

EVEREST BASE CAMP: FITNESS

SO WILL I BE FIT ENOUGH TO COMPLETE THE TREK?

You don't have to be an extreme athlete to complete this trek but it's advisable to be healthy - both physically and mentally. In our opinion it's more about doing the little things well, thereby making the whole experience more enjoyable. The more you enjoy the trek, the better frame of mind you're in and thus more positive your outlook. What do we mean by this?

We recommend that you observe the detail below and that immediately before and during the trek you:

1. **Eat sensibly** - whether you like the food or not, it's a source of fuel and you won't reach the base camp on an empty tank. So eat what's provided, when it's provided! Simple we know, but if you're not a breakfast person normally, or you're a fussy eater, then it could be your undoing.
2. **Drink plenty of water** - the altitude dries your mouth and the exertion will deplete your liquid reserves. Whether you feel like drinking or not it is essential that you maintain sufficient liquid intake. Our leaders will watch and advise you accordingly. Take their advice they've been there before, many times!
3. **Get plenty of rest** - ensure that you sleep well at night. Make sure that you are comfortable and warm. You'll need a good sleeping bag and an organised tea-house room. No good scrabbling about for a lost torch when you need the toilet and waking your unfortunate companion. They won't be best pleased!
4. **Wear the right clothing** - it's essential to be dressed correctly at all times. Don't overheat and continue on regardless - remember the hydration and the positive mind-set - be comfortable and happy.
5. **Look after your feet** - ensure that your feet are kept in the best condition by washing and drying them at the end of the day. Powder them and let them breathe for a while, the oxygen will help keep them in good condition. Wear clean comfortable socks and ensure that your boots are well worn in. Let our leaders know when you have a hot spot, or a sore point. We need to catch this before it becomes a blister and makes your climb that little bit more unpleasant.
6. **Don't rush** - there are no prizes for the first to the base camp and believe us, the more time you spend each day gaining height gradually, not over exerting yourself and enjoying the whole experience, the better chance you will have of actually getting there!

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO GET FIT?

The best exercise for trekking in the mountains is to actually trek in the mountains, that said, not many of us actually live close to suitable training areas. So, make the best start you can and get out walking, in the boots that you're likely to wear.

The stronger your legs and the better your general fitness the more chance you'll have of completing, and more importantly enjoying the trek.

Do what you normally do! We recommend that you continue with the training that you normally undertake. If you run several times a week, then continue. If you cycle three times a week, then continue. If you love the aerobics or spin classes, then continue. They will all assist in attaining a base fitness and ensuring that you enjoy the process of getting hill fit.

No time like the present: Leave yourself plenty of time and don't overdo it to start with! We recommend that you start immediately and you'll know straight away what kind of shape you're actually in. It's essential though that you build up gradually. If you rush this process you are likely to pick up niggling little problems and injuries that might just rear their ugly head on the mountain. Make sure you enjoy getting fit. If you constantly push yourself hard you're more likely to give up and not make the grade.

Live a healthy lifestyle: any Doctor would recommend that you eat the right foods, cut down on the alcohol and give up the smoking.

WHERE DO I START?

On top of your general fitness programme we're asking you to start walking - after all that is what you'll be doing as you trek to Everest Base Camp!

Start with an hour's walk three times a week, at a normal pace and build up. You need to walk at a pace that you can maintain and be able to talk to a companion. Do this for the first couple of months, you should start to feel the benefit.

Next - throw in some longer walks at the weekend. Take along some friends and include some hills. Start to lengthen the weekend walks to four hours duration (with hills). Remember not to power up the hills but maintain the pace that you are comfortable with.

Normal routine - You should be continuing with your normal fitness - the running, cycling etc, but also now be including three walks a week - the weekend walks being longer and more arduous.

Multi-day walks - When you've built up the length of the walks we recommend that you visit a more hilly or mountainous area, maybe the Peaks, the Lakes or Scotland. Spend the whole weekend there. You will need to be able to walk for up to 6 hours a day, each day on the trek to EBC so try it on these weekends.

Take it a little easier - A month before you embark on the expedition back off slightly - maintain your general fitness but reduce the walking to around three 2-3 hour walks three times a week.

We hope that this routine and advice gives you more confidence. You can nail this trek!