

Your guide to Trekking



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Believe in
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Barnardo's

Getting started

Top 10 tips

1. Patience

It takes time to build and grow your fitness. The hikes you do now will take 2-3 weeks to bed in so build up slowly and stay patient, after 5-6 weeks of consistent training you'll feel fantastic!

2. Have a routine

Work, family and social life means that you might need to rework our training plans to make them work for you.

Complete your training on the days and at the times you know will give you the best opportunity to focus on each session and build a good routine.

3. Any weather

The changeable British weather is part of the excitement and challenge of walking. Check out our top kit tips in this guide to ensure you stay safe and comfortable in all conditions and to keep you motivated even in the winter months.

4. Train to time

Always thinking about how many miles you are covering can become stressful as you build through the weeks, that's why our training plans are mostly set to time which means you can focus on building sustainably as the weeks go by

5. Don't just walk!

Cross training such as aqua jogging, cycling, running, swimming and gym work can really push your fitness along quickly particularly if you are short on time to get out and complete hiking sessions mid week.

6. Adapt to succeed!

Just because our plan has you doing a long hike at the weekend or says to go out on a particular day and hike doesn't mean you need to do it that way. Take ownership and adapt the plan to your lifestyle.

7. Set targets

Building through several weeks of training can be a daunting process so look to break up the plan and include some shorter walking challenges as intermediate targets either in an organised event or by meeting up with friends or family.

8. Get strong

Your trek challenge will involve several hours spent exercising possibly over undulating and uneven terrain, having a strong core and posture will really help make the miles feel easier and regular the likelihood of injury.

9. Fuel and recover

Your body needs rest and fuel in order to train and improve. You will progress best if you sleep well and have a diet rich in protein and micro nutrients supported by high quality carbohydrate, snacking and eating well between meals.

10. Keep it social and practical

One of the joys of walking is that it is a very accessible and social activity. Chat to family and friends and aim to build a support team of people who will share some of the training with you.

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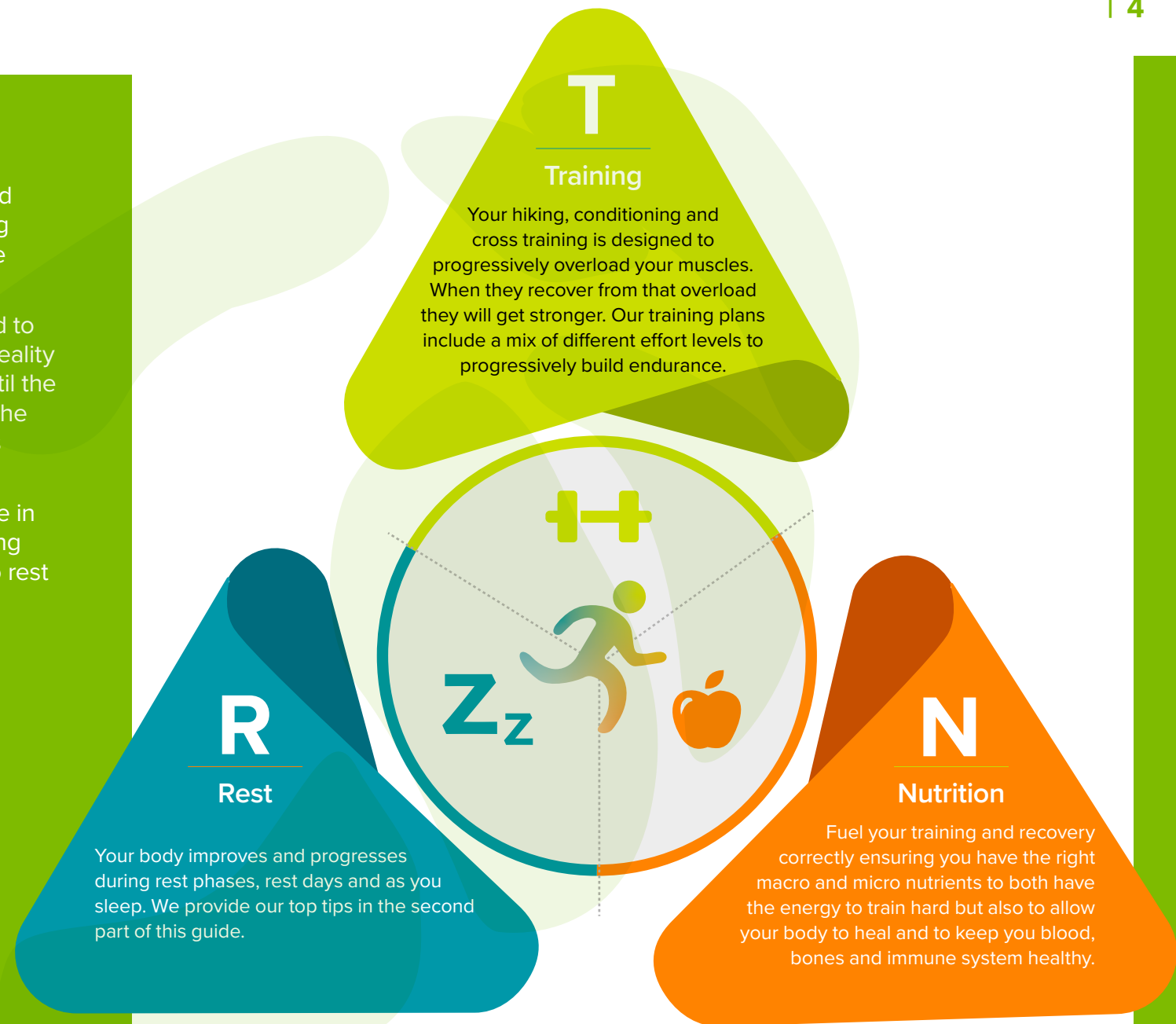
Keeping it all in balance

Developing your fitness can seem complicated at times with lots of information and conflicting advice, but honestly it is simple! The key is the training triangle you see to the right.

Most of us think the training sessions we need to do are to become stronger, fitter or faster. In reality you won't really make gains in these areas until the nutrition, and the rest and recovery points of the triangle are considered and given equal focus and attention.

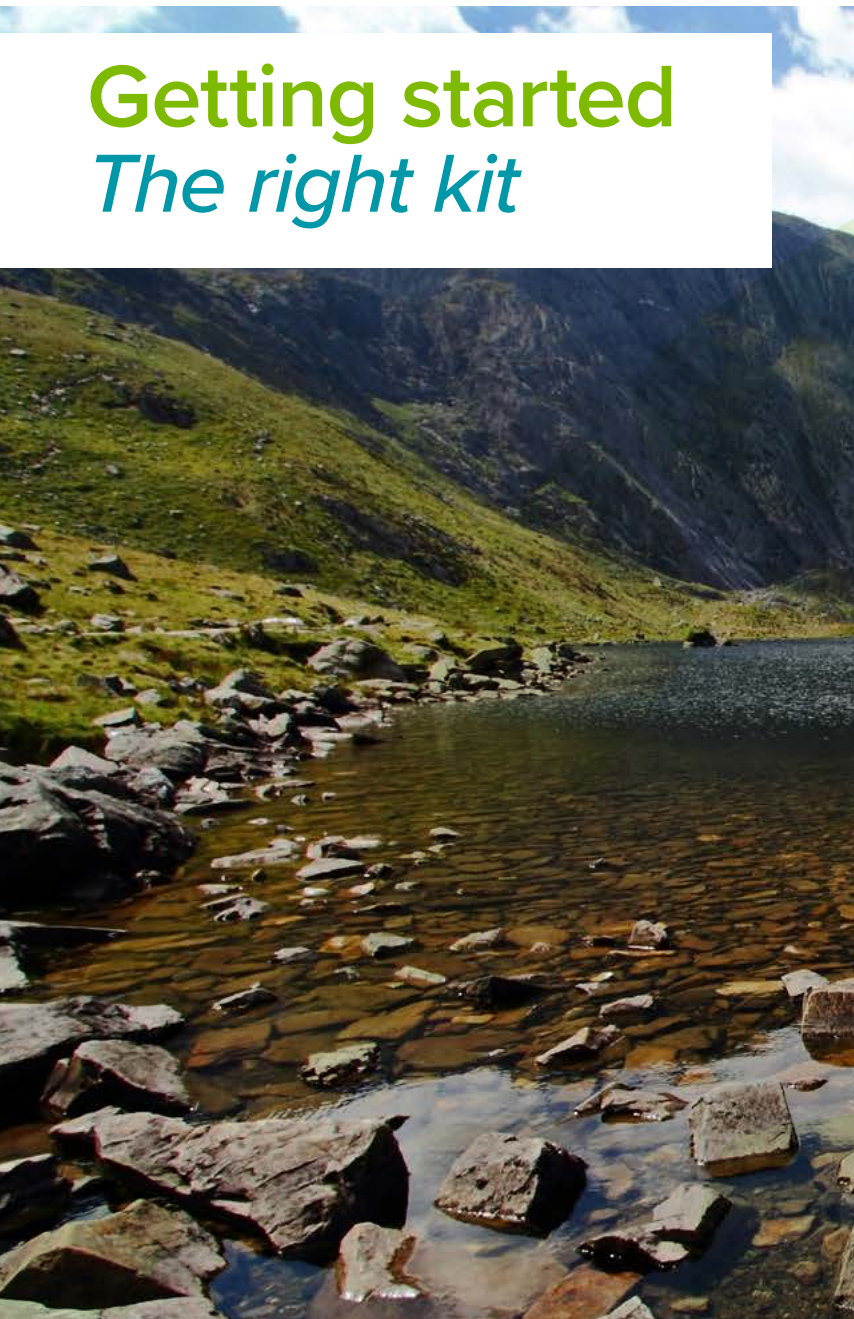
As you increase your training keep the triangle in balance by improving your nutrition by ensuring you listen to your body and respect its need to rest in order to improve.

In the next few pages we cover each of these areas in turn.



Getting started

The right kit



Boots

Well fitting waterproof boots, moulded tread, for good grip both up and down slopes.

Look to get these professionally fitted – it is worth the money. It is usual to get at least half size more than your shoe size. If you can feel the end of your toes touching the toe-end of a boot, it is too small. Good sideways ankle support is recommended for walking on uneven ground.

Trainers are not recommended in rough country because they give limited support and little protection rocks and wet conditions.

Walking socks

Padded and breathable socks made with wicking fabrics will both help provide additional cushioning but also help prevent blisters.

Look for socks that come over the height of your boots.

Lightweight waterproof trousers

Lightweight, waterproof and breathable walking trousers or over trousers are inexpensive and can make a massive difference to keeping you warm and dry.

Avoid denim or thick cotton that gets heavy in wet conditions and hot in the summers.

Layers

Look to several layers of wicking, technical fabrics which will keep you warm but give you the option of removing if it gets warm.

A thermal base layer is an essential requirement in the winter.

Jacket

A breathable water resistant jacket, with a hood, that lets sweat out and stops rain getting in is essential. Look for a fully waterproof, not just shower proof jacket.

The jacket should be large enough to wear over a fleece. Velcro fastening on sleeves is recommended while pockets should be free from rain intrusion.

Accessories

Hats, gloves and scarves play a massive role in keeping you warm and comfortable. It is possible to get waterproof hats and gloves so consider these for the winter months.

Rucksack

A small, lightweight 'day sack' should suffice for the training contained within our plans. Make sure it is fully adjustable with chest and waist straps and will be big enough to hold maps, food and additional clothing.

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Phone

A fully charged mobile phone should be considered an essential piece of kit.

Consider keeping one separate to your normal every day phone so you know you can keep it fully charged for emergencies

Sun cream

3 or more hours out in sunlight will increase your risk of skin damage. Always wear sun cream on all exposed skin. A brimmed hat can also help in bright sunlight.

A first aid kit

A small, basic first aid kit should always be carried when you are venturing out of built up areas.

A whistle, torch, safety blanket and emergency food and water should also be considered. Whilst they may never be needed on the plans we set they would be useful in an emergency scenario.

A map and compass

For longer walks an OS map and compass may be useful.

GPS, a navigation device could be helpful with orientation and route planning. It should never replace a map.

GPS can also be useful for monitoring your training.

Camera

It's always nice to feel you have some record of your training journey and the spectacular sites you have seen!

Sunglasses

Some would consider these an essential item either way they will help you relax and enjoy the sunlight more.

Poles

Walking sticks or poles can be great over hilly or rocky terrain. They are not essential however unless you feel you need them for supporting your joints or have been advised to use them by a doctor or physiotherapist.



Getting started

Keeping safe



- Plan before setting out – your kit, your route, your travel.
- Check the weather forecast and local conditions.
- Remember what time it gets dark in the Autumn and Winter months.
- Many accidents occur towards the latter part of the day stay focused and fresh!
- Charge your phone.
- Wear suitable boots with a treaded sole which provide support for ankles.
- Wear bright clothing that is warm, wind proof and waterproof.
- Take spare warm clothing and perhaps a hat and gloves; it is always colder on the tops.
- Bring additional food and water beyond what you'll need on the walk.
- Bring a map, compass (and the ability to use them).
- In all conditions, it is wise to carry a whistle, torch, spare batteries.
- If in groups, make sure party leaders are experienced; do not let the party become separated.
- Take special care of the youngest and weakest in dangerous places.
- If you prefer to go alone, be aware of the additional risk. Let people know your route before you start.
- Be prepared to turn back if conditions are against you.
- If you have a serious problem, Dial 999 and ask for mountain rescue if in the hills as soon as possible. Prior to dialling 999 be prepared to state your contact number, your location if known, the nature and number of injuries.
- Keep injured/exhausted people safe and warm until help reaches you. If you cannot contact anyone. Use six whistle blasts or torch flashes, repeated at minute intervals, to signal an emergency.
- Be particularly aware of precipices or cliffs, black ice or visible ice, gorges and stream beds.
- Take care not to exceed your experience and abilities.

The training

Find your effort

The feeling of not being sure how fast you should train is common. At the beginning all you are trying to do is get out and exercise at an easy pace – if you can't talk comfortably as you are walking, you're going too fast, simple as that.

Faster than easy, conversational effort is steady walking. This is where you must be honest, so conversation should still be possible, but a little strained.

Incorporating brisk walking efforts will see you getting into shape more quickly and efficiently. This is where you are walking at a controlled discomfort level: you can still talk between breaths, but only 5 or 6 word phrases.

Interval training and shorter, faster blocks of power walking, or hilly terrain will really get your heart pumping.

Interval effort

Power walking at a high intensity, maintaining a good tall posture with driving the arms.

8-9/10

Brisk walk

Have faster, more powerful strides, pushing up the effort and getting the heart beating faster.

6-7/10

Steady walk

Let your pulse rise a bit, still remain in control, breathing and putting effort into your walk.

5-6/10

Easy walk

Natural and able to remain fully conversational, relaxed and in control.

3/10

The Training Stretches

Glutes



Sit with one leg out straight. Cross the other leg over, keeping knee bent. To feel stretch in backside hug bent knee into chest. Keep back straight.

Hamstring (origin)



Lay on back. Pull one leg up to chest and hug with both arms. Keep one leg straight on floor keeping ankle flexed.

Hamstring (belly)



Lay on back. Keep one leg on the ground. Raise other leg holding the back of the calf. Bring up to feel the stretch in the middle of the hamstring.

Lower back



Lay on back. Bring one leg up to chest and rotate to lower knee to floor using opposite arm as a weight. Keep one leg straight and both shoulders on floor. Other arm should be straight out at shoulder level.

Quads



Grasp the top of the ankle with the same side hand and bring heel to backside. Hips should be pushed forward.

Hip flexors



Kneel on one with a 90 degree angle at both knees. Push hips down and forwards until a stretch is felt at the front of the hip.

Calf (gastrocnemius)

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Take one foot forward and keep feet parallel. Maintain the arch in the forward foot by pressing down with the toes to stop foot rolling in. Straighten back leg and feel stretch in top area of the calf.

Calf (soleus)

Repeat position of the gastrocnemius stretch but this time bend back leg to take stretch into lower calf above Achilles.

Key tips when stretching

- Stretch both legs and repeat 2-3 times if certain muscle groups seem particularly tight.
- Hold a stretch for 40-45 seconds each time and complete stretches after your hikes.
- Never stretch cold muscles.
- A good stretching routine will help to restore muscle balance and allow you to be more flexible.
- Consider investing in an 'MOT' with a sports physiotherapist or have sports massages which will help manage the build up of tightness that will occur when training.
- A 'foam roller' can be used to supplement your stretching on a day to day basis to carry out self massage.

The Training

Strength and conditioning

Finger crusher

Get into a sit-up position. Find the natural arch in your back and place your hands under the arch. Engage your lower abs and pelvic floor and push your spine down onto your hands, trying to crush your fingers into the ground. Hold this for 45-60 seconds per set.

The next level: Do small alternate leg lifts, while still keeping even pressure on your hands or extending in to 'bicycle' movement in and out with your legs.



Back extension

From a prone position with your toes on the ground and fingers on temples raise your chest off the ground by engaging your lower back muscles. After a few seconds relaxed back to the ground and repeat for 45-60 seconds.

The next level: Extending your arms out in front of you with add a greater lever angle and make this exercise more challenging.



Plank

Lift your body up with your weight on your elbows and toes. Keep a straight line from the neck down through the legs to your ankles, engage all your core muscles by sucking your belly button up to the ceiling. Keep your chest over your elbows. Hold for 30-60secs.

The next level: Add in small alternate leg lifts. If this is too hard to begin with, you can avoid lower back pain by doing this with your knees on the ground.



Side plank

Make a right angle with your supporting arm, your feet together and your stomach strong. Rise up, making sure you squeeze your glutes and push your pelvis through. Hold it for 30-60 seconds.

The next level: Lift your free arm into the air, keep your side really strong, and don't let your middle sag.



Bridge

From a sit up position raise your hips up so your body forms a straight line from shoulder to hips to knees. Hold this position for 45-60 seconds by squeezing your glutes and your lower abdominal muscles.

The next level: From a 'bridge' position straighten one leg at a time aiming to not let your hips 'sag' as you do so.



Single leg squat

Stand on one leg, engage your glute on your standing leg, keep your hips facing forward and aligned with your knee and toe. Send your hips backwards whilst bending at the knee. You don't want your knee to roll inwards, so go down as far as you can without that happening before moving back to a tall standing position. Repeat 8-15 times.

The next level: You can use a swiss ball or a wobble board under your feet.



Staying strong

Cross training

What it's all about...

The strength exercises we have shown you in this guide are from one of our cross training (XT) training plans.

The other option is non walking cardiovascular training such as *running, swimming, cycling, aqua jogging* (yes running in the pool with a buoyancy aid!) *rowing and using a cross trainer*. This exercises the heart and muscles and will definitely keep you aerobically fit.

Your heart doesn't know the difference between going for a walk or cross training it just works as hard as you ask it to. You can really boost your fitness with additional XT in your week.

Time and effort

If you are struggling to get out and hike through injury or weather conditions you can complete key sessions in the plan using cross training.

Even when injury hits, it can be tempting to panic and just stop training. Providing you can cross train safely and pain free you can maintain an even progression of your fitness. Simply replicate the time and effort we have asked in the hiking session using the other training options available to you.

Get checked out

If you're injured firstly consult a doctor or a physiotherapist before embarking on your cross training. If they say you are able, still follow a training plan try to use use cross training instead.

Don't lose that hard earned fitness – keep going!

If you can see a sports physio or injury expert they will also offer treatment and training advice. Ensure that the cross training is also pain free and that you add into your routine specific rehabilitation exercises to aid your recovery.

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Keep it specific

Whilst cross training can add masses of value and variety to your weekly training remember your goal. At the end of your block of training you need to feel you have the strength and the fitness to walk your chosen event.

The minute your conditioning or cross training is getting so hard that its leaving your too tired to complete your key hikes, or you are even risking injury itself, then the XT has lost its benefit.

Remember its there to support your running, not totally replace it.

Gym classes

Many of you will be members of gyms or go to local fitness classes. These can be great giving you a motivating environment to complete your conditioning or cross training.

Remember the key rules in this though – stay specific and don't leave your classes super tired.

Pilates, yoga and core classes can be a great option to add to your training mix.

Heart rate

If you want to get serious with your cross training you may wish to explore investing in a heart rate monitor which will help you hit the training in the correct effort zones and allow you to keep a track of your developing fitness as you run and train more and more.

Over time your should feel that you are better able to control sudden increases in heart rate and than you will be able to hike at a similar speed but a lower heart rates. You may also notice your resting heart rate going down a few beats!

Staying strong

Energy, Nutrition and Recovery



Balance the triangle

Nutrition is one of key elements of our training triangle. Without getting the basics right you will struggle to have the energy to train well or the nutrients to heal and adapt to the training you have completed. It's a huge area with ever developing science and research so here we cover just the basic tips to keep you walking strongly!

Never hungry, never overfull

Split those big main meals into 5-6 smaller meals, with mid morning and mid-afternoon snacks to ensure blood sugar levels are balanced.

Protein rich, carbohydrate clever

Carbohydrate is critical to fuelling your training effectively. Take on high quality, 'slow release' complex carbohydrates including plenty of oatcakes, sweet potatoes and whole grains. Protein provides the essential nutrients you need to heal damaged muscle fibres and tissues from lean meats, fish, nuts, sprouting seeds and tofu.

Micro-nutrients

Vitamins and minerals will deplete more quickly as you train harder so your demands will go up. Iron, vitamin D, B12, C, magnesium and calcium are just some of the basic ones to be aware of. Increase your

nutrient density by eating as broad a range of foods as you can, plenty of variety in your fruit and vegetables is a great place to start!

Hydration

Aim to drink 2-3 litres of fluid a day. Sipping water regularly or even water with electrolyte tablets (*e.g. High5 Zero*) is a good habit.

Avoid drinking caffeine with your main meals as this can limit some of your nutrient absorption. Don't drink caffeine late at night, it will impact on your sleep.

As your peak weeks of training kick in you may wish to monitor alcohol consumption which can have a big impact on your recovery.

Time it right

After your long hikes make sure you refuel well and within 60 minutes of finishing. Taking on plenty of fluid and having a good balanced meal with plenty of protein and healthy carbohydrates is important.

Fuelling your hikes

You will need to practice taking on fuel in your training sessions. One of the great things about hiking is that you can take on solid foods when out walking. Aim to eat

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small and often and focus on slow release carbohydrates such as rice balls, energy bars and savoury foods as well as sweet.

Monitor your health

As you increase your training your body and your energy demands will change. Your diet will need to change and adapt with this. Become good at monitoring your energy levels and notice any sustained increase in fatigue or tiredness over several days.

Keep a training diary and note down those sessions that felt fantastic what you ate and drank so you can repeat this in the future!

Ignore the myths

There are a lot of myths and scare stories out there surrounding nutrition. We shouldn't ever look to eliminate whole food groups unless recommended to do so by a qualified dietician, nutritionist or doctor. Avoid the advice of unqualified bloggers and if you want to explore your nutrition in depth then seek a fully qualified professional.

Get to bed

Sleep is vital to adapting to training and getting fitter. Regularly getting 4, 5 or 6 hours sleep a night will limit your ability

to achieve deep sleep, release growth hormones and will affect cortisol and stress levels. Get into a good pattern at night, avoid digital screens in the final hour before bed and limit caffeine and alcohol late at night.

Avoid the terrible too's

Building your training up too fast, too soon and doing too much training too hard is a sure fire way to pick up niggles and gradually lose the motivation to get up and train. Stick to the plan, be patient and don't panic or backfill training if you have started late or had some time off.

Know when to back off

If you are regularly tired no matter how much sleep you are getting, feel your nutrition is good but you still lack energy, are struggling to improve or even going backwards despite doing more and start to lose motivation to get out and train you might be over training. Listen to your body and be prepared to back off and take an extra rest day and adapt your plan if needed. Consistency is vital!



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