



## The END Fund Mount Kenya Trek, July 2022

### *Trekking Training Guide*

### How to train

This workout plan is designed to target areas that power you up the trail for a multi-day trek. It is designed to build strength and mobility in your core and major leg muscles, and build your endurance.

#### General Overview:

- **Increase strength in major muscles** that hikers rely upon. Stronger legs and core muscles will better support the load in your pack and help you hike safer, harder and longer.
- **Build endurance** in those same muscle groups, as well as the shoulders and lower back because hiking is an all-day, full-body activity.
- **Improve your balance** so you have a more stable base that will allow you to take uneven terrain in stride.
- **Don't forget your cardio.** Complement this exercise plan with activities like trail running, mountain biking or another aerobic exercise that you enjoy.

*Before beginning any training program, check in with your doctor or certified training professional.*

### Training Schedule

Start training 8 - 12 weeks before your multi-day hike, depending on your base fitness level. If you are starting from a low base, give yourself extra time. Keep the following in mind as you train:

- Make the exercises fit your body, not the other way around. If something hurts, modify the exercise.
- Move at your own pace, going slowly at first. Increase the repetitions or add more resistance or weight as your training progresses.

A weekly workout schedule should be varied and include the following:

- **Strength Training:** Two (2) non-consecutive days of strength training for the major muscle groups in your core and legs.
- **Cardio:** Three (3) non-consecutive cardio sessions (walking, cycling, rowing, running).
  - Use one (1) weekly cardio session in alternate weeks to involve slopes (or steps) in the cardio activity
  - Use one (1) weekly cardio session the other alternate week to do long day hikes - building length over the weeks from 60+ to 120 minutes and involving some rough



ground and hills. Use these days to break in your hiking boots and carry your day pack - with contents close to the weight you'll be carrying on your trip.

- **Rest:** Two (2) non-consecutive rest days; take more anytime you feel your body needs it.

**Two weeks before your trip:** Make your long hikes weekly and add a fourth hill cardio training session to one of your strength-training days.

## Strength Training Exercises

The following workouts are examples and explains the purpose of each activity. As you customize your workout schedule to best fit your body, modify or use other exercises that work for you.

**Warm-Up:** Warm up by doing a brisk 5 - 10 minute walk.

**Strength Training Exercises:** After you warm up, follow the guidelines below as you progress through these exercises:

- Rest for 30 - 45 seconds at the end of each exercise (unless otherwise noted)
- Do each of the exercises below one time in succession, then rest for two minutes and repeat another set of the exercises (if you have time to fit in a third set of exercises, that's even better)

### Exercise 1: Jump Squats

**Purpose:** Squats provide an excellent all-around workout for all of the muscles in the lower body and legs - your body's hiking engine. Adding a jump helps further develops power in the lower legs.

#### Directions:

1. Start with your feet shoulder-width apart and then squat down until your thighs are at least parallel with the ground.
2. Keep your chest up, your feet flat and your knees over your toes.
3. As you come up from the squat, push through your heels and explode up and jump a few inches off the ground.
4. Land softly and quietly, and immediately go into another squat.
5. Repeat this 15 - 20 times.

## **Exercise 2: Hip Rolls**

**Purpose:** Most of your daypack weight rides on your hips. This exercise works the glutes and other muscles that support the hips to improve their stability and endurance.

### **Directions:**

1. Stand on your left leg.
2. Lean your body forward at your hips, keeping your back straight and lift your right leg back behind you, slightly off the ground.
3. Rotate (roll) your hip away from your standing leg.
4. Keep your body in a straight plane as you roll your hips back.
5. Repeat this 10 - 15 times on each side.

## **Exercise 3: Step Ups**

**Purpose:** Hiking with a pack on involves a seemingly endless amount of stepping up and over things. This exercise builds strength and endurance in your glutes and quad muscles so you can handle whatever obstacles you'll encounter on the trail.

**Props:** For this workout, you will need a stable surface, about 8 inches off the ground. This can be a training box or aerobic step if you have it. If not, the bottom step on a flight of stairs will work.

### **Directions:**

1. Start with your left foot on the ground and your right foot on top of the step - your right knee will bend.
2. Step up until you are standing with your right leg nearly straight and you are balanced on top of the step; your left leg should be slightly bent and your left foot poised an inch or so above the step.
3. Pause in a balanced position, then step down, returning your left leg and right leg to the starting position.
4. Repeat this exercise 15 times, then do it on the other leg 15 times.

## **Exercise 4: Heel Lowers**

**Purpose:** To get down after you step on top of a boulder or a log, you need to be able to lower your body and pack weight under control. That's key to preventing knee injuries and stumbles. This exercise works your glutes and quad muscles to build the strength and the balance to do so.

**Props:** For this workout, you will need a stable surface, about 8 inches off the ground. This can be a training box or aerobic step if you have it. If not, the bottom step on a flight of stairs will work.

### **Directions:**

1. Start by standing on top of a step, balanced on your right foot with your left foot hovering to the side.
2. Lift your toes on your left foot, then bend your right knee as you slowly lower your left leg until your left heel is barely touching the ground or poised just above it.
3. Power back up with your right leg until you are back to the starting position.



4. Do this 15 times, then repeat the exercise 15 times on the other side.

### Exercise 5: Squat Curl Overhead Press

**Purpose:** This exercise combines a squat to work your lower body muscles with upper body. As you squat, you will lift a moderate amount of weight to build strength in your upper body that will help you carry your daypack and take it on and off throughout the trekking days.

**Props:** A pair of lightweight dumbbells.

#### Directions:

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, arms at your side, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
2. Press your hips back and squat down as if you are about to sit on an invisible chair. Try to bring your thighs parallel to the floor.
3. Power back to a standing position, using your upward momentum to assist you as you curl up and then press the dumbbells overhead with your palms facing each other the entire time.
4. Return to the starting position and repeat this 10 - 15 times.

**Tips:** Keep your back and neck in a neutral position; try not to round your shoulders or crane your neck forward. Also try to not keep your knees facing straight forward and do not let your knees go past your toes while you are squatting.

### Exercise 6: Bridge with Hamstring Curl

**Purpose:** The bridge portion of this exercise engages your core muscles to help improve your balance on the trail. The hamstring curls build your glute and hamstring muscles so they can provide power when trekking uphill.

**Props:** A medium-size exercise ball. To check for the correct size, sit on top of it - if the tops of your legs are parallel to the ground, then it's the correct size. If the tops of your legs slope down towards your knees, then the ball is too large. If the tops of your legs slope slightly up towards your knees, the ball size is fine.

#### Directions:

1. Lie on your back with your arms extended down by your sides, with your legs extended and your heels resting atop the exercise ball.
2. Tighten your glutes and abs as you pull your legs back, rolling the ball towards your butt.
3. Stop when your knees are bent at slightly more than 90 degrees.
4. Extend your legs straight again, rolling the ball away from you.
5. Repeat this sequence 15 times.



### Exercise 7: Side Plan with Leg Raise

**Purpose:** Planks are a staple of many exercise routines because they help build core muscles like the obliques, glutes, and leg muscles. This plank variation adds a leg raise to build endurance in the muscles that move and support your hips.

#### Directions:

1. Lie on your right side, supported by your elbow under your shoulder; your right forearm should be perpendicular to your body, your left hand should rest on your left hip with your elbow pointing up, and your legs and feet should be stacked atop one another.
2. Activate / tighten your core as you raise your hips into a plank, creating a straight line from your head to feet.
3. Slowly raise your left leg up and slightly back, keeping it straight as you do so. Keep your hips still.
4. Lower your leg and raise it a total of 10 times.
5. Repeat the exercise lying on your left side 10 more reps.

### Exercise 8: Hip Circles

**Purpose:** Many hikers complain of knee fatigue and soreness. This exercise builds strength and mobility in the hips, which helps prevent knee issues by giving you better control over your knees.

#### Directions:

1. Stand with your weight balanced on your left leg and knee slightly bent.
2. Keep your back straight and your weight centered over the standing knee.
3. Imagine that you are at the center of a clock. Lift and extend your right leg, reaching it forward towards 12 o'clock.
4. Bring your leg back to the center.
5. Repeat the movements toward the 3, 6, and 9 o'clock positions. As you reach for each position, stay balanced over the standing leg and don't let your hips shift from side to side.
6. Switch to the other leg and repeat; do 5 - 8 reps on each leg.

**Tip:** Keep your hips level and push into the ground with your standing foot for balance.