

Fitness Program

Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa and hiking to the peak is a challenge that should not be underestimated. With all the information you could possibly gather, added to being physically prepared, one's chances of reaching the summit is substantially increased. Stamina and mental determination to a great extent, will determine whether or not you will be successful in your quest to conquer the Roof of Africa. Being physically prepared for the trek will also greatly contribute to the level of your perseverance, confidence and personal enjoyment!

How fit do you have to be?

The type of fitness is more important than the degree of fitness. Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro is a hike, therefore the best preparation one can do is to hike, preferably under simulated conditions. Although jogging could be beneficial to your fitness level, it does not fully prepare your muscles for a strenuous 6-day hike. We suggest that you spend some of your training by merely hiking. In addition to regular gym workouts, make sure you also go for walks in order to stimulate relevant muscle development. Try to do a one or two day hiking trials in your area. This will not only be an excellent way for physical preparation, but also an enjoyable means to prepare yourself mentally.

We have furthermore developed a practical (in terms of time and costs) fitness preparation guideline to assist you in getting your body ready for a Mt. Kilimanjaro summit attempt. This guide contains a gym and a hiking program that should be followed simultaneously over an 8 week period.

Important points to remember – Before you start!!

Medical Check-up

Before embarking on a fitness program, it is always wise to first seek the advice of a medical doctor. Feel free to share this program with your family doctor for input. Chances are, your doctor will be delighted to know that you undertake to exercise regularly.

Progressive Resistance

In essence, the gym section of our fitness program consists of regular and progressive resistance exercises with either free weights (like barbells and dumbbells) or free weight machines that are readily available in gymnasiums. The idea behind progressive resistance is that your exercise regime can be tailored to your age, physical condition and strength, steadily progressing to higher resistance level as you develop.

Safety Factor

Progressive resistance movements could be customized to individual strength and fitness levels, therefore our fitness program is potentially safe. It is however essential that all of the exercises be performed correctly and that basic safety procedures are followed at all times. It is furthermore always a good idea to invest in reading material on physical fitness and to consult your local fitness instructor about performing each exercise correctly.

Sets and Repetitions

This workout consist of repetitions (reps) and sets. A rep is a single count of an exercise, for example moving downwards for one squat movement. A set is knows as a series of reps – an average set consist of 8 to 12 reps.

Warm Up

It is highly recommended that one always warms up the muscles before starting with any exercising routine. The norm is doing a variety of stretching movements to warm up, strengthen and progressively challenge the tendons, ligaments, joints and muscles. Stretching is very important, as it is the best way to prepare for an injury-free workout.

Gym program – eight weeks guideline

Exercise	Monday		Wednesday		Friday	
	Sets	Reps	Sets	Reps	Sets	Reps
Warm up and stretch	5 minutes		5 minutes		5 minutes	
Leg developing aerobics						
Cycling	10 minutes		10 minutes		15 minutes	
Leg combination						
Squats	3	12			4	12
Leg presses			4	12		
Thighs isolation						
Leg extensions	3	10	3	10	4	10
Leg curls	3	10	3	10	4	10
Lower legs isolation						
Calf raises	3	20	3	20	4	20
Toe pulls	3	20	3	20	4	20
Lower back combination						
Hyper extensions	3	12			4	12
Good morning exercise			3	12		
Abdominal						
Crunches (upper)	2	20	2	20	3	20

Exercise	Monday		Wednesday		Friday	
Leg raises (lower)	2	20	2	20	3	20
Leg developing aerobics						
Stairmaster / climbing	10 minutes low resistance		10 minutes high resistance		10 minutes low resistance	
Cool down and stretch	5 minutes		5 minutes		5 minutes	
Total time	1 hour 15 minutes		1 hour 15 minutes		1 hour 15 minutes	

More gym guidelines

1. The above represents a guideline and can be adapted to your time schedule and current fitness level, but it will give you an good idea of which muscles you should concentrate on.
2. Unfit people should utilise light weights during the first two weeks of this program.
3. To stimulate sufficient muscle growth and development, the weights should be increased progressively at least every two weeks.
4. For effective muscle development every muscle or muscle group should be given a resting and recuperation period of at least 48 hours after every strenuous exercising session if weights where utilised.
5. It is important to execute the various exercises in the same order as listed above.
6. The above program can be adapted for home gymnasiums – we will gladly advise you on request.
7. If time permits it always a good idea to include some upper body development exercises in your program, in order to achieve a more balanced and overall body development.

Walking program

It is advisable to go for frequent walks which should include some uphill and down hills sections. Take your daypack with you and carry at least three litres of water or three kilograms with you. This will simulate the conditions you will encounter. As mentioned before, doing a one or two day local hiking trial in your area is not only an excellent way of preparation but also most enjoyable. We have developed an adequate hiking programme of least 8 weeks to ensure an adequate level of fitness.

If your local weather conditions do not always permit outdoor activities, you can do part of it on a treadmill and simulate the flat, uphill (inclined) and downhill (declined) sections. Terminate your hiking program at least 4 days before you're the start of your summit attempt to ensure sufficient rest before the climb.

Walking program – eight weeks

Week 1			
	Tuesday	Thursday	Sunday
Warm up and stretch	8 minutes	8 minutes	8 minutes
Walk			
Flat terrain at 4,5km per hour	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
Walk – lower leg development			
On heels, toes lifted	3 minutes	3 minutes	3 minutes

On toes, heels lifted	4 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes
Walk			
Flat terrain at 4,5km per hour	40 minutes	40 minutes	40 minutes
Cool down and stretch	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Total time	1 hour 10 minutes	1 hour 10 minutes	1 hour 10 minutes
Week 2 to 3			
	Tuesday	Thursday	Sunday
Warm up and stretch	8 minutes	8 minutes	8 minutes
Walk			
Flat terrain at 4,5km per hour	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
Walk – lower leg development			
On heels, toes lifted	3 minutes	3 minutes	3 minutes
On toes, heels lifted	4 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes
Walk			
Flat terrain at 4,5km per hour	40 minutes	40 minutes	30 minutes
Uphill at 2-3 km per hour	N/A	N/A	20 minutes
Downhill at 5-6 km per hour	N/A	N/A	10 minutes
Cool down and stretch	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Total time	1 hour 10 minutes	1 hour 10 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes
Week 4 to 8			
	Tuesday	Thursday	Sunday
Warm up and stretch	8 minutes	8 minutes	8 minutes
Walk			
Flat terrain at 4,5km per hour	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
Walk – lower leg development			
On heels, toes lifted	3 minutes	3 minutes	3 minutes
On toes, heels lifted	4 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes
Walk			
Flat terrain at 4,5km per hour	40 minutes	30 minutes	50 minutes
Uphill at 2-3 km per hour	N/A	20 minutes	40 minutes
Downhill at 5-6 km per hour	N/A	10 minutes	20 minutes
Cool down and stretch	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Total time	1 hour 10 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes	2 hours 20 minutes

The above training programme will prepare you physically for Kilimanjaro to the extent that you are capable of hiking 100 kilometres in one week. If you are fit enough for this, rest assured that your body will still give you more when you need it. If you follow the guidelines for both the gym training as well as the walking routine, you are definitely ready for Kilimanjaro physically. You can now concentrate on being mentally ready, but chances are...