



## TRAINING FOR OUR HIKING ADVENTURES

A jog on the treadmill is insufficient preparation for a hike in the great outdoors, especially when carrying added weight on your back. Part of the reason is that hiking, like other exercise, uses specific muscle groups in specific ways. The physiological principle of specificity says that the body learns to do exactly what is called upon to do. Veteran hikers know that best training for a hike is a practice hike. But there may not be time to hit the trail three times a week, and the health club is closer. The closest way to mimic hiking up and down steep trails in a gym setting is the following:

- For uphill training, use the treadmill setting the incline at its steepest angle to mimic the concentric contractions legs experience on the trail. You can also change the incline setting up and down manually to create a "true trail experience" and try to maintain a reasonably fast walking pace. Stair climbers are also effective. And don't forget – **THREE hours a week MINIMUM!**
- For downhill, the training gym equipment is more limited. To strengthen the muscles and the eccentric contraction of the experience in going down steep trails (muscles actually fatigue quickly due to the braking and extending of your legs and many people are more sore from this than going uphill) requires weight-training techniques. Experts suggest doing leg exercises; such as squats and presses, concentrating especially on the lowering of the weights slowly back down. Weight training is invaluable in creating endurance for your muscles doing the long haul. Again, **THREE hours a week MINIMUM!**
- Remember that upper body training should not be neglected either in your conditioning regimen. Do not forget to stretch before and after each workout.
- Of course, if you have the opportunity to train outdoors, that would also be of great benefit. Find some good trails with varying terrain and grades. Remember to train carrying weight on your back to simulate your upcoming trek if you will be on a backpacking trek.
- Before your trip with us, give yourself at least a 48 hours break from training, but try to stretch and stay reasonably active EVERY DAY.

We hope these recommendations will help you in planning for your adventure with us. The difference it can make in the enjoyment of your trip can be substantial.

Finally, remember to get your doctor's advice if you have any specific or general health issues you have. We are not able to provide medical advice on your specific condition.