

Fitness Guide

Everest Base Camp Trek

A trek to Everest Base Camp (EBC) is a serious undertaking. Although physical fitness is an important part, you do not need to be an athlete or marathon runner to either complete or enjoy it.

Most first-time trekkers are concerned that they are not fit enough and won't keep up. It is important to trek at your own pace. It will allow you to enjoy the amazing scenery that surrounds you and you will soon discover that at a steady pace, you can climb almost anything; the classic tortoise and hare.

The fitter you are, the less it will take out of you on a daily basis allowing you to enjoy other activities rather than collapse at the end of each day!

In general, there are four areas to concentrate on when preparing for a trek of this nature: aerobic and physical strength, mental robustness and equipment.

Aerobic conditioning - the air is thinner and you'll be climbing hills a lot. With good aerobic conditioning you will be able to better metabolise whatever oxygen is available to you.

Physical strength, particularly legs. Your thighs will be the workhorses that will carry you up (and down) the hills. Many perceive that the uphill is going to be the toughest when in fact most find the descents harder (knees). Upper leg strength will provide the protection to knees.

Training. We all lead different lifestyles with varying amounts of time with which to spend training and therefore no hard and fast regime can be used.

- Aim to exercise 2/3 times per week, 3-6 months prior to your trip.
- Walking, jogging, cycling, swimming are all excellent forms of exercise and if you do any of those now, you're half way there!
- Remember what your training is geared towards - walking. There is no better training other than to do just that - walk. Even better if it's done with the exact footwear and daysack that you'll be using when you're out there. Familiarisation is good.
- Aim to get some long day walks in (with daysacks), once a week in the months before you trek.
- Tai Chi and Pilates classes are good. They both develop balance, core strength and stability of the body.
- Speed is not important. Build for endurance and leg strength.

Mental strength is also important. You are going into a remote region, with no road transportation, basic facilities and cold weather. Some robustness is required and you will experience some discomfort, due to the altitude. The ability to cope with some physiological changes to your body for a few days is required.

Equipment. It's an obvious statement to say that you should be correctly equipped but many inexperienced trekkers fail to understand the potential severity of the conditions they may experience. It's not necessary to spend a small fortune on the best clothing and equipment available, just make sure that what you do have is adequate. The dossier has more information.

Summary. There is no magic single formula to preparing for EBC. Good steady aerobic exercise (any type) with a focus on leg strength combined with a series of long walks with the boots and daysack you're going to use is all that's required. Step it up in the final month and get very familiar with whatever clothing/equipment you are taking.