knows the level of training you are hoping to carry out. If you or your doctor has any concerns, please contact us. We can deal with most things if we understand your needs well in advance.

Training

Training for an event ensures you are physically prepared, that you are able to complete the challenge safely which will greatly contribute to your enjoyment of the event.

Don't forget that, even if you are accustomed to walking, you will probably not be used to walking for up to 16 hours in 24 hour period on uneven ground and mainly on steep trails or difficult terrain. You should aim to increase your fitness levels to prepare yourself for this type of challenge.

Pain

Be prepared for at least a bit of pain, be it blisters, sore muscles, sore joints etc, this is normal. If you have done some good training you will be familiar with this and it won't feel so bad if it happens on the event.

Don't worry, this isn't a definitive list, but it is an indicator. If you feel you might struggle in some respects, there will be lots of support for you along the way.

Take some time to work out your training plan for the coming months. Depending on your current fitness, training may need to start four months before your departure. If you start early and work within your limits, you will get great results.

A plan, with some goals along the way, will keep you focussed and motivated. Use our suggestions for its basis and modify it according to your needs and preferences.

Stretching

Tight muscles hurt, do not work well, are more prone to injury, and can cause joint problems. Make stretching a habit through your training to improve flexibility in your muscles and joints. You will find that it will pay real dividends, and it feels great afterwards!

Easy does it

Rest is as important as exercise. If you feel exhausted or ill but still push yourself to the limits, you may do yourself more harm than good. Take time off and recover. Work within your comfortable limits and these will expand with time.

Enjoy your training

Take in your environment as you go, and even while training you will discover new things.

Mix it up

Add variety by using different approaches. This alleviates boredom and means you're getting fitter without putting the same strain on the same bits of your body all the time.

But remember which activity you are training for and focus on that as much as you can.

Eat well

Food and drink are vital elements for training, and during the expedition. Good food will fuel, maintain, and repair your body.

As you increase the distance over which you are training, you will need to ensure that you eat well, both before and after the session.

And drink!

We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to drink water and sports drinks before, during and after training, and during the expedition. If you don't give your body all the water it needs, it quickly stops working properly.

Some suggested goals

If by the end of your training programme you know you can do the following reasonably comfortably, then you should start the challenge with a very good level of confidence:

- Walk 15 miles one day, and again the next day.
- Walk at a fast pace or up a steep hill for 20 minutes with no big stops, have a rest and then carry on as normal.
- Walk up and down steep rocky terrain confidently.
- Deal with the problems of blisters and being hot.
- Comfortably carry your rucksack with the day kit we've listed.

Setting up a daily schedule is vital to your success. Below is a 12 week plan for beginner to intermediate walkers:

Guide for Beginners

Mondays – Rest day

Tuesdays and Thursdays – Moderate walks of at least 4 miles

Wednesdays – Comfortable walks of at least 3 miles

Fridays – Cross-training for 1 hour

Saturdays – Endurance walking, slowly building up to 80% of goal distance

Sundays – Recovery day with at least 30 minutes of cross-training or comfortable walking

- A typical distance training walk should include periods of comfortable walking, periods of stretching, and periods of peak walking.
- Start your walk at a comfortable, natural walking pace for the first 10 minutes. Stop for your usual stretching exercises for about 5 minutes and then resume walking fast enough so that you maintain your heart rate at 65–80% of your maximum heart rate (MHR).
- At this walking pace, you should be able to speak only in short sentences, barely passing the talking test. Walk at this pace for most of your distance goal before ending your training walk with cool down exercises.

Tips for Intermediate Walkers

More seasoned walkers can begin a more demanding training schedule. If you walk 6 to 8 miles 5 times per week, you can consider yourself an intermediate walker. This training plan is similar to the beginner's plan:

Mondays – Rest day

Tuesdays – Interval walks of varied pacing for at least 4 miles

Wednesdays – Comfortable walks of at least 3 miles for better technique

Thursdays – Tempo or power walking for 5 to 6 miles

Fridays – Cross-training for 2 hours

Saturdays – Endurance walking, sometimes called a long distance day, slowly building up to 80% of goal distance

Sundays – Recovery day with at least 45 minutes of cross-training or comfortable walking

- Interval walking means walking at a fast pace for a short time, then walking at a normal pace.
- Tempo walking means pushing yourself, but not so much that you're spent before you finish your walk.
- On long distance days, you should walk at a steady pace that is slightly faster than your normal pace. Aim for reaching your distance goal in the final 2 weeks of your training schedule. As the challenge gets closer, try to leave whole weekends free for long training walks. Time spent walking 15 - 20 miles a day, back to back, will pay dividends

- Cross-training—other exercises such as cycling, push-ups, weight training, or swimming—are vital to long distance walking, so always schedule 2 days of cross-training per week.
- Begin each workout with a 10- to 15-minute warm-up period and end each session with a 5 to 10 minute cool down.
- As your training goal approaches, include a taper period in which you slow down the pace of your training to allow your body to prepare for the event.
- Carrying enough water for a long distance walk is nearly impossible, so it's a good idea to plan your routes around water sources such as public water fountains, vending machines, or grocery stores.

Don't worry, this isn't a "must do" list, but it is a realistic indicator. If you feel you may be struggling please contact us for help and advice.

Your training

This 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.

Don't forget that, even if you are accustomed to walking, you will probably not be used to walking mainly on steep tracks or difficult terrain for consecutive days in a row! You should aim to increase your fitness levels to prepare yourself for this type of challenge.

If you live near a park and hills, use them for your training as much as possible to prepare your muscles for doing lots of walking! If you don't, visit open places for your weekend walks or use the incline setting on a treadmill.

Walking in a group will encourage you to train, and will take you to lots of beautiful places. The Training Walks are a good means of working up your fitness and stamina. They are also a good way of getting to know your fellow walkers.

As the challenge gets closer, try to leave whole weekends free for long training walks. Time spent walking 15 - 20 miles a day, back to back, will pay dividends

Walking tips

To ensure you are comfortable when walking long distances, you must pay attention to your posture and gait. The following tips will help you to walk comfortably and avoid injury:

- Keep your head up and your back straight, shoulders relaxed and level, especially when going up and down hill.
- 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.
- Don't overstretch. Use a natural stride length. Take short steps when going uphill.
- Train with the rucksack you will use for the challenge, including its equivalent weight. The extra weight of the rucksack will alter your gait, and your body will appreciate the chance to get used to this.
- Walk at your own speed. Don't feel you have to keep up with faster people.

Train using the walking boots you intend to take with you on the challenge. This will help you to get used to them, break them in, and ensure they are comfortable for the challenge. If you are using walking poles train using them.

In summary

Enjoy your training. Take your time. Remember, the challenges are not just physical, and everyone on the challenge will be there to support each other. At times it may be tough, but there is every reason to finish feeling you've done a great thing, and had a great time!

Good luck!