



Mountaineering Training Recommendations

By Participating in the Climbing for Kids fundraiser you are supporting the efforts of Bay Area Wilderness Training (BAWT). The money that is raised by Climbing for Kids goes a long way towards providing wilderness and outdoor experiences to at-risk youth. As a Climbing for Kids climber we would like you to get the most out of your mountaineering experience; you will need to make sure you are physically prepared for the challenge. In order to successfully climb a 14,000 ft. mountain you need train regularly so that you are in good physical condition. With that in mind we have compiled a general guideline for our Climbing for Kids participants.

The best way for you to increase your chance of summiting would be to begin a regimen consisting of regular, strenuous cardiovascular exercise supplemented with strength-training as soon as possible. In general, climbers usually begin to train for a climb of this type several months in advance; so the sooner you start the better¹. While we provide some general training information here that may be of assistance, climbers should not rely on BAWT or its personnel for particularized medical or training advice, especially if they have medical or health conditions. Rather, be sure to speak with your physician and trainer before beginning or modifying your work-out regimen to insure you are healthy enough to undertake specific physical activities. While training will be an essential part of getting you up the mountain; it will not be necessary to devote your life to getting ready for your climb in order to enjoy it².

Building Cardiovascular Endurance:

An important part of preparing for a climb at high altitude is making sure that your body is used to strenuous physical activity. Generally, aerobic exercise that elevates your heart rate for at least 30 minutes, at least 3 days a week is going to be the best way to prepare for a climb³. Activities such as hiking, biking, running, swimming or the use of gym equipment will help you achieve this. Most gyms offer a variety of structured workouts like spinning classes, circuit training, and aerobics that would all work well to help you prepare for your climb. Make training with a pack and boots a part of your regimen by speed walking and jogging; or by using incline treadmills and stair climbing machines if you are unable to take training hikes on a regular basis³. Regular cardiovascular exercise will help you to condition your body so that you are able to better utilize the lower levels of oxygen that you will encounter at altitude⁴.

Building Muscle Strength and Flexibility:

A well-rounded workout will include strength training in addition to cardiovascular training. To get ready for a climb; strength train at least 2 days a week if possible and focus on leg and core strength as this will be most useful for your purpose. You will be able to develop your strength with exercises such as calf raises, hanging leg raises,

step-ups, pull-ups, and triceps dips, among others. Make sure that you are working the opposing muscle groups so that you can maintain muscle balance and help prevent overuse injuries. If you have limited experience with strength training, use the resources at your local gym or consult a professional to ensure that you get a well-rounded workout.

Flexibility is another important factor in your training and will make the body more resistant to injuries and enhance strength. Adding a few minutes every day of stretching which will be vital to ensuring that you get the most out of your training and help prevent injuries³. Activities such as martial arts, yoga and dance offer some alternatives to stretching regimens and improve flexibility⁵.



Training Hikes:

The best way to prepare for a climb is to actually get out and climb. This means that as part of your weekly fitness regimen, you should be getting out to do an extended hike at least 3 to 4 times a month. Hikes that have significant elevation changes and hikes in higher altitudes will be one of the best ways to prepare. If at all possible, plan on doing at least two overnight hiking trips that take you above 10,000 feet in elevation¹. Carrying a progressively heavier pack is the recommended way to get used to carrying the approximately 50 pound pack you will need to carry to and from the base camp³. It is important to work your way up by going farther and faster with more weight, keeping in mind that the more you push yourself before you get to your mountain the easier that climb will be.

Here is a general guideline for steadily increasing the difficulty of your hikes to get into “peak” condition⁶.



- **Month 1 – Pre-conditioning: 2-4 hikes**
 - Distance: 4-8 miles
 - Elevation: 1,500-2,500 feet of elevation gain over the course of the hike.
 - Pack-weight: 15-25 pounds. Include a lunch, extra layers and extra water.
 - Pro-tip: Look for hikes that have either steep rolling hills or long steady elevation gain.

- **Month 2 – Base Miles: 3-4 hikes**
 - Distance: 5-10 miles
 - Elevation: 1,500 – 2,500 feet of elevation gain over the course of the hike.
 - Pack-weight: 30-35 pounds.
 - Pro-tip: As you increase your pack-weight integrate trekking/hiking poles into your routine. These will save your knees during descents.

- **Month 3 – Strength and Endurance: 3-4 hikes**
 - Distance: 5-15 miles
 - Elevation: Up to 4,500 of elevation gain.
 - Pack-weight: 35-45 pounds
 - Pro-tip: Simulate big hills by doing several laps on a smaller hill or the stairwell of a big building. Four laps of a 1,000 foot climb is a great way to get a long day of training in.

- **Month 4 – Peak Condition and Elevation Preparation: 2-3 hikes**
 - Distance: 10-15 miles

- Elevation: Integrate hikes at high elevations. One hike at 6,000 feet or more, should be followed by a hike that takes you over 10,000 feet, if possible. Continue to train on steep trails and hills at lower elevations in between.
- Pack-weight: Up to 1/3 your body weight.
- Pro-tip: If you don't have access to hikes at high elevations, continue to push your limits by doing very-long hikes (over 15 miles) and hiking at a fast pace. Slow your workouts during the two weeks prior to your climb and don't do a long hike the weekend before. Rest, eat well and drink up to 5 quarts of water per day.

Recreation Activities & Rest Periods:

Being in the gym is not for everyone, and one of the greatest aspects of climbing a mountain is being outside and enjoying the experience. Whether you like to swim, bike or kayak make sure that your interests are part of your training. Not only will these activities keep you interested in training; they will also make you enjoy it more.

Time away from training that allows you to recuperate and relax is also vital to any fitness regimen. It is important to take at least one day off from training every week because the body will only strengthen when it is allowed to recover⁷. You will need to alternate between muscle groups and between the intensity of your workouts in order to reduce the chances of prolonged soreness and injury. Schedule your demanding workouts at least 48 hours apart so that the targeted muscles, tendons and ligaments can recover before they are subject to stress again. Keep in mind that tendons and ligaments take longer than muscles to adjust to increased workloads. Make sure to pay attention to your body taking rests or altering your training program so that you do not injure yourself⁸.

Weekly Training Schedule:

This is intended to be a platform upon which you can develop your own schedule and plan based on your own availability and physical condition. Keep in mind that any work out is a progression and no training routine is appropriate for everyone⁹. You will want to start off slow and build up to being more than ready to tackle your mountain of choice. Use the resources at your gym facility in combination with other available sources to ensure that you are getting a safe and effective workout. Also make sure to speak with your physician, and or trainer before beginning or modifying your work-out regimen to insure you are healthy enough to undertake specific physical activities.

3-4 Days of aerobic exercise between 45 min to 1 hour in duration

2-4 Days of strength-training

1 Training hike or additional day of aerobic exercise to supplement (incline treadmill, stair climbing)

1 Day of active recreation

1 Rest day

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Aerobic Exercise	●	●		●	●		
Strength Training	●		●		●	●	
Training Hike						●	
Recreation			●				
Rest							●

(Adapted From: Soles, 2008, p. 252)

Other Suggestions and Tips:

Many people need more than just a desire to be able to successfully train. Form groups or work with your established support resources such as family and friends to help you to stick to your training plan and be successful. Choose a plan that works for you; not everyone has time to put in all of the recommended training time, but the more you are able to train, the greater your chances of reaching the summit.

Hopefully this guide gives you what you need to start training for your Climbing for Kids Climb. We want you to use the resources in this guide and any others available to you so that you can get as much from your climb as Bay Area Wilderness Training and at-risk youth get from your fundraising efforts.

Resources:

Bay Area Wilderness Training. (2008). Training Timeline.⁶

Cox, S. M., Fulsaa, K., & Mountaineers. (2003). *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills 7th ed.* Seattle WA: Mountaineers books. ² p. 14, ⁸ p. 82,

International Mountain Guides. (1998-2011). *Training Suggestions for Mt. Rainier.*

Retrieved May 2011, from International Mountain Guides:

<http://www.mountainguides.com/rainier-training.shtml> ¹

Sierra Wilderness Seminars Inc. (2010, May). *Physical Conditioning.* Retrieved 2011, from Sierra Wilderness Seminars: <http://www.swsmtns.com/formspdfs/Physical10.pdf> ³

Soles, C. (2008). *Climbing: Training for Peak Performance.* Seattle WA: The Mountaineers Books. ⁴ p. 80, ⁵ pp. 203-5, ⁷ p. 210, ⁹ p. 236