



SKY MIND RETREATS

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

Welcome to Sky Mind Retreats **backpacking meditation retreat**. You will be carrying a full backpack weighing 35-45 pounds, hiking for two days uphill on a trail into the Emigrant Wilderness of the Sierra Nevada, covering approximately four miles per day. We can't give you a training program that will guarantee you'll be in shape for the trip. You must be responsible for your conditioning. But we can give you an idea of what you will be doing on the trip and some general guidelines for getting in shape. If you are already in good shape, keep it up. If not, now is the time to start.

1. WHAT TO EXPECT:

Backpacking hikes of approximately four miles on a trail, gaining elevation into the mountains.

2. SOME PRINCIPLES:

Get inspired, but not intimidated. We don't expect you to devote half of every day to fitness, but starting now on a regular conditioning program will make a huge difference.

Expensive equipment and health club memberships are not required, nor are they as important as your commitment.

Use specificity training where appropriate; the more similar your training is to the future activity, the more benefit you will derive.

If you live in an area with local hills or mountain trails, we strongly suggest that you go on as many hikes as you can. If you live in the flat lands, stadium stairs provide great "hills".

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION:

A. Aerobic training for cardiovascular fitness. This is the most important area, as all wilderness travel involves repetitious aerobic activity. Cardiovascular training increases the ability of the body to transport oxygen efficiently to working muscles. Bicycling, hiking, jogging, swimming, and other aerobic workouts will increase cardiovascular fitness.

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B. Flexibility. A typical hiking day involves all types of movement using all the muscle groups. A flexible, loose person will probably move more efficiently, have less residual muscle stiffness, and experience fewer muscle and joint injuries.

C. Strength and Power. The ability to hike up and down hills and over backcountry terrain requires strength. Strong muscle groups help protect joints from injury. Joining a gym to get a good workout may be appropriate for you; hiking at a good pace on hills and trails, and climbing stairs or trails will help. Strengthen back, shoulder, and abdominal muscles also. Remember, start well within your current ability and work up to harder exercise as you gain strength.

D. Attitude. This is one of the most important aspects of the trip and of your conditioning program. **Courage, humor, humility, and self-forgiveness** will all be important. There may be times on the trip when you feel discouraged or tired; expect that as part of every trip. Perhaps the most important resources we bring on the trip are an **eagerness to learn, a willingness to take what nature sends our way, a sense of individual responsibility, and a concern for others.** Having an optimistic attitude will help make the trip succeed for you and your companions.

REMEMBER: You can improve your physical conditioning greatly by starting a steady program now. **Please do not put this off.** It is essential to your safety and enjoyment, and the safety and enjoyment of your companions, that you have the proper physical fitness. If you would describe your conditioning as “moderate,” “fair,” or “average,” you probably need to increase your exercise regime. Yoga, gardening, and walking the dog are all wonderful, but none of them is full preparation for a week of hiking.

Call us if you have any questions about this.