

ATTITUDE AND MENTAL PREPARATION

Have fun and enjoy the adventure of preparation while training for your course! This is an excellent opportunity to get fit either outdoors or in your own home. Plan to be patient, to persevere, to expand your limits and to have a memorable adventure! **Your attitude of commitment and willingness to try new things are two of the most important contributions you can bring to your course. Prepare yourself mentally and physically to take on new challenges and try new activities.**

FITNESS AND TRAINING

We hear from a lot of participants who return from courses that the physical challenge was harder than they thought it would be. Traveling long distances with a heavy pack, pushing a dog sled uphill, or carrying a canoe is hard! Your success, as well as the success of the entire group, is dependent upon each participant arriving for course physically fit!

- You do not have to be an athlete to participate on an Outward Bound course
- You do need to be physically capable and active
- You can succeed if you start early, and work consistently towards your training

Note: We strongly suggest that applicants with any of the following conditions consult with their physician to establish an exercise program: high blood pressure, a family history of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, smoking (more than one pack a week) or a prolonged sedentary lifestyle.

THE BEST EXERCISE THERE IS, is the one you'll do, so choose one you enjoy! Try to enlist a friend or family member to join you. Some general rules are: enjoy yourself; mix up your training so you aren't doing the same thing every day (jog, swim, bike...); don't hurt yourself; slowly increase the intensity of your regimen every week and take at least one day off a week. Exercising five times a week is optimum physical preparation for your course.

COURSES WITH CANOEING or SEA KAYAKING

All VOBS canoeing courses are self-supported, meaning, groups paddle with absolutely everything they will need for their entire expedition! This means carrying heavy packs & canoes. Consider conditioning with a weighted backpack. See the example below under backpacking courses. You won't carry your gear all day on a canoe course, but you will have to use strength and stamina to carry canoes and packs over portage trails between lakes. Sea kayaking requires core and arm strength. While you won't be carrying your boats over trails you'll want to focus on upper body, core, and cardio for endurance!

COURSES WITH DOG SLEDDING

Dog sledding is not a passenger sport! You will become an essential part of the dog team. This means running alongside the sled in deep snow, jumping off and back on again, and pushing and maneuvering a 400+ pound sled! For these courses, cardio should be a key element of your pre-course fitness routine. We recommend devoting at least 45 minutes to cardio 4 times a week. On your expedition, you are going to be skiing, shoveling snow, splitting wood, pushing and pulling a heavy sled on narrow trails and more. All of these tasks benefit from a good foundation in strength. You'll want to focus on your back, shoulders and quads. Those three areas tend to be the primary muscles you will need and use throughout your course. Life on trail in the winter can be an endurance game. From the moment you wake up until the moment you fall asleep, you are going to be active.

COURSES WITH BACKPACKING

Hike with a weighted backpack. Start with 20-30 lbs., and then build to 50+ lbs. If you do not own a backpack, you may be able to borrow one from a friend, family member or rent one from an outdoor sporting goods store. If none of these options are available, try a smaller "book bag" style backpack with approximately 15 lbs. in it. Start out hiking just a couple of miles on hilly terrain or stairs and increase your intensity and mileage as you gain strength and endurance. On course, you can expect to carry a backpack that weighs approximately 40 to 55 lbs., and you may be hiking for distances of five to 15 miles per day.

SUGGESTIONS TO GET YOU GOING!

- Home: Free YouTube Classes. Some favorite classes are: Blogilates, Scolo Dondo, PopSugarFitness. Jumping rope, running in place, climbing apartment stairs
- Gym: Stair climber, stationary bicycles, rowing machines, aerobic classes, team sports or swimming.
- Outdoors: Running, power walking, playing sports. Hilly terrain is great. If hills are not available to you, integrate a section of stairs (buildings, stadium bleachers).
- Interval Training: A system of increasing cardiovascular fitness by alternating brief periods of increased output (30 seconds – 2 minutes) with periods of recovery. This can be running sprints, hill repeats, or using an interval setting on an indoor trainer. Be sure to warm up and cool down surrounding your interval repetitions.
- Strength Training: Supplement the above with weight training or bodyweight only exercises which can be completed almost anywhere like: sit-ups, push-ups, squats, lunges. Focus on building strength in your legs and supportive muscles of the back, shoulders and stomach.

[SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR A DETAILED PLAN YOU CAN USE TO PREPARE FOR ANY COURSE.](#)

Course Preparation Guide

SAMPLE EIGHT WEEK FITNESS PROGRAM OUTLINE

The program outlined below is appropriate if you enrolled eight or more weeks prior to your course start. If you don't have the full eight weeks to train, adjust this program accordingly. Take this conditioning program seriously; getting in good shape before your course will significantly reduce the chance of injury and increase your opportunities for enjoyment.

Week One Day 1, 3, 5: 20-30 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 6 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 10 minutes of stretching and 10 minutes of light weights Day 7: Rest	Week Two Day 1, 3, 5: 20-30 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 6 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 10 minutes of stretching and 15 minutes of light weights Day 7: Rest
Week Three Day 1, 3, 5: 25-35 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 8 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 10 minutes of stretching and 20 minutes of light weights Day 7: Rest	Week Four Day 1, 3, 5: 30-40 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 8 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 15 minutes of stretching and 20 minutes of light weights Day 7: Rest
Week Five Day 1, 3, 5: 35-45 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 8 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 15 minutes of stretching and 25 minutes of light weights Day 7: Rest	Week Six Day 1, 3, 5: 40-50 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 8 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 15 minutes of stretching and 25 minutes of light weights Day 7: Rest
Week Seven Day 1, 3, 5: 45-60 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 10 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 15 minutes of stretching and 30 minutes of light weights	Week Eight Taper off one week before course Day 1, 3, 5: 30 minutes of aerobic fitness training (1 day of intervals- 6 repetitions) Day 2, 4, 6: 10 minutes of stretching and 10 minutes of light weights