

# TRAINING for Mt. Everest Basecamp Trek

## **What kind of physical condition should I be in?**

High altitude trekking requires strength & endurance. Being in sound physical condition is the single most important aspect for climbers to maximize their climbing potential. The better your physical condition, the more likely you are to perform well and have an enjoyable experience. The most frequent comment climbers have is that they feel they have underestimated the fitness level needed to fully enjoy their climb. Additionally, inadequate fitness has a direct effect upon the atmosphere, pace, and overall enjoyment of the trip for all team members. We encourage you to consult Luis Benitez, Director of Trekking, [luis@trekkingforkids.org](mailto:luis@trekkingforkids.org) for any questions about fitness.

**IMPORTANT: Do not assume that because you run or do some other type of exercise frequently that you will be in shape for this trek. Running marathons, playing tennis, or other types of activities will not adequately prepare you for hiking many hours at high elevation.**

## **What type of physical conditioning should I do?**

Physical conditioning should be approached on two fronts:

**Cardiovascular conditioning.** Traditionally improved by activity sustained for at least 45-60 minutes, 4-5 times per week. Suggested activities include running, bicycling, swimming, stepping, etc. Proper stretching and warm-up are very important.

**Strength conditioning.** Traditionally improved by training with free weights or Nautilus machines.

- **General conditioning for mountaineering:** When possible, hike steep outdoor trails with water weight added to your pack. A physical goal should be to ascend 3,500ft carrying 15-20 pounds. Increasing amounts of water in collapsible plastic jugs can vary the workout and slowly work up to a heavier pack. (Water weight is suggested so that when the climb up is complete the weight can be dumped to save knees on the downhill return). If you are training in a gym you can use a "Step-Mill" machine that is similar to an escalator or even better an elliptical trainer. If not in a gym, stairs or small hills also work well. If you train indoors, be sure to work gradually up to training with a heavy pack & your boots. While you won't be carrying 20-40lbs on the trek, training with that much weight will make your 10-15lbs that you will be carrying seem much lighter!

## **How early and how often?**

Please begin training for this trek **at least** 2 months in advance. This will be a strenuous hike and you will need to take your physical preparation seriously.

- **4-5 times a week:** 35-45 minutes, working up to 60 minutes of cardiovascular conditioning and strength training.
- **Once a week:** Get outside and do a longer walk or hike with a weighted backpack, working up eventually to 4-6 hours. Remember, we'll be hiking 6 days in a row, so you'll need to train for endurance. This is a great opportunity to get together with other Trekking for Kids Trekkers in your area.

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** Do I really have to exercise with a weighted backpack?

**A:** YES! You will still want to carry some food, water and a little extra clothing. But mostly, hiking with a pack will build your strength and endurance. If you're at a gym, it will also draw attention to yourself. What a great opportunity to tell others about Trekking for Kids! 😊

**Q:** How do I train for the elevation?

**A:** If you can get to higher elevations to train, do so. Training at high elevations will not carry over to help you when you are in Nepal. You cannot build your body's ability to carry more oxygen in your blood. However, by training at high elevation, you will learn how you will react specifically to elevation. You will have practice in dealing with and preventing the headaches, shortness of breath, disorientation, etc.

Here are some key things to remember when hiking at elevations higher than about 4,000 feet.

- Drink LOTS of water.
- Eat snacks and have a few bites every 15-30 minutes or so.
- Don't sprint. Maintain a slower, steadier pace than you would at low elevation.

**Q:** Should I wear my hiking boots or athletic shoes when I work out?

**A:** Both. You will wear hiking boots on the trail, but you will also want to wear lighter athletic shoes (tennis shoes) some days or for walking around camp, at the orphanage, etc. If you don't have hiking boots already, make sure you purchase them in time to wear them in and get used to them.

**Wear your hiking boots at least for one workout per week.**

Foot blisters will be the most common, yet most incapacitating problem that we will experience on the trail. Having boots that are comfortable, yet supportive is critical. Get your boots soon and wear them often.

*For this trek, we require checking with your physician before embarking on this trek, or any strenuous activity.*

---