

### 3. WILD PREPARATION

**Note: This training program is a guide only and should be used in consultation with a trained Adventure Fitness Coach for safety and best results.**

#### **TRAINING PROGRAM: SYDNEY COASTREK: 12 - 24 weeks.**

Endurance Trekking Events offer us the opportunity to break down physical and mental barriers and achieve extraordinary goals. Walking non stop for 18 - 36 hours is a great achievement of mental and physical toughness and a goal that is within reach of anybody who chooses to take up the challenge.

Training to Trek 50 - 100 kilometres presents unique challenges, because in addition to trekking fitness you also require mental toughness, commitment and understanding of nutrition and foot care. The potential for overuse injuries is high so these challenges are not recommended for overweight participants.

To prepare for a 100k endurance trekking event, you simply need to walk. A lot! However, by following our Trek Training guidelines, you'll minimize the time it takes to prepare your body and maximize the results you get in your preparation for Coastrek. It's best to walk on the actual route of Coastrek, which can be found on the Coastrek website. If this is not possible, you should find a long distance route which includes a variety of surfaces, including sand, bush tracks, road, stairs, hills and footpaths. The greater the variety of surfaces, the less chance there is of sustaining overuse injuries.

#### **Trek Training**

##### **What is Trek Training?**

"Trek Training" is a specialized, time efficient Wild Women on Top outdoor adventure fitness training program to prepare the body for endurance trekking. Trek Training is designed to make trekking less arduous, safer and more enjoyable for the participant. The more time and effort you put into Trek Training prior to Coastrek, the more you'll be able to delight in the company, exquisite scenery and great satisfaction that comes from safely achieving an endurance adventure challenge.

Simply walking, is not enough to increase

fitness and prepare the body for trekking. In fact, a recent study done by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta found that "94% of people who exercise mainly by walking do not walk frequently enough or fast enough to gain real health benefits."

We all know overweight and unfit people who tell us they walk every day! Walking alone will not increase fitness. To prepare the body for trekking, we need to increase the intensity and duration of our walking, so that we improve our heart/lung fitness and endurance. We can do this by walking faster; by carrying weight in a back pack; and by adding hills, ramps, stairs, soft sand, water and distance to our workout. This is the essence of Trek Training.

Trek Training is best done on bush or coastal tracks, on undulating uneven terrain including hills, stairs, sand and rocks, in all weather by sun and torch light. For the inexperienced, it is best not to venture off track or too far away from civilisation, so suburban bush and coast tracks are ideal. Trek Training will prepare you for trekking no matter what your age or past fitness experience. However, you need to start from the beginning and if you are not exercising regularly, please consult your doctor before commencing this Trek Training Program. There are two components to Trek Training: The Undulating Pack Trek and Interval Training.

**Undulating Pack Trek:** An undulating Pack Trek is a long distance Trek with pack and poles for 2 – 8 hours on a bush, coast, rock and/or soft sand route with uneven and irregular terrain including hills and stairs at a Rate of Perceived Exertion RPE of 5 - 8. ( See chart following)

**Interval Training:** Interval training is a fitness training method which involves periods of high intensity effort, followed by periods of low intensity effort, to maximize the overall training effect possible in a given time frame. Interval training is known to be the most effective way to increase cardiovascular fitness.

**Note: The following training programs are**

**designed for participants who already have a walking base, which includes being able to walk at a brisk pace for 2 hrs. They are NOT programs for obese or de-conditioned participants. Overweight or unfit participants will need to significantly increase the time taken to achieve the goal and complete all tasks on flat terrain before beginning hill and stair training. If you are more than 10kg overweight, you should not carry a back pack for endurance walks. All exercise can be potentially dangerous. Please consult a doctor before commencing these exercise programs.**

*"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... You must do the thing you think you cannot do."  
Eleanor Roosevelt*



## **GETTING STARTED ON COASTREK TRAINING:**

To enjoy a challenging endurance trek such as Coastrek, you will need to be able to trek on soft and hard sand, concrete, stairs, uneven surfaces and undulating terrain, carrying a 3 – 5kg backpack, for 18 – 36 hrs, in warm to hot weather.

Before commencing, find locations near your home that can best replicate coastal bush terrain and plan your workouts. You need hills, stairs, ramps, rocks, tracks and/or soft sand. Hills, stairs and ramps will train your cardiovascular system to cope with ascents while strengthening your muscles and joints to cope with descents. If you want to increase the intensity of your workout to maximize your results, you should carry a 5 – 10kg back pack as you walk. This will strengthen the legs and increase the cardiovascular benefits of your training.

To improve your cardiovascular fitness you

need to “push” your body so that you’re puffing, which forces your heart and lungs to work harder to supply the required amount of oxygen to your working muscles. In other words, you must reach a certain level of exertion to improve the functioning of your heart and lungs. If you’re a runner, you just run faster in bursts. But most of us aren’t runners, so we need Trek Training.

To be really effective, and maximize the benefit from each workout, you need to ensure that your heart is working at 65 – 85% of your maximum heart rate, which is called your Training Zone. As a guide, maximum heart rate can be calculated by deducting your age from 220. So, if you’re 40 years old, your maximum heart rate should be 180. In this instance, your heart rate Training Zone should be 120 – 150bpm.

While this is helpful if you use a Heart Rate monitor, it may not be of much use as you trek along a bush track with your back pack. So, to monitor whether you’re working hard enough while Trek Training we recommend you use “Rate of Perceived Exertion” or RPE. The RPE Scale gives a quantitative identification of the feeling of fatigue. These feelings of fatigue are very highly correlated with heart rate. As you trek, estimate your level of intensity based on the following scale.

## **RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION: RPE SCALE:**

- 2-3 very, very light exertion
- 3-4 very light exertion
- 4-5 moderate exertion
- 5-6 somewhat hard exertion
- 6-7 hard exertion
- 7-8 very hard exertion
- 8-9 very, very hard exertion
- 10 Absolute maximum exertion

During Trek Training, your Training Zone should be from 5, which is ‘moderate exertion’, to 8 which is ‘very hard exertion’ to get maximum results. During interval training, you should get to 8 every time you go up, but during undulating pack treks, you should aim for 6 - 7 for most of the time.

## **GEAR FOR TREK TRAINING:**

Packing your pack for trek training is a skill you’ll become highly accomplished at, but at first it will require some thought and planning. If you’re carrying a day pack with less than

10kg, the main thing to remember is to check that you have all the essential items listed below. You should pack them with the heavier items close to your spine and use the lighter items to keep them in place.

**What to wear:** Loose comfortable shorts, wicking t shirt, hat, quality socks, sock liners and boots. Optional extras: cuffs or gaitors, cooling bandana – great idea! sun glasses.

**What to carry:** Back pack, maps, 1 litre of water, chocolate, mobile phone, whistle, rain coat, trekking poles, head torch, Personal First Aid, yoga mat or towel and warm fleece. Optional extras: Thongs, thermos, tea, cup, pocket knife and compass.

**Footwear for Trek Training:**

In Trek Training, WWOT recommends alternating between boots, runners, and trail runners so you strengthen your ankles and the intrinsic muscles in the foot. However, for night trekking by head torch, we recommend boots with ankle support for maximum safety.

**Tip: Smother your feet in Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment every 4 hours to prevent blisters while you're breaking in new boots, when trekking long distances or in extreme heat**

**If you haven't packed properly, don't carry!**



**TREK TRAINING FOR COASTREK**

Plan your week as follows:

- 1 x 3 - 6 hr undulating trek with a 5k - 10kg back pack
- 1 x 90 min interval training session with a 5 - 10kg pack
- 1 x 60 min undulating trek or interval training session with or without pack,
- 1 - 2 x relaxation and injury prevention session such as yoga, swimming, water walking or pilates

Include core and stretching for 12-15 mins at the end of each session, to improve flexibility and prevent injury. Focus on perfect posture at all times.

**All exercise can be potentially dangerous. Please consult a doctor before commencing these exercise programs.**

**UNDULATING PACK TREK**

**THE WORKOUT:**

Trek with pack and poles for 2 – 8 hours on a bush, coast, rock and/or soft sand route for 8 – 32 kilometers with uneven and irregular terrain including hills and stairs at a RPE of 5 - 8. Start gently so that you ease in to warm up your body, then gradually pick up the pace until you reach your Training Zone.

You should choose walks that within 60 minutes of your home, are in suburban bush, and are well signed and marked with a variety of different surfaces.

If you're walking for a full day, ensure you have at least 3 in your group, a mobile phone, map and compass, that you stay on well marked tracks at all times. We recommend getting a bushwalking book for your local area, or contacting the local bushwalking club to find out where the best local walks are and stay safe.

**Tips and Variations:**

- ✓ Pack weight will depend on your goals, your strength and your fitness. Start by carrying 3kg and increase pack weight by 0.5 - 1 kg per week. (Note: If you are more than 10kg overweight, you should not carry a back pack for endurance walks.)
- ✓ Take a 5 min stretch/drink/snack break every 90 minutes.
- ✓ Aim to cover 3 – 6kms per hour, depending on pack weight, the gradient and the difficulty of the terrain, so that you are puffing, but can still manage a conversation for most of the time.
- ✓ Ensure you do a 5 min warm-up with a gentle stretch of calves, thighs, and hamstrings, and finish each session with a 15 min session of Core and Stretching.
- ✓ Adjust your workouts based on tides, locations, weather and goals.
- ✓ Always carry a map and compass and advise family of your location if you're venturing away from the coast or more than 2kms from urban areas.

- ✓ Constantly remind yourself about “engaging” your Core (the muscular girdle that supports your torso) and focusing on correct posture to prevent injury and strengthen vital pack carrying muscles. Expand space between sternum and pubic bone and lift up.
- ✓ Try training at night with a head torch, boots and a minimum of two friends.
- ✓ Every time you see a set of stairs enroute, climb them!
- ✓ Give yourself a goal with each workout: a particular distance, pack weight or pace and commit to it. Eg: **Distance trek 12 km.** Select a 12km route which can be safely done in 3 hrs, carrying pack weight appropriate to your skills, needs and goals and time yourself.
- ✓ Select a route which includes stairs, hills or ramps and count the number of stairs to a total of 5,000 (2,500 ascending and 2,500 descending.)
- ✓ Adjust footwear for the terrain: boots for torch light and rough terrain, runners for road and fire trails.
- ✓ Wild Women on Top look forward to rain, cold and wind!!! Extreme weather allows us to test our gear, and our commitment. Force yourself out in wild weather – apart from being exhilarating, it will build your mental tuffness. However, DO NOT train in electrical storms.
- ✓ There are NO excuses for missing training ... (except a family or kid crisis). Coughs, colds, pmt, tiredness, gastro, headaches etc don’t count: they could all happen on Coastrek.
- ✓ Carry your water in a bladder or on a karabiner on your hip so you can reach it easily.



## **INTERVAL TRAINING**

Interval training is where you push your body hard for a short period of time then allow it to recover, before repeating the process. It is best understood on a set of stairs. The high intensity phase is going up and the recovery phase is going down. It is great for improving your aerobic and anaerobic capacity, and an excellent way to prepare for altitude.

Interval training is best done on a variety of stairs, ramps, soft sand, steep rocky scrambles, in the water or hills with a minimum of 1 minute intervals. The length of the intervals will depend on your location, but you will find you can push yourself harder for shorter intervals of intense effort. The high intensity interval phase forces the heart and lungs to pump much harder, which greatly improves fitness levels. Then, the rest in between makes the intensity tolerable, because your body has a chance to “catch up” and recover.

As you get fitter, seek out longer sets of stairs or hills until you can push yourself up for 5 minutes then recover on the descent. Interval training is also very time efficient because you can get a greater training effect in a shorter time period. However, as it is very strenuous, limit yourself to 3 sessions per week, with and without pack and poles.



### **Interval Training Workout: 30min – 2 hrs**

- ✓ Warm up with a pack walk 1-2 km to a hill, ramp, soft sand, steep rocky scramble or set of stairs.
- ✓ Fast walk to the top at an RPE of 8 (very hard exertion) and immediately return to your interval starting point. Select interval locations that provide a 1 – 5 minute interval of high intensity followed by 1- 5 minute of low intensity. Do 10 sets; five with your

- pack and five without. If you like jogging, you should jog the sets without the pack. Do not jog with a pack as this puts great stress on the joints.
- ✓ Pack walk 1-2 km back and finish with 12 – 15 minutes Core and stretching exercises.

### Variations and tips for Coastrek Interval Training:

- ✓ Find several different sets of stairs, ramps or hills in a similar location and incorporate 15 mins on each set
- ✓ Take a dice with you and roll the dice. If you get a 1 - 3, do that number of sets with a pack, if you get a 4-6, do that number of sets without a pack.
- ✓ Vary the intensity as follows: One set to an RPE of 8, followed by a set of slow technical walking followed by a set going up every second step. Repeat the series.
- ✓ Aim to really puff so you can't talk on the ascent, while recovering the breathing on the descent. Focus on muscular control to protect the knees on the descent.
- ✓ We recommend you use poles with packs over 10kg in weight. This will provide an additional upper body workout on the ascent and injury prevention on the descent.
- ✓ Select a route with several sets of stairs in close proximity and do 2 sets with pack and 2 sets without a pack at each set of stairs.
- ✓ Select a location where you can go up stairs and down a ramp, or up a headland and along the soft sand for your intervals.
- ✓ Time yourself on your first interval and your last, aiming to improve your time towards the end of your workout.
- ✓ Don't wear your Gortex jacket during training in the rain because you will overheat and sweat so much that you will think the jacket is leaking. Unless you're in a really cold climate, you can just get wet and change to dry clothes when you've finished.
- ✓ Interval training is also an excellent calorie burner but DON'T use this as an excuse to eat more!!

- ✓ Aim to really puff so you can't talk on the ascent, while recovering the breathing on the descent. Focus on muscular control to protect the knees on the descent.
- ✓ We recommend you use poles with packs over 10kg in weight. This will provide an additional upper body workout on the ascent and injury prevention on the descent.

## COASTREK DISTANCE TRAINING TREKS

In addition to the weekly requirements of Trek Training, your team must also do a 15 – 55k training walk fortnightly for a 12 - 24 week program. Your goal should be to go as light as possible, carrying only water and essentials of about 3-5kg.

Remember, the purpose of the training is so that you have lots of fun trekking the Sydney Coastrek rather than being tortured by the magnitude of the challenge and the conditions. The more you train smart, with time and nutrition for recovery, the more fun your trek will be!

### COASTREK TRAINING AT A GLANCE:

Plan your **fortnight** as follows:

- 1 x 15km – 55km walk on undulating bush and/or coastal tracks as follows:
  - Week 1: 15km,
  - Week 3: 20km,
  - Week 5: 30km,
  - Week 7: 40km,
  - Week 9: 60km,
  - Week 11: 40km,
  - Week 12: light walk then complete rest for 3 days before the event
- 2 x 3 hr undulating pack treks,
- 2 x 2 hr interval training session,
- 1 x 60 min interval training session,
- 2 x relaxation and injury prevention session such as yoga, swimming or pilates
- Include core and stretching for 12-15 mins at the end of each session, to improve flexibility and prevent injury. Focus on perfect posture at all times.
- Tip: A sprained ankle is the most likely injury and also the MOST DANGEROUS. If it happens on a trek it can jeopardize the whole team.

“EVERY STEP, EVERY STEP” is a good motto for trekking safety.

- Tip: Staying positive is really helpful if you want to get to complete the challenge as a team. If you're feeling tired or exhausted, try not to verbalize this. Chances are everybody in the group is feeling the same and a positive comment will lift you and the group, while a negative one can bring everybody down.
- We recommend trail runners for the Sydney Coastrek during the day for grip and shock absorbency and boots at night for ankle stabilisation. It is essential that the boots are really well worn in or blisters will spoil your day! You might also consider adding some sorbethane shock absorbing inserts to your boots because there are large sections of footpath and concrete in the last 50k of Coastrek. Some trekkers keep their trail runners or runners on for the duration of the event to gain more shock absorbency.



### **100k WILD WOMEN ON TOP SYDNEY COASTREK 12 WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM**

#### **Week 1:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 15km endurance trek,**

#### **Week 2:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 3:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 20km endurance trek,**

#### **Week 4:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 5:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 30km endurance trek**

#### **Week 6:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 7:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 40km endurance trek**

#### **Week 8:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 9:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 60km endurance trek**

#### **Week 10:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 2 x 1 hr interval training/jog

#### **Week 11:** 5-7 kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 40km endurance trek**

#### **Week 12:** 5-7 kg pack;

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **rest.**

### **50k WILD WOMEN ON TOP SYDNEY COASTREK 12 WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM**

#### **Week 1:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 10km endurance trek,**

#### **Week 2:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 3:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 15km endurance trek,**

#### **Week 4:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 3hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 5:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 20km endurance trek**

#### **Week 6:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 7:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 28km endurance trek**

#### **Week 8:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 1 x 1 hr undulating trek/jog

#### **Week 9:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 40km endurance trek**

#### **Week 10:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; 2 x 1 hr interval training/jog

#### **Week 11:** 3-4kg pack:

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **1 x 30km endurance trek**

#### **Week 12:** 3-4kg pack;

1 x 4hr undulating trek; 1 x 2 hr interval training; **rest.**

You are now ready for the Wild Women on Top Sydney Coastrek 50-100k event.